



STATE OF VERMONT

Workforce Investment Act

2012 Annual Report

July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013

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

**Anne Noonan
Commissioner
Vermont Department of Labor**

**Rose Lucenti
Workforce Development Director**



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Introduction:

Program Year 2012 was a very successful year for the WIA program in Vermont. Overall measurements improved from 2011 to 2012, serving more people in all three areas, Adult, DLW, and all Youth. Total participants and exiters increased significantly, exiters doubling, while overall cost of program activities remained at or slightly lower than 2011. This can be attributed to better management of the programs with implementation of improvements such as use of the WIA-7 overview form outlining the training and costs up front, limiting initial request for funding to \$5,000 per participant, and increased emphasis on collaboration with partners to share program costs on an individual basis. The only significant increase in cost was in Rapid Response services, stressing the “early intervention” strategy to assist people return to work as soon as feasible.

In addition this year included the ongoing management of the three NEGs continued from the Program Year 2011. Vermont is still recovering from the devastation caused by the three natural disasters of 2011. The grant received for disaster #2, unusual flooding in Caledonia, Essex, Orange, and Washington counties was successfully retired.

Disaster #1, considerable damage caused in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Washington Counties due to record high water levels in Lake Champlain, extended the grant through PY 2012 and to the end of the 2013 calendar year.

Similarly the largest disaster, caused by hurricane Irene, impacting all 14 Vermont counties, was also extended through calendar year end 2013.

Great creativity and flexibility is required by the VDOL staff working on these grants primarily due to the unpredictable weather conditions in the state. Safety of the cleanup teams and accessibility to remote sites are of prime concern as the weather deteriorates.

The WIA/WP 5 Year Strategic Plan was approved. Highlights of the plan were the inclusion of the implementation plan for American Job Center Branding, commitment to install a new MIS system, and the addition of waivers.

The end of the year saw the start of significant Rapid Response preparation for an IBM layoff which started mid-June 2013. The RR team was defined and informational packages were revised and prepared for an unknown number of dislocated workers. By the time IBM announced that 419 employees from the Essex Junction, Vermont, plant lost their jobs (July 18, 2013) VDOL had conducted at least four Rapid Response sessions and a Job Fair.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Of the 656 customers eligible for the survey, 434 participants were included in the Workforce Investment Act Customer Satisfaction survey for 2012. We were able to reach 214 of those participants and get completed surveys, resulting in a Customer Satisfaction score of 78% and a response rate of 49.3%.

One particular challenge that became evident in the attempts to contact 2012 WIA exiters was a high number of disconnected cell phone numbers for the participant as their main form of contact. Of the 220 people we were not able to get a hold of; there were 120 without working telephone numbers for the participant and for the listed emergency contacts. With Vermont's plans to transition WIA activity over to Vermont Job Link, which will be Vermont's new MIS, we will be able to capture participant's email addresses upon registration and will have that new third form of contact for future customer satisfaction surveys.

Additional Research:

Vermont has once again funded an evaluation by the Center for Social Science Research Center at St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. The evaluation for 2012 is nearing completion but we do not yet have a final report with summaries and conclusions. This evaluation will focus on various program delivery strategies; i.e. single service vs. multiple services per individual participant, as measured by earning gains and job stability or retention. The evaluation will also measure the effectiveness of specific training activities; i.e. On-the-Job Training, Occupational Skills Training and Work Experience.

Employer Customer Satisfaction Surveys:

Results from the Employer Customer Satisfaction survey showed an increase from Program Year 2011. Of the 1,535 total employers eligible for the 2012 survey 1,149 were included in the sample. Of that sample, 589 completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 51.3%. The final satisfaction score for 2012 increased to 75%, up from 63% in 2011.

Vermont attributes this increase to a new focus on identifying employer's needs while also introducing or reminding employers of Vermont Job Link, VDOL's website for employers to create and post job openings. The introduction of the Make Vermont Home Initiative (***formerly known as Bring It Home to Vermont initiative - please refer to the section in this narrative for more information on the Make Vermont Home Initiative***) in early 2012 has spearheaded this increased focus on businesses' needs as well as reminding employers of the different services and opportunities available through the VDOL's Workforce Investment Act partnerships.

State self evaluation and continuous improvement:

WIA Monitoring Process:

The WIA Monitoring Process has been redefined and the new process has been implemented.

The Monitor process is designed to be a part of the ongoing learning, training, and continuous improvement process for all field office operations and support service provided by the Central Office staff.

The initial process, sent to the Regional Manager prior to the visit, will also be evaluated and improved as more experience is gained.

The Monitor Process is:

The WIA Monitor process and plan for PY 2013- 2014 is based on a recent webinar training and the April 2013 ETA Training Manual and examples.

The process will use the above information modified to match the small state single Workforce Investment Board (WIB) environment.

The objective of the WIA State Monitoring Process is to:

- Ensure compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements at the Federal, State and Workforce Development Council levels.
- Identify problems and areas of non-compliance, create action plans to resolve the areas of non-compliance.
- Review procedures and processes used in the offices for consistency within the office, the programs, and across the state. Identify “best practices” and establish a continuous improvement plan for the division.
- Identify issues requiring technical assistance.
- Determine the extent that internal or contracted program operations are effectively and efficiently meeting their obligations.
- Identify internal problems with the administrative support organizations within the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and introduce timely solutions.

From initial information onsite monitoring will be scheduled for up to two days per office. Schedule can be modified based on variables found in the setup and results of the first visit to each office.

Monitoring consists of:

Review of a mix of closed and open files, predominantly recent files, for WIA Adult, DLW, and Youth programs.

Review of the OJT program services potentially including an employer visit.

Determine the understanding of waivers and demonstration of their effective use within the office.

Observation of staff interaction with customers for both the WIA and W-P funded programs.

Offices will be given one or two weeks notice of the confirmed visit dates. Once dates are established a telephone discussion of the monitoring process will be held with the Regional Manager. The Regional Manager may invite staff to participate. Notice of specific files that will be included in the review will be provided two days prior to the visit. Monitor will conduct an online desk review of files in the MIS systems prior to visit. An exit discussion of observations will be held with the Regional Manager and staff at the Managers discretion. A formal Monitoring visit report will be provided to the Workforce Development Director within 30 days of completion of the visit. The report will include corrective action plans with commitment dates for resolution. An overall annual summary report for all offices, including Central Office, with recommended action plans will be written following completion of visits and reports of each individual office. Above is subject to change based on continued analysis of training information and reviews.

New MIS System AJLA:

Agreements have been established and signed to install AJLA as a fully hosted and supported system. Evaluation and testing teams have been assigned and are in process of developing a detailed installation, testing, phase over, and training plan. AJLA will eliminate the current dual MIS systems of VJL and IDEM providing a single servicelink system for data collection, tracking, and reporting of services and measurements.

Information on the cost of workforce investment:

Vermont exceeded 9, met 10, and failed 1 PY 2012 measures.

PY 2012

Common Measures	Vermont Department of Labor		Failed, Met or Exceeded Goal
	Negotiated Goals	Actual Results	
	PY 2012	PY 2012	
WIA Adults			
Entered Employment	70.0%	69.6%	met
Retention	85.0%	74.2%	met
Avg Earnings	\$11,700	\$ 12,684.00	exceeded
Credential	53.1%	50.6%	met
WIA Dislocated Workers			
Entered Employment	80.0%	82.4%	exceeded
Retention	90.0%	87.3%	met
Avg Earnings	\$16,421	\$ 16,673.00	exceeded
Credentials	60%	51.7%	met
Customer Satisfaction			
Participants	80.0%	78.0%	met
Customers	80.0%	75.0%	met
WIA Older Youth			
Entered Employment	50.0%	53.4%	exceeded
Retention	85.0%	63.2%	Failed
Earnings Change	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,118.00	exceeded
Credentials	28.10%	36.4%	exceeded
WIA Younger Youth			
Goal/Skill Attainment	75.0%	74%	met
Diploma Attainment	50.0%	44.8%	met
Retention	55.0%	46.8%	met
W-P Labor Exchange (LEX)			
Entered Employment	58%	62%	exceeded
Retention	81%	82%	exceeded
Avg. Earnings	\$ 11,700.00	\$ 12,678.00	exceeded

The corresponding PY 2012 WIA All Programs Alternative Efficiency Measurement indicates running a more successful and efficient program than PY 2011.

PY 2012 Cost Per Participant – All Programs
Equals \$3,377

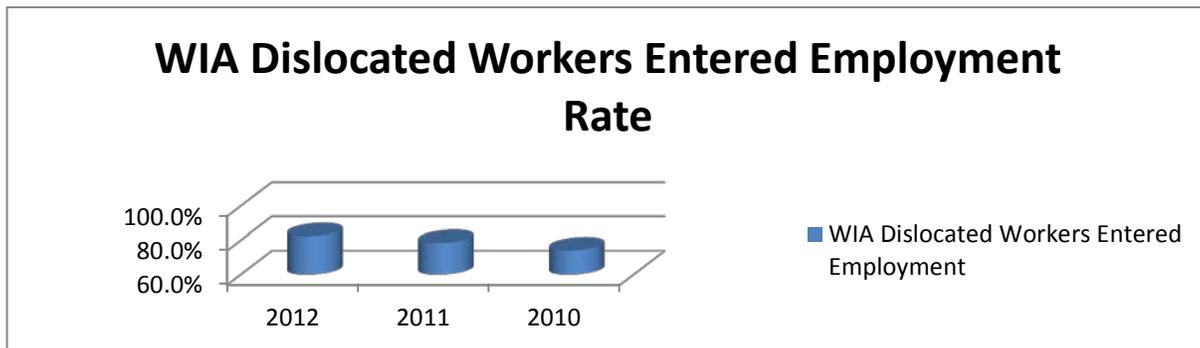
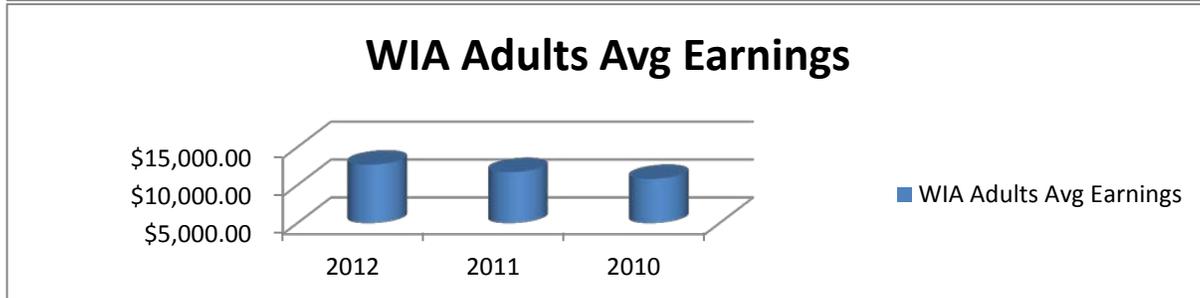
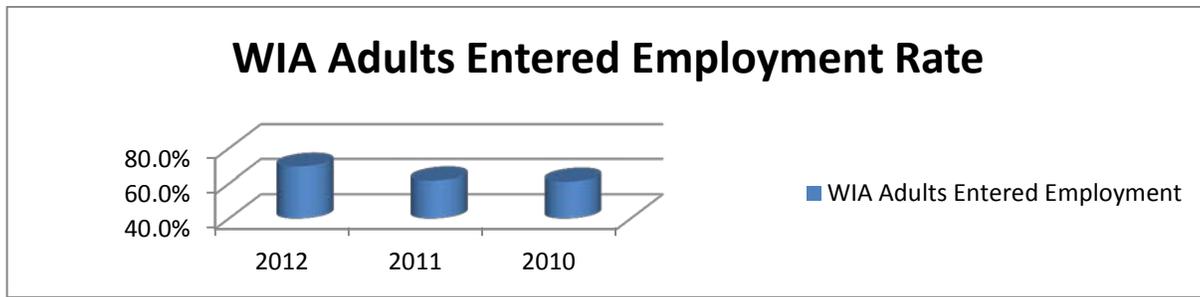
All Program Expenditures	\$4,225,094
All Program Participants	1251

