



FY  
**18**

# Testimony before House Appropriations Committee

February 17, 2017

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Vermont Student Assistance Corporation



Creating opportunities  
for all Vermont  
students,  
but especially for  
those  
—of any age—  
who believe that  
the doors to  
education and training  
are closed to them.





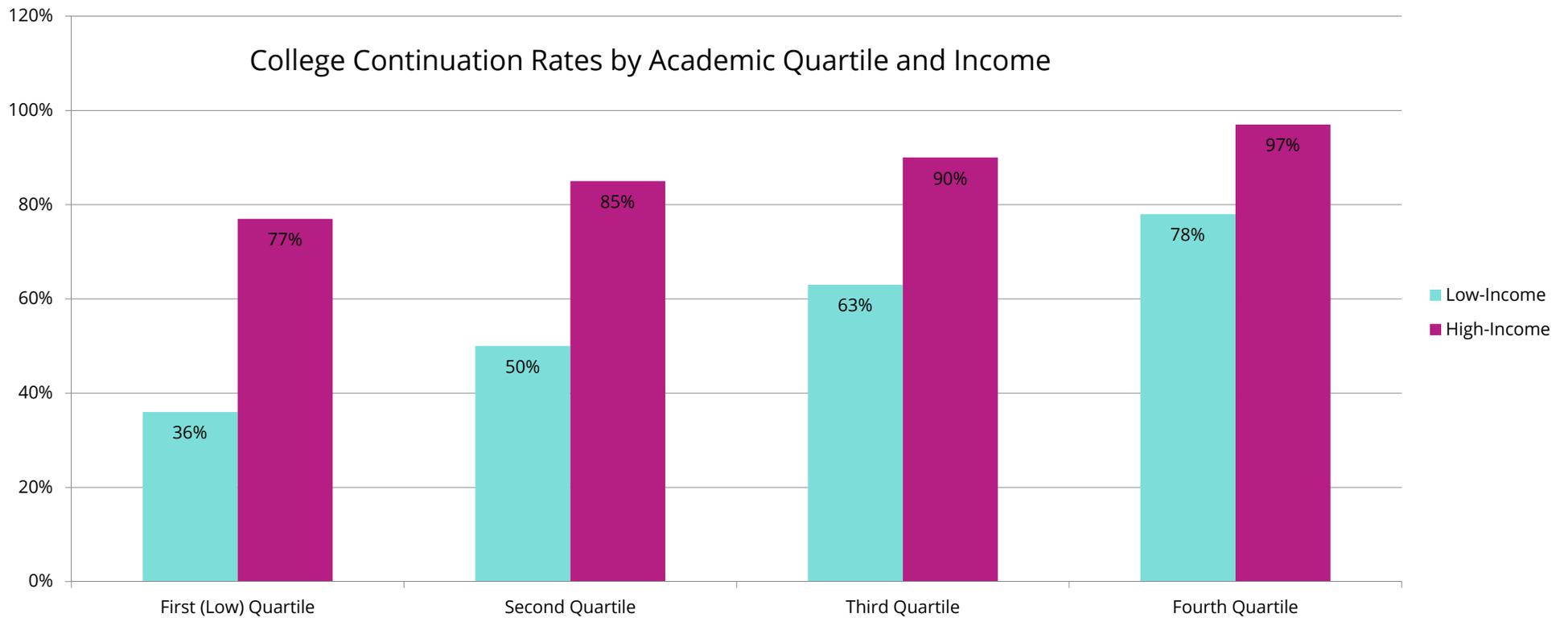
## Pathways to Postsecondary Education & Training

PreK-6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Postsecondary
VHEIP — VT's 529 college savings plan			18,268 accounts worth \$311M**				
Naviance			24,565 students at 114 schools*				
PLP training			76 schools*				
GEAR UP			3,050 students*				GEAR UP scholarships 469 scholarships*
Talent Search			1,023 students*				
School counselor training			1,184 attendees*				
			Roadmaps to College website & e-mail communications to students and parents		9,400*		VT Grants from VSAC 13,030 awards*
				College Pathways	1,193 attendees*		
					Paying for College nights	2,490 attendees at 65 high schools*	VSAC's Advantage Loans \$42M**
					Forms nights	1,365 attendees at 70 sessions*	
					FAFSA completion		GUIDE 194 first-year students*
					Dual enrollment stipends	188 stipends worth \$28,200**	
						Early college stipends	165 stipends worth \$24,750**
				Intro to College Studies			Career & financial aid at CCV sites
				Remedial vouchers			
Lamoille Aspirations Initiative							
Bellows Falls Aspirations Initiative							
Hazen Union Aspirations Initiative							Educational Opportunity Centers for adult learners 1,719 adult learners*

