STATE OF VERMONT

Workforce Investment Act

2014 Annual Report

July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

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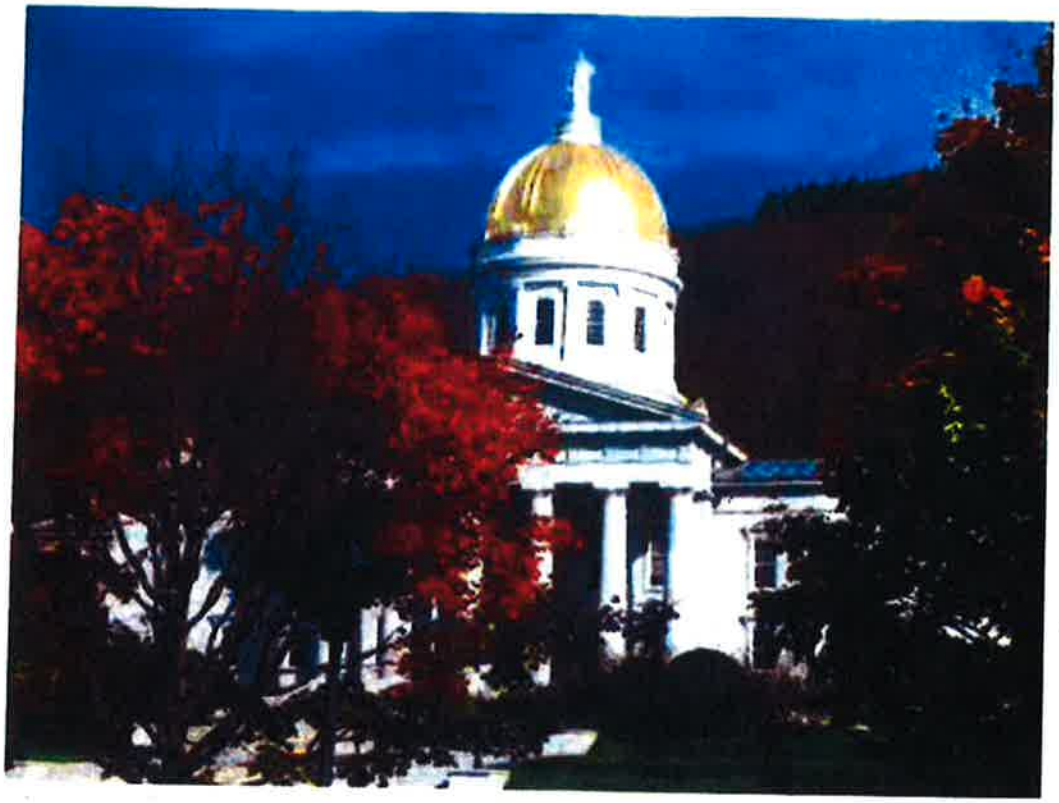
VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Honorable Peter Shumlin
Governor
State of Vermont

Anne Noonan
Commissioner
Vermont Department of Labor

Rose Lucenti
Workforce Development Director



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VERMONT

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

INTRODUCTION

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) has statutory responsibility to promote the well-being and economic interests of Vermont's business and workforce community. We are engaged with Vermont employers to help them prosper and grow their businesses, create new jobs, and market our priority economic sectors to compete in the global economy. A key role for the VDOL is to utilize our program and staff resources to develop and maintain a high-skilled workforce to meet Vermont's hiring needs of today and tomorrow. We provide accurate and timely labor market information to the public, employers, incumbent workers, job-seekers, students, lawmakers, researchers and planners to assist with strategic and successful decision-making.

In Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin's Statewide Strategic Plan, he outlined the first priority goal to: "*Create a brighter economic future for Vermonters by raising incomes, growing jobs, improving job training, strengthening our local foods-based agriculture, and improving our quality of life.*"

http://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/S-W%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20V5_Dec_17_2012.pdf

This goal was adopted after discussions with key departments, including VDOL, and closely mirrors the Vermont Department of Labor's own strategic plan goals, to wit:
"Help workers achieve permanent jobs with livable wage and benefits, and engage in continuous learning to remain competitive for the jobs of the future, aligning with the workforce needs of Vermont employers. Promote programs, policies, information and legislation that support economic growth and competitive advantage for Vermont businesses and job creation in Vermont. Promote and enforce policies and laws to ensure that Vermont's workplaces are safe, healthy and respectful. Provide program and economic support to Vermonters who are unemployed or seeking new career options, with a focus on populations who face greater employment barriers.

The Governor's vision for workforce development focuses on creating jobs in key economic sectors, opportunities and incentives for the workforce to grow and prosper in Vermont.

- Key goals:
    - Coordination of the State's economic development, workforce development and education systems
    - Increased state funding for post-secondary education, training and loan forgiveness
    - Coordination and expansion of workforce development activities
    - Increased career awareness and exploration in secondary and post-secondary schools

- Building a strong internship and other work experience activity for students at all levels, strengthening the workforce pipeline for Vermont employers
- Focusing on key economic sectors identified for real growth in Vermont
- Increased support for entrepreneurship and job development

In VDOL's plan, we outline various strategies to achieve this goal, including, but not limited to the following:

- Provide opportunities for education, training and skill development for Vermont's unemployed, under-employed, incumbent workers, students and recent graduates that will prepare them to succeed in a knowledge-based economy, including occupations in high demand, and in emerging and priority sectors.
- Help workers who are in low-wage or declining occupations, dislocated or who face employment barriers to develop skills or re-tool their skills to secure better jobs with good wages and benefits.
- Promote and assist business growth and development, job creation, career and wage advancement, and programs and policies that advance a brighter economic future for Vermonters.

A key priority for VDOL is to help eliminate or "shorten" the skills gap that exists for many workers. With our partner organizations, VDOL has been able to better align our economic development initiatives and workforce initiatives and resources, through:

1) Legislation in the Spring of 2104, S.220/Act 199, Workforce Education and Training, http://leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/Acts/ACT199.pdf which states that "*the Commissioner of Labor to be the leader of workforce education and training in the State and articulates the associated responsibilities of the position; requires state agencies to provide information and coordinate any workforce education and training with the Vermont Department of Labor; directs the Commissioner of Labor and Secretary of Commerce to submit proposals by November 1, 2014 regarding best practices for the Workforce Education and Training fund and the Vermont Training Program; directs the Commissioner of Labor to study and report on expanding internship opportunities for 15–18 year olds; creates a state-funded, postsecondary loan forgiveness program for Vermont residents who graduate from Vermont postsecondary institutions and take a job in Vermont in an economic sector designated by the Secretary of Commerce and the Commissioner of Labor as critical to the Vermont economy; and creates an internship program for Vermont residents or students at Vermont postsecondary institutions to build experiential opportunities for students and the workforce available to Vermont employers*";

(2) VT Agency of Commerce's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, at http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/business/CEDS/VT%202020%20CEDS.pdf which states: "*The Department of Labor and the Department of Economic Development in collaboration with Regional Development Corporations and other partners will develop and apply a survey of Vermont businesses to better understand the needs of employers with respect to specific skills that are currently lacking in the Vermont workforce. The mismatch between worker skills and employer requirements has been a major issue raised during the CEDS process. Compiling the anecdotal evidence into a systematic assessment will help us to*

strengthen the activities that are designed to help link workers and good jobs. The initiative will improve workforce training results and improve the ability of young workers (and those seeking career changes) to identify jobs or skill development that meet their career objectives; and Coordination of Training Programs. The Department of Labor in consultation with other state agencies will begin to establish an integrated system of workforce education and training for Vermont. The system will include an inventory of the workforce training and education programs in place, benchmarks of success, and the long-term goals for future workforce training and education activities. This initiative will be informed by the ongoing results gathered from the Workforce Skills Needs Assessment as one mechanism to ensure the connection between employer needs and the delivery of services to Vermont workers".

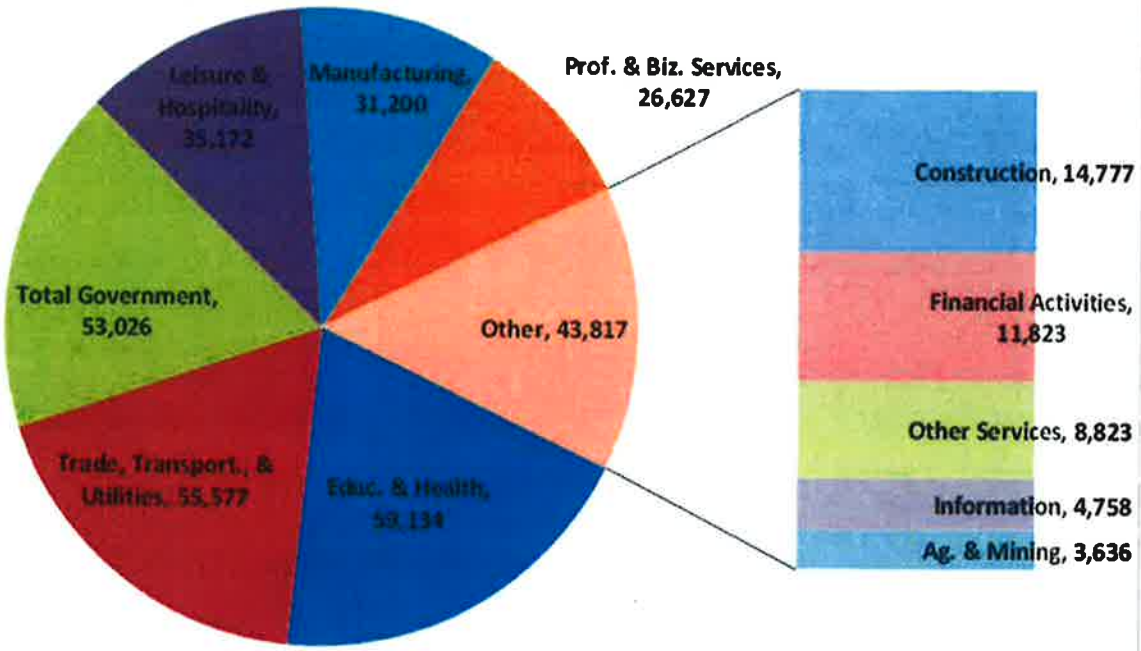
VERMONT Demographics: Vermont

Vermont is a rural and mountainous state and as a result, many important facets of the Vermont economy can be overlooked or forgotten. It is easy to associate Vermont with value-added agriculture and winter recreation. However, these are only parts of the Vermont economy. The true drivers of the Vermont economy are more conventional in that

- Vermont has a greater relative share of manufacturing employment than the United States
- Technology industries combined with technology occupations found in non-technology industries account for 25% of employment opportunities in Vermont
- For the past six years of data (2009-2014), per capita personal income in Vermont has exceeded national averages. This reverses the near one-hundred year historic trend dating back to the 1920s where the U.S. average exceeded Vermont's per capita personal income.

As a result of the perceptions of there being no "modern" jobs or no way to make a living in Vermont, the state's greatest challenge may be in debunking myths and out of date information.

2014 Distribution of Covered Employment in Vermont



The reality surrounding the Vermont economy is the annual employment growth rate is greater than the state's population growth rate. This creates a limiting factor on the ability of Vermont businesses to grow as they would wish. Couple the slower than average population growth with these facts:

- Vermont has the forth lowest unemployment rate in the country (3.6% in July 2015)
- Vermont has a higher than average aged population,
- the Baby Boomers have started to retire, and
- both nationally and in Vermont, young people are displaying decreasing levels of labor force participation rates

and the end result is a *tight* labor market.