PY 2011 Cost Per Participant – All Programs
Equals \$4,537

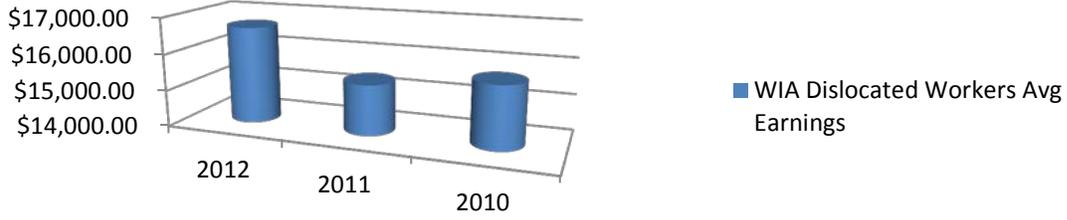
All Program Expenditures	\$4,178,656
All Program Participants	921

This shows an increase of 330 participants from PY 2011 to PY 2012 while reducing the cost per participant \$1160 and meeting or exceeding all but one of the program measures.

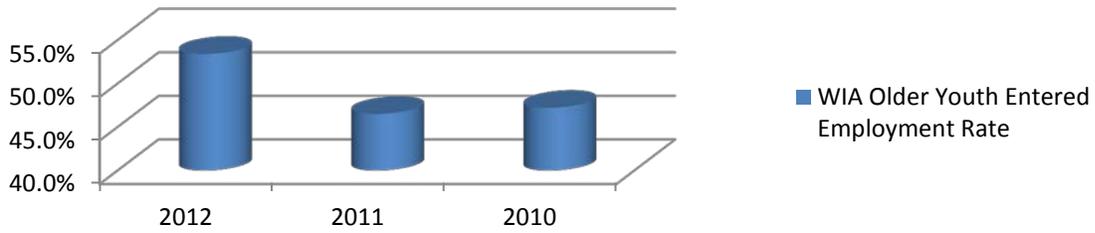
Some other indications of continuous improvement in the operation of the WIA programs are:



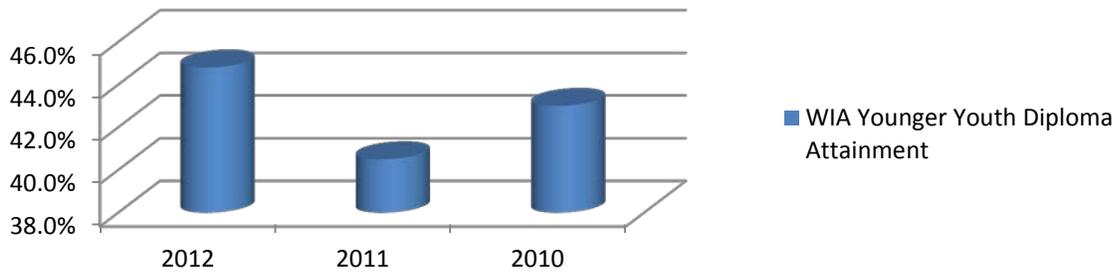
WIA Dislocated Workers Avg Earnings



WIA Older Youth Entered Employment Rate



WIA Younger Youth Diploma Attainment



Assurance that all required elements are measured and reported uniformly:

All workforce development employees, both WIA and Wagner Peyser, in Vermont are State employees reporting directly to the Director of Workforce Development assuring that the required elements are measured and reported uniformly.

Information on participants in the workforce investment system:

Information on the participants is included in the above measures chart and in the following program narratives.

Waivers:

In Program Year 2012, Vermont had two waivers in effect.

1. Waiver of WIA Section 123 that requires that providers of Youth program elements be selected on a competitive basis.

The State of Vermont's Department of Labor, Workforce Development Division, was granted a renewal of this waiver for PY 2012, which Vermont originally received in 2001. The waiver for the competitive selection of Youth Training Providers for the work experience, supportive services, and follow-up program elements allows for the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) youth case managers to provide these three program elements instead, thereby limiting the expense and administrative duties of going through a competitive process, negotiating and monitoring grants for these elements. In a small, rural state such as Vermont, there tends to be very few service providers with even a regional structure, much less a state wide presence that could cost effectively and efficiently provide the required services.

This waiver allows Vermont a more streamlined approach to case management of youth services and provides for more personal attention on a consistent basis to each youth as they work through the different opportunities available to them through the Workforce Investment Act's Youth program. The youth participants continue to be the ultimate beneficiaries of this waiver.

2. Waiver of the provision at 20 CFR 663.530 that prescribes a time limit on the period of initial eligibility for training providers.

Under this waiver, Vermont is allowed to postpone the determination of subsequent eligibility of training providers. The waiver also allows Vermont to provide an opportunity for training providers to re-enroll and be considered enrolled as initially eligible providers. Again, noting the rural nature of Vermont and the limited pool of local training providers, this waiver allows us to retain currently approved eligible training providers for most youth and adult program services. This waiver assists Vermont in developing a more efficient and cost effective workforce system and provide a wider range of options to Vermonters.

These two waivers were approved to be extended through June 30, 2017 with the submission and final approval of the State of Vermont Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act

Five Year State Plan (effective July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2017).

Four new Waiver requests were submitted with the State Plan and were also approved to go into effect July 1, 2013.

Waivers in process of implementation are:

Layoff aversion activities for Rapid Response

Incumbent working training

Expanded transfer authority

Waiver of required maximum 50 percent of OJT employer reimbursement.

Another waiver request was submitted on June 28, 2013 to the Regional DOL office in Boston and approved for implementation by US DOL in August of 2013. This waiver of the WIA regulations at 20 CFR 666.100 to exempt the state from including credential attainment outcomes for participants enrolled in on-the-job training in the credential performance measure calculations, will most likely be implemented when Vermont converts its MIS to Vermont Job Link for all WIA funded activities due to the technical aspects for tracking and reporting. Once implemented this waiver will allow Vermont to be more responsive to employers and employees by developing OJT's based on local industry, business or worksite needs without negatively impacting the credential attainment outcomes measures for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Older Youth participants.

The Common Measures waiver request has been withdrawn. It will be resubmitted when the new MIS system is installed and operational.

Writing policy for the new waivers has been assigned and is in process. Staff training for the implementation of the waivers is targeted for early first quarter of 2014.

General Report Narrative:

National Emergency Grants (NEG):

NEG Overview:

- July 2012 to October 2012, VDOL continued with recruitment of new work sites and participants for those worksites
- In November of 2012 our largest statewide outdoor project completed, as did many of the projects that involved outdoor work
- As a result of the NEG funding that Vermont obtained, a number of people with multiple barriers were able to obtain employment based partly on their successful participation in these projects
- Due to the work of the participants, many recreational opportunities were restored for use by the public. This included ball fields, parks, and hiking trails.
- The NEG funds provided opportunities for VDOL to form relationships with non profits and municipalities, that we had never worked with before. This in turn provided additional opportunities for VDOL to assist Vermonters find employment and/or training.

Some interesting data on the NEG disaster grants as of the year end 2012:

- 14 Vermont Counties had benefited from NEG dollars.
- 35 projects were started throughout VT.
- 500 clean up sights benefited from NEG.
- 194 NEG participants were trained and received training wages.
- 49 entered unsubsidized employment.
- 310 plus miles of waterways were cleared.
- 90 tons of debris was removed from rivers, streams, roads, recreational facilities, etc.
- 210 volunteers worked with NEG crews.

VDOL NEG dollars provided training wages to 194 participants, VDOL placed 49 of those participants into unsubsidized employment, over 500 locations have benefited from NEG activities, and more than 90 tons of debris was disposed of at a cost of 1.4 million dollars. All the above activities at an average cost of \$2800.00 per sight.

In general most NEG activities were suspended during the winter due to the weather and unsafe working conditions. Some existing projects were scheduled for completion and some new projects were scheduled in the summer when the weather improved. Three projects are currently active and one is ready to start up.

Success stories:

SA had been the head waitress at a small business in a rural community for 4 years until TS Irene came along. The business was destroyed and the owner felt she was too old to start over. SA was a single parent with 1 child in college, and 2 teenagers at home. She did apply for and receive unemployment benefits, however due to the wages she had been earning she did not receive the maximum weekly payments. This resulted in her and the children moving in with her parents. SA had always worked with people and lived in the same area for a long time. She wanted to give back to the community, so once the flooding was over she started volunteering in any way she could. VDOL made contact with her as a recipient of unemployment benefits and asked if she would like to be involved in recovery work. She was very excited to learn that she could be paid to do what she had been doing as a community member. We very quickly learned she had great organizational and supervisory skills. SA was put in charge of a crew that restored a couple of parks and a ball field. During this time she was also dealing with a terminally ill parent. Once this work was completed she was given administrative tasks to do, once again with flood recovery efforts. This involved recruiting worksites and participants. She enjoyed her work with VDOL so much, that she applied for and was hired for a permanent state position with the Vermont Department of Labor.