\*Figures as of FY16 end (June 30, 2016)

\*\*Figures current as of February 14, 2017

# The Unspoken Equity Issue



Source: College Board

# Vermont State Grant programs

## FY16

In the 2015-2016 academic year (FY 2016), VSAC awarded 13,030 need-based education grants to students attending school full- or part-time, or enrolled in nondegree courses of study.

VT Grant Program	Grant Awards
Full-time	8,297
Part-time	3,008
Nondegree	1,725

FY16 VSAC Appropriation: \$19,909,088

# VSAC's new initiatives

- Career & Education Wellness
- FAFSA Completion Initiative
- New "Aspirations" projects
- 70X2025VT.org



# Vermont nondegree grant program: a brief history

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**1982:** The Vermont General Assembly creates the first nondegree grant program in the country; applicants needed to be receiving unemployment benefits to receive a grant.

**1984:** The program is expanded to include under-employed Vermonters, opening up the program to applicants who are working but not receiving a livable wage and to applicants from families receiving state assistance.

**2016:** More than 35,600 nondegree grants awarded since the inception of the program. The nondegree grant has nearly doubled the numbers of awards over the last decade.



# Nondegree grant: purpose

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## **An accredited training program that increases employability**

*CDL licenses*

*Certification as childcare providers*

*Training that gains entry into health professions such as LNA, massage therapy and medical transcription*

*Training to enter into fitness professions, culinary arts, etc.*

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## **Driver's education programs**

*For low-income adult students to complete the driver's education they need to acquire a Vermont driver's license. Vermont's lack of widespread public transportation is a significant barrier to employment in most areas of the state of Vermont outside of Chittenden County*

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## **Nondegree courses at colleges and universities**

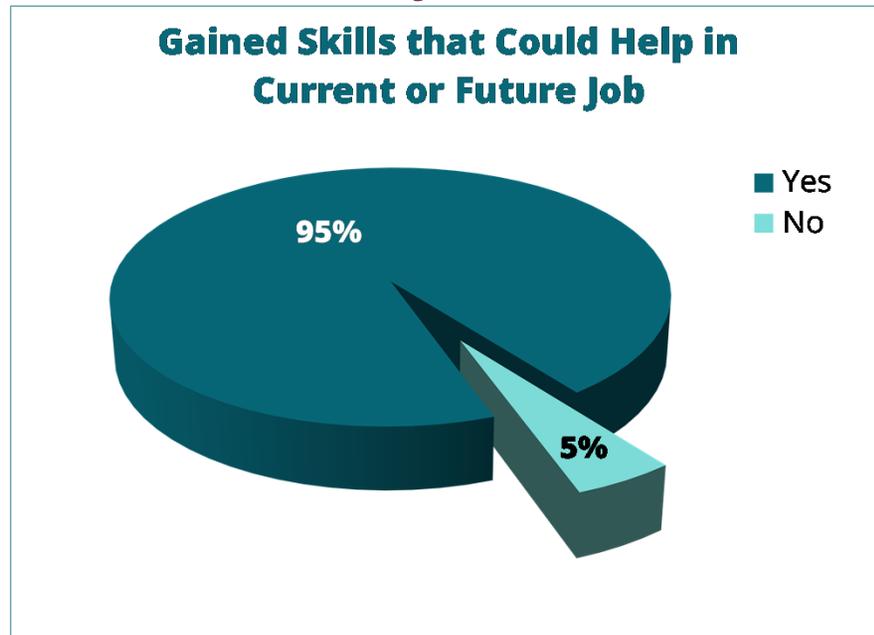
*For applicants who are trying to decide if they are capable of successfully tackling college-level work*

*Applicants who have prerequisites that they need to take before they can be admitted to a college*