A tight labor market creates many challenges for the Vermont Department of Labor. Due to shortages of labor supply, the remaining job-seeking population tend to have the most barriers to employment. This can cause stress when Vermont employers are looking to expand or fill vacant positions due to retirements. Employers, now more than ever are willing to work with the Department to assist in finding qualified applicants. The Department has had to embrace a

greater advocacy role as it relates to the populations being served and the availability of state programs to provide job training. The future of the Vermont economy comes down to the ability of:

- the state to recruit more residents
- the Department of Labor to convince employers to upskill incumbent workers to allow for greater access to entry level and lower skilled occupations
- the Agency of Education and the public school system in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor to increase career awareness and career readiness of Vermont students. A big step forward on this has already occurred with a mandate towards proficiency based grading standards and individual learning plans which will include components of career awareness.

The Vermont Department of Labor's activities impact the day-to-day lives of Vermonters through the programs that we administer, the laws that we enforce, and the assistance that we provide to the workforce and the employer communities. While our immediate focus in this still-troubled economy is to help create jobs and get Vermonters back to work, in the long-run we strive to be part of the engine and solution that moves Americans to achieve economic security for themselves and their families, to alleviate the destruction and despair of poverty, and to help each person find fulfillment in their working lives and security in their retirement years. We trust that Vermonters share a hope and vision for our nation's economic recovery: that it will be strong and vibrant in the years ahead and include all Americans in its gains and opportunities.

On behalf of the VDOL staff, I am pleased to offer this year's Annual Workforce Investment Act Report.

Anne M. Noonan
Commissioner

WIA Annual Report Narrative: 2014

PY 2014 Customer Satisfaction Measures

Employer Satisfaction

Of the 1,852 total employers eligible for the 2014 survey, all were included in the sample. Of that sample, 856 completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 46.22%. The final satisfaction score for 2014 for the 856 employer responses was 69.06%, down from 2013's satisfaction score of 72%.

During the course of the survey year, employers identified appropriate job referrals of candidates to their companies as an area of improvement on the Workforce Development system. As a result, emphasis has been placed on training in this area in the AJCs around the state.

Participant Satisfaction Survey

Of the 440 participants eligible for the WIA Customer Satisfaction survey, 151 participants responded to the survey answering the three core questions. The final satisfaction score for 2014 for those who responded was 77.89%, an increase from 2013's satisfaction score of 74.93%.

The task of conducting WIA Participant Satisfaction surveys for 2014 exiters was changed beginning in January 2014. Previously, the Vermont Department of Labor had contracted with St. Michael's College to conduct the WIA satisfaction surveys. A lateral move within the Vermont Department of Labor allowed for a staff member to take over these surveys.

The three required participant satisfaction survey questions were asked:

1. Program Satisfaction. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means "Very Dissatisfied" and 10 means "Very Satisfied", what was your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Vermont Department of Labor?

2. Program Expectations. Based on what your expectations were prior to starting the job training program, to what extent did the services you received meet your expectations? Using a scale of of 1 to 10, 1 means "falls short of your expectations" and 10 means "exceeds your expectation."

3. Your ideal services. Thinking of what your ideal set of services would have been for your job training program, how well did the services you received compare with your ideal set of services? Using a scale of 1 to 10, 1 means the services received did not match your ideal set of services and 10 means the services received matched your ideal set of services.

All questions were scored using a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest possible score and 1 was the lowest possible score.

VDOL also gathered and recorded any volunteered responses from the participants.

Of the 440 WIA exiters eligible for the survey, VDOL attempted to contact all. 151 participants responded to the survey, resulting in a response rate of 34%.

The overall satisfaction score of 77.89% is an increase from PY 2013.

STATE MIS SECTION

Labor Exchange and TAA

Vermont has used Vermont JobLink (VJL) as its case management and reporting system for Labor Exchange and TAA as a self-hosted state for many years. In late May 2014, hosting of the site and all technical responsibilities were transferred to America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA) in Kansas. As the host, AJLA maintains VJL by troubleshooting any software issues and is responsible for installing all upgrades including federal reporting changes.

WIA Conversion Project: Legacy system to Vermont JobLink

In December 2013, VDOL began the conversion of WIA data, from all open cases and cases exited on or after July 1, 2011, from the existing legacy system (IDEM) to VJL. The final conversion of data occurred on April 3, 2015. VJL, as the Vermont case management system went live on April 6, 2015. As expected with any major software conversion, there were a few bugs identified shortly after the final conversion and many have been resolved. Software scripts continue to be written to correct the imported data. Several training events have been offered for WIA case managers, grant managers, and leadership staff. Training for WIA/WIOA case management will continue as part of the Workforce Development professional development.

VJL provides a number of canned management reports which are accessible to all case managers and management staff for federal program requirements. One such report released to AJLA states is the Exit and Outcomes Report. This report allows the tracking of Outcomes (credentials) and Exit Question information (student status at exit, entered training related employment, entered nontraditional employment, etc.) to ensure data is accurate and complete. This report will enhance data integrity and performance measure outcomes for WIA/WIOA, TAA, and Labor Exchange.

AJLA released their WIOA program eligibility on June 30, 2015 for the July 1, 2015 WIOA start date. All WIA eligible participants prior to June 30, 2015 will continue to operate using the WIA eligibility guidelines. All new individuals enrolled or eligible on or after July 1, 2015 are now subject to WIOA eligibility requirements as laid out in the software installed and maintained by AJLA.

Cost of Workforce Investment Activities

PY 2014 Cost Per Participant –
All Programs Equals $4,962

All WIA Program Expenditures	**$5,661,722**
All WIA Program Participants	**1141**

PY 2013 Cost Per Participant –
All Programs Equals $3,613

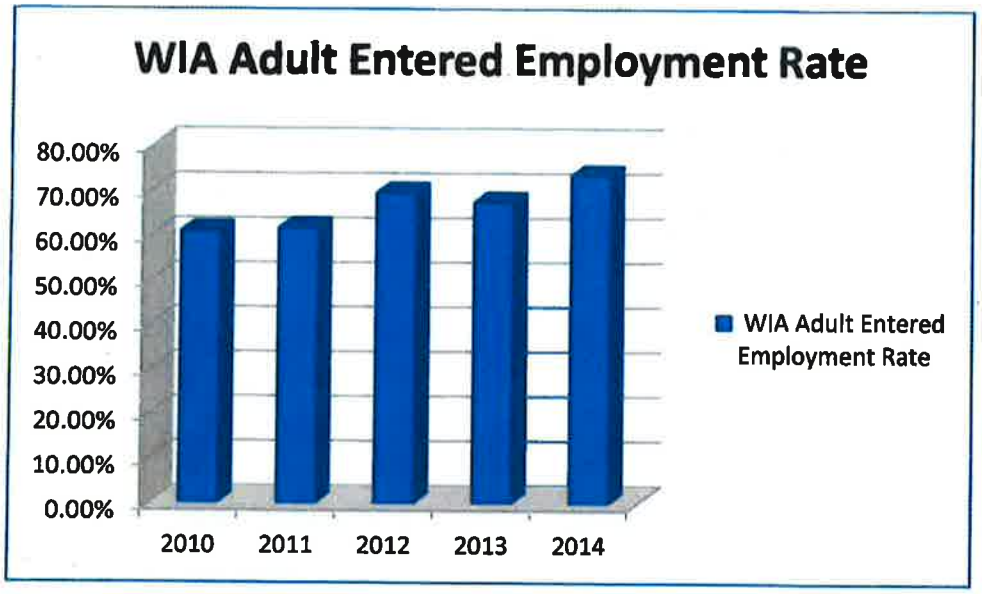
All WIA Program Expenditures	**$4,689,754**
All WIA Program Participants	**1298**

Between PY 2013 and PY 2014 the overall program expenditure increased by $971,968 with expenditure per individual increasing by $1,346.

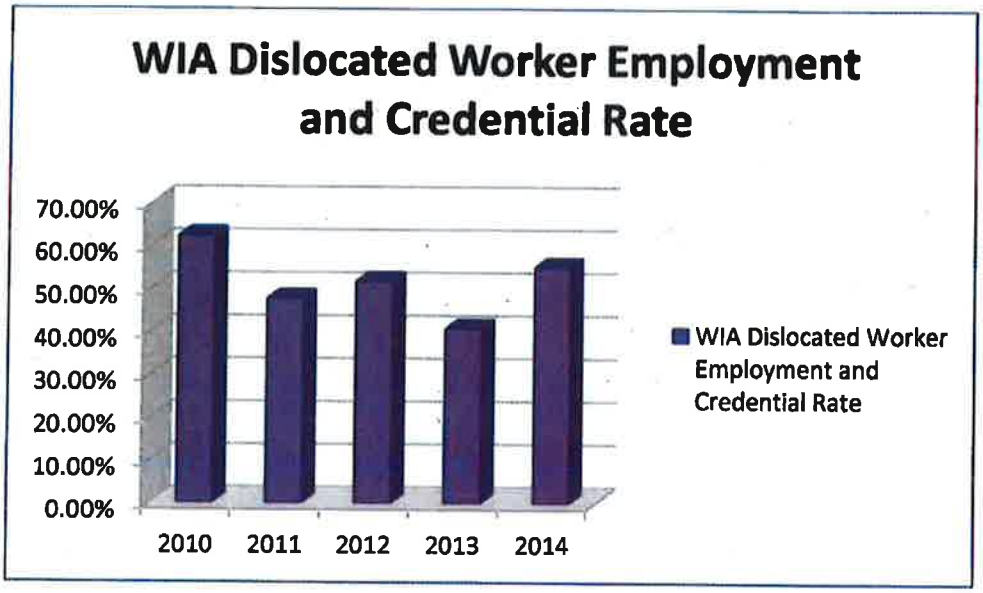
PY 2014 WIA Programs

Statutory Measures	Vermont Department of Labor		Met, Exceeded or Failed Measure
	Negotiated Measures	Actual Results	
	PY 2014	PY 2014	
WIA Adults			
Entered Employment	71.30%	73.50%	Exceeded
Retention	82.60%	82.90%	Exceeded
Avg Earnings	$12,500.00	$ 11,211.00	Met
Credential	48.0%	52.40%	Exceeded
WIA Dislocated Workers			
Entered Employment	83.30%	80.40%	Met
Retention	92.60%	90.00%	Met
Avg Earnings	$16,694.00	$ 16,810.00	Exceeded
Credentials	56.00%	55.10%	Met
WIA Older Youth			
Entered Employment	53.90%	55.80%	Exceeded
Retention	75.00%	86.70%	Exceeded
Earnings Change	$ 2,523.00	$ 3,471.00	Exceeded
Credentials	35.00%	27.80%	Failed
WIA Younger Youth			
Goal/Skill Attainment	80.00%	69.20%	Met
Diploma Attainment	50.00%	70.60%	Exceeded
Retention	55.00%	61.00%	Exceeded
Customer Satisfaction			
Participants	80.00%	77.89%	Met
Employers	80.00%	69.06%	Met
W-P Labor Exchange (LEX)			
Entered Employment	63.00%	65.00%	Exceeded
Retention	83.00%	84.00%	Exceeded
Avg. Earnings	$ 14,000.00	$ 13,647.00	Met

