

1 Introduced by Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
2 Referred to Committee on
3 Date:
4 Subject: Commerce and trade; workforce development
5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide a
6 framework for a public engagement process and succeeding steps to modernize
7 and strengthen the State workforce development system.

8 An act relating to workforce development

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

10 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

11 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

12 (1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic
13 vitality of Vermont. However, our State currently faces several key labor
14 market challenges:

15 (A) Employers throughout our State are facing an extremely serious
16 and ongoing skills gap due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range
17 of jobs across multiple sectors, today and into the future.

18 (B) Vermont has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the
19 country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current job
20 vacancies.

1 (C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and require training to
2 update their skills and find available job opportunities that match their
3 interests.

4 (D) Many Vermonters who are unemployed or underemployed face
5 significant barriers to employment and require more support in overcoming
6 these barriers.

7 (E) Vermont youth currently access postsecondary learning at the
8 lowest rates in New England and with significant inequities by family income
9 and background. A strategic focus on addressing equity in postsecondary
10 learning opportunities, in alignment with workforce needs, will ensure
11 Vermont maximizes the potential of every Vermonter to contribute to the labor
12 market.

13 (F) Parents, youths, and families are facing a future where the next
14 generation of workers may not have the same opportunities to prosper as the
15 previous one.

16 (G) Vermont has a series of fragmented workforce development
17 programs, but not a unified workforce development system. The recently
18 reconstituted State Workforce Development Board is central to creating such a
19 system.

20 (2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont’s
21 building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is

1 a diverse public-private partnership among employers, government, and
2 education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the
3 skills needed by businesses.

4 (b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

5 (1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont’s workforce development and
6 training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the Commissioner
7 of Labor, in collaboration with key administration partners, the education and
8 training communities, and other stakeholders from business and government.

9 (2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will result in a
10 more coherent, efficient, and effective workforce development system within
11 which:

12 (A) all Vermonters who want to work, and all employers who want
13 workers, can connect through education and training with what they need to
14 thrive; and

15 (B) stakeholders and programs, both inside and outside State
16 government, are optimally connected and aligned.

17 Sec. 2. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
18 PROCESS; DUTIES

19 (a)(1) The State Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with the
20 Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community
21 Development, Education, Human Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources,

1 and Transportation, shall conduct a public engagement process consistent with
2 20 C.F.R. §679.100, 679.130 and 10 V.S.A. §541a to establish a vision and
3 shared goals for meeting Vermont’s 21st century workforce education,
4 training, recruitment, and retention needs.

5 (2) The public engagement process shall be designed to inform
6 workforce-related aspects of other state strategic plans and reports, including
7 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan, the State Economic
8 Development Marketing Plan, and the Statewide Comprehensive Economic
9 Development Strategy.

10 (3) In evaluating the current workforce service delivery system, the
11 Board shall use a data-driven process and solicit the perspectives of job-
12 seekers, incumbent workers, employers, industry representatives, program
13 administrators, and workforce service delivery providers.

14 (4)(A) The Board shall adopt a vision and describe the State’s collective
15 goals by February 1, 2020.

16 (B) The vision, goals, and any findings or recommendations shall be
17 posted online.

18 (C) The Board shall provide advance notice to the Chair and Vice-
19 Chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and
20 the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General

1 Affairs if the recommendations may require legislative action during the 2020
2 legislative session.

3 (5) The vision and goals shall serve as the basis for an action plan to
4 revitalize Vermont’s workforce development system.

5 (b) The Board may create a social network map of workforce service
6 delivery providers, employers, workforce program administrators, and industry
7 representatives to:

8 (1) develop baseline data in conformance with the Workforce
9 Innovation and Opportunity Act of how individuals, including new Americans,
10 and organizations, both within and outside State government, are involved with
11 workforce development and training around the State;

12 (2) analyze the relative level of connectivity of people and programs
13 managed inside and outside State government; and

14 (3) identify opportunities to strengthen connectivity to achieve greater
15 program alignment toward and realize the Board’s vision for the State’s
16 workforce development and training system.