AE had been working with VDOL since 2007. She had expressed interest in a variety of skill sets, had come to the department with multiple skill sets. She was on public assistance. There were times when she was very active with the department and looking for work, then life would get in the way. Staff would call and find that cell and land lines had been disconnected, she had moved, etc. In May of 2012 AE entered the NEG grant funded Rozalia project. During this employment, she demonstrated reliability, team work, supervisory skills, good organization and many of her other skills. During the time she was in this program she and VDOL staff worked very hard at finding that permanent job for her. The NEG project ended in October of 2012 and AE started a WIA funded On the Job Training to learn a brand new skill set. She quickly became an integral part of the employer's team and to this date is still employed by this company.

JM was a 30 year old young man living on public assistance with the mother of his child and the child. He was

on probation, had lost his license and had a history of issues with substance abuse. He had not been employed for a number of years; felt very strongly that his felony record and history was preventing him from obtaining employment. When JM was contacted to take part in flood recovery work he was very excited, but a little nervous based on his past experiences with looking for employment. He was very clear he did not do “book work”, he was a hands on guy. JM did have some learning issues, struggled with school and book learning. He was placed with a crew that was working outdoors, cutting brush, restoring parks and ball fields. The work was within walking distance of his home to accommodate his lack of license and transportation. He was very reliable, quickly showed he was a take charge kind of guy, had great ideas for getting the work done and could motivate others. JM now is off probation and all public assistance, and has his license back. JM was hired by a flagging company, is now a crew chief and supervises 4 to 5 employees.

Adult WIA:

The Vermont Department of Labor administers the Workforce Investment Act adult funding stream to provide services to income eligible Vermonters so they can obtain employment in an occupation that is in demand or expected to grow in the near future.

Applicants must meet eligibility guidelines for these services. Eligibility is determined by a number of factors, including but not limited to income, little or no work history, barriers to employment, including barriers with disabilities. An assigned VDOL case manager will complete an assessment of the individual to ensure that the individual is appropriate for the training. Case managers work with the participant throughout their training and are available to assist when problems arise. VDOL works closely with those individuals that are unemployed or underemployed, and priority is given to those receiving public assistance or determined to be low-income.

Occupational Skills

This educational based training is designed to help individuals gain occupational skills that are needed to perform a specific job.

Success Story:

Here is a success story from Cindy in our St. Johnsbury office,

William came to me in December of 2012 looking for financial assistance to pay for CDL A training. Having been in substance abuse treatment twice and taking two years off from work to get his life in order he was feeling strong enough again to get back to work and he had an employer who was willing to help him pay for the training and give him a job upon successful completion of it.

I verified this with the employer, and also contacted his parole office to ensure that she was in agreement with the plan. All systems were go!

By combining funds with the employer and William, who contributed the few remaining dollars in his bank account to prove his dedication to the plan and his success. William was able to begin the training program at Giroux's General Transport out of Barre at the end of January. On March 13th, 2013, William took and passed his road test, earning his VT Commercial Driver's License, Class A.

After years of being unemployed and dealing with personal struggles, the Workforce Investment Act was

able to help William get back on his feet. He began work for Raymond Geraw Logging, driving his log truck on March 19th and is very proud to be earning a pay check again.

On-The-Job Training

This training allows eligible individuals that are unable to secure a job in their chosen field and to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed and perform the job. The participant is hired by the employer and VDOL develops a training outline with input from the employer and the participant based on the current skills of the participant. The employer is reimbursed for a percentage of the extraordinary cost of training based on a negotiated rate.

Success Story:

Here is a success story from Laurie in our Newport office,

I began working with David in November 2012, when he was referred to me for WIA Adult services through his Reach Up Case Manager. At the time, he had been on Reach Up since the fall of 2010. A single dad of two teenagers, he found himself with no other options after suffering a series of major heart attacks that made it impossible to return to the telephone line-clearing work that he had been doing. In addition, David had lost his driver's license to unpaid fines, which he could not afford to pay while receiving benefits.

When I started working with David, he had been in an unpaid work experience program through Reach Up. He was doing really well at Pine Computers, and building on the knowledge that he had gained through his coursework at Community College of Vermont in the Computer Networking program. However, there was still a bit of a skills deficiency for him to be hired on in the role of Computer Repair Technician. Having heard this, we at VDOL were quick to move forward with an OJT. David started the OJT in December.

David completed his six month OJT at Pine Computers in June of 2013. He is now the only technician on the premises. While working out the OJT contract, David also took a CYSKO networking course at CCV in Williston, which involved a lengthy commute, nearly 2 hours one way. He has one class left to finish his degree!

When he was hired on for the OJT, his Reach up Grant transferred to Reach Ahead, which allows participants a higher amount of food stamps and other benefits for a few months after entering employment to help them transition off state assistance. In addition, David has been able to pay off his fines and had his driver's license reinstated; lack of transportation in the rural Northeast Kingdom of Vermont can be crippling, and this is now a barrier that David will no longer have to face.

Work Experience

This training allows individuals to “work” on a temporary basis to explore different types of jobs. Individuals are expected to learn good work habits that allow them to become successful in their field. This training assists the job seeker to learn the “soft skills” that are required in the workforce of today; there may also be an educational component to this training. The length of the work experience is determined by the needs of the individual. VDOL is the employer of record for all work experience participants and pays a training wage equal to the state's minimum wage and

covers the worker's compensation for each individual participant.

Success Story:

Here is a success story from our Barre office.

HC was a young man in his late 20's and had been coming into the Dept. of Labor for a couple of years. He never asked for help from our staff but would obtain multiple job referrals. HC was never successful in obtaining employment. DOL staff arranged to have an in depth conversation with him regarding his lack of success. This conversation yielded the information that he had a number of factors standing in his way.

HC did not present well. He had poor hygiene, poor self esteem, and he would not make eye contact and only made negative statements about himself. He kept his head down and only spoke when spoken to. The WIA team determined that this person was appropriate for us to work with. Feedback from previous referrals was that HC had no work history, no references, no transportation, a criminal record, no experience, etc. HC was brought into the office and provided with this information. We explained that we could enroll him in WIA and could provide resources to help him deal with his barriers. A bus pass was provided and staff worked with him on a resume. Written and verbal assessments were completed to determine appropriate work, training and education. The decision was made to look for an employer who would be willing to do a Work Experience for HC with the potential to turn to an OJT if successful. HC was referred to 3 or 4 non-profit's that we worked with in the past and we scheduled interviews. HC started a part-time janitorial position which was later moved to full-time. HC obtained food stamps and fuel assistance. HC was referred to a custodial position at Burger King and was hired. HC maintained close contact with his DOL workers. Many times he stated we were the only ones that ever believed in him or gave him a chance. As of 3/16/13, HC was not only working as a custodian at Burger King but he is now working the sandwich line, which includes moving quickly, multi-tasking and interacting with the public. This has increased his hours and he has learned to budget so can maintain his home. He makes eye contact immediately upon meeting someone new and has a whole different body language. Enough time has passed that his information has come off the sex offender registry, which adds to his self esteem. HC feels very strongly that WIA saved him from living under that bridge he was afraid of. This case was a very intensive case to work with; there were weekly meetings for a very long time, sometimes even daily meetings as we moved down the path to success. HC needed an opportunity and someone to believe in him. He got both when he got involved with DOL.

Dislocated Worker WIA:

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) administers the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker Program. The Dislocated Worker Program provides reemployment services to adversely affected dislocated workers statewide, which may include:

- Job search strategies
- Resume, cover letters, applications
- Referrals to jobs
- Labor Market Information
- Interview preparation

The VDOL Career Resource Centers statewide provide direct services to the dislocated workers,

and assist in identifying appropriate services. This may include core and intensive services and retraining services in order for the adversely affected worker to become reemployed.

Dislocated Worker Success Stories:

When PACE closed their operation in Rutland there were a number of employees that worked as Personal Care Attendants. Because they did not have LNA certification they really were not very employable at any other health care organizations. The idea for LNA training for these individuals actually came from the PACE H.R. person that was here in Vermont to help with the closing of the PACE facilities.

She actually made the first contact with Stafford Technical Center to inquire about a special class for just the PACE employees. Then Bill Lucci the Adult Ed. Coordinator at Stafford and I coordinated things to get the WIA eligibility done on the employees that wanted training. Bill needed to have at least 8 people take the class in order to pay the instructor and not run the class at a loss. We were able to get 10 students. Some of these students inquired about Phlebotomy training in addition to LNA classes. Bill and I both thought that would make these individuals much more employable if they could draw blood for testing, as well as perform LNA duties. Bill found an instructor and 7 students took the phlebotomy class.

The LNA course has not ended yet. I do want to commend Bill Lucci of Stafford though for all the hard work he put in to get these classes up and running. It is a good example of VDOL and a local educational institution working together to meet a need.

Tal is a 47 year old individual who had been employed in manufacturing for more than 28 years when he was laid off from his employment when the company reduced their workforce significantly. He resided in a very remote part of the State with very limited job opportunities in the manufacturing field; any work in manufacturing was located more than 60 miles away. He had a solid work history with a strong commitment to his community and no interest in relocating for work.

He recognized early on that in order to remain in his community he would have to change careers and develop new skills that would secure this future. He knew he was a disciplined worker, liked variety in his work and enjoyed working with people. During the assessment process along with the assistance of the VDOL staff, he researched various occupations and realized that pursuing work in the medical field would offer long term work opportunities and a career ladder as well as meet his values for work. He narrowed his career choice to Licensed Nurse Aide and pursued training in that field.

A WIA employability plan was developed which included enrollment into an LNA course being offered within a commutable distance. He enrolled in the program and successfully completed the program. Tal was very appreciative of the assistance provided through VDOL and stated that the LNA Program had made a significant impact on his life. He never would have left his manufacturing job, [even though he never felt fulfilled in his job], if not for the layoff, but as a result he has become employed in a satisfying career in the ever growing health care field.

There were ample employment opportunities in his geographical area for this type of work and he selected his new employer carefully. He chose to begin his health care career in a local nursing home as a licensed nurse aide. Tal was exited from the program but continued to keep in contact with his WIA Case Manager at VDOL. Approximately 6 months after beginning his LNA career at the nursing home he changed employers and is now employed at the local Community Hospital where he has been employed for more than a year. A recent phone call from Tal shared great news that he had been selected as employee of the year for the Hospital.