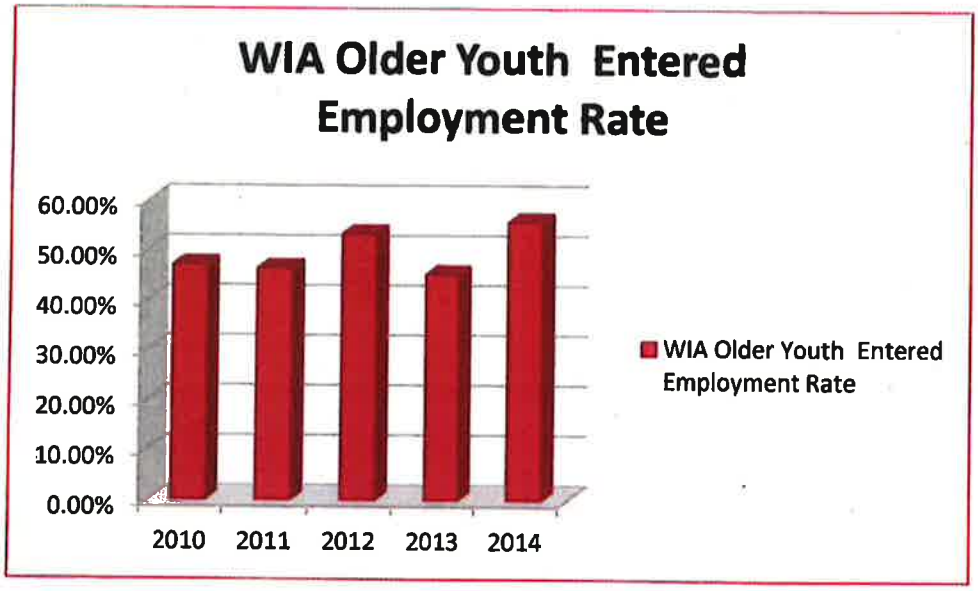
PY 2014 WIA Programs
Alternative Efficiency Measurement Indicators*



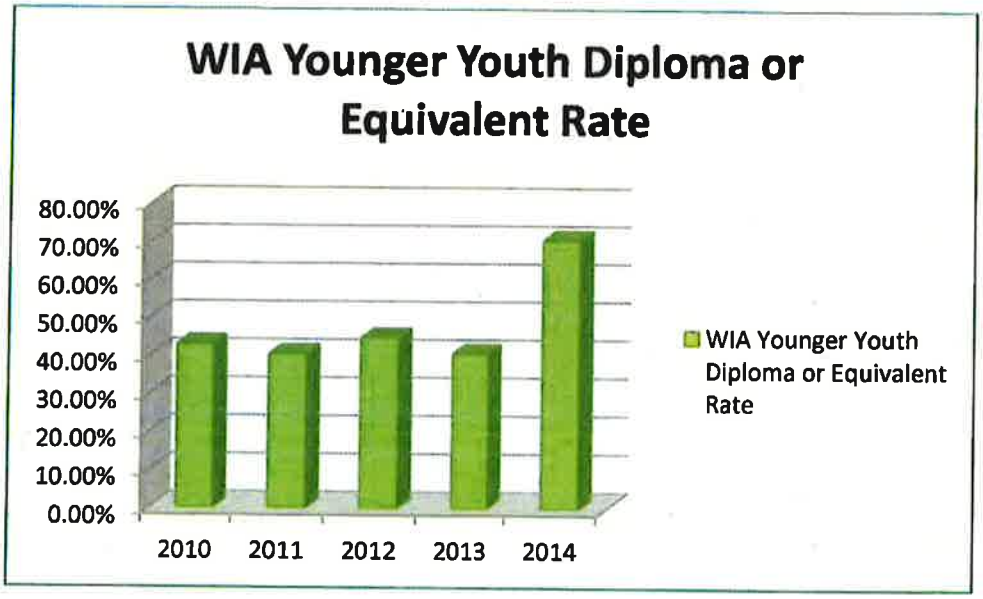
Vermont gained 6.02% in the Adult Entered Employment Rate from PY 2013 to PY 2014 (67.48% to 73.5% respectively).



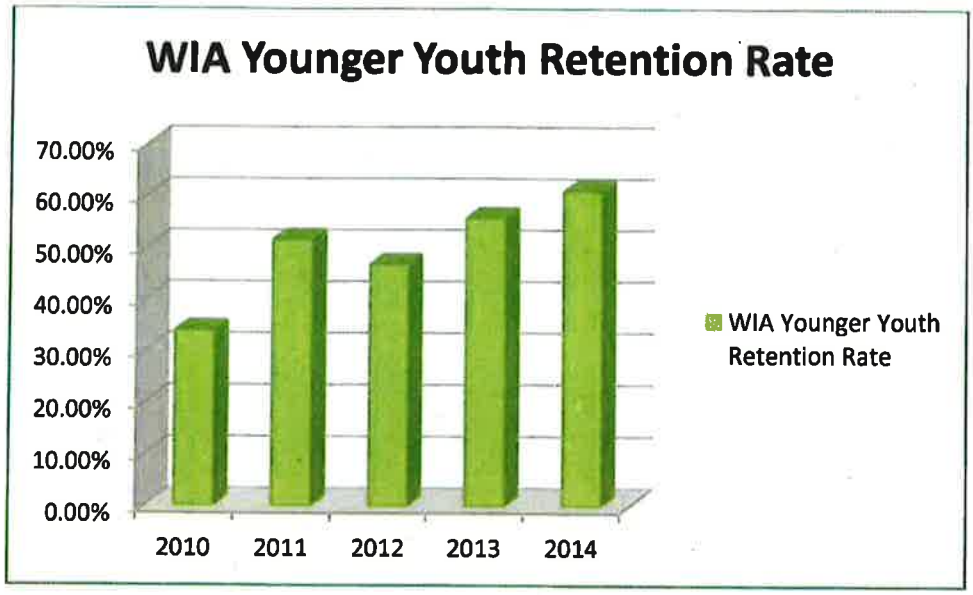
With a concentrated focus on credentials, the Dislocated Worker Employment and Credential Rate soared from 40.74% in PY 2013 to 55.1% in PY 2014.



WIA Older Youth saw an increase in the Entered Employment Rate from 45.28% in PY 2013 to 55.8% in PY 2014, a total increase of 10.52%.



Vermont showed significant gains in the WIA Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Rate. 40.68% of the Younger Youth population earned a High School diploma or equivalent in PY 2013 compared to 70.60% in PY 2014.



WIA Younger Youth participants also had an increase in the Retention Rate measure between PY 2013 and PY 2014 (55.77% and 61% respectively).

*Vermont resubmitted the PY 2013 WIA Annual Tables in January 2015. The figures used in the PY 2013 Annual Narratives reflected performance measures captured on 9/15/2014.

Assurances That All Required Elements Are Measured And Reported Uniformly

All Workforce Development (WD) employees are State employees within the VDOL and report to the Director of Workforce Development assuring consistency and uniformity in services and reporting.

WD staff were trained during Program Year 2014 on the state MIS and data entry processes, in addition to multiple program specific trainings and professional development activities.

New employees are required to attend VJL Basic Training, a one day session which introduces staff to the functionality of the case management system, Wagner-Peyser policies, procedures, services, and documentation requirements. VJL Refresher/Advanced Training, was developed and implemented in PY 2014 to support the new employee training, as well as providing continuous instruction to incumbent workers. This one day class provides in-depth processes regarding job seeker and employer functionality such as: creating job orders and resumes, job searches and resume matching, job referrals and outcomes, documenting services and case notes.

Required elements are also being captured for WIA participants as well through Vermont's MIS, VJL. Trainings were held for case managers prior to the WIA conversion in April 2015 and continue.

PY 2014 Waivers:

1. Waiver of WIA Section 134(a)(1)(A) to permit a portion of the funds reserved for Rapid Response activities to be used for incumbent worker training.

   Under this waiver, Vermont is permitted to use up to 10% of rapid response funds for incumbent worker training only as part of a layoff aversion strategy. The waiver request is consistent with the national policy direction to develop a workforce system that is responsive to the demands of both individual and employer customers. In addition, it supports a key priority of the Governor to close the "skill gaps" between job vacancies in the state and the available workforce through better alignment of public investments with regional data on employer need.

   The Vermont Department of Labor has not implemented the waiver and continues to develop policies for full implementation.

2. Waiver of Section 134 (a)(3) to permit local areas to use a portion of local funds for incumbent worker training.

   The "Incumbent Worker" waiver allows the VDOL to implement innovative Incumbent Worker Training by allowing up to 10 percent of local adult, dislocated worker, and youth funds to be expended on education and training activities to the incumbent workforce as part of a broad layoff aversion strategy. The goal of the Incumbent Worker Training waiver is to allow the VDOL flexibility to meet the needs of employers and their employees. Incumbent Worker Training initiatives enhance the skills of current employees, resulting in increased employee productivity and potential company growth, which may equate to the need for additional staffing.

   The Vermont Department of Labor has not implemented the waiver and continues to develop policies for full implementation.

3. Waiver of Section 133 (b)(4) to increase the allowable transfer amount between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams allocated to a local area.

   Under this waiver, Vermont is permitted to transfer up to 50% of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams. Such flexibility would enable Vermont to better serve the needs of its customers, and would heighten the State's ability to respond to changes in the local market.

   VDOL has not yet needed to transfer any funds between WIA adult and Dislocated Worker streams and therefore did not implement this waiver in Program Year 2014.

4. Waiver of WIA Section 101 (31)(B) to increase the employer reimbursement for on-the-job training.

   Vermont received approval of this waiver in 2013. Under this waiver, Vermont is permitted to increase the employer reimbursement for on-the-job training through a sliding scale based on the size of the business as follows:
   a. Up to 90% for employers with 50 or fewer employees
   b. Up to 75% for employers with 51-250 employees or
   c. For employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirement of up to 50% will continue to apply

   A graduated scale of reimbursement will create more incentive for small employers to participate in OJTs that achieve high-skill, high-demand, and/or high wage attainment.

   The Vermont Department of Labor has not implemented the waiver and continues to develop policies for full implementation.

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

   Vermont received approval to continue this waiver in 2013. Under this waiver, Vermont is permitted to allow its American Job Centers or partner agencies to directly provide the following youth program elements: supportive services, follow-up services, and work experience. Vermont continues to need this waiver to accommodate the unique and challenging characteristics of a rural state, including limited access to services, using One Stop Career Centers to maximize resources.

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

   The youth participants are provided the ultimate benefits of this waiver.

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

   Vermont received approval to continue this waiver in 2013. Under this waiver, Vermont is allowed to postpone the determination of subsequent eligibility of training providers. It also allows Vermont to provide an opportunity for training providers to re-enroll and be considered enrolled as initially eligible providers.

   Due to the rural nature of Vermont and the limited pool of local training providers, this waiver continues to allow VDOL to retain approved eligible training providers for most youth and adult program services.

The waiver also assists Vermont in developing a more efficient and cost effective workforce system while providing a wider range of options to Vermonters.

7. Waiver of the WIA regulations at 20 CFD 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.

   Vermont received approval for this waiver in 2013. Under this waiver, Vermont WIA participants enrolled in an OJT are exempt from the credential attainment performance measure. The waiver has provided Vermont greater flexibility in 2013 and 2014 to the needs of employers and Adult and Dislocated Worker participants by developing OJTs based on local industry, business or worksite needs without negatively impacting WIA performance for credentials.

