

House Commerce & Economic Development Briefing

# *Workforce Overview*

*Wednesday, March 1, 2023*

**Victoria Biondolillo**, *Executive Director*  
State Workforce Development Board

---

*Office of Governor Philip B. Scott*

# Environment

## Data illustrates TWO major issues:

1. Current shortage of labor and need to fill jobs
2. Long term trends in demographic decline

## Current:

- 20,000+ open jobs
- From 2019-2022, average wage increase of 21%
- Consistently low unemployment claims

## Trend:

- ALL counties show decline from peak workforce
- 6 showing over 10% decline
- 8 showing over 15% decline

# Vision

*A sustainable, nimble workforce system that can bolster our economy for generations to come, while effectively matching employers with workers to fill open jobs, today.*

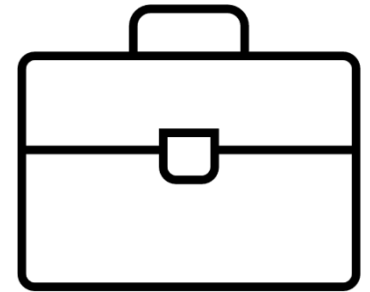
# Strategy

Invest in the existing workforce

Retain graduates

Add net new workers

Continuously monitor and improve to ensure system efficiency



# Workforce Funding

## State funding

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Training
- Wrap around services
- Business supports

## Federal Sources

- WIOA
- Low-income, marginalized, or disabled adults
- Disadvantaged youth
- Unemployed workers

Non-profit &  
private  
investment

# Key Players

## Government Agencies

- Department of Labor
- Agency of Education
- HireAbility
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development

## Education and Training

- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation
- Vermont State Colleges
- University of Vermont
- Independent colleges and universities
- Technical Centers

## Private and Local Partners

- Regional Development Corporations
- Vermont Business Roundtable
- Advanced Vermont
- Vermont Futures Project
- Adult Basic Education
- Governor's Institute
- Labor Organizations

State Workforce Development Board

# Workforce Board Statutory Charge

## Board Bylaws (Article II, Duties)

- "The Board advises the Governor on the development and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated and responsive statewide workforce education and training system."
- "Development and updating of comprehensive state performance accountability measures, including state adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state."

## State Statute (10 V.S.A. § 541a)

- "...conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the State that brings together employers and potential employees, including students, the underemployed, the incumbent employees seeking further training, to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and training needs..."
- "...ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the State's workforce and economic goals..."

## Federal Charge

- "...the review of statewide policies, of statewide programs, and of recommendations on actions that should be taken by the State to align workforce development programs in the State in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system in the State..."
- "Development and updating of comprehensive state performance accountability measures, including state adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the core programs in the state."

# State Workforce Development Board

## **Vision:**

*Vermont's employment demands will be met through a statewide, coordinated, and integrated system of workforce education, training, and development where all Vermonters can connect to robust career pathways, advance along career ladders, and new Vermonters can quickly secure employment with a Vermont employer. (Vermont's Modified 2022 WIOA Combined State Plan, pg.25)*

## **Mission:**

*To develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive statewide workforce education and training system. (Board Bylaws)*



# Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Workforce  
Innovation and  
Opportunity Act  
(WIOA)

Workforce System  
Alignment

Workforce Supports

Workforce  
Education and  
Training

Relocation,  
Recruitment and  
Retention

# **Priority Area 1:**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity  
Act (WIOA)

# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

*In keeping with WIOA, the Board will remain in compliance regarding federal requirements.*

## Strategies

## Benchmarks

1. Develop, Implement and Modify WIOA State Plan

- The SWDB staff, along with applicable agencies, will review, execute and improve statewide policies and programs outlined in the State Plan.

2. Select One-Stop Operator and Monitor System Improvement

- By March of 2023, the SWDB staff will procure the One-Stop Operator to oversee the One-Stop system, including all One-Stop system partners.

3. Create and Apply State Performance Accountability Measures

- The Board staff will produce an annual report, in collaboration with the Policy Committee, to be evaluated by the full Board and the Governor, that uses metrics to measure and correct program effectiveness.