17 (c) The Board shall identify what resources are necessary to maintain the
18 network map over time and track changes in levels of connectivity and
19 alignment across the stakeholder community.

1 (d) The Board may, in compliance with any employment and
2 confidentiality regulations, and after reviewing currently available data and
3 resources, collect information from:

4 (1) “front line” service delivery providers to understand how the current
5 system is and is not serving the needs of job seekers and employers;

6 (2) employers and employees to understand the effectiveness of
7 existing workforce programs; and

8 (3) past and present participants of training programs to understand if
9 the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of interest or
10 training.

11 (e) The Board may initiate activities to improve understanding by
12 stakeholders concerning:

13 (1) the workforce development system;

14 (2) the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act;

15 (3) the role of the Board; and

16 (4) how the Act governs workforce development funding and policies
17 implemented by the State.

18 (f) The Board, in cooperation with the Department of Labor, Agencies of
19 Commerce and Community Development, Education, Human Services,
20 Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Transportation, shall review methods of
21 employer engagement and evaluate the tools available to employers to

1 facilitate their access to and retention of workers. The Board may recommend
2 strategies for improvement to address:

3 (1) how employer outreach positions in each of the State-funded field
4 offices might be shared;

5 (2) what type of coordination is needed between the State level
6 employer outreach staff and local workforce organizations, including staff of
7 the regional development corporations and regional planning commissions, to
8 better serve employers;

9 (3) whether establishing a One Stop American Job Center in each region
10 to provide comprehensive customer-driven services for employers and job
11 seekers could serve businesses better, improve responsiveness to emerging
12 sector needs, and increase access to qualified, available workers through direct
13 outreach and recruitment;

14 (4) scaling or expanding pilot projects that link career coaches, or other
15 experts with industry knowledge, directly within middle or high schools, or
16 both, to foster career readiness and exploration; and

17 (5) ways to share data and information collected from employers among
18 parties who implement workforce development programs.

19 (g) The Board shall review how functions performed by local workforce
20 investment boards, career technical education regional advisory boards,
21 regional planning commissions, regional development corporations, and other

1 regional economic development and workforce related boards could be more
2 equitably executed from region to region, and recommend structures that
3 would foster better regional collaboration, alignment, and employer
4 participation.

5 (h) Following the public engagement process outlined in subsection (a) of
6 this section, the Board may make recommendations to align relevant funding
7 sources to promote:

8 (1) employer-driven workforce education and training opportunities;

9 (2) results-based outcomes;

10 (3) innovative and effective initiatives, pilots, or demonstration programs
11 that can be scaled to the rest of the State;

12 (4) access to federal resources that enable more innovative programs
13 and initiatives in Vermont; and

14 (5) equitable access to employment and training opportunities for
15 women and underrepresented populations in Vermont.

16 (i) The Department of Labor, with assistance from the Board, shall
17 facilitate the sharing of information among workforce development and
18 training delivery organizations so they may stay current with initiatives and
19 plans related to building an effective workforce development system.

20 Sec. 3. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; CAREER PATHWAYS;
21 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1 (a) As used in this section “Career Pathways” means a combination of
2 rigorous and high quality education, training, and other experiences and
3 services, beginning not later than seventh grade, with multiple entry and exit
4 points that:

5 (1) at the secondary level, integrate the academic and technical skills
6 required for postsecondary success;

7 (2) are developed in partnership with business and industry and align
8 with the skill needs of industries in the local, regional, and State economies;

9 (3) prepares an individual to transition seamlessly from secondary to
10 postsecondary experiences and be successful in any of a full range of
11 secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered
12 apprenticeships;

13 (4) includes career counseling and work-based learning experiences to
14 support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

15 (5) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in
16 the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific
17 occupation or occupational cluster;

18 (6) organizes education, training, and other experiences and services to
19 meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the
20 educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

1 (7) enables an individual to gain a secondary school diploma or its
2 recognized equivalent, and that allows for college credit and industry
3 certifications to be earned in high school; and

4 (8) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or
5 occupational cluster.