   Vermont converted to a new MIS, Vermont Job Link, which has the ability to identify those participants enrolled in an OJT and exclude those participants in the quarterly reports. Vermont understands that eDRVS does not have the ability to accommodate states with this waiver and has therefore certified the 4th quarter report (6-30-15) and PY 2014 Annual Tables using the Employment and Credential measure for Adults and Dislocated Workers without the OJT credential waiver programming as VDOL met or exceeded the performance goals for each without the waiver.

Status of State Evaluation Activities

WIA Section 134(a)(2)(B)(ii) requires that states conduct evaluations of workforce investment activities under WIA section 136(e). These evaluation results are used to promote, establish, and implement methods for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the statewide workforce investment system in improving employability for job seekers and competitiveness for employers. The evaluations identify best practices as well as challenges and potential workforce solutions.

The questions for the evaluation are:

1. Program Satisfaction. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means "Very Dissatisfied" and 10 means "Very Satisfied", what was your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Vermont Department of Labor?

2. Program Expectations. Based on what your expectations were prior to starting the job training program, to what extent did the services you received meet your expectations? Using a scale of of 1 to 10, 1 means "falls short of your expectations" and 10 means "exceeds your expectation."

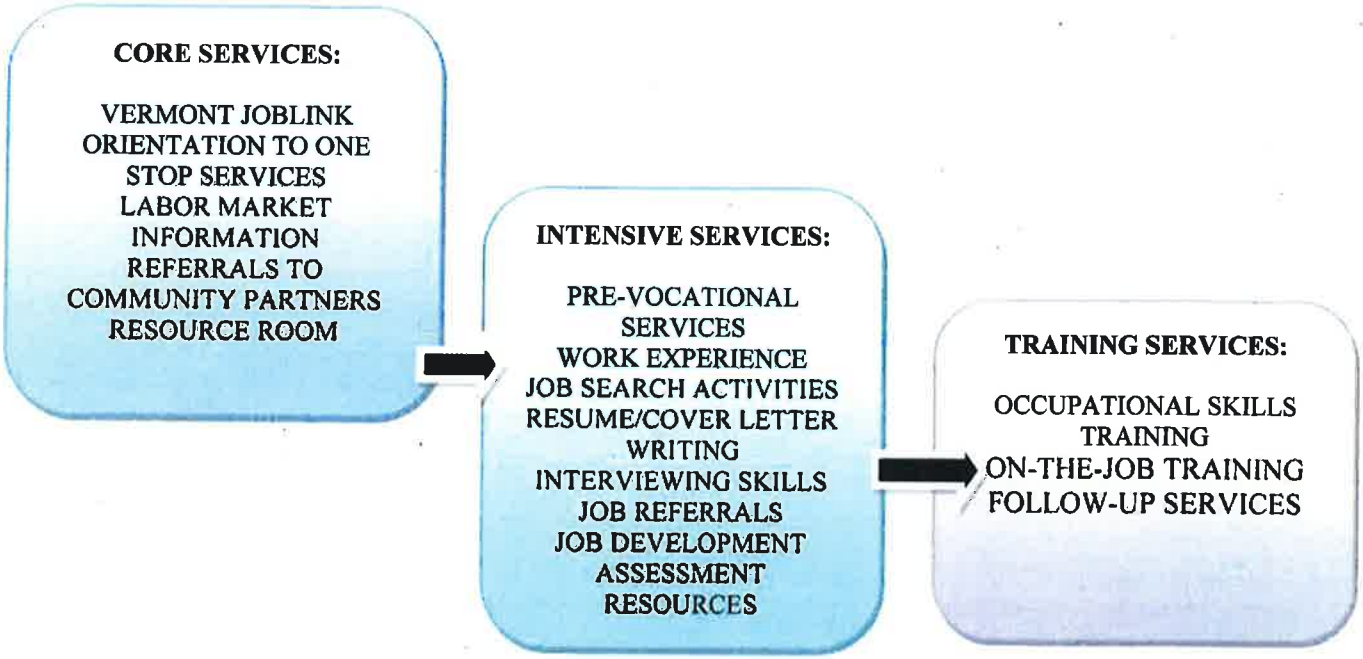
3. Your ideal services. Thinking of what your ideal set of services would have been for your job training program, how well did the services you received compare with your ideal set of services? Using a scale of 1 to 10, 1 means the services received did not

match your ideal set of services and 10 means the services received matched your ideal set of services.

Comments were encouraged and recorded for further evaluation in this process.

Adult WIA

WIA Case Managers are committed to providing opportunities to eligible individuals that will lead to viable employment, job retention, increased earnings, and a better quality of life. There are three levels of services that drive this effort:



Vermont has established strong relationships with its employers and community partners. Case Managers, in partnership with the individual and other community partners, establish an employment plan and provide intensive case management services to ensure identified barriers are addressed and supports are being provided. It is our charge to train individuals for positions which will assist employers in finding skilled workers to fill their job openings and remain competitive in today's global economy.

The following success stories are just a snapshot of what VDOL does for Vermonters:

BURLINGTON WIA ADULT

After a history of addiction and incarceration, Kim successfully completed the Vermont Works for Women Transitional Jobs Program. VDOL partnered with VWW and was able to provide tuition. Working with a VDOL Case Manager Kim entered a work experience at Vermont Cares (a non-profit organization) helping people who are at risk of HIV. Kim successfully completed the allotted 5 weeks when she was evaluated and approved for an extension. The training opportunity gave her a chance to compete for an open full time position. Kim successfully completed the work experience and was hired as a full time employee last October at a starting salary of $28,000. Recently, Kim, who struggled with multiple barriers including theft and substance abuse, was promoted to Regional Coordinator with a $1,000 salary increase. Since beginning the program she has gone from relying on public transportation to having her own car, from public assistance to financial independence and adequate housing. With the help of VDOL & WIA, Kim is on her way to a bright future.

BURLINGTON WIA ADULT

While Earle was incarcerated at the Newport correctional facility, the Newport staff began working with Earl to conduct an initial assessment and career action plan with him. At the time of his release, Earle relocated to the St. Albans area. During his incarceration, he attended basic welding classes through the Community High School and assisted the instructor in the classroom. Prior to his release, Earle wrote a personal statement on his goals and acquired letters of recommendation including his last employer, Cabot Creamery and his welding instructor. Earle was recommended by his welding instructor to take the Advanced Welding Institute (AWI) training program. Earle was very motivated in getting the necessary training and returning to work. He was also successful in acquiring $16,116 of the $18,000 tuition on his own through a FASFA grant and loan, VSAC, and AWI Scholarship. He began the program in June 2014 and successfully completed it in November 2014. He started work as a Welder on 12/1/14. WIA paid $1884 towards his tuition and $747 in support services. Earle did have some barriers while he was in the training, including lack of transportation. Because of Earle's initiative and support from the Case Manager, he is now self-sufficient.

BENNINGTON WIA ADULT

When Karl began working with his VDOL Case Manager, he had many identified barriers to employment, including his criminal history, single parent without support to two small children, no vehicle or access to public transportation, and living in a remote area with limited access to employers. Karl had been previously connected to Corrections, but was no longer supported through the probation and parole system. Karl's life began spiraling downward.

Karl's criminal case was highly publicized in the Bennington area and his name was recognized because of the charges. Karl had many case managers from Economic Services to the Jobs program and now VDOL. Karl expressed frustration with the various systems and processes.

He committed to attending all the workshops that were offered and took every class to which he was referred. He was compliant, but not motivated. He participated in a work experience, but was not offered employment.

The VDOL Case Manager worked with Karl to develop a resume and recommended taking some college courses. Once the resume was completed, the VDOL Case Manager forwarded it to several employers. A local employer was willing to give Karl an interview. He interviewed and began work the next week. He continues to work for the employer.

ST JOHNSBURY WIA ADULT

Sara's determination was evident when she introduced herself to the VT Department of Labor in October, 2013. As a 23 year old single mom, Sara relocated to Vermont without permanent housing, a support network, an education, or employment. She accepted assistance from Reach Up and Umbrella to meet her primary needs, but knew this was only a first step toward change.

The VT Department of Labor WIA case manager began coaching Sara during weekly meetings. A series of assessments helped her to identify her strengths and interests in order to create long and short term goals. Earning a High School Diploma was Sara's first goal. She utilized the Flexible Pathways bill, working in collaboration with Lyndon Institute, Community College of Vermont, and Northeast Kingdom Learning Services to earn her High School Diploma.

Sara wanted to develop some additional workplace skills, a reference for use in her job search and general experience in the local labor market. She completed a short internship as the front desk receptionist at Umbrella. This volunteer position improved Sara's confidence and confirmed her passion for working in an office environment. When the opportunity for a Work Experience at a local non- profit housing organization became available, Sara was more than prepared to apply her skills; she was already familiar with utilizing public transportation, and even had a plan in place for childcare. Following a 17 week Work Experience, Sara transitioned to a 3 month On the Job Training opportunity. During this time she received intensive job specific training by the employer, and also earned a nationally recognized Customer Service and Sales Certification, which continues to aide her in providing top notch services.

Sara is now employed full time with the housing organization as the Front Desk Receptionist and looks forward to a long term career there. In a recent conversation, Sara stated, "I like my job, my apartment is perfect and I have reliable transportation. Things have really come together lately". Sara is currently receiving follow up services with the VT Department of Labor; she connects with us monthly and we are always happy to hear of her continued achievement. Sara's success was a combined effort of VDOL and community partners.

RUTLAND REGION

Bridget was introduced to VDOL through the ABAWD program and was referred directly to the WIA Orientation due to her significant barriers to employment. Bridget spent time in prison for felony drug charges and is now on probation. Core and intensive services were provided to Bridget including resume writing and career guidance. It was clear that her felony charges were going to make it difficult for her to find employment on her own.

When a job order from a local employer came to the office, the case manager immediately identified that this might be a perfect fit for Bridget. The case manager reached out to the employer to discuss the WIA program and Bridget. The employer's first response was "we do not accept felons." The case manager was then able to speak to the employer about VDOL's federal bonding program. After the employer was fully educated on the WIA program and the Federal Bonding Program, they stated that they would be willing to give Bridget an interview.

Bridget had attended workshops and had been well prepared by her case manager for the interview and was able to present herself to the employer. She had the opportunity to shadow for a day with the employer. At the end of the day, Bridget was offered a part-time position with the company. The employer only requested that VDOL implement Federal Bonding.

Bridget is still employed with the company and doing well. The supervisor states "the client is awesome, everyone likes her and she fits in perfectly". VDOL now has a strong relationship with the company and has since placed another participant there in a work experience.

The Vermont Department of Labor registered new programs in the trades of Technical Writer with Triad Design Services of Williston and Medical Coders with Precyse Solutions, LLC from South Burlington. These apprenticeship programs are a joint venture with VT HITEC, Triad, and Precyse. As with all VT HITEC models the related instruction is offered at the start of the program. Upon successful completion of the related instruction component, participants are guaranteed excellent jobs in high-growth fields.

Success Stories from the Vermont HITEC OJT Program with Precyse

Serena Leigh:

- Female
- 29 Years Old
- Single Mother
- Education: High School
- Underemployed, WIA Eligible Adult
- Previous Employment: Pharmacy Technician

When chosen for this program Serena had been unemployed for over six months due to personal reasons. She lives in a very rural area of Vermont, has few employment options, and is a single mother of three. She saw the announcement for the HITEC Precyse program on the Vermont Department of Labor website and applied.

She previously worked as a pharmacy technician and had always been interested in the medical field. Money and time restraints made attending college impossible for her and therefore, she was unsure of her capability as a student. The class made her more confident and supplied her with a support group of friends/colleagues who went through the program together. She and her family are much better off now, and she expressed gratitude for having had this opportunity.

