



FY  
**18**

# Testimony before Senate Education Committee

February 15, 2017

Scott A. Giles, President & CEO

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<br>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<br>13,030 awards*                                       |
|                                       |     |     |   | College Pathways         | 1,193 attendees*          |                                     |   |
|                                       |     |     |   |                          | Paying for College nights | 2,490 attendees at 65 high schools* | VSAC's Advantage Loans<br>\$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 |                           |                                     |   |
|                                       |     |     |   | Remedial vouchers        |                           |                                     | Career & financial aid at CCV sites   |
| Lamoille Aspirations Initiative       |     |     |   |                          |                           |                                     |   |
| Bellows Falls Aspirations Initiative  |     |     |   |                          |                           |                                     |   |
| Hazen Union