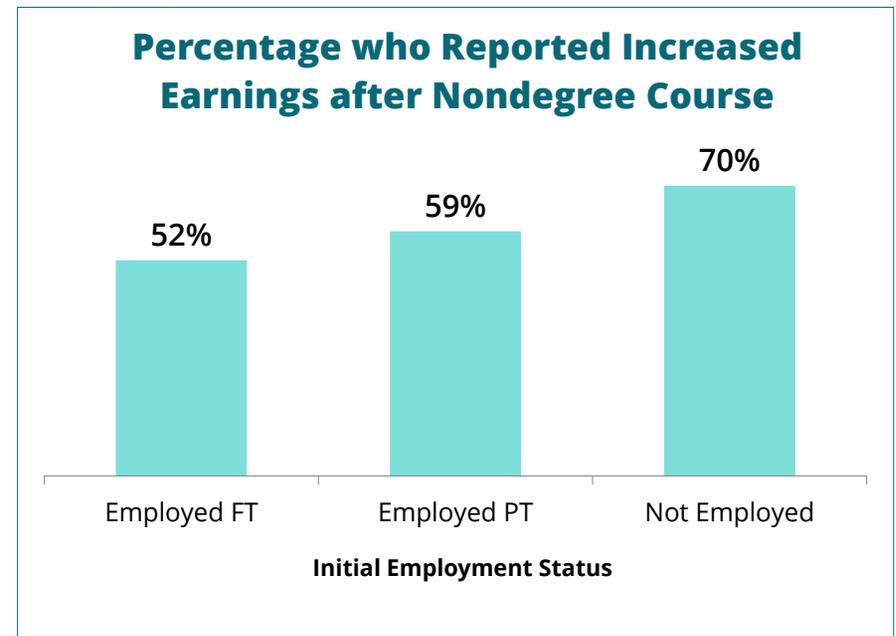
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# Nondegree grant: changing lives

Overwhelmingly report they gained skills that will help them in their current or future jobs

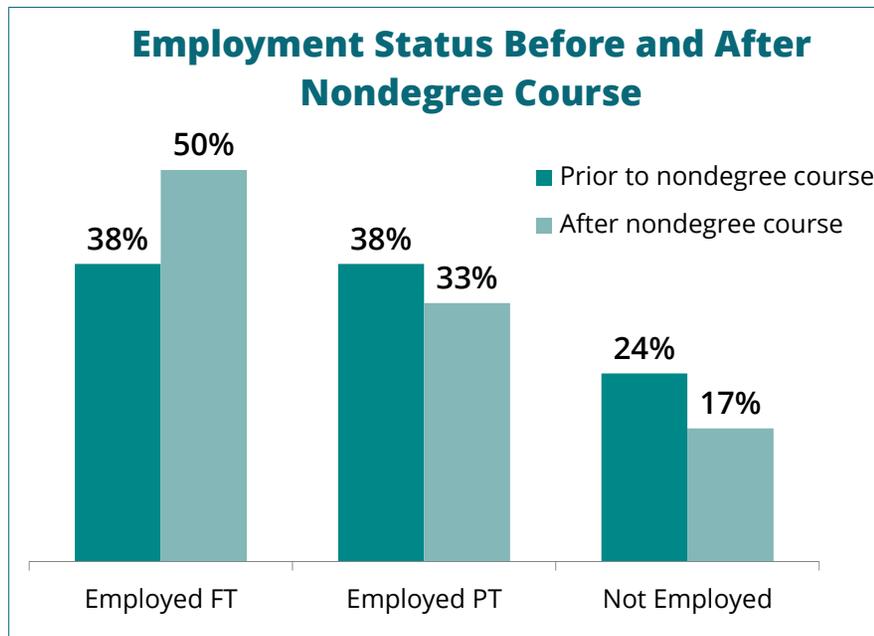


Increased earnings after completing the course, regardless of their initial employment status