Margaret Pent:

- Female
- 29 Years Old
- Education: High School and three years of College
- Unemployed, WIA Eligible Adult
- Previous Employment: Phone Operator, Infant Teacher

Margaret lives in North Hero, 45 min from Burlington and has 3 children under the age of 5.

After hearing an ad for the HITEC program, she attended the orientation and saw the 500 other people who also were there, which was intimidating. Bus she stayed and listened to the speakers and was inspired by HITEC and the Precyse program and subsequently applied.

She states that the program was been one of the hardest and most rewarding things she has done. During the program, she was up by 6 AM to get some work done until helping her children get ready for the day. She was in class from 8 until 5, with approximately 4 hours of

homework to complete at night. The expectations and course load is heavy, not unattainable but intense. Chris Powell (Precyse CEO) spoke during the Town Hall about having an impact on the community and about great companies doing great things. Margaret is excited to be part of a growing company.

Dislocated Worker Program

VDOL administers the Dislocated Worker program and provides direct services through the AJC's and Rapid Response. Services are provided to individuals who have been terminated or laid off, or have received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment generally due to plant closures or downsizing.

The Dislocated Worker program provides re-employment services to adversely affected dislocated workers, which may include:

- Assessment
- Job Search strategies
- Interview preparation
- Resume, cover letters, applications
- Referrals to jobs
- Labor Market Information
- Training/re-training
- Support Services

Vermont Rapid Response

VDOL provides Rapid Response activities in Vermont through Rapid Response teams throughout the state and dedicated staff trained in Rapid Response. Rapid Response Teams are comprised of VDOL representatives from the Workforce Development Division, the Dislocated Worker Program, Unemployment Insurance Division, Labor Market Information Division and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. Additionally, the team works closely with the AJCs, workforce development partners, the State WIB, state and local business and economic development professionals, employer associations and organizations, unions and local educational institutions. VDOL also works with Rapid Response Teams from bordering states in an effort to provide seamless responses to businesses that are laying off or closing and employ Vermont workers who may be affected by downsizing/closings in other states.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is administered by the Workforce Development Division of the Vermont Department of Labor and direct services are provided by staff in the AJCs around the state. The TAA program provides reemployment services and benefits designed to return workers adversely affected by foreign trade to suitable employment. Services and benefits include basic skills training, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, job search and relocation allowances, Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance

(RTAA), and Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA). TRA is administered by the Unemployment Insurance Division and provides extended unemployment insurance benefits.

During the WIA 2014 Program Year, there were five certified trade petitions statewide. The approximate size of the adversely affected workforce was over 300 workers.
Vermont's program delivery is designed to integrate the statewide Rapid Response activities, WIA Dislocated Worker services and the Trade Program. Administrative and direct services staff work together to provide a seamless entry into the programs for the adversely affected trade impacted workers.

The TAA program supported many different types of training programs for the affected workforce across Vermont. Within the computer field occupational specific trainings included computer hardware and software engineering; Computer Systems Analyst, Computer Programming, Graphic Design, Computer System Networking and Telecommunications, Multi Media and Information Design.

One successful participant is John Q. who attended an informational session offered by the VDOL for former IBM employees who had been identified in a Resource Action by their employer. Two TAA petitions were granted by the USDOL for IBM; the second certified on March 7, 2014 identified the workers, including John who were eligible under the Trade Act of 2011. Following the information session John was determined eligible to participate in TAA. He had some solid IT skills, yet he had been turned down by numerous employers over a 10 month period. An assessment, conducted by a VDOL case manager, identified the skills John lacked for employment. John entered into a six-month training program with an Eligible Training Provider and received his certification as a Systems and Network Administrative professional. John obtained full time suitable employment as a Senior Infrastructure Engineer two months after completing the training His hourly wage at hire was a dollar more per hour than his wage at layoff. *"I consider myself quite lucky indeed and to have far exceeded the 80% salary recovery goal is just icing on the cake. It's very hard to know this during a long unemployment period, but it's been worth the work and the wait".*

The TAA also sponsored occupational specific training in the Health Care Field including Health Information and Medical Records Administration, Social Work, Nursing, Pharmacy Technician and Administration, Nutrition and Wellness Studies, and Massage Therapy.

Other training programs successfully completed by TAA participants include CDL Training, Teacher Apprenticeship Training, Accounting and Business Management and HVAC Technology Training.

VT Registered Apprenticeship Program

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

Affirmative Action requirements. The Registered Apprenticeship staff conducts outreach to businesses, attends Career and Job Fairs, Veteran's meetings, and speaks at high schools and tech centers regarding the benefits of the Registered Apprenticeship program.

During the past fiscal year, over 1,175 individuals were enrolled as apprentices with 65% in Building & Construction trades, followed by 20% in service and other occupations, and 15% in Utility & Industrial Apprenticeships. There were 327 new apprentices registered, up from 253 last year. There were 117 Completion Certificates issued and over 310 employer sponsors participated in the program.

The Vermont Department of Labor contracts with VT Technical College to administer the related instruction component for the trades of Plumber and Electrician. There are 38 classrooms throughout the state at tech centers and community colleges to cover all 4 all levels of each trade. VDOL offers traditional classes as well as classes over VT Interactive TV to reach the areas of the state where the numbers don't support offering traditional classes. VIT classes meet one night a week and one Saturday a month at the VTC campus in Randolph Center.

The VT Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship works closely with Vermont veterans to access their benefits under the G. I. Bill. Registered Apprenticeship allows Veterans to receive a monthly stipend from the V. A. Many apprentices start at 50% of the completed wage rate and benefit greatly from this assistance.

Vermont's technical centers offer classes in HVAC, Plumbing and Electrical to their high school students. While enrolled in classes, the students may be allowed the opportunity to work in a co-op program to begin to accumulate the required hours of hands-on experience in the trade. Students work under the supervision of a master license. They may be allowed the opportunity to test out of level 1 of their respective trade upon completion of their high school class. The Vermont Department of Labor recognizes the hours worked in the trade by the student when they are officially enrolled as an apprentice. Upon graduation from high school, some of these students are able to enter the trade at the second year level and are awarded credit for work in the trade.

The Vermont Department of Labor registered new programs in the trades of Technical Writer with Triad Design Services of Williston and Medical Coders with Precyse Solutions, LLC from South Burlington. These apprenticeship programs are a joint venture with VT HITEC, Triad, and Precyse. As with all VT HITEC models the related instruction is offered at the start of the program. Upon successful completion of the related instruction component, participants are guaranteed excellent jobs in high –growth fields.

Pre-Apprenticeship

For the second year, VT HITEC, Husky Injection Molding Systems, and the VT Department of Labor teamed up to provide opportunities to high school juniors and seniors in Advanced Manufacturing. This program was funded by the VT Department of Labor Workforce Education and Training Fund and Husky Injection Molding. The Husky Summer Institute offers an 8-week paid internship at Husky's facility in Milton, VT for up to 10 high school juniors and seniors for two consecutive summers. These students receive $10 per hour in wages, invaluable on-the-job

work experience in the Advanced Manufacturing field, 17 college credits from Burlington College, 320 pre-apprenticeship hours toward a CNC Machinist state-registered apprenticeship program, and mentoring by Husky's seasoned staff.

The goal of this program is to teach the skills necessary to create workforce-ready CNC machine technicians. The program provides an opportunity for students to learn a trade while simultaneously earning wages, college credits, and hours towards an apprenticeship credential.

In the first year of this training the students are enrolled into the well-established CNC Machinist Fundamentals Program being used at Husky. This program focuses on providing students with a wide breadth of foundational knowledge. The second year of the Summer Institute expands upon the foundational skills and provides a greater depth of knowledge as part of the Advanced CNC Concepts Program being used at Husky. Both summer programs have an academic component and hands-on project work, with job shadowing and mentoring occurring throughout the Husky facility.

The students will learn Computer Numeric Control (CNC) I-G & M Code, Programming, Blueprint Reading with Geometric Dimensioning and ComTolerancing (GD&T), Machine Tool Math, Introduction to Inspection, Machining Processes I, Introduction to Apprenticeship, Fundamentals of Tuning, Milling, Inspection, Testing, and Manufacturing Processes and Computer Aided Design (CAD).

High schools represented at the Husky Summer Institute include Burlington High School, Burlington Technical Center, and Center for Technology (CTE) Essex, Milton Senior High School and Bellows Free Academy, St. Albans.

Apprenticeship News

This is an exciting time for Registered Apprenticeship; President Obama and Vice-President Biden are taking notice of the success of VDOL's programs. Registered Apprenticeship puts Americans to work in high growth industries and secure, well-paying jobs. Vermont is expanding registered apprenticeship to new and exciting occupations.

Success Story

Chris attended the plumbing courses for two years while a high school student at the Barre Technical Center. Chris's teacher recognized that Chris was highly skilled, and had the determination and drive to be successful in this trade. Chris was a High Honors student and was sincere about a career in the trade. He was a quick learner, could take direction, and possessed strong soft skills. The teacher mentored Chris and arranged a job for Chris with Vermont Mechanical.

In Chris's senior year he was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society and was the top student in his Plumbing & Heating class. Chris competed in Skills USA for Plumbing and placed 1st in Vermont. He then went to the Skills USA National competition in Kansas City and placed 5th in the country for Plumbing. In 2014, Chris was selected 1st of the 12 Skills USA national competitors to represent the USA in the Skills International Competition for plumbing to be held in Brazil in August of 2015.

Chris graduated from high school and became a full time employee with Vermont Mechanical. He began his career with a year of Registered Apprenticeship classes completed and credit for hours worked in the trade.

Chris continues to be a stellar student and is considered a valued employee by Vermont Mechanical. Because of the excellent instruction that Chris received at the Barre Technical Center, he has been able to advance his career and will complete his 4 year Registered plumbing Apprenticeship a year ahead of schedule.

YOUTH SERVICES

Youth WIA

WIA Case Managers are dedicated to making a difference in their regions by supporting at risk youth to better prepare them for a successful future. WIA offers a year-round package of services that increases the youth's chances of success both in school and the workplace.

Eligible youth are afforded 10 program elements during their participation in the program. VDOL teams together with key partners to ensure that each youth receives the most comprehensive and necessary supports available.

The youth and the Case Manager work together to create an Individual Service Strategy Plan that is tailored specifically to the individual's employment, educational and personal goals.

Case Managers provide youth with ongoing intensive services through a positive mentorship, consistent guidance and building a strong support team around them.

Youth Success Stories

MATT

Matt was a 20 year old, out of school youth in need of WIA youth training supports to complete his education and career goals. Matt was dealing with several barriers: no diploma, autism, felony arson charges, and mental health issues. Matt had no idea what he wanted to do for a career and had 500 hours of community service to complete.

Matt was referred to the WIA youth case manager by Jump On Board for Success (JOBS) program.

JOBS reported that Matt was a solid worker but had large gaps in employment. Matt also struggled with maintaining employment due to poor communication skills, difficulty understanding expectations, and suffering from depression and anxiety.

Matt and his case manager developed a plan focused on completing his court ordered community services at a site that would encourage growth and help develop coping skills. Matt was placed with Montpelier Parks to repair flood damage of trails, rebuilding culverts, trail grooming, removal of invasive plan species harmful to native plant life, and completing daily rounds to keep the park presentable to over 300 daily visitors.