Rapid Response Activities:

VDOL provides Rapid Response activities in Vermont. Each Regional Resource Center has trained Rapid Response staff who can be called together to provide outreach to both employers and dislocated workers wherever needed in the state. The rapid responses can be held onsite, or at a designated location, to hold informational meeting(s) for the workers involved in a downsizing or plant closure.

In the event of a layoff or closure, or upon receipt of a WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) Letter, meetings are scheduled at convenient locations and advertised via all media available. Early intervention is critical in providing services to assist workers obtain employment and or training as soon as possible.

A plan for proactive rapid responses and workshops is being developed based on the successful rapid response sessions and job fair for the IBM dislocated employees. Registration of attendees to “open” sessions showed that 100 or more of the attendees had not been employed by IBM.

The “Make Vermont Home” reports have been used extensively following Rapid Responses. Companies reporting openings have been contacted and the information matched with Rapid Response attendees interests, background, and skills. The job opening information is then forwarded to the attendees for follow up.

An integral part of the overall Rapid Response Strategy has been to improve the working relationship and communications between the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Department and the Workforce Development Division. This allows quicker contact with companies who are closing or downsizing so employees can be provided information and services as soon as possible and before employers lose contact with them.

Another advantage is to be aware of companies that are requesting short term compensation due to a business economic slowdown. Layoff aversion options, including incumbent worker retraining, can be offered so businesses can survive and employees retain employment. The Vermont economy has over 20,000 companies, with two thirds of those employing 5 people or less, so rapid response, layoff aversion, and incumbent worker training is critical to maintaining employment to sustain and grow a viable economy in the State.

The partnership and communication with UI also extends to the REA and JAS programs which provide good referrals to the WIA programs.

Job Fair at the Sheraton for dislocated workers primarily from IBM:



Senator Bernie Sanders prepares to take over the podium from Commissioner Ann Noonan to address the attendees of the Job Fair held primarily for IBM dislocated workers.



Governor Peter Shumlin addresses the attendees of the job fair.



VDOL Workforce Development Staff assist job seekers with resumes and applications from employers who could not attend.

VT Registered Apprenticeship Program:

The Vermont Department of Labor, through the State Apprenticeship Council, is the registration agency for Registered Apprenticeship in Vermont. VDOL is responsible for registering apprentices, monitoring training, issuing completion certificates, tracking all performance data such as grades, wages, and on-the-job training hours; arranging classroom instruction; ensuring compliance with Affirmative Action requirements; and developing new apprenticeship programs.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program continues to rebound after a significant downturn due to the lagging economy. During the past fiscal year, 869 individuals were served in apprenticeship with 65% in Building & Construction trades, followed by 20% in service and other occupations, and 15% in Utility & Industrial Apprenticeships. There were 171 new apprentices registered and 137 Completion Certificates issued. There were over 303 employer sponsors that participated in the program and VDOL registered new programs in the occupations of Game Warden and Meat Cutter.

For the past several years, VT, along with other states, worked on complying with the requirements of the Federal Register Title 29, CFR part 29, which was recently updated. This required rewriting the VT State Apprenticeship Rules, and on July 1st, 2013, the U. S. Department of Labor accepted our rules. We will now begin the legislative rules process.

Federal Register Title 29, CFR 29, required that the registration agency be changed from the VT State Apprenticeship Council to the Vermont Department of Labor, provide for provisional registration for new sponsors, require that all instructors receive professional development, and include program performance standards for sponsors. To modernize the apprenticeship program, there were changes made to the traditional structure of some of the programs. Traditional registered apprenticeship requires a set number of hours of on-the-job experience in the trade and the successful completion of the required related instruction. For some trades such as Electrician, Plumber/Pipefitter, and Line Maintainer, the required time in the trade and the related instruction will remain the same. In all other trades that don't require a license, sponsors have the option of using a competency based apprenticeship or a hybrid program. The changes also allow for the delivery of related instruction using electronic media, and the issuance of interim credentials.

This year the Vermont Department of Labor worked closely with Vermont Technical College to establish an assessment process for the plumbers and electricians that were in the related instruction component to develop a method to assess their reading and math skills. This tool is to enable us to better serve our apprentices by offering tutoring and mentoring to ensure their success.

VDOL Registered Apprenticeship works closely with our veterans to access their benefits under the G. I. Bill. Registered Apprenticeship allows our Veterans to receive a monthly stipend from the V. A. Many apprentices start at 50% of the completed wage rate and really benefit from this assistance.

APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS STORY: "Living the dream"



Randy Hazard completed his 4 year tour of duty with the Marine Corps and entered the Community College of VT under the G. I. Bill. He graduated in 2012 with an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. Randy's dream was to become a Game Warden and his degree in Criminal Justice made him an excellent candidate for the job. Once Randy went through the rigorous interviews and physicals, he was hired as a Fish & Game Warden in Law Enforcement. In Vermont our Game Wardens are fully certified in law enforcement and attend the Vermont Police Academy in Pittsford. Not only can our Game Wardens enforce the regulations in hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreational vehicles they can also enforce laws the same as a police officer. During his apprenticeship, Randy will work all over the state training under fully qualified Game Wardens. Because Randy is a veteran, and registered as an apprentice, he is able to continue to use his G. I. Bill and receive a monthly stipend while he is training. Randy loves to hunt and fish and take advantage of the outdoor recreational activities that Vermont has to offer. The field of Game Warden seemed like

a perfect fit for Randy. It combines a love of the outdoors and the ability to ensure that the rules and regulations are followed by all so that everyone can fully enjoy what Vermont has to offer. According to Randy no two days are alike. The work varies from day to day, month to month, season to season, and the weather can change what your day will look like. This summer Randy worked on the lakes of Vermont, checking boater registrations, conducting safety checks and verifying fishing licenses. Depending on the time of year Randy may work more heavily in the areas of hunting, fishing, trapping, or boater safety compliance. The fall season brings Randy into the bear season along with small game hunting for grouse and rabbits. Deer season will start with archery and then move into gun season. Game wardens will inspect tree stands, deal with trespassing and licensing issues, and enforce compliance of the law. They may investigate illegal shootings, such as firing a gun from a vehicle, gunshots after dark, and those hunting without a license. The winter season will have Randy out on the frozen lakes and ponds on a snowmobile working with ice fisherman or in the woods checking out the trapping activities. How many people get to go to work every day in a job they love? Randy is truly "living the dream."

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA):

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

During the WIA 2012 Program Year (7/1/12 to 6/30/13) Vermont experienced five certified trade petitions statewide. The approximate size of the adversely affected workforce was over 200. This

was a substantial increase from the previous program year in which there was one certified petition affecting approximately 16 adversely affected workers.

The Trade Act program is housed within VDOL. The TAA Program is managed by the Workforce Development Division and the TRA Program is managed by the Unemployment Insurance Division. When working with trade-affected workers, all divisions work together in providing accurate information to the trade-affected workers.

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

Claire Talbot was laid off on 5/31/11 when Bogner of America closed its operation in Newport, VT. She



had worked there for 33 years. She started in 1978 as a stitcher and was promoted to supervisor of the sewing and cutting departments during her years of service. In 2003, she was promoted to Customer Service Representative as she was very knowledgeable about their products and had acquired computer and administrative skills on her own along the way. As a CSR, she was responsible for servicing hundreds of retail customers throughout the US and Canada. The closing of Bogner created a major loss for Claire in many ways, however, she quickly engaged in Re-Employment Services and maintained a positive outlook on her future. Upon her lay-off she began working closely with me under TAA and after an intensive assessment of her skills and the labor market, it was decided that in order to secure suitable employment she would need to gain some formal education and training in the administrative field.

Her TAA plan was developed and she enrolled at Community College of Vermont in Newport to earn an A.S. in Administrative Management. She started her full-time training during the summer semester of 2011 and completed her degree program in May on 2013 when she graduated with her A.S. in Administrative Management. In addition, Claire used her elective course options to earn a certificate in Health Information Services which has a focus on the growing

health care field. She was highly successful in making the transition from long time full-time worker to full-time student. She was dedicated to her courses and accessed any support she needed when she found the learning challenging. She completed her plan earning a final GPA of 3.9.

During her final semester of training, Claire worked diligently on developing her resume, preparing for interviews and deploying an active job search plan. The Newport labor market is known to be sluggish, particularly in the good paying, high skill jobs. Her diligence paid off and she was offered an

Administrative Support position with Northeast Kingdom Community Action in early June, 2013. She is earning \$12/hr. which is prevailing wage for this type of work in the Newport area. Claire was also offered a Patient Registration position with North Country Hospital, but turned it down because it was part-time/on-call.

Claire shares that the support under TAA and the education she received was transformative for her. She never believed she could be a successful college student and she definitely was. In addition, she was determined to remain in the Newport area that she has called home for most of her life. The position at NEKCA allows her to do that and she reports that there may be room to advance with that organization.



After working for almost 20 years for a major pharmaceutical company Karen learned that the company was closing. Layoffs were done in phases and Karen had one year to contemplate what she would do next. She held a manufacturing position which paid union wages and she knew she wouldn't be able to find employment that paid close to what she was making. Karen wanted a job that offered stability and a livable wage to support her family.

Upon careful consideration, Karen decided to move forward on a desire that she always had to become a nurse. Karen knew that she had a long road ahead of her. She hadn't been in a classroom since high school. Karen met with a TAA Case Manager and worked on a training plan. The company Karen worked for was in

New York, however she lived in Vermont. Both states worked together on getting her plan approved as well as making certain that she received her unemployment benefits.

Karen enrolled at a local community college to take prevocational classes prior to enrolling in the Nursing program at VTC. Shortly after Karen learned that she was losing her job and while she was in training she encountered some obstacles in her personal life that might get the average person down. Not Karen. Karen was very persistent. She had a goal and was committed to succeeding. Karen stayed on track and maintained an A average throughout her training. Within a month after graduating she sat and passed the nurses licensing exam. Within a week of passing the nurses exam she was offered a job working as a nurse, her dream job.

Youth Services:

VDOL continues to partner with multiple state agencies including the Departments of Education, Justice, Children and Families (ESD), Vocational Rehabilitation, Corrections and youth serving providers in the development of a youth vision strategy designed for youth in transition.