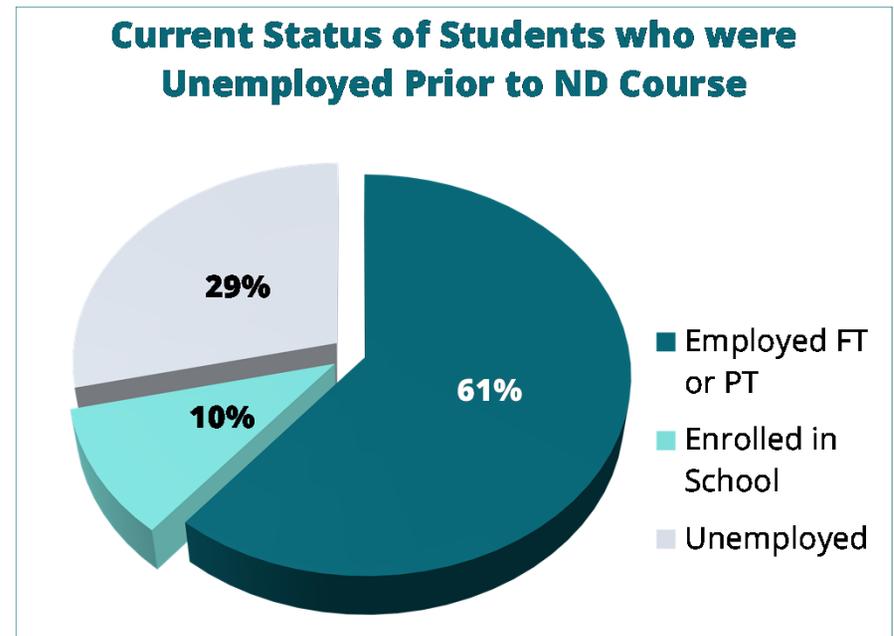


# Nondegree grant: changing futures

Full-time employment among recipients increased from 38 percent to 50 percent, a 31 percent increase



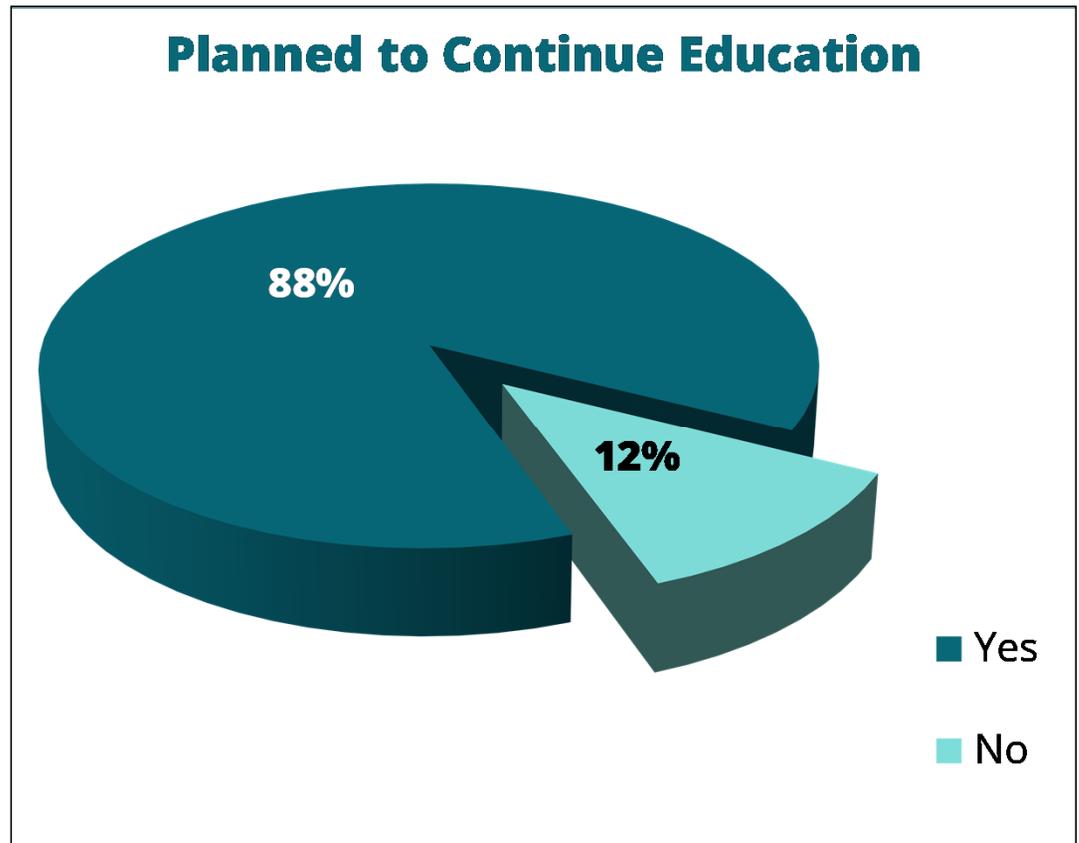
7 out of 10 unemployed adult students were either working or in school after completing the nondegree course



## Nondegree grant: changing future generations

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The vast majority of students who used a nondegree grant to complete a college course found that they were successful taking college-level courses and planned on continuing their education.