Matt was supervised in his Community Service hours by a long time VDOL mentoring employer. Through his community service he earned a position in the granted Summer Work Employment Opportunity (SEO) with Montpelier Parks. During the program, Matt successfully completed his GED and earned a credential in Chain Saw Safety. With this credential, Matt was able to land a job with a tent rental company at the end of the program. Matt remained in work experience until the end of the winter season so he could transition to employment while getting all of his required community service hours completed.

Matt is now employed in a manufacturing position with a growing company in Northfield Vermont. Matt continues to be supported by VDOL and its partners.

LOGAN

Logan came to VDOL as a 17 year old youth attending an alternative education program for individuals who have been expelled from high school.

Logan came to VDOL for an individual orientation with the same WIA Case Manager. He was much more polite and engaged in the conversation. At the end of the presentation, Logan stated he needed to find a training site that would mirror the academic courses he was missing in order to graduate on time. Logan also wanted to step up his skill set and enter the military. When asked what changed his mind about participating in training, Logan admitted that he was impressed that a state worker would welcome him back for another attempt without holding a grudge against his past behaviors. With WIA expectations clear, Logan began his Individual Service Strategy with a Summer Employment Opportunity at Two Rivers Farm to learn Agriculture and Construction Trades.

In the fall, Logan interviewed with a local mentoring employer at a local garage. This mentor had a proven track record with dealing with the most at risk youth in the community and was a former at risk youth himself. During the time with this mentor, Logan was able to learn mechanical skills, customer service and interaction, inventory, lube and tire tech skills, and patience.

Logan was a challenge at first, but his behavior and grades improved at school, his grades improved, and he received credit for his internship work experience. Because Logan completed his diploma a semester early, he attended VDOL workshops and intensive services appointments to work on his resume, interview techniques, and assisted job search. Logan was looking for a seasonal job in a similar field.

Logan received his Vermont Driver's License, was hired for a position at L&D Safety Marking and continues to do well.

CHRIS

Chris came to VDOL in May as a youth aging out of foster care after 12 years in DCF custody. Nine of those years, Chris lived in residential treatment and attended educational programs for individuals with emotional disturbance disabilities.

Chris engaged in an SEO with a local mentoring employer after a month of transitioning to Spaulding High School. When he started his SEO, he was very eager to please others and wanted to learn all he could, however after a few weeks it was clear that Chris was not ready for work.

Over the school year, WIA staff and Spaulding Special Educators used the SEO feedback as a working assessment of Chris's abilities to show him areas that need attention and how to build on his strengths.

Chris concentrated on his academics, specifically his basic skills goal of showing measurable increase in Math Computation. In the early winter, Chris followed through on a referral to the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) and was accepted as a Crew Member for the summer. That acceptance improved his attitude and his last semester of school progressed with fewer disciplinary issues; his team stated he demonstrated leadership skills.

In the spring, Chris came to VDOL to meet with the Job Corps staff to discuss further training. Chris began work for VYCC in June and continues to do well. He accepted life skills coaching from WIA and will check in at the end of July before entering Job Corps.

ASHLYN

In November of 2014, Ashlyn was referred to WIA services at VDOL by her case manager at Youth Services. She was a 20 year old single mom without any work history, but with a dream of one day becoming a Registered Nurse.

Ashlyn worked with her VDOL Youth case manager and was accepted to the American Red Cross's LNA training course in Keene, NH, in December of 2014. In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services and Youth Services, funding was available for her to participate and earn her LNA Certificate. WIA funds were used to help with transportation.

The VDOL case manager worked with Ashlyn, Youth Services, and Economic Services and identified a local elderly home in which Ashlyn would work. She received supportive services in order to purchase interview and work clothes. She also began tutoring to increase her math and reading levels.

Ashlyn's work experience has ended and she is still waiting for testing in Vermont to be licensed. She applied to several local jobs, had two interviews and was offered both. Now she is working as a waitress at a local café.

Summer Youth Employment Opportunity (SEO):

VDOL funded 13 Summer Employment Opportunity grants throughout the state in 2014, for a total of $125,000. One hundred forty two youth successfully completed their summer employment opportunities.

The **Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County** (BGCRC) served 7 participants, 3 of whom were in-school and 4 out. They assisted BGCRC staff providing professional child care to over 200 low-income, at-risk Rutland County children, ages 6-12. Two of the youth were in paid internship opportunities in food service, custodial and general maintenance services.

In 2013, the **Burlington School Food Project** and a local business teamed up on a cutting edge Food Truck that launched in 2014. The Food Truck was an extension of their existing gardening and cooking programs. At the heart of the mobile restaurant was a culinary training program that employed 9 students from area high schools. Meals served were focused on local and seasonal ingredients including vegetables, fruit, and honey from the network of school gardens.

The **City of Winooski** provided summer employment to 18 youth over the 8 week program. The positions included:

- Counselor in Training positions with the City's Thrive Summer Program for children in grades K-5
- Positions staffing the Snack Bar at Myers Pool
- Teen Harvester positions
- Kitchen Assistant for Vermont Works for Women's "Fresh Food" Program.
- Site Coordinator for the City of Winooski's Summer Food Program
- Park Patrol positions with the Winooski Police Department
- Trail Crew positions with the City's Public Works Department

The **Foxcroft Farm Harvest Program** provided summer services for students who are discouraged and disengaged in their education, with priority to students who are not eligible for Special Education resources and are failing because they are not motivated, have little interest, and have lost hope. Students help support the farm needs and revenue generating projects while participating in work-based/project-based learning opportunities. They were able to make significant contributions to their community while learning skills that will support them. They took an active role in the business operations of the farm and helped support senior citizens, grade school children, and nonprofits with farm products, baked goods, and wood products.

SOAR Learning Center provided services and support to youth who were out of traditional public school settings. The program linked academic learning and vocational training, job coaching with the Watershed program, a four-week intensive outdoor experiential education program designed to apply academic learning to community issues. Participants received experience in work-related skills such as carpentry, culinary arts, photography, horticulture, forestry, green technologies, stone masonry, basic and wilderness first aid, and business finance.

Sunrise Family Resource Center provided opportunities for out-of-school parenting and foster care youth to explore a variety of careers in the community including food preparation, grounds

and property maintenance, housekeeping, office administration and healthcare professions. Participants learned about skills required and preparation needed to secure these positions.

The Tutorial Center, Inc. provided at-risk youth with the opportunity to participate in a paid work opportunity for hands-on work in educational gardens and with local farms and farmers' markets. Youth develop transferable skills: growing and cooking healthy food, managing tasks as a team, marketing, and customer service. The Summer Work and Learn program is part of the broad Youth Agriculture Project, supported by the Tutorial Center and the University of Vermont Extension.

Other funded Summer Employment Opportunity Grants include: Burlington High School: Ready Set Work, Montpelier Parks, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Northeast Kingdom Human Services, ReSOURCE, and Youth Services.

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD)

VDOL entered into an agreement with Department of Children & Families/Economic Services Division (DCF/ESD) on July 1, 2014, to assist with program work rules pertaining to their Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs). The ABAWD program participants must be engaged in or exempted from employment services in order to receive a 3Squares VT benefit (food stamps).

VDOL agreed to provide ongoing orientations at the AJCs to individuals eligible to receive 3Squares. The coordination of employment services for program participants includes but is not limited to: monitoring of work search activities, volunteer community placements, and job development/referrals/placements. VDOL also conducts weekly workshops in the areas of resume writing, job search strategies, and interviewing techniques. VDOL has designated case managers in each of our district offices to perform the work. In 2014/2015, approximately 7900 referrals were received from ESD. VDOL exceeded the negotiated performance measure of 50% engagement in employment related services, with an outstanding year end result of 98%. The Agency of Human Services /Department of Children & Families has been federally recognized twice for their improved participation rate in the 3Squares program as a result of the partnership.

In October 2014, VDOL was asked to participate in a human services agency forum to review a Federal Nutrition Services request for proposal. On March 20, 2015, Vermont was notified it received one of ten awards in the amount of $8.9 million dollars. The award allows Vermont to be in the forefront for the potential redesign and implementation of a new federal food stamp work program.

Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG) And Wagner Peyser

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) American Job Center (AJC) staff provides "Priority of Service" to all Veterans. Program services available to Veterans include job readiness assessments, occupational development activities, and employment services through a variety of State and Federal funded programs.

JVSG staff consist of Disabled Veteran Opportunity Program Specialists (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employer Representatives (LVER). The DVOP and LVER work with the Job Center

Specialists in the AJCs to ensure Veterans who are eligible for specialized services are appropriately referred.

LVERs build relationships with the employer community to develop job opportunities and job referrals for these Veterans, and provide "priority of service" to veterans. LVERs work with the DVOP, AJC staff, and case managers who provide information used in job development, OJTs, Internships and apprenticeships to job ready veterans. Currently the apprenticeship program has 60 veterans enrolled in a wide spectrum of occupations.

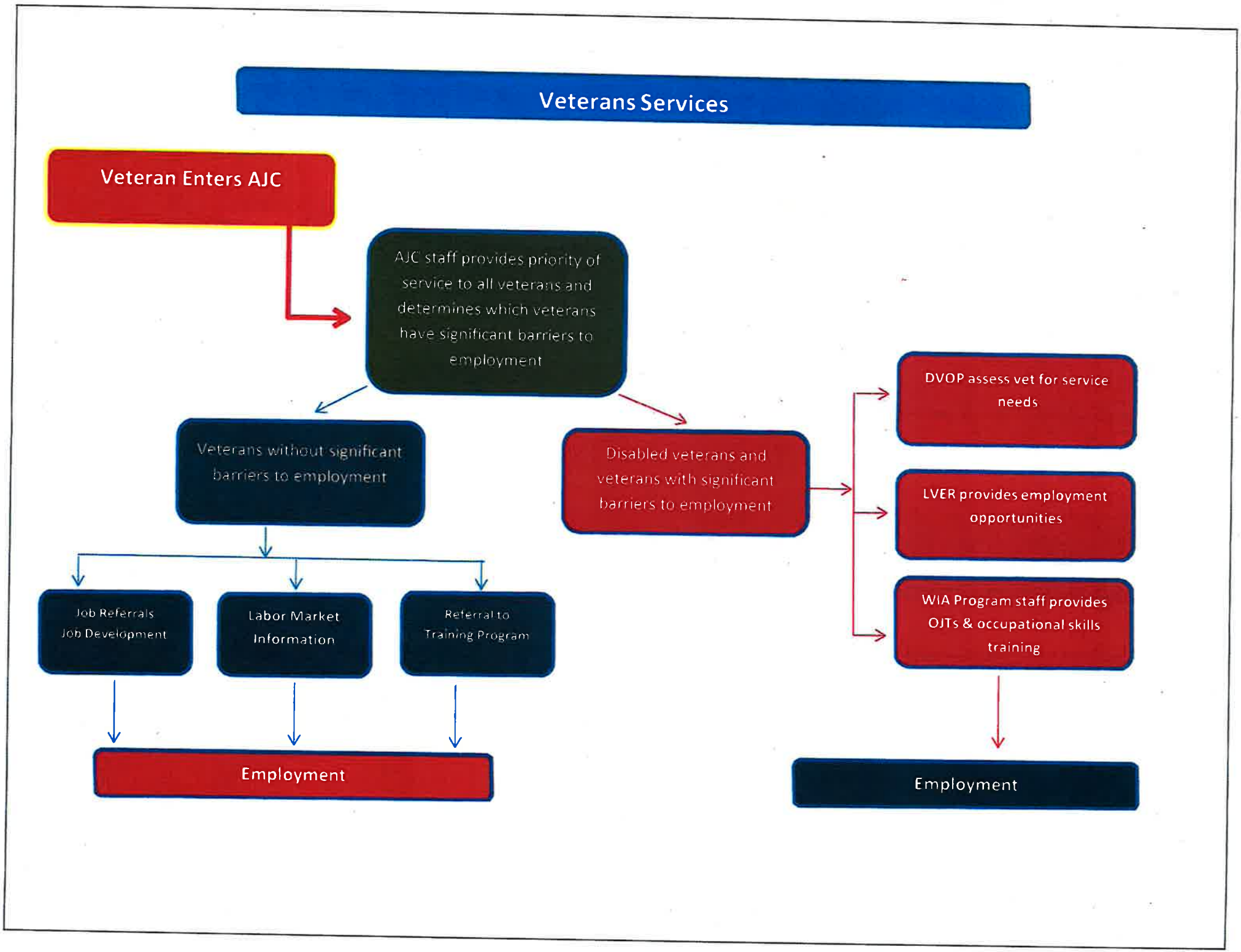
DVOPs provide intensive services to eligible Veterans. The DVOPS meet with Veterans to assess their job readiness and identify barriers that prevent them from entering the labor market or retaining employment. DVOPs assist Veterans to develop strategies and appropriate pathways to overcome barriers such as transportation, child care, substance abuse, mental health concerns, lack of appropriate housing, and more. The DVOP is also responsible for ensuring that all referrals to services or employment opportunities are seamless.