VDOL continues to focus on youth facing serious barriers including out-of-school youth,

homeless and runaway youth, high school dropouts, youth with disabilities, Native American youth, migrant youth, court involved youth or those at-risk of involvement, children of incarcerated parents and youth in foster care or those aging out of foster care.

Youth Success Stories:

Success story from Carrie Ballou

Clark has grown up in extreme generational poverty and has received Individual Educational Plan services from a variety of different schools in the Upper Valley. Clark's behaviors and attitudes were out of line with his aspirations and goals.

Clark is mechanical, loves to hunt and fish and race lawn mowers. Clark also lives with explosive anger. By connecting Clark with a mentoring employer and showing him how his goals could so easily be attained, Clark is now attending mainstream school, with no behavioral intervention, and has been accepted into automotive training at the area Technical and Career Center.

Clark and his family still live in poverty but his attendance is better, his attitude is positive and his relationships are healthier, because he was held to a high standard of accountability by his mentoring employer. Clark is still very young and has a long way to go to be a Master Mechanic, but he is steady in his efforts to get there.

Success story from Carrie Ballou

Naomi was a homeless out-of-school youth who needed case management assistance and the WIA 10 Program Elements as provided by Vermont Department of Labor to enter into Alternative Education, and Internship and later an On-the-Job Training in order to meet life and career goals.

Naomi, through her work with VDOL and our close network of community partners, engaged in counseling to complete a Teen Alcohol Assessment and address anxiety issues that previously presented barriers to healthy relationships, completed the High School Completion Program and earned a work reference and the opportunity to become employed.

Naomi, did well, despite many barriers along the way and just successfully completed her OJT contract, also supported by WIA dollars and is now earning \$11 an hour as a Child Care Worker.

She continues to meet with her VDOL Career Development Facilitator twice a month to work on her long term goals. She is staying connected, staying sober and has received outstanding reviews by her employer, who has committed to raise her wage if she completed the portfolio for the Child Development Associate Nationally Recognized Certificate.

Naomi has also started college courses at Community College of Vermont. All goals she set for herself over a year ago and was able to follow up with the support of her team.

Naomi continues to work on her life skills and is reunited with her mother.

JJT was referred to WIA Youth Training Program for Case Management and continued career exploration. JJT has successfully completed the terms of the Alternative Pathways to a High School Diploma offered by Community Connections, but hadn't found labor market success or identified a clear direction for himself.

JJT is very mechanical and values tangible tasks; he needs to see what he has accomplished in a day in order to feel the days' worth. He had not been successful at typical teen jobs in retail and customer service as he couldn't quantify his accomplishments.

JJT was connected to a mentoring employer in the auto-maintenance field. WIA trained JJT by accessing Work Experience funds for wages and Workers' Compensation Insurance and provided supports for appropriate clothing as JJT is of low income and couldn't secure the required clothing.

The employer provided hands on work readiness training and it quickly was determined that JJT was excelling in the field. They enjoyed JJT's dedication and clear love of working with cars, specifically tire changing and maintenance, that they received corporate permission to hire long term for what is typically a seasonal position.

JJT's employment contract will come to an end in last summer of 2013 when he will enroll in Vermont Tech for Auto Mechanics. The mentoring employer stated that it rare that they get applicants who are eager to get dirty and understand the value of their skills.

WIA continues to support with Core Follow Services until 10/2013. JJT has needed some supports in terms of clothing and gear as the seasons changed.

Success story from Carrie Ballou

Shawn, was a high school drop out who needed WIA services in order to complete his high school diploma and edge his way into the labor market during the height of the recession.

Shawn had held very temporary jobs and never quite held himself up to employer expectations. After a few less than successful starts, Shawn found the right mentoring employer with a VDOL funded SEO. Shawn found the right mentor at the right time. That was 2009. Now he is the assistant manager of a retail shop and does the hiring and training of new staff.

He is not done with his career exploration and vows to return to the VDOL Career Resource Center to take his current skills and see where they lead, but in the meantime he is employed hiring teens and giving them their first opportunity with a mentoring employer who has been in their shoes.

MW was a 17 year old out of school youth who was not successful in school because he was unchallenged and many behaviors prevented him from completing without the assistance of alternative education and wrap around services.

MW struggled throughout his Work Experience to meet his mentoring employers expectations. MW could produce for the company but he would not accept feedback on dress, elementary work readiness concerns, and presenting an internship image for a very public agency.

Nearer to the end of his internship, after several different individuals provided feedback on dress, attitude, and timeliness MW was let go for a one week suspension. At the conclusion of that suspension MW returned to meet with the mentoring employer, a local community broadcast station, and WIA Case Management to review the overall progress he made and the holes in his learning, which had caused his plan to be in jeopardy. MW presented information on the specific skills he learned and how they would benefit the agency if he was given yet another chance to complete.

MW made a complete turnaround after realizing the value of his placement. He had better attendance and completed the terms of his training plan and alternative education plan.

MW remained in contact with his mentoring employer and two years later was offered a position at the site. He is now a Production Manager for the same company and is currently supervising a current WIA participant in their Workplace Training and has recently considered suspending this individual for lack of professionalism on the job site. MW developed a plan to return this individual to a productive intern and sited his own mentors for being a strong advocate when he was ready to make his own change.

Summer Employment Opportunity (SEO):

The SEO program is an integral part of the services provided through the VDOL Youth Services Program. Each year grants are awarded to partners to provide work experience and training to both in school and out-of-school youth.

Twelve SEO grants were awarded in PY 2012, totaling \$135,852, serving 134 youth located throughout the state. Grant amounts ranged from \$4,000 to \$30,000. Youth participated in a variety of experiences.

In **Montpelier**, the Parks Division served both in and out-of-school youth during their SEO program. They worked on landscaping projects, planting native trees and shrubs and eliminating invasive species throughout the park system. They built new steps leading to the Old Shelter picnic area, removed hazardous trees, repaired trails and play areas, and split and stacked firewood for use in the park.

The **City of Winooski** served 11 in-school youth during the summer program, partnering with Navicate to provide workplace readiness once a week. By the end of the summer, 12 participants received First Aid/CPR Training and Certification from the American Heart Association, 2 received training to be Summer Food Service Program servers, 1 was certified in ServeSafe, 214 smoothies, 346 peanut butter bars, and 79 lemonades were sold by Berry Project youth at local Farmers' Markets. Four participants worked with 91 elementary-aged youth at the Thrive Summer Program where they were Counselors in Training.

Reflections by youth served in the Southern part of Vermont by the **Tutorial Center** follow:

What did you learn?

A lot of communication skills, and about crops and hard work. Having to communicate that you will be late. That this is not an easy job and farmers play a valuable role.

How to eat with healthier foods

What did you like about this program?

I got to learn how to farm and I made money
Getting to know new people and build relationships
That you take adolescents in and give them a chance

What changes have you noticed in yourself since the start of this job?

More committed...finish tasks
More responsible and quick to work
This job has helped me be active and allowed me to lose weight

For the second consecutive summer, the Farm at **Vermont Youth Conservation Corps**, an agricultural leadership program offered summer employment, workforce readiness and agricultural skills to 9 young adults. The WIA-funded Farm Crew worked closely with nine Farm Apprentices to grow crops, host volunteers, and deliver food to food insecure Vermonters. Highlights of specific activities include: Animal husbandry, including chicken chores; nutrition education, carpentry skills, tool training and maintenance, career exploration, business management (harvesting and packing produce to stock the VYCC Farm Stand), and providing food security to Vermont families in need.

Foxcroft Farm, located on the western side of the state served 13 in-school at risk youth. The participants created a prize winning float for the Brandon Independence Day celebration, created a corn maze, complete with information on agricultural facts for each state to be used on signs throughout the maze, produced Adirondack furniture and donated it to the Brandon Chamber Auction, and maintained a community garden, delivering and donating food weekly to local seniors and the Boys & Girls Club.

Success Story:

Each year we met over 50 plus kids who have been referred by community partners, parents, or just by hearing about our program. Although the WIA program is a year round program summer is our busiest time of year.

A few summers ago one of the local middle schools we work with referred a young man to us (we can call him Bob). Bob has struggled with getting along with peers off and on. He had struggled with academics off and on and was considered a newer American so language was just another barrier thrown into the mix.

Bob was placed in a transitions program with BHS. The program is unique and designed to help struggling incoming Freshmen with academics as well as learning employability skills while working on BHS campus and becoming familiar with buildings, educators, and a group of peers.

Bob struggled off and on that summer with academics as well as getting along with his peers. He was pulled aside and spoken to many times. He was sent home on occasion to think about his behavior and come up with a plan on how to do better.

Bob wanted to quit many times but he met with staff and managed to stick it out.

Bob completed that summer with BHS and entered 9th grade. He worked the following summer with Ready, Set, Work which is a program which allows students to work for a local employer mentor and earn a wage as well as put his learned skills to work.

Bob completed this summer and was offered a position with the company. He ended up not following through and the position was given to another person. Bob would come by our office and ask us to "find" him another job. After dusting Bob off and sending him on his way after a lengthy prep talk he would show up a few months later with the same request.

Bob had skills he knew how to navigate each person he had worked with in the past and advocate for himself and if it was not for good communication between agencies he may have been successful in having a job developed and handed to him.

Last night we met with Bob at a local career fair. He is now a Senior at BHS and he will be entering Castleton State College in the Fall of 2014.

Reach Up (TANF):

VDOL works closely with Vermont's TANF , Corrections and Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies , to ensure that services are provided to those determined low income, public assistance recipients and people with disabilities . Whenever possible we work collaboratively to share resources on behalf of our shared clients.

As a part of this collaboration , each VDOL Career Resource Center has identified Career Development Facilitators working directly with the TANF (referred to as Reach Up in Vermont) population of job seekers . These staff members are funded by a contract with Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), an Agency of Human Services entity operated by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation . CWS is designed to create a single entry point for AHS consumers with barriers to employment.

The function of the VDOL Reach Up staff is to provide one-on-one services in our Career Resource Centers to those Reach Up jobseekers referred by the CWS local teams; the goal for this specialized staff is employment for the jobseeker receiving public assistance. The Reach Up staff is an integral member of each local VDOL Resource Center and is well versed in the multiple resources available to all jobseekers. As a member of the VDOL Team, they are very familiar with WIA programs , Veterans' programs , Vermontjoblink, and the connection with the Unemployment Division. Reach Up and Wagner Peyser staff work closely with each other. Career Resource Center staff and partner agencies to provide needed services to their clients. It is not uncommon for the blending and braiding of services and funding streams to work within our workforce development system .