# **Priority Area 2:** Workforce System Alignment

# Workforce System Alignment

*Improve Vermont's workforce development system by increasing coordination, integration and tracking of support services to meet the needs of all Vermonters throughout their lifespan.*

## Strategies

## Benchmarks

1. Create and Implement a Warm Handoff System

- The Board staff, along with the One-Stop Operator entity, will review, and edit, the current common intake form encompassing all One-Stop partners and interested community partners to ensure a warm handoff among all workforce services by July 2023.

2. Foster and Maintain Regional Business Partnerships

- The Board staff will engage with business owners monthly on a regional basis to better understand employer needs (county tours, events, etc.).

3. Expand Workforce Services to Marginalized Groups

- The Board staff, in coordination with the Office of Racial Equity, will leverage community partnerships and host events to directly offer workforce services, information and resources to marginalized communities, no less than four times per year.

# **Priority Area 3:** Workforce Supports

# Workforce Supports

*Improve awareness and utilization of current workforce resources while also addressing external workforce barriers like affordability of housing, childcare, internet access, and more which additionally must be considered to better enhance workforce growth.*

## Strategies

## Benchmarks

1. Solicit and Apply Workforce Board Policy Input

- The Board will propose policy recommendations related to workforce to Governor office staff and cabinet members for consideration.

2. Implement Language Accessibility Plan for Workforce Related Materials

- By December of 2023, the Board staff and members will identify priority workforce related documents, including the Board's employee and employer toolkits, to be translated in the following languages: العربية (Arabic), Bosnian, မြန်မာစာ (Burmese), دری (Dari), Français (French), Kirundi, नेपाली (Nepali), پښتو (Pashto), Soomaali (Somali), Español (Spanish), Swahili, Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese).

# **Priority Area 4:** Workforce Education and Training



# Workforce Education and Training

*Identify Vermont's high-demand careers and develop career pathways to be seamlessly executed by training and education providers while engaging Vermonters at any stage of their career path, leading to greater financial independence and personal fulfillment.*

## Strategies

## Benchmarks

### 1. Map Career Pathways

- By July 2023, the Career Pathways Committee will establish the process for defining, creating and approving of career pathways to be carried out on a quarterly basis.

### 2. Host Training and Education Provider Round Tables

- The Board staff will engage with primary, secondary and post-secondary education and training providers, including career and technical education centers and adult education and literacy providers, in coordination with AOE, twice per year to better understand education and training providers' needs to improve the handoff system between education and career pathways.

### 3. Define Eligibility and Approve Credentials of Value

- By March of 2023, the SWDB staff will maintain a Training and Credentialing Committee that will meet at least twice per year to approve State-endorsed and industry-recognized credentials and certificates, in coordination with VDOL and interested community partners.

# **Priority Area 5:**

Relocation, Recruitment and Retention

# Relocation, Recruitment and Retention

*Work to better identify, strengthen and coordinate Vermont's relocation and recruitment system with the guiding objective of net-new workers to grow Vermont's workforce.*

## Strategies

## Benchmarks

1. Facilitate Collaboration and Efficiency of Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- The Board staff, along with the Relocation and Recruitment Committee, will engage with the Regional Development Corporations (RDCs), workforce training providers and applicable agencies at least twice per year to better understand effective and ineffective relocation and recruitment strategies and their marketing campaigns. This includes identifying gaps in those efforts.

2. Increase Workforce Diversity

- By March of 2024, the Board staff, in coordination with the Office of Racial Equity and other interested community partners, will produce recommended strategies to assist into recruitment, relocation and retention of marginalized groups in Vermont's workforce for the Board to consider.

3. (Pending Legislative Approval) Develop Statewide New American Support Network

- (Pending Legislative Approval) The Board will request for proposal and contract an entity to convene the Agencies of Human Services, and Commerce and Community Development, Secretary of State Office of Professional Regulation and community-based service partners to develop and recommend a coordinated system to recruit and employ more New Americans in the state's labor force and to support the career advancement of New Americans living in Vermont so they may more fully participate in Vermont's economy.