Many qualified Veterans are offered a wide variety of services provided by the AJC, through Wagner Peyser funding. Those services include skill assessment, job development, employer outreach, targeted job fairs, job referrals, and career coaching. Through the One Stop AJC, Veterans are also referred to partner organizations such as Vocational Rehabilitation or other Specialized Veterans groups.

Outreach activity is provided to all Vermont veterans through the *Governor's Welcome Home* program administered by the State Office of Veterans' affairs. A foundational piece of this program is the provision of a list of Veterans who are scheduled to be discharged from service within 30 days. VDOL Veterans staff contact those Veterans and review employment and training services available through the AJCs.

The *Vermont Veterans Employment Services Working Committee* was created in April 2015 to enhance real-time connections for Veterans seeking employment by collaborating with other Veteran service providers who focus on employment as a key element of their mission. Meeting quarterly, the committee is currently comprised of the ESGR, Heroes2Hire, SBA Veterans, Vermont HITEC, VA Woman's Services, Vermont Veterans Services, and Veterans, Inc. and is chaired by the VDOL Veterans & Employment Services Coordinator who provides guidance to the committee. Information and resources are provided to Veterans with challenges to finding employment, appropriate housing, dependable transportation, daycare, and other barriers.

The integration and easy access to labor market and occupational services is a crucial element in ensuring the success of our Veterans in Vermont's Labor Market. Vermont is fortunate to be a single delivery state; WIOA, Wagner-Peyser services, Trade Adjustment, Apprenticeship and SNAP are all housed together. Additionally, strong collaborations with other state agencies and organizations that assist Veterans provide a strong community network of supports.


Veterans Services
Veteran Enters AJC
AJC staff provides priority of service to all veterans and determines which veterans have significant barriers to employment
Veterans without significant barriers to employment
Disabled veterans and veterans with significant barriers to employment
DVOP assess vet for service needs
LVER provides employment opportunities
WIA Program staff provides OJTs & occupational skills training
Job Referrals
Job Development
Labor Market Information
Referral to Training Program
Employment
Employment

Policy on Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouse

One provision of law (38 U.S.C. 4215) establishes Priority of Service (POS) requirements for covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers, as defined by this statute) in qualified job training programs.

Veterans and eligible persons are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services for any DOL funded program. Veterans and eligible persons are identified through point of entry into the Vermont AJCs. AJC staff are trained in the delivery of priority of service for all qualified job training programs delivered through the AJC. A veteran definition for POS means a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2).

Through the Vermont Job Link system (VJL), veterans and eligible spouses identify themselves at the point of entry into the system. All participants are encouraged to create an account prior to receiving service. Veterans and covered persons are identified in demographics and populated to the appropriate reporting for services by the AJC and or DVOP.

Job Fairs

Vermont Department of Labor held a Veterans Job Fair in November 2014 that was attended by 45 employers and well over 100 veterans in attendance. JVSG staff provided support to the 3rd Annual North East Kingdom Veterans Summit with a mailing that emphasized the services VDOL's Veterans and AJC staff can provide. Veterans were connected with services and obtained employment as a result. The LVERs supported 12 job fairs across the state during April and May, 2014, which offered them an opportunity to provide information and services to the Veteran population.

Gold Card and Post 9-11

Veterans identified as Gold Card or Post 9/11 are provided with intensive services and receive Priority of Service when referred to other AJC programs. This past year has witnessed a decline in the veterans participating in Gold Card identification. The post 9/11 veterans are identified through the Vermont Job Link registration system and highlighted for DVOPs immediately through the Recently Registered Veterans report which is reviewed frequently.

Success Story

SB served 8 years of honorable service as an Aircraft Mechanic in the U.S. Military. The Marine and Army Veteran struggled to find meaningful employment after being laid off from his previous employer. To further complicate his job search, SB had served time in jail for a wrongful conviction and was seeking exoneration. Looking for assistance in his job search, Shawn turned to his local American Job Center (AJC) in Rutland, Vermont.

After receiving priority of service at this AJC, SB was referred to the center's Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) who told him about the Veterans Employment and Training Services available to eligible persons; and SB decided to accept intensive services. After 3 months of intensive services and a referral to a Veterans Justice and Re-Entry Specialist, SB gained employment at the Mountain Top Inn and Resort as a Banquet Staff Member. He expressed his appreciation to AJC staff for assisting him with his search for employment and for connecting him with the legal resources necessary to resolve the issues that hindered his job search in the past. He now makes $9.15 per hour plus gratuity and couldn't be happier with his job placement.

Success Story

S.P. served as a Multiple Launch Rocket Systems Fire Direction Specialist. While deployed for Iraqi Freedom in 2004 he was part of a convoy escort personal security team for the Brigadier General. For his performance and duties he was awarded the Combat Action Badge, Iraq Campaign Medal, and Bronze Star. When he became unemployed, he met with the Barre DVOP with a goal of part-time employment in security or case management. He became gainfully employed with a family services organization and is now a clinician working with teenagers in a couple of group home settings. It is a full time four day work week, allowing him time with his family. S.P. wrote to his DVOP thanking her "for your support during this time of hardship. I appreciate the emotional and practical support" and made specific reference to the help he received with his resume, connecting with job openings, feedback about skills & preferences, and advice on how to answer questions during interviews.

Wagner-Peyser

Wagner-Peyser services are provided in all 12 of Vermont's American Job Centers (AJCs) which are uniformly distributed throughout Vermont. All workforce development activities occurring in the AJCs are under the Vermont Department of Labor's umbrella. The AJCs provide auxiliary aids, services, and other reasonable accommodations upon request to individuals with disabilities or those who need the assistance of a translator. Vermont's AJCs provide job matching services and career guidance at no cost to employers and job seekers. Vermont continues to maintain a seamless and comprehensive system of career and employer services by co-locating our Employment Services, Veterans and Apprenticeship programs, and all services provided through the WIA.

Vermont's AJCs focus on a variety of employment-related labor exchange services including:

- Job search assistance
- Career assessments
- Job referrals
- Job Fairs
- AJC hiring events
- Job development for job seekers
- Re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, TANF, and SNAP participants
- Registering unemployment insurance claimants for work
- Recruitment services for employers
- A variety of workshops related to resume writing, interviewing skills, networking and soft skill development

The Vermont Department of Labor's resource rooms contain the technology, materials and staff knowledge of the labor market to bring comprehensive career activities to Vermonters seeking employment. Augmenting and complimenting the Labor exchange activities are a wide range of WIA activities to assist those who may need "up-skilling" to enter the labor market.

Vermont Continues To "Make Vermont Home"

Now in its fourth program year, the "Make Vermont Home" project continues to be a rich source of employment leads and a valuable opportunity to connect with Vermont employers. This cross-divisional project between the Workforce Development and Economic & Labor Market Information divisions within the Vermont Department of Labor communicates daily with Vermont employers to better understand their labor force needs. During this past program year (July 2014 through June 2015), the "Make Vermont Home" initiative successfully completed 3,900 employer contacts which identified 9,035 open positions in the Vermont economy. These identified open positions are recorded and distributed daily to the local American Job Centers to help in further placement activities. In addition, monthly compilations of the daily data are produced to assist in understanding broader trends within the Vermont labor market such as identifying the industry with the most openings and the occupational group for which employers are having the most difficulty recruiting qualified individuals. This program continues to be successful because of its tailored approach to employer outreach; the call list can be adjusted to focus on a particular region or industry in response to changing economic conditions.

Outreach to Agricultural Employers:

PY2014 has seen yet another slight increase in H-2A visa requests within Vermont. The state has approximately 44, up from 42, resulting in the certification of just over 500 positions, up from 490 last year.

Outreach to agricultural employers in Vermont has increased significantly by expanding the partnership with the Agency of Agriculture to provide overall improved service to the farming community. The Agency of Agriculture, Departments of Health, Fire Safety, Community Development, and Labor have all come together with numerous non-profit and advocacy groups (both Farmer organizations and Farm Worker groups) to create an 8 page document titled "*Vermont Farm Worker Wage, Hour and Housing Fact Sheet*" in both English and Spanish. The document is intended to be an outreach tool to help raise awareness, for both employers and employees, of Rights and Responsibilities of both groups, within Vermont law. The Vermont Department of Labor has also developed a new and important relationship with the Consul General of Mexico. This relationship will certainly benefit the entire Agriculture community within Vermont.

Fifty-five 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. Three 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 levels of the employees. Employers are also surveyed to capture the most accurate picture available for Vermont Agricultural Wages.

In addition, through collaboration with both the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security and the Maine Department of Labor, the Northeast Regional Woods (logging) Surveys are mailed and completed in Vermont by 59 logging employers. The results of the logging surveys (Prevailing Wage and Prevailing Practice) are sent to the Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information to be included in the Northeast Logging Report.

Job Service Quarterly REPORT -- Ending on 06/30/2015
Report Period: Jul 1 2014 Through: Jun 30 2015

		MSFW (number)	MSFW (percent)	Non-MSFW (number)	Non-MSFW (percent)	Equity	
Part Three							
A	Total Applications	5	100	32229	100		
1	Referred to Employment	1	20	4141	12.85	Yes	
2	Received Staff Assisted Services	3	60	16716	51.87	Yes	
3	Referred to Support Service	0	0	3439	10.67	No	
4	Career Guidance	0	0	629	1.95	No	
5	Job Development Contact	0	0	5	0.02	No	
						Compliance Indicator	Compliance Level
Part Four							
1	Placed in Job	0	0	213	0.66	No	42.5
2	Placed $.50 above min Wage	0	0	143	0.44	No	14
3	Placed in Long Term non-ag Job	0	0	113	0.35	No	3

Entergy Vermont Yankee Project

Vermont Department of Labor has been partnering with Entergy Nuclear Power Plants Vermont Yankee site since their closure announcement in August of 2013. Since then, VDOL has collaborated with the New Hampshire and Massachusetts Labor Departments. Informational sessions were held in the fall of 2014 which included Unemployment Rapid Response Sessions, Workforce Investment Act/Labor Market Information, interviewing workshops and Career Resource Center Services. The Tri-State team in partnership with Entergy held an employment fair for all Vermont Yankee employees on October 23, 2014. A TRADE petition was filed in October of 2014 and approved in November. Informational Workshops regarding TAA and TRA were held in December of 2014 and January of 2015.