6 (b) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the State Workforce
7 Development Board, shall promote policies that support introduction of CTE
8 programs of study to middle school students, along with career readiness and
9 awareness activities.

10 (c) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall promote
11 collaboration among middle schools and regional CTE centers to:

12 (1) develop and deliver introductory CTE courses or lessons to expose
13 middle school students to Career Pathways and CTE programs, as appropriate;

14 (2) provide exposure to local career opportunities through activities such
15 as business tours, guest lecturers, career fairs, and career awareness days; and

16 (3) provide middle school students with exposure to CTE programs
17 through activities such as tours of regional CTE centers, virtual field trips, and
18 CTE guest visits.

19 (d) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall promote
20 flexible and student-centered policies that:

1 (1) support equitable access and opportunity to participate in pre-tech
2 foundation and pre-tech exploratory programs, for students in grades 9 and 10,
3 when supported by their personalized learning plans, so that students are
4 exposed to a wide variety of career choices in their areas of interest; and

5 (2) ensure that students in grade 10 have access to courses in CTE
6 programs when supported by their personalized learning plans.

7 (e) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall direct
8 CTE centers to provide rigorous programs of study to students that are aligned
9 with an approved Career Pathway and in combination with a registered
10 apprenticeship when appropriate.

11 (f) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Department of Labor
12 and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shall implement
13 a process for reviewing Career Pathways that considers:

14 (1) program relevance to State and regional employer need;

15 (2) participation of regional advisory boards or other boards with
16 employers;

17 (3) pathways to postsecondary education and training; and

18 (4) ability for students to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment
19 credits, postsecondary credential or degree attainment, and employment.

20 (g) The Agency of Education shall report on its Career Pathways review
21 process, findings, and recommendations to the Board on a regular basis.

1 (h) The Board may identify opportunities to leverage Workforce
2 Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, Carl D. Perkins Act postsecondary
3 funds, Next Generation funds, Vermont Training Program funds, and other
4 relevant funding sources to develop community-based Career Pathways that
5 respond to local occupational demands.

6 (i) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall work to
7 ensure that every high school student has the opportunity to experience
8 meaningful work-based learning when supported by the personalized learning
9 plan, and that high schools work with regional CTE centers to avoid
10 unnecessary duplication of opportunities already provided by the centers.

11 (j) The General Assembly shall create a permanent classified position
12 within the Agency of Education to perform the functions currently performed
13 by the limited service Career Pathways Coordinator position.

14 (k) The Agency of Education and the Department of Labor shall support
15 coordination and alignment of programs of study delivered by the regional
16 CTE centers and the State’s postsecondary institutions so that education and
17 training opportunities available to secondary and adult students lead to a
18 degree or stackable credential of value.

19 (l) The Agency of Education, with input from the Career Pathways
20 Committee of the Board, shall create two pilot projects that model a unified
21 funding structure, unified governance structure, or both, designed to streamline

1 the delivery of the educational experiences of both high school and CTE
2 students.

3 (m) The Department of Labor shall be responsible for the oversight and
4 coordination of adult career technical education in the State. The Agency of
5 Education shall provide technical and programmatic assistance, as necessary,
6 to the Department to ensure alignment between secondary and postsecondary
7 institutions, programs, policies and funding.

8 Sec. 4. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD;

9 STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING

10 PROGRAMS

11 (a) The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps to encourage,
12 promote, and support the creation of registered apprenticeship programs, pre-
13 apprenticeship programs, paid internships, occupational trainings, and other
14 work-based and on-the-job learning opportunities that lead to industry
15 recognized certificates and credentials. The Board shall consider ways to meet
16 employers' immediate and long-term employment needs in a variety of ways
17 that can include:

18 (1) expanding the number and diversity of employer-sponsored
19 registered apprenticeships;

20 (2) promoting the development of and access to pre-apprenticeship
21 programs in high schools and career and technical education centers;

1 (3) engaging Vermont’s colleges and universities in delivering the
2 related instruction components of registered apprenticeship programs;

3 (4) expanding the number of internships and returnships available in
4 current and new sectors;

5 (5) developing partnerships and alignment between training programs
6 offered in correctional facilities and those offered in business or community
7 settings; and

8 (6) registered apprenticeship programs that guarantee offers of continued
9 employment or consideration for future employment upon completion of the
10 program.