# VSAC's FY18 request

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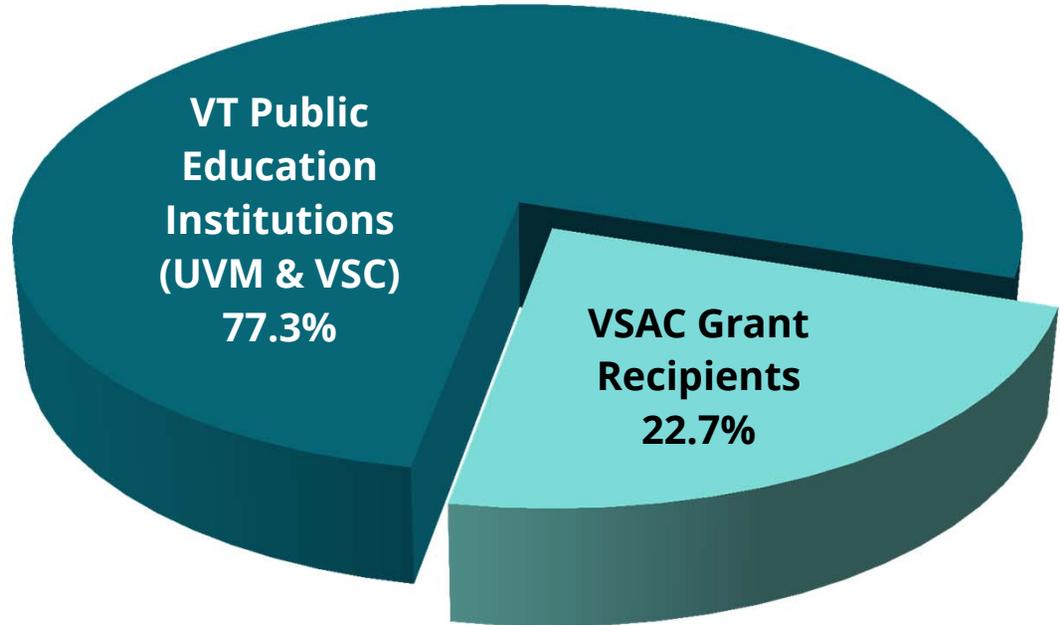
- The Act 148 Committee recommended that funding for higher education (VSC, UVM, and VSAC) increase at the rate of GF growth plus 1%.
  - We are requesting a 5.8 percent increase for Higher Education.
  - \$1,000,000 of the appropriation is targeted for the Nondegree program which assists adult learners who seek to improve their education and training.
- \$200,000 to expand the Aspirations Project, and serve up to four high schools in regions throughout the state.
- Add \$12,000 for dual enrollment stipend for books and travel, for a total of \$72,000.



# Appendix

# Distribution of state funding for HE

Fiscal Year '16



VT Public Higher Education includes UVM & VSC.

Source: Joint Fiscal Office, 2016 Joint Fiscal Facts; VSAC percentage includes Next Generation Scholarships

## Saving for the future generation

The **Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan** seeks to help families begin to save early and reduce their need for borrowing when the time comes to pursue postsecondary education or training.

It is also one way grandparents can help ensure a lasting legacy.

As of December 30, 2016 VHEIP had more than 18,000 active accounts and \$300 million in assets.

Since its inception, VHEIP families have withdrawn more than \$116 million to help 4,722 students pay for college.



## Middle and high school students

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Two federal grants (**Talent Search and GEAR UP**) provide targeted information and counseling services to low-income and first generation students beginning as early as 7th grade.

Whole schools are served as well, by providing services using a **Cohort Model**.

In addition, VSAC provides access to **Naviance** and **PLP training** to all public middle and high schools.

**Aspiration Projects** are being conducted at three high schools to increase the proportion of students to continue their studies after high school.