In June of 2015, Vermont Yankee announced that they would lay off 14-15 security employees in July of 2015. The Tri-State team held two Rapid Response sessions at the Entergy Vermont Yankee Site in Vernon, Vermont. At this time, only four employees have been affected by this lay off. The next anticipated lay off according to Entergy officials will be May/June of 2016.

STATE GRANTS

Next Generation Funding: Workforce Education and Training Funds (WETF)

In FY 2014, the Vermont Department of Labor awarded over 1 million dollars of state general fund money to twenty businesses, organizations, and schools for training of incumbent and new workers, and for career exploration programs through the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF).

The Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle counties received funding to strengthen and expand their Personal Care Attendant Career Ladder program. This program has successfully reduced the PCA turn-over rate and has improved client satisfaction. Employees are more engaged and clients are benefiting from the increased training as well. The Career Ladder creates a foothold into the fast growing field of home healthcare (BLS estimates the need for PCAs will increase by 70% by 2020) for under-employed and unemployed people with no prior experience in healthcare.

Another healthcare initiative was funded by a grant to Vermont HITEC to recruit, educate, and place into a USDOL apprenticeship 12 Vermonters as medical assistants and/or pharmacy technicians for Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. It is an eighteen month project that will encompass all aspects of workforce development, and will result in national certification and jobs for those who successfully complete.

Pete's Greens, a leader in the locavore movement, was granted money to hire and train 4 new employees in technical skills needed for a new venture that will produce minimally processed vegetables for institutions and retail markets. These new jobs will have starting wages of $12 - $14/hour plus benefits.

The Governor's Institute of Vermont (GIV) provides opportunities for high school students to experience intensive residential learning programs in Information Technology, Entrepreneurship, or Engineering. These particular programs were partially funded by the WETF.

Other recipients of WETF grants included small businesses, the Community College of Vermont, Central Vermont Community Action Council, Vermont Rural Water Association, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and more.

Next Generation Funding: Internship

The department uses a portion of the appropriated Next Generation Funds for Internship programs that serve both secondary and post-secondary students, as well as recent graduates.

One of the most successful internship models for secondary students is the Training Interns for Partnership and Success (TIPS) program which the Department of Labor funds in 6 separate locations. The program begins with an in-school course during which participants examine their strengths, interests, and work styles and learn how to utilize these to pursue their career goals.

The curriculum emphasizes building and practicing 21st century skills, including effective communication, networking, problem solving, flexibility, creativity, and innovation. Basic skills such as how to apply for a job, dress appropriately, write a resume, and financial literacy are also included.

Two post-secondary programs that are funded have set up clearing houses for internship opportunities. The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation recruited over 75 local businesses to participate in a centralized system that provides internship opportunities to students from five Windham Region higher education institutions.

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, located in Chittenden County, connects college students and recent graduates with employers in Vermont. The organization supports the development of high-quality internship opportunities and cultivates an applicant pool and employer community prepared to meet the state's workforce needs.

Other Internship grantees include Vermont HITEC, which places high school students into internships in advanced manufacturing. Another is Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports that hires interns to work with people with disabilities as they ski, sail, hike, and engage in many other outdoor activities.

The Vermont Department of Labor provides grants to 17 Adult Technical Education institutions to use in their ATE programs and to 11 Regional Workforce Partnerships for workforce development activities throughout the state.

VDOL SPECIAL PROJECTS

NASWA Annual Conference

In September of 2014, Vermont hosted the 78th NASWA (National Association of State Workforce Agencies) Annual Conference in Burlington, VT. Headquartered at the Hilton, attendance was so great that two additional hotels were added to accommodate attendees. The conference focused on many important workforce issues, including the economy, unemployment, reemployment initiatives, the redesigned Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, workforce development systems and many other resources and programs.

Mark Henry, President stated in his welcome that: "Our annual conference is the highlight of each year during which our Association aims to fulfill its mission to: 1) promote the work of state workforce agencies; 2) engage in liaison activities with the US Department of Labor, Congress, employers, workers, the public, and the media; 3) facilitate information sharing among association members through conferences, webinars, research, and other forms of communication; and 4) initiate training and development activities to enhance program performance, efficiency, and innovation."

Conference participants were able to enjoy Vermont in one of its most glorious seasons, experience ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center where a welcome reception was held, and explore downtown Burlington.

Job Driven National Emergency Grant

To strengthen the capacity for working with long-term unemployed Vermonters, VDOL partnered with 501(c)3 non-profit Vermont HITEC to implement the Job-Driven National Emergency Grant (JD-NEG). The goal of this grant is to support and expand the existing VDOL Career Resource Center resources and infrastructure to support the long-term unemployed dislocated worker population.

Vermont HITEC has been nationally recognized by the USDOL as an innovator of workforce development models. Vermont HITEC has been conducting workforce development activities throughout the states of Vermont and New Hampshire for almost 15 years. The organization has educated, trained, and employed Vermonters using a unique workforce development model (ITAR) that also serves employers looking for skilled workers. The program requires employer partners to guarantee employment to program participants in advance of a comprehensive education and training program. Participants attend at no cost to them due to the variety of funding streams HITEC receives. This workforce development model includes all components necessary for individual job placement, including participant and employer outreach, curriculum development, pre-apprenticeship education, and apprenticeship/on-the-job training activities. Based on a strong record of program success, Vermont HITEC has extensive employer contacts throughout the state and has actively participated in numerous economic development success stories that have directly placed over 1100 participants in livable wage jobs - most of whom remain employed to this day.

A significant part of Vermont HITEC's success is due to its strong partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division, including the VDOL Career Resource Centers and the Apprenticeship Program. The two organizations have partnered closely on various projects in outreach, recruitment, and supportive service activities.

To date, the JD-NEG grant has trained and employed more than 12 long-term unemployed Vermonters in the high growth fields of Health care, Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Business Services. Participants have filled numerous occupations including certified medical coders, certified pharmacy technicians, certified medical assistants, software support specialists, and technical writers with top employers such as Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Precyse Solutions, Vermont Information Processing, and Triad Design Service. Through an articulation agreement with Burlington College, participants earn 24 to 30 college credits upon completion of an 8 to10 week intensive training, and an additional 39 credits after completing the Registered Apprenticeship.

Due to the high number of dislocated workers in Vermont, VDOL and Vermont HITEC secured a Sector Partnership NEG grant to expand training and employment services to this population. This grant expands upon the existing HITEC model by enhancing sector partnership strategies to secure employer and industry participation, and additional career enhancement services for participants. The same training and employment model is used to secure trainees guaranteed jobs and additional training through registered apprenticeship; additional education partners like Burlington College enhance training services through remedial skill development and grant-

funded continuing education to expand upon the credits received during the intense training and apprenticeship. Participants are only 15 credits from an associates' degree when they complete the first 6 months of the apprenticeship. The services available through this grant enable participants to earn stackable credentials at a fraction of the normal cost.

While this grant is in the initial stages of implementation, 3 certified pharmacy technicians were recently trained and employed with Dartmouth-Hitchcock.

Both the Sector Partnership and Job Driven NEG grants are supported by participating employer partners, including Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Precyse Solutions, Vermont Information Processing, Triad Design Service, Husky, and Vermont Precision Tools. The newly-acquired Sector Partnership NEG will allow VDOL to expand employer outreach in coordination with the Vermont State Workforce Investment Board, collect labor market information, identify key areas of high demand for employers, and identify high growth career opportunities for individuals trained within specific industries.

Triad Design Service, Inc., a technical publications service company, and Vermont HITEC, Inc. partnered to develop an eight-week pre-apprenticeship education program followed by a one-year apprenticeship program for Technical Writer jobs. A technical writer interprets engineering source documents to write or revise technical manuals.

Prior to the start of the education program, a curriculum was developed with the unique and custom requirements of the employer partner and the requirements of the positions that would be filled by the apprentices. Through an extensive recruitment process, in partnership with the US Department of Labor, Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, and the Institute for American Apprenticeships at Burlington College, twelve individuals were selected for the eight-week training program.

Designed to serve unemployed and unemployed Vermonters, the program provides free education and includes one year of on-site mentoring through the apprenticeship at Triad Design Service in Williston, VT. Successful completion of the program leads directly to full-time employment as Technical Writers.

The training program was funded in part by a grant administered through the US Department of Labor.

Success Stories—Triad Design Service

Jerome Lindberg

- Male
- 58 Years Old
- Education: Bachelor of Science
- Displaced Worker
- Previous Employment: Product Engineer

Prior to joining Vermont Circuits in Brattleboro, Jerome was at the IBM plant in Essex Junction from 1994 to 2013. His last day at IBM was in July 2013. After leaving IBM, it took him 5 months to find the Vermont Circuit job. This job was technical in nature, but was far from his home in Jericho. Each week he left early Monday morning and returned home late Friday evening. In September of 2014, Vermont Circuits closed after 25 years of building circuit boards.

He spent the next 7 months looking for work in Chittenden County and discovered the job market was challenging for a person his age; there were few jobs that required his skill set. After filing many applications, he received little interest and very few interviews.

With the help and encouragement of the staff at the Vermont Department of Labor, Jerome applied for the TRIAD opportunity and was accepted. With the exception of the past year, Jerome has always been employed and engaged. The program gave him the opportunity to recharge his skills; he now has the confidence needed to be an effective employee and to continue working in the technical field.

He feels well-prepared for the apprenticeship, having enhanced his skills during the classroom instruction component.

"The program gave me the opportunity to recharge my skills. I took full advantage of the opportunity and now have the confidence that I can still be an effective employee."

Peggy Bradley

- Female
- 42 Years Old
- Single Parent of Grandchildren
- Education: Some College
- Unemployed
- Previous Employment: Office Administration

Peggy was born and raised in the small Vermont town of Huntington, where she lived with her parents and siblings, Paul (a mechanic & welder), Rita (an IBMer) and Penny, respectively. She attended school in the Chittenden East School District and graduated from Mount Mansfield Union High School in 1990. While at MMU, she attended the Essex Technical Center and studied Data Processing and Accounting. Although she had her first child during her Senior year, she took a year of classes at Champlain College for Accounting.

Peggy attended the Step-up for Women Program at Vermont Works for Women, where she learned the basics of electrical wiring, construction, and arc welding.

Her work history includes various full-time temporary and permanent jobs. With the exception of working briefly as a construction worker and cashier, most of her jobs were in an office as an administrative assistant, bookkeeper/office manager, and Microsoft Office specialist.

She went from being homeless, living in a motel for several weeks with her children to now co-owning a home. Prior to beginning the NEG -OJT, she had been on unemployment for nearly 8 months, exhausting her benefits.

Peggy found information about the program while filing her weekly claim. She felt the program would enhance skills she already possessed and was intrigued by TRIAD as a company. She attended the informational meeting and was called for an initial interview. There was a second interview and she was accepted into the ITAR program.

The Tech Writer program was more intense than Peggy anticipated, with long class days and considerable homework. She was able to keep her goal of a career with Triad Design Service in mind and persevered with the coursework.

She has grown personally and professionally and looks forward to an enhanced future.

"It has been life-changing, exhausting, exhilarating, difficult, and fun."