11 (b) The Board shall create a process for identifying, monitoring, and
12 evaluating occupational trainings and industry-recognized credentials. The
13 Board may consider establishing a process for endorsing credentials and
14 certificate programs to facilitate targeted investments in programs that meet
15 industry needs.

16 (c) The Board shall create and review periodically publicly available
17 documents that list:

18 (1) current industry, State, and federally recognized credentials;

19 (2) requirements to obtain these credentials;

20 (3) training programs that lead to these credentials; and

1 (4) the cost of training and educational programs required to obtain the
2 credential.

3 (d) The Board shall work with the Office of Professional Regulation to
4 increase recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states, in
5 addition to supporting professional paths that involve more than one industry,
6 state, or federally recognized credential and rules adopted by the Office;

7 Sec. 5. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; GROWING THE
8 SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

9 (a) The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and
10 Community Development, Education, and Human Services, in partnership with
11 the State Workforce Development Board, shall take steps to:

12 (1) increase labor force participation of Vermonters by creating
13 multitiered engagement, training, and support activities that help working age
14 Vermonters who are able to participate, or participate to a greater degree, in the
15 workforce, in consultation with the Agency of Education; and

16 (2) recruit and relocate new workers and employers to Vermont ; and

17 (3) assist businesses in locating and retaining qualified workers.

18 (b) To meet these objectives, the Department of Labor and the Agencies of
19 Commerce and Community Development and Human Services shall:

1 (A) engage regional and statewide stakeholders, including regional
2 CTE centers, regional development corporations, and regional planning
3 commissions, to identify needs, strategies, and define success;

4 (B) identify targets and methods of recruitment, relocation, re-
5 training, and retention;

6 (C) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs
7 to support more workers within and outside of Vermont entering and staying in
8 the workforce; and

9 (D) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and
10 economic impact.

11 (c) The Board may examine incentives to encourage participation in the
12 labor force by target populations, including unemployment insurance waivers,
13 income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security, housing and
14 transportation vouchers, tuition and training reimbursements, or waivers for
15 training. The Board shall notify the House Committee on Commerce and
16 Economic Development of any findings or recommendations, as appropriate.

17 Sec. 6. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

18 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

19 (1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is an
20 employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end-
21 customers of the education and workforce systems. VTPM seeks to improve

1 the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employer needs with
2 education and workforce development and training programs.

3 (2) VTPM is a statewide public and private partnership among the
4 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Brattleboro
5 Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce Investment
6 Board, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont
7 Business Roundtable. It is informed by resource partners including the
8 Agency of Education, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, State
9 Workforce Development Board, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and the
10 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

11 (3) Partners will coordinate the network of training providers to deliver
12 industry, State, and federally recognized credentials, job training, and
13 workforce education in targeted job areas, sectors, and industries which
14 connect to the skills employers are looking for when filling available positions.

15 (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

16 (1) to acknowledge the importance of VTPM as an important, statewide,
17 employer-led model in its start-up phase with pilots in key industries;

18 (2) to support development, scale-up, funding, and roll-out of VTPM
19 across all economic sectors, businesses of various size, and regions of the State
20 by training regional partners in local communities statewide; and

1 (3) to encourage the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, the
2 State Workforce Development Board, and VTPM to collaborate in identifying
3 and developing additional credentialing programs within applicable industries.

4 Sec. 7. RESULTS BASED MONITORING

5 (a) The Department of Labor, with the assistance of the Government
6 Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall
7 develop a framework to evaluate workforce education, training, and support
8 programs and services. The framework shall be applied to the State's
9 workforce system inventory and shall distinguish programs and services based
10 on method of delivery, customer, program administrator, goal, or other
11 appropriate category. The framework shall:

12 (1) create population level indicators based on desired outcomes for the
13 workforce development delivery system;

14 (2) along with social network mapping work that the Board may pursue,
15 support program and service alignment of State-grant-funded projects with the
16 State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan;

17 (3) align with the Board's vision;

18 (4) note performance measures that already exist in the workforce
19 system and identify where State-specific measures would help monitor
20 progress in achieving the State's goals; and

21 (5) identify gaps in service delivery and areas of duplication in services.