# S.11 (ACT 183) Update

## S.11 workforce initiative highlights include:

- **\$3M Vermont Trades Scholarship Program** will be administered through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and provide scholarships for individuals enrolled in an industry-recognized training and certification program that leads to employment in high-demand sectors in Vermont.
- **\$10M to address healthcare workforce shortages** through various grants, loan forgiveness and incentive programs to support, recruit and retain healthcare workers in the state.
- **\$3M New Relocating Worker Program** to continue the state's work to recruit new residents to the state through grants that help pay for their moving expenses.
- **\$720K Corrections Workforce Development System** to be created to better support reentry into the workforce by establishing a community-based reentry program.

## S.11 economic development initiative highlights include:

- **\$40M Community Recovery and Revitalization Grant Program** to support municipalities, businesses and non-profits in sectors severely impacted by the COVID-19 emergency through investments to recover and revitalize their businesses and local communities, with a preference for projects located in regions and communities with declining or stagnant grand list values.
- **\$19M Forgivable Loan Program** to be administered by the Vermont Economic Development Authority and provide forgivable loans to businesses who are experiencing continued working capital shortfalls due to the COVID-19 emergency mitigation measures.

# Fiscal Year 2024 Investments:

## *Existing Workforce*

### **Fiscal Year 2024:**

- \$1M Work Based Learning & Training Funds
- \$3M Upskill Vermont (UVM)
- \$1M to VSAC for trades-based scholarships
- \$5M to the Vermont Training Program
- Modernizing Vermont Apprenticeship Program

### **Previous Investments**

- ✓ CTE and trades training to boost trades workforce.
- ✓ Internships, work-based learning, career placements and apprenticeships to directly place Vermonters into jobs.
- ✓ Regional workforce development support services to address regional business and worker needs.
- ✓ Training and upskilling scholarships to fill critical jobs and provide opportunities for Vermonters for career growth.

# Fiscal Year 2024 Investments:

## *Retention*

### **Fiscal Year 2024:**

- \$1M Youth Development Program foster care youth
- \$10M, 50% tuition reduction for critical sectors at CCV
- \$3.4M 802 Opportunity Grants
- \$9M in bridge funding for VSC

### **Previous Investments**

- ✓ Loan repayment for critical occupations.
- ✓ Investment in youth employment and training.
- ✓ Expanding work-based learning in our education system.
- ✓ Tuition re-imbusement for upskilling and training.

# Fiscal Year 2024 Investments: *Net New Workers*

## **Fiscal Year 2024**

- \$1M Reach up benefits cliff pilot
- \$4M New and relocated worker grants
- \$3M in forgone revenue military pensions tax exemption
- \$200K In New American workforce coordination to the State Workforce Development Board
- \$3.2M for the Language Action Plan
- \$1M for refugee resettlement
- \$5.2M to expand the earned income tax credit to 45% of the federal credit to cover more hard-working families and allow low-income Vermonters to keep more of what they earn
- \$8M to increase income thresholds by \$15,000 for the Vermont social security income tax exemption. Thirty-nine states don't tax Social Security at all and most of the remaining states have more generous exemptions

## **Previous Investments:**

- ✓ Hundreds of millions invested for recruitment and retention in critical occupations like trades, healthcare, childcare, and infrastructure
- ✓ Relocation funds to recruit workers here
- ✓ Modernizing licensing requirements and processes to attract more workers here
- ✓ Re-engaging disengaged workers already in Vermont
- ✓ Investments in affordable housing, childcare, education, broadband and infrastructure
- ✓ "Returnship" grants for mature workers
- ✓ Give a second chance to people who have criminal backgrounds and are trying to earn stable, meaningful employment to become licensed

# Fiscal Year 2024 Investments: *System Oversight*

## **Fiscal Year 2024**

- One – Stop Operator procurement
- Performance measurement systems as outlined in the State Workforce Development Board's strategic plan.
- Special Oversight Committee on Workforce Expansion and Development (SOCWED) implementation
- New American Labor Support Program

## **Previous Efforts**

- ✓ Creation of the SOCWED
- ✓ State of Vermont Unified State Plan



# Questions?

- Contact -

Tori Biondolillo, Executive Director  
Victoria.Biondolillo@vermont.gov  
802-585-6805

Abby Rhim, Deputy Director  
Abby.Rhim@vermont.gov  
802-522-0678