# Aspiration initiatives

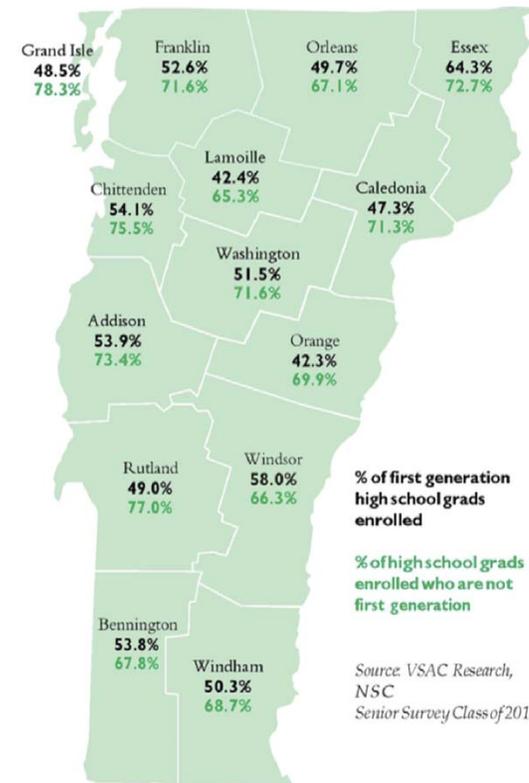
The Aspiration Project aims to increase postsecondary aspiration and continuation rates.

In FY16, nearly 1,100 middle and high school students were served by the project at the following schools:

- Bellows Falls Union High School
- Lamoille Union Middle School
- Lamoille Union High School

Hazen Union High School was added to the program in academic year 2016-2017.

**College Enrollment & Family Education:**  
Vermont postsecondary education  
enrollment rate by county



## High school juniors and seniors

VSAC presents **College Pathways**, the state's largest college planning event on three college campuses in the spring of each year. A full range of workshops led by experts provides students and parents the opportunity to learn about the college application process and for many, visit a college campus for the first time. More than 17,700 Vermonters have attended the event since its inception.

**Dual Enrollment & Early College stipends** are available to low-income students who need to pay for books and/or transportation to a college campus.

**"Paying for College"** workshops go to where Vermonters are: their local high school. VSAC counselors visited 65 high schools last year and served more than 2,490 students and parents.



# College students and parents

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## Vermont State Grants

**Vermont Opportunity Scholarship** for former foster children

Administrator of private and public **Scholarships**

**GUIDE** a program for first year college students who were served by outreach programs; provides support to improve retention

## Vermont Advantage Loan

## Vermont Advantage Parent Loan



## VSAC serves adult students

In addition to Vermont's **nondegree grant**, VSAC supports adult students with other programs:

- A federally-funded **Educational Opportunity Center** grant allows VSAC to work with adults who want to enter, or continue a program of study.
- The **Vermont National Guard Education Assistance Program** helps our members of the Guard pursue their education while they serve.



# After college: help is a phone call away

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- Launched **Vermont Advantage Loan Coach**: free, in-depth personalized education debt counseling
- VSAC's **Customer Relations team** works closely with borrowers to help them understand all the repayment options available to them.



*"I can't thank you all enough for the help and patience over the years. I still have a loan for my daughter, but VSAC helped my son become a VT State police officer. Nothing but kudos to all of you there!"*

*~Susan*

## VSAC: A statewide leader and partner

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VSAC serves as the coordinating agency for **70x2025vt.org**, the state's postsecondary education completion efforts.

Leads **FAFSA Completion** Initiative.

Administers the **Chafee Education and Training Voucher** for AHS and the **Health Incentive Scholarship** for the Vermont Department of Health.

Awarded grants through the McClure Foundation and Lumina Foundation

Conducts the Senior Survey, a statewide survey of high school graduates' postsecondary plans and enrollment.

Provides professional development workshops and events for secondary and postsecondary education and financial aid professionals.



# 45% 70% by 2025

**GOAL:** By the year 2025, 70 percent of Vermont's working-age adults will possess a postsecondary degree or credential of value.

- Currently 45 percent of working-age adults in Vermont have a college degree or a postsecondary certificate.
- A \$50,000 **Lumina Foundation grant** to the VSC and VSAC provided seed funding for the initiative.
- VSAC serves as the coordinating agency for **70x2025vt.org**, the state's postsecondary education completion efforts.

Learn more at  
Tom Cheney, Director of 70x2025 at [Cheney@VSAC.ORG](mailto:Cheney@VSAC.ORG)

**70x2025VT.ORG**