1 (b) The State Workforce Development Board shall consider whether the
2 information and data currently collected and reported throughout the workforce
3 development system is useful and shall identify what information and data are
4 not available or readily accessible. The Board shall make its findings available
5 and recommend a process to improve the collection and reporting of data.

6 (c) The State Workforce Development Board may create a process and a
7 timeline to collect program level data for the purposes of updating the State's
8 workforce system inventory.

9 (d) The State Workforce Development Board may develop tools for
10 program and service delivery providers that support continuous improvement
11 using data-driven decision making, common information-sharing systems, and
12 a customer-focused service delivery system.

13 Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. chapter 22A is amended to read:

14 CHAPTER 22A. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

15 § 540. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADER

16 The Commissioner of Labor shall be the leader of workforce education and
17 training in the State, and shall have the authority and responsibility for the
18 coordination of workforce education and training within State government,
19 including the following duties:

20 (1) Perform the following duties in consultation with the State

21 Workforce Development Board:

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(G) design and implement criteria and performance measures for workforce education and training activities; and

(H) establish goals for the integrated workforce education and training system; and

(I) with the assistance of the Secretaries of Commerce and Community Development, of Human Services, of Education, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and of Transportation, and of the Commissioner of Public Safety, develop and implement a coordinated system to recruit, relocate, and train workers to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont’s businesses are met.

* * *

(8) Coordinate intentional outreach and connections between students graduating from Vermont’s colleges and universities and employment opportunities in Vermont.

* * *

§ 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 3111, the Governor shall establish a State Workforce Development Board to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

1 (b) Additional duties; planning; process.

2 (1) ~~In order to~~ To inform its ~~decision-making~~ decision making and to
3 provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board
4 shall:

5 (1)~~(A)~~ conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the
6 State that brings together employers and potential employees, including
7 students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training,
8 to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and
9 training needs; and

10 (2)~~(B)~~ maintain familiarity and promote alignment with the federal
11 State and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
12 and other economic development planning processes, and coordinate
13 workforce and education activities in the State, including the development and
14 implementation of the State plan required under the Workforce Innovation and
15 Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic development planning processes
16 occurring in the State, as appropriate.

17 (2) To ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce
18 development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the
19 State's workforce and economic goals, the Board shall regularly:

20 (A) Review and approve State-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect
21 a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving

1 employment outcomes, meeting employers’ and workers’ needs, and
2 leveraging available State and federal funding.

3 (i) Career Pathways shall encompass educational and training
4 experiences from middle school to the postsecondary years, and may focus on
5 particular target populations or industry sectors.

6 (ii) Career Pathways shall include or culminate in degrees,
7 certificates, and other relevant credentials approved by the Board.

8 (B) Publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways, including on
9 websites managed by the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and
10 Department of Economic Development.

11 (3)(A) The Board shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and
12 industry-recognized credentials and certificates, excluding high school
13 diplomas and postsecondary academic degrees, that are aligned with the Career
14 Pathways.

15 (B) The Board shall design a review process that ensures:

16 (i) business and industry are participants and are engaged early in
17 the process;

18 (ii) the credential review process involves relevant stakeholders;

19 (iii) credentials are differentiated based on rigor and industry
20 demand; and

1 (iv) systems are designed to be responsive to changing industry
2 needs.

3 (C) The Board shall ensure that a review and oversight process is in
4 place on or before July 1, 2019.

5 * * *

6 § 543. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; GRANT
7 PROGRAMS

8 (a) Creation. There is created the Workforce Education and Training Fund
9 in the Department of Labor to be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A.
10 chapter 7, subchapter 5.