2012 RU Success Stories:

A Reach Up (TANF) Household (Allen and Ashley L) were on & off public assistance, 3 children with one on the way. Allen (job seeker) had a 10th grade education, suspended license and needed full set of dentures. He had a seasonal work history. Yet he was motivated to work, just needed a lot of support to help get and retain a job.

We were able to help him get a payment plan to get driver's license back (needed for job), developed a resume & focused on cleaning work that would be year around. We met 2 to 3 times a week to help him apply for jobs & I also job developed once he applied.

After 2 months of job preparation and job search efforts, he was hired at the Burlington School District @ \$14.85 per hour plus second shift differential. Additionally, we provided job retention services at the start of his job and it all worked out successfully. This family was generational poverty, yet he's still employed and doing well. This family is now self-sufficient.

Jason and Jessi moved from NY to VT and were living in car with young son. They applied for Reach Up (TANF) and moved into a shelter provided by COTS. After several months of a rocky road for job search and the family, Jason expressed an interest in training.

He was referred to the WIA Program and met with the VDOL WIA Case Manager, Becky, to begin the assessment process and develop an employability plan. The plan was to enroll him into a Computer Repair and A++ Certification Training program utilizing both WIA and Reach Up funds.

He is making great progress in the program. This household has secured a Section 8 housing voucher and now have their own apartment.

Jessi has some challenges, yet she's doing the best she can to address these and totally supports Jason's training program. This family faced significant struggles during the last year, yet now the family is doing well and working toward self-sufficiency at the completion of his training.

This is an example of WIA and Reach Up working together to assist clients. The family had substance abuse, mental health and felony challenges that were preventing them from moving forward. They still need some ongoing support, yet it's minimal compared to when they first came to VDOL through the Reach Up Program.

Chris came into the VDOL Reach Up Program in September 2012. The couple was separated and one parent and two children (8th and 6th graders) had moved to our district. Chris started meeting with the VDOL Case Manager, conducting an intensive work search and taking an active and positive role in Job Club twice a week.

By early October 2012 Chris was offered a job in a Deli and took it gladly, thereby reducing the RU grant. In addition Chris was placed in a Community Service Placement at a worksite to make up the few remaining hours of the Work Requirement of the Reach Up Program.

In November 2012 the couple reunited but Emile had no job, having moved to this district in order to rejoin the family. Emile began meeting with a VDOL Case Manager, conducting an intensive job search and attending Job Club twice a week. Emile was a leader in the group, kept up his job search and yet had trouble finding work.

When the family began to discuss moving back to another state where there were more jobs but unfortunately more crime, their VDOL Case Manager reminded them of their strengths and assets and to assure them that something would come soon.

At this writing Emile is also employed in the produce department of a major grocery chain and expect that promotion may be available. Both parents are working, meeting the Work Requirement and happy to be free of Reach Up benefits and requirements.

Veterans Services:

Programs, Initiatives, and Strategies for serving Veterans:

The Vermont Department of Labor participated in numerous veteran focused activities, programs, and initiatives over the past year. These included the Governor's Make Vermont Home Campaign, introduction of an Unemployment Claims Indicator, and the rollout of US Chamber of Commerce "Hire Our Heroes" Job Fairs. In addition to these initiatives we continued to focus on the Veterans Re-education and Assistance Program (VRAP) and the Post 9/11 Gold Card programs. These two programs, along with keeping up with the ever changing guidelines around the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, kept our team busy throughout the year.

Training was critical to the successful roll out these programs and initiatives. This year two staff members attended the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) specialized trainings, including Labor and Employment Specialist Training (LES), and Promoting Partnerships for Employment (PPE) training. The veterans team also participated in four quarterly staff conferences/trainings in the months of July, September, December, and April. In the trainings a variety of topics related to the Jobs for Veteran's State Grant and veterans employment were reviewed, including performance goals and reports, upcoming Labor Exchange Report changes, Gold Card and VRAP tracking, as well as items specific to roles and responsibilities under the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). Guest speakers from other agencies and organizations that provide outreach and employment opportunities to veterans, were invited to attend. Some of these included the Small Business Association, US Customs and Immigration, University of Vermont Veterans Services, Veterans Inc., Employer Guard and Reserve, and VA Voc Rehab. Having these organizations attend provided a platform to share services, success stories, and better determine how we can continue to provide the enhanced services to Veterans.

Make Vermont Home

Veteran Employer Outreach staff assisted our division with the "Make Vermont Campaign." This initiative was started back in 2012 to survey employers to see what occupations they may have had difficulty in hiring, inquire about job openings, and to take job leads. This information was then compiled into a daily report and passed onto the VDOL Career Resource Centers throughout the state. The report included a list of employers which is emailed daily to our LVER's and Employer Outreach staff. LVERs coordinated with DVOPs to see if they have an eligible veteran to fill any open positions. If no qualified veteran was found to fill these positions the job orders were then passed onto Employer Outreach staff.

UI Claims Indicator

In October of 2012, the automated process of flagging veterans that have filed new and initial claims was completed. A file is now automatically generated and then manually transferred into an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is sent to our VDOL Career Resource Centers on a weekly basis so that staff can provide outreach and services to these veterans. Between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013, nine hundred and fifty one veterans were captured by this program and were provided outreach during the first week of filing their claim.

Job Fairs

The US Chamber, in collaboration with VDOL, held four Hire Our Heroes Veterans' Job Fairs in PY 2012. Events were held Burlington, White River Junction, Rutland, and Bennington regions. This is the first time that VDOL has collaborated with the US Chamber. This model proved to work extremely well for our state.

In November, Northwest Region LVER worked in collaboration with the US Chamber to host their Annual Veterans Career Fair on November 8th at the Holiday Inn in South Burlington. Forty-one employers participated, one hundred and sixty four persons attended, out of which one hundred and twenty-one were veterans. Employers reported making sixty-eight conditional offers of employment. US Customs and Immigration Services held an on-site interviewing and recruiting event. They interviewed over twenty-five jobseekers and made eighteen offers of employment to veterans.

In March, VDOL collaborated with the US Chamber, ESGR, New Hampshire Employment Security, SBA, National Guard and other organizations to host a dual state, "Hire Our Heroes" Job Fair. At this particular job fair we also facilitated four workshops which ran throughout this event. These included "How to Navigate a Job Fair," "Starting a Veteran Owned Business," "Job Search 2013: How Social" Are You?" "The Importance of Post Secondary Education, Transitioning Montgomery GI Bill to the Post 9/11 GI Bill," and "How to file for a Disability Claim?" Emily Munzo, Northeastern Regional US Chamber Coordinator, stated the following. *"What is most staggering about these numbers, even if the job seekers are a little lower than what my estimate was, is that with sixty-two attendees at the How to Navigate a Job Fair workshop, 89% OF OUR JOB SEEKERS WENT TO AT LEAST ONE WORKSHOP (based on our total of 70, some of which were civilians). In addition to the achievement of making this truly a two-state event, to my knowledge, there has never been another HOH event that can boast the same percentage of job seekers going to a workshop. As noted above, this number gets even more impressive when we factor in the "other" job-seekers, who were largely civilians: thus, the numbers bear out that almost every veteran job seeker who walked through the doors on Thursday attended a workshop. While this approach required a lot of effort on the part of our planners, and a great deal of energy on behalf of our workshop presenters, this level of contact - and the real opportunity to engage job seekers - is truly unprecedented."*

The Rutland "Hire Our Heroes" Spring Job Fair, co-sponsored by the US Chamber of Commerce, was held in April. At this event four-hundred and twenty-eight job seekers attended of which ten percent were veterans. In May, Bennington hosted the last event of the year collaborating with the US Chamber and their traditional Community partners at the Southwest Vermont Career Development Center. At both the Rutland and Bennington events the first hour of the event was reserved for veterans only.

In addition to the US Chamber Hiring Our Heroes events our LVERs organized and participated in a number of additional Job/Career Events throughout the year. These included recruiting events for local employers that had an interest in hiring veterans. In January, the Burlington VDOL Career Resource Center hosted a Technical Career fair to match veterans, and other job seekers impacted by recent layoffs, with new technical positions. In March, the Saint Albans and Burlington LVERs participated in and assisted with the Franklin County Region Career/Job Expo. In April, the Central

Vermont LVER attended the Annual Central Vermont Job Fair and Lamoille Valley Career Expo, reaching out to area employers, veteran service providers and veteran attendees.

In June the Burlington veterans team coordinated a TAP workshop with the Military Family Community Network for one-hundred and fourteen Army soldiers coming off Active Duty Orders (ADOS) and twenty Air Guard members coming off from Active Duty to a classified location. This event was to ensure these soldiers had the tools to gain employment or return to previous employment. This event included a small job fair, and various presentations by VDOL LVERs and WIA staff including a resume workshop, interviewing skills and a presentation related to training opportunities.

VRAP

In May of 2012 all veterans' staff participated in a VRAP webinar/conference call and met again in October and March with a designee from the Vermont Veterans Affairs office. In these meetings we discussed progress and status of VRAP in our state. The meetings also better equipped the veterans team in sharing this opportunity with veterans. Because Vermont is a rural state, with one community college, we initially had difficulty getting veterans approved for this benefit. Later in the process Vermont Technical College received VA approval for several of its two year programs which expanding training opportunities for Vermont Veterans.

Since its inception, VDOL has made a special effort to reach out to post 9/11 veterans who may be eligible for VRAP and the Gold Card. This was achieved by running special reports to identify eligible veterans and target them for services. The veterans team sent targeted mailings to these veterans by region and conducted follow up phone calls and/or emails. Ongoing training and guidance has been provided to our State as the Veteran's Program Coordinator developed a step by step procedure for tracking requirements and protocols for the veterans team.

The last VRAP report, dated September 27, 2013, indicated that in Vermont one-hundred and two applications were approved and thirty-seven participants were in training. Out of these, the VA gave Vermont nineteen names of veterans that participated in VRAP. Of these nineteen, seven could not be contacted, five dropped out of training because they found full time employment, six others either moved, were still enrolled, or never began training. The others that were contacted were not seeking further assistance. One Veteran out of the nineteen completed and was seeking assistance by our staff.

