

Letter of Support to Vermont General Assembly

Workforce development continues to be a tremendous challenge facing Vermont businesses and communities. With an unemployment rate hovering around 2.5%, businesses are struggling to remain viable as worker shortages limit productivity in critical areas of Vermont's economy. We know that state leaders are working hard to address these challenges – thank you.

We believe that it will take innovative solutions that grow Vermont's workforce capacity and address issues of equity, poverty, food security, and environmental protection. That is why we support the **Serve Learn Earn** collaborative including Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Vermont Works for Women, Vermont Audubon, and ReSOURCE.

Serve Learn Earn organizations provide pathways to employment for young people and side-lined workers through paid service learning opportunities. Not only are participants in these programs building essential career-specific skills and earning professional credentials, they are engaging in soft-skill and leadership development that will help them become invaluable additions to our businesses.

With so much work to be done to address the housing and environmental crisis a tremendous shortage of skilled workers is slowing the pace of construction, weatherization improvements, and the gains of renewable energy installations. The outdoor recreation, working lands, agriculture, and conservation sectors are in equal need of a skilled and well-trained workforce.

We are also endorsing Serve Learn Earn because this collaborative has a proven track record of connecting participants with employers. Serve Learn Earn is demonstrating that it's possible to create meaningful career pathways for participants, offer paid service and training experiences, and complete high priority projects that benefit all Vermonters.

Respectfully submitted,

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