11 (b) Purposes. The Department shall use the Fund for the following
12 purposes:

13 (1) training for Vermont workers, including those who are unemployed,
14 underemployed, or in transition from one job or career to another;

15 (2) internships to provide students with work-based learning
16 opportunities with Vermont employers;

17 (3) apprenticeship, preapprenticeship, and industry-recognized
18 credential training; and

19 (4) assisting small businesses with their recruiting efforts, including
20 building connections with secondary and postsecondary institutions and others

1 to locate, hire, and retain workers from among Vermont students and
2 graduates; and

3 (5) other workforce development initiatives related to current and future
4 job opportunities in Vermont as determined by the Commissioner of Labor.

5 * * *

6 (f) Awards. The Commissioner of Labor, in consultation with the Chair of
7 the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop award criteria and may
8 grant awards to the following:

9 * * *

10 (2) Vermont Strong Internship Program. Funding for eligible internship
11 programs and activities under the Vermont Strong Internship Program
12 established in section 544 of this title.

13 (3) Vermont Strong Returnship Program. Funding for eligible returnship
14 programs and activities under the Vermont Strong Returnship Program
15 established in section 545 of this title.

16 ~~(3)~~(4) Apprenticeship Program. The Vermont Apprenticeship Program
17 established under 21 V.S.A. chapter 13. Awards under this subdivision may be
18 used to fund the cost of apprenticeship-related instruction provided by the
19 Department of Labor.

1 necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any
2 combination of these.

3 (b)(1) The Department of Labor shall develop and implement a statewide
4 Vermont Strong Returnship Program for individuals who are returning to the
5 workforce after an extended absence or are seeking a limited duration on-the-
6 job work experience in a different occupation or occupational setting.

7 (2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to
8 public and private entities for returnship programs and opportunities that match
9 experienced workers with Vermont employers.

10 (3) Funding awarded through the Vermont Returnship Program may be
11 used to build and administer coordinated and cohesive programs and to provide
12 participants with a stipend during the returnship, based on need. Funds may be
13 made only to programs or projects that:

14 (A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

15 (B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace experiences;

16 (C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of **hard**
17 **and soft professional** skills and other factors that indicate a likelihood of
18 success in the workplace;

19 (D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-
20 based learning opportunities with Vermont employers; or

1 (E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and
2 relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and
3 attractive for individuals to continue to work and live in Vermont.

4 (c) The Department of Labor shall:

5 (1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to
6 the Vermont Returnship Program;

7 (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures
8 that demonstrate program results for returnship programs funded through the
9 Vermont Returnship Program;

10 (3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the
11 Returnship Program to expand returnship opportunities with State government
12 and with entities awarded State contracts; and

13 (4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance
14 returnship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

15 Sec. 9. **ALLOCATIONS;** APPROPRIATIONS

16 (a) In fiscal year 2019 the [Department of Labor] shall allocate the amount
17 of \$80,000.00 from [sources] to the State Workforce Development Board to
18 perform the duties specified in this act.

19 (b) In fiscal year 2019 the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
20 General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont Strong
21 Returnship Program created in 10 V.S.A. § 545.

1 (c) In fiscal year 2019 the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
2 General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont College
3 Graduate Placement and Small Business Recruitment Initiative to provide
4 small businesses with support and resources to more effectively recruit new
5 employees from among graduates of Vermont colleges and universities.

6 Sec. 10. REPORTING

7 (a) On or before January 15, 2019, the State Workforce Development
8 Board shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
9 Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing
10 and General Affairs concerning the implementation of this act.

11 (b) On or before January 15, 2019, the Department of Labor, in
12 collaboration with the Agency of Education and the State Workforce
13 Development Board, shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and
14 Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic
15 Development, Housing and General Affairs concerning:

16 (1) how to encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships;

17 (2) how to encourage more labor force participation in apprenticeships;

18 and

19 (3) of the myriad federal and private apprenticeship opportunities

20 available, which additional opportunities, and which industry sectors, should
21 be offered or enhanced in Vermont.

1 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.