How the state implemented the Gold Card/Post 9/11 Initiative and the six month follow up:

As with VRAP, when the Gold Card and Post 9/11 initiatives were introduced by Vermont's DVET and JVSG Veterans' Program Coordinator sent emails and guidance related to these initiatives. This was followed up with a conference call and more formal training was provided during quarterly staff meetings. In the trainings roles and responsibilities were reviewed related to providing intensive services to any Gold Card/Post 9/11 veteran. As with VRAP, in July of 2012 the VDOL IT group created and ran a query which allowed our staff to send out targeted mailings to eligible veterans. The mailing included an introductory letter, a sample copy of a Gold Card Certificate, and a one page summary explaining the program. In addition to the query, our Unemployment Division placed an identifier into their database so that when initial claims are taken, a list of veterans, that have filed

new and initial claims, is generated. This gave the veterans team the ability to conduct outreach to anyone who identified themselves as a veteran. We were able to continue to provide outreach and intensive services to these veterans by running weekly, monthly and quarterly reports through the Vermontjoblink data and reporting system. Two of the reports that are frequently used are the “Soft Exit” and “Comprehensive Client” reports. The reports are able to catch veterans when they enter, and prior to exiting the VJL system. They allow us to reach out to veterans that we have not been in contact with in the last thirty days.

VR & E (Vocational Rehabilitation and Education)

In December of 2012 the State of Vermont VA VR&E office moved from White River Junction Vermont to Hanover, NH. The office will remain there for two to three years. At the time they only had one VR & E Counselor who was providing services to a case load of five hundred and forty-four Veterans. Since that time the VA has hired a second VR & E Counselor and now the two of them share this case load.

Over the course of the PY 2012 Vermont was able to serve, and refer, just about all of our VR & E cases to employment. We provided follow-up services to disabled veterans who participated in the VA’s VR&E program which resulted in an overall Entered Employment Rating of 94%

How the State implements Priority of Service for all DOL programs:

POS regulations clearly state that priority of service means the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining services. Taking precedence means that, provided the covered person meets any and all eligibility requirements for a specific program:

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

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

As previously stated, one-stop services are available to all job seekers. Accessibility to services for individuals with disabilities is facilitated through the use of assistive technologies in Vermont’s one-stop and affiliate centers.

For veterans, LVER and DVOP staff work closely with ES, WIA, and TAA staff as well as with the staff from partners who are housed in these facilities. LVERs and DVOPs attend regular one-stop staff meetings. These meetings afford them a regular and convenient opportunity to educate one-stop center staff about the special Labor needs of veterans and other eligible persons and to quickly and easily facilitate the delivery of the necessary intensive and core services. Also, veteran representatives, LVERs, participate in the development and implementation of VDOL’s on-going employer relations program.

As indicated above, the LVER/DVOP program staff members cover all VDOL Career Resource Centers. It is the responsibility of all staff, both veterans and core, to ensure that all veterans receive priority status throughout the one-stop system as outlined in the Jobs for Veterans Act.

Vermont has been using the “Jobs for Veterans Program Plan” as well as federal guidance to administer Priority of Service in our State. Over the next year Vermont will work towards developing more formal state policy related to the delivery of priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses. This will be accomplished by looking at policy written by other states such as Wisconsin, and use this as a guideline. Over the next year we intent to develop a draft state wide policy proposal, submit to the VDOL Director and Commissioner for review and then by PY 2014 the latest, share this with other organizations that receive federal DOL funding and also provide services to veterans.

Within VDOLs Career Resource Centers Priority of Service begins during the Core Service intake process. Veterans who self-register in our Vermontjoblink system receive a computer generated message that they are eligible for special services and are directed to contact a local veteran’s staff representative to learn more about these services. Disabled veterans, veterans, and other eligible persons who come into any of VDOL’s Resource Centers are identified through a variety of ways. These include the following; answering verbal questions as part of the registration and intake process, completing eligibility forms when participating in REA, Worker Profiling, Extended Benefit including EUC and REA/RES-EUC intakes.

VDOL gives veterans preference in job placement selection and referral process. Vermont’s automated Labor Exchange System, Vermontjoblink (VJL) automatically and psychically “flags” veteran self-service referral requests so staff can process these veterans ahead of similar requests from non-veteran job seekers. Likewise, VJL puts an American flag next to the names of qualified veterans who are identified during the job order search, selection and referral process so special disabled veterans, disabled veterans, certain spouses and other eligible persons can be provided job referrals ahead of the general public. Just recently Vermont implemented an upgrade which allows eligibility veterans the ability to see all job orders, one full day ahead of, non-veteran job seekers.

This same priority of service is observed in the provisions of intensive services including resume preparation, employment search activities, career assessment, career guidance, employability planning, case management services, and referrals to support services and training. Whenever veterans are referred to Job Corps, SCSEP programs and other programs, outside VDOL, the training provider is advised that the person being referred is a veteran so the provider can likewise accord the veteran the appropriate level of priority of service.

Regional Resource Center Managers monitor all aspects of local Resource Center Labor Exchange activities to ensure veterans receive priority of service in the selection and referral of jobs. These managers work closely with WIA and TAA Program Managers to monitor the provision of intensive services to eligible veterans to ensure they receive enrollment priority in WIA and TAA training programs and seating priority in workshops.

Over the past year the data and tracking system has been updated to include new Labor Exchange Reports including ETA 9002 F which now tracks Priority of Service. An example is in July our

VermontJolink System was upgraded to version 12.3 which included a variety of updates that impact veteran's services including "Priority of Service." This included changes to the primary enrollment/registration page, change the intake process for veterans, automatically created a self-service enrollment period at the time of registration, new Veterans questions were added and questions that appear are determined by the preceding questions, dates of service will determine what questions appear, employers are not able to see job orders for two days after creating as a result of Priority of Service in the system. "Eligible Veterans and Other Eligible get notified the first day an order is entered or day 0, covered persons the second day or day 1 and everyone else on the third day or day 2."

On November 16, 2012, a division wide training was held which included a section on Veterans Priority of Service. The Veterans Program Coordinator reviewed, handed out, and discussed the ETA Power Point Presentation titled, "Veterans and the Public Workforce System dated June 17, 2011." The training was to remind staff of our requirements related to Priority of Service and how Veterans differ from other job seekers. Additional trainings will also be planned for PY 2014.

Success stories:

Over the course of this past year our team submitted a number of success stories. These stories are a great example of collaboration and utilization of DOL resources to help veterans take advantage of training resources and to find gainful employment.

The Central Vermont DVOP and LVER worked with a Veteran who had a goal of becoming a Truck Driver. They were able to get him enrolled in CDL training and an OJT which landed the Veteran a job with Northern Transport.

Another example included our Central Vermont WIA Case Manager who met with the company Accuworx. She brought along a resume of a veteran who appeared to have the qualifications for the positions. The Case Manager explained to them the benefits of hiring veterans and the Veteran was hired and enrolled in WIA within a week of talking to them. The organization also received assistance with paying for his Hazmat training and CDL A license.

The Rutland LVER assisted a veteran with finding federal employment with US Customs and Immigration Services. This job seeker was a drilling reservist who found out about the federal job application process class held in St. Albans through the Rutland Resource Center. He was signed up for and attended the class. He also attended the Burlington Hire Our Heroes Job Fair in November where he met with the hiring managers for federal positions with USCIS; he interviewed on the spot and was offered a position.

The Burlington DVOP worked closely with two homeless veterans and University of Vermont Veteran Services to secure boarding and enroll the two veterans in the Community Kitchen Academy providing them with training in culinary arts and becoming ServSafe certified.

The DVOP also represented VDOL and participated in COTs Veterans Transitional Housing Stand Down for the homeless at the Winooski High School. The event was a huge success and volunteers were able to assist fifty five homeless veterans with various services and amenities
Burlington DVOP, Shirley Snelling, presenting George Drewy, Vietnam Veteran with his High School Diploma.

Fifty-five homeless Veterans were assisted on site.



Volunteers at Homeless Veterans Stand Down Winooski, VT



Veteran getting a free haircut. Just one of the services offered at the Stand Down.

**Photo's by Shirley Snelling-Sexton, Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist. Shirley also provided job search and resume assistance at the event and is a participant of the Veterans Advisory Council.*

Michael is a recently separated post 9/11 Veteran who was referred to me from his aunt who works with state vocational rehabilitation. Michael was a Lt. in the Army, has a degree but had no idea on where to start with his job search which is common with recently separated veterans transitioning back into civilian life. We came up with a development plan based on his experience, education and interests and found that federal or state jobs would be the best fit for him. I helped him with USA jobs as well as the state human resources website. A short time later I informed Michael about a Hiring our Heroes event in Burlington where there were going to be on the spot interviews and job offers with USCIS. Michael went to the career fair met with a USCIS representative and was given a job offer. Michael has since relocated to Burlington and began his career as an Immigrations Officer.

Michael, Post 9/11, OEF and OIF, had contacted me in the St. Johnsbury office very frustrated with the lack of interviews he was getting and what little good paying jobs were out there. We talked in depth about re working his resume, targeting specific jobs that he was applying. He had all the skills necessary for most of the positions he was applying for, but they weren't being reflected on his resume. He had also never applied to State of VT jobs. He was very excited to see the opportunities with in state gov't. Michael has since been hired as Director of Security for the VT State Lottery Commission

I had met with George a few times in the St. Johnsbury office. Good work history, but just wasn't getting any job offers. I kept George informed of jobs that I found fit his qualifications. I met with a

rep from AutoZone who was hiring for a new store that was being put in the Berlin area. Told George of the interviews being held in Barre, I suggested that he apply for a manager's position as I believe he had the leadership skills for such a position. George was interviewed and hired and is still currently employed as a manager at AutoZone. George has actually called me on several occasions looking for veteran candidates for openings in his store.

**Success stories provided by Adam Rice, Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist, Northeast Kingdom and Central Vermont Regions.*

Performance Metrics/Current performance data:

The JVSG grant has been operating under PY 2011 Negotiated Performance Goals for all of PY 2102. States did not receive formal guidance until August 2013 for PY 2013 goal negotiation. The performance goals below are based on PY 2011 and the reporting results are from our ETA 9002 and VETs 200 series reports dated 06/30/2013.

