

S.155

An act relating to creating a strategic workforce development needs assessment and strategic plan

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

This bill may be referred to as the Strategic Workforce Enhancement and Employment Program (SWEEP).

Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) The State of Vermont offers a wide range of workforce training and workforce education programs designed to increase and diversify the skills of and opportunities available to the workers of this State.

(b) Over the past several years, significant resources have been devoted to enhancing many of the available workforce development opportunities. However, the current state of the economy and the continuing pressures projected for the budget over the next several years require a critical analysis of every state investment to ensure the maximum return on investment of limited resources.

(c) The General Assembly finds that Vermont's Farm to Plate Initiative can serve as an effective model for the workforce development and education strategic plan. The Initiative has greatly enhanced our collective understanding and the future development of the operation and ongoing needs of Vermont's

food system. The Farm to Plate Initiative demonstrates the success of an approach that is:

- (1) strategic, comprehensive, and systems-based;
- (2) forward-looking, with a ten-year planning horizon;
- (3) informed and driven by performance metrics; and
- (4) built on a foundation of broad stakeholder engagement.

(d) In adopting this act, it is the goal of the Vermont General Assembly to use the experiences of workforce development training and education providers along with measurable data to ensure that workforce training and workforce development education programs in Vermont are effective, relevant, and responsive to the ongoing needs of Vermont's citizens, employers, and the State's economy.

(e) To achieve this goal, the General Assembly resolves to create a workforce development needs assessment and strategic plan that is:

(1) primarily constituent-driven, whereby those who use the services administered by the various workforce development education and training programs shall be consulted in order to define and understand their workforce and training needs;

(2) secondarily administrator-driven, whereby those who administer the various workforce development education and training programs are responsible for identifying, developing, and implementing the

forward-looking, long-term initiatives required to meet Vermont's workforce development needs; and

(3) modeled after the Farm to Plate Initiative set forth in 10 V.S.A.

§ 330.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A § 545 is added to read:

§ 545. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND
STRATEGIC PLAN

(a) The Commissioner of Labor, in coordination with the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development and the Secretary of Education, and in consultation with the Workforce Development Council and the Secretary of Human Services, shall create a strategic plan for workforce development in Vermont that shall:

(1) identify the components of Vermont's labor market and workforce trends based upon existing data, studies, and analysis;

(2) identify current and future workforce skill requirements; and

(3) identify and determine the effectiveness of existing state workforce development and training resources, including those programs established under this chapter, chapters 22 and 22A of this title, and 16 V.S.A. chapters 37 and 39, and recommend ways to enhance operational efficiencies.

(b) The strategic plan shall identify gaps between the public, nonprofit, and private workforce development programs and Vermont's workforce development needs and propose measures to bridge these gaps.

(c) The Commissioner of Labor shall:

(1) consider the Farm to Plate Initiative, as set forth in section 330 of this title, as a model for the design and implementation of the needs assessment and strategic plan and consult with the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund in these efforts;

(2) use the information gathered from the needs assessment and the strategic plan on an ongoing basis to identify methods and funding necessary to strengthen the link among the Vermont workforce and public, nonprofit, and private workforce development programs;

(3) coordinate with the State Auditor of Accounts to develop measurable benchmarks to assess the performance of the State's workforce development programs; and

(4) on or before January 15 of each year, submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education a report on the workforce development strategic plan and the performance of the State's workforce development programs.

(d) The Commissioner of Labor may seek and accept funds from private and public entities and utilize technical assistance, loans, grants, and other means as available for the purposes of this section.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2013.