	Outcome Goal	Actual Outcome	Goal Met? (Y/N)
One-Stop Career Center			
Veteran Entered Employment Rate (9002D R6 A4)	48	62	Y
Veteran Employment Retention Rate (9002D R9 A4)	75	82	Y
Veteran Average Earnings (9002D R15 A4)	\$14,200	\$15,207	Y
Disabled Veteran Entered Employment Rate (9002D R6 D7)	48	62	Y
Disabled Veteran Employment Retention Rate (9002D R9 D7)	75	80	Y
Disabled Veteran Average Earnings (9002D R15 D7)	\$13,750	\$16,053	Y
DVOP			
Disabled Veteran Entered Employment Rate (200A R19 CE)	51	62	Y
Disabled Veteran Employment Retention Rate (200A R25 CE)	75	79	Y
LVER			
Recently Separated Veteran Entered Employment Rate (200B R19 CG)	70	83	Y
Recently Separated Veteran Employment Retention (200B R25 CG)	85	79	N
DVOP/LVER Consolidated			
Veteran Entered Employment Rate – Weighted (200C R19 CC)	52	65	Y
Veteran Employment Retention Rate (200C R25 Col C)	75	82	Y
Veteran Average Earnings (200C R28 Col C)	\$14,500	\$15,246	Y

Hire Our Heroes Job Fair:



State Grants (WETF & Internship):

The Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF), funded by the State of Vermont through the Act 46/Next Generation legislation, supports grants awarded by the Vermont Department of Labor designed to provide occupational training to Vermont workers who are unemployed, under-employed, or at risk of becoming unemployed. Over the years thousands of workers have been trained using this funding enhancing both the quality and quantity of skilled workers in the state. This program year over half a million dollars was granted to businesses and training providers, including \$128,000 for Regional Workforce Development Partnerships. An additional \$400,000 was designated for dual enrollment. Fifteen separate grants were awarded in Manufacturing, Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Hospitality, Education and Utilities. Over 1,000 people were trained.

WETF Innovative Training success story:



Biebel Builders of Windsor Vermont was granted a Workforce Education and Training grant to ensure the employability of their aging workforce. The objective was to diversify and expand the skills of their aging workforce so they could become trainers and mentors for those entering the trades. The training also included certification in the energy efficiency field through the Building Performance Institute (BPI) so they could expand their business into new "zero energy" homes and buildings as well as renovations for energy savings. Each building designed and built meeting BPI standards could be certified as energy efficient. By training his experienced staff of carpenters and concrete workers, who were no longer able to physically handle heavy lifting and outdoor work in cold weather, he was able to keep them gainfully employed, help expand the business, and have mentors available for new hires into the construction business.

The Vermont Legislature has continued funding for PY 2014. The department will be awarding grants to keep employers competitive in the global economy with a well prepared and diverse workforce.

Next Generation Internship Program 2012/2013:

The Vermont Department of Labor administers the state funded Next Generation Internship Program which is intended to support work-based learning opportunities for secondary and post-secondary students or recent graduates with Vermont employers. Grantees may be employers, business associations, schools, and other public and private entities. Over the years, this has been a very successful program, resulting in increased awareness of the workplace, its culture and

requirements, on the part of students, and exposing employers to the local talent pool available. A number of internships have evolved into paid positions and many employers regard the internship program as another recruitment tool. Internship opportunities improve school completion rates as well as workplace skills, while providing much needed wages and experience.

Over \$380,000 was granted during fiscal year 2013, split evenly between Secondary and Post-secondary programs. Three hundred eighty businesses took part in the program, providing internship placements for between 560 and 580 interns.

One unique program is Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, which has received funding for several years. The organization is dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities by providing access and instruction to sports and recreation. In the summer, there are paddling, cycling, sailing, climbing, and horseback riding programs, and in the winter, alpine/cross country skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing. The internships Vermont Adaptive offers give post-secondary students the opportunity to learn about working with people with disabilities, non-profit organization management, program management, specialized training in adaptive sports, disability specific training, event management, fundraising, volunteer management, risk management and more. Interns are offered opportunities for training certifications, such as CPR, First Aid, Professional Ski Instructors of America and American Canoe Association, among others. Stipends are awarded on an as-needed basis and academic credit is determined by the sending school.

Internship Success Story:

J did an internship with Vermont Adaptive in the summer of 2012 under the previous Program Supervisor. J grew into a phenomenal adaptive sports instructor and member of the Vermont Adaptive team. The focus of J's internship was building a relationship with organizations in Central Vermont and providing adaptive sports for participants in that area of the state. Due to J's outstanding performance as an intern, Vermont Adaptive developed a strong relationship with summer special



education departments at U-32 High School and Spaulding High School. The next summer, Vermont Adaptive hired J to run all summer programming with these two schools and to expand the Central Vermont programming. He organized weekly cycling and paddling for U-32 and two cycling days for Spaulding High School. Furthermore, he brought two summer interns from the Burlington site with him each week to teach them about the Central Vermont programs. J stepped up all summer to help with fundraising efforts and additional events throughout the state. It is incredible to see J run programming with minimal supervision. Vermont Adaptive invested about \$1000 in training for J as well. He became a certified Life Guard and was sponsored to attend an Adaptive Paddling Training at the University of New Hampshire to expand his skills as an adaptive paddling instructor.

WETF Grant Monitoring:

A WETF Grant Monitoring Procedure was developed and implemented during PY 2012.

Both employer and participant surveys were developed. The surveys were sent to the employers ahead of the monitor visit, employer responses were recorded during the interview, participant surveys were distributed by the employer and returned directly to VDOL. 15 employers were visited, the results of the interviews compiled and a report submitted to the Workforce Development Director and the Commissioner.

The employers monitored employed a total of 3052 employees. Six of the fifteen reported the training exceeded requirements and six more reported it met requirements.

Eleven said the training improved their business outlook and nine reported that it enabled them to retain jobs. The quality of service provided by VDOL staff was rated high in all categories.

The top ten responses from participants included, better prepared for future goals, high quality of training and instructors, increased ability to do the job, major skills improved were safety and quality.

Overall the sample of results from the monitoring showed that employers were using the funds for the appropriate training and participants found the training valuable.

Employer Outreach:

Vermont Continues to “Make Vermont Home”

As a continuation from last year’s successful program, “Make Vermont Home” (previously referred to as “Bring it Home To Vermont” in last year’s report but has since been renamed) has successfully completed 2,362 employer contacts between October 2012 and end of August 2013. This effort has isolated 8,654 open positions in the Vermont economy. On a daily basis, identified open positions are recorded and distributed to the local Career Resource Centers to help in further placement activities. On a monthly basis and in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor’s Economic & Labor Market Information division, the information collected from businesses is compiled to track trends in industries, occupations, and employer feedback on hiring challenges. This monthly data is again distributed to the local sub-state level for incorporation into local staff meetings. At the local level, discussions around hiring challenges have led to greater understanding of the local employer perspective and the development of successful strategies to engage employers. In addition, the real-time nature of this program allows for adjustments to target specific areas or types of employers based on current economic conditions. For example, when the Vermont Department of Labor received word of a large manufacturing firm’s imminent layoff, “Make Vermont Home” adjusted its employer outreach parameters to generate the maximum amount of employment leads by region and industry consistent with the perceived location and skills of potentially impacted employees. The “Make Vermont Home” reports have been used extensively following Rapid Responses. Companies reporting openings have been contacted and the information matched with Rapid Response attendees interests, background, and skills. The job opening information is then forwarded to these attendees for follow up.

Outreach to Agricultural Employers:

Outreach to Agricultural employers in Vermont has been increased significantly along with expanding the partnership with the Agency of Agriculture to provide overall improved service to the farming community.

151 prevailing practice surveys were sent out to the diversified and expanding crop growers, (fruit, berries, vegetables, apples), to better understand the changes in the agricultural businesses. 3 major growth areas are organic crop production, funding and sales through the creation of Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and farmers markets, and the production of marketable products from the raw product such as cider from apples and wine from grapes.

This diversity and growth changes the employment requirements for some agriculture workers including experience and education level of the employees.

Included in the agricultural outreach in Vermont are the prevailing wage surveys and Woods (Logging) Surveys. The results of the logging surveys are sent to the Maine Department of Labor Center for Workforce Research and Information to be included in the Northeast Logging Report.

American Job Center Branding:

Project was started in the 2nd quarter of 2013.

Field staff awareness and training is in process.

A presentation was prepared and given to Regional Managers for coverage with Career Resource Center Staff, and to VDOL Central Office Staff.

Pictures of the VDOL offices have been collected showing that all offices have different restrictions on posting the AJC logo. Implementing AJC on an office by office basis has extended the project.

VDOL's new website has been developed and is awaiting approval. Upon approval the AJC logo will be added to the website.

VDOL brochures will be updated with the AJC logo as they are updated and reprinted.

WIA/WP 5 Year Strategic Plan:

Incumbent worker training opportunities update from the strategic plan:

The WIA/WP 5 Year Strategic Plan referenced two areas of significant potential growth where incumbent worker training is essential to providing the workforce to support the growth.

In the Northeast Corner of the State Jay Peak President Bill Stenger has a half-a-billion dollar investment plan for the Northeast Kingdom using the federal EB-5 investor program. The project base is the expansion of Jay Peak and Burke Mountain ski areas into year round resorts, the Jay Peak expansion is under way with the construction of new hotels and completion of a year round sports water park. Burke Mountain is known worldwide for mountain biking with plans to expand the accommodations in the area and development of an all weather year round mountain bike training facility. Included in the plans is the development of the town of Newport, located on Lake Memphremagog, to include conference center facilities, specialty stores, office space, restaurants and hotels. Commitments have already been made to introduce technical development and

manufacturing facilities with the AnC Bio, a biomedical facility in Newport.

The project is expected to introduce 10,000 jobs over the next 5 years, half of these will be construction jobs. The local technical centers and educational institutions are already geared up to provide the basic education to support the construction trades and hospitality skills that will initially be needed. Incumbent worker training will be key in making sure the workforce is available in an area that currently has a high unemployment rate. VDOL Regional Manager for the St Johnsbury and Newport offices, Cindy Robillard, is deeply involved in the planning process and a key member of the development committee making sure that incumbent worker training will be available to WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth clients under the new incumbent work waiver.

In the southwest corner of the state the composites industry in the Bennington area continues to grow slowly. Plasan and Kaman are the key employers making carbon composite parts for the automotive, aircraft, and specialized medical industries. After the initial training in the area, sponsored by a USDA Rural Development Grant, most of the basic jobs were filled and the industry experienced a downturn resulting in some layoffs. Despite these events the management of Plasan and Kaman attended a public forum with training providers, including VDOL Regional Manager Wendy Morse, to explain the need and training requirements for employment with the Specialized composites industry. This, like the Northeast Kingdom Project, is an opportunity for VDOL to utilize the WIA incumbent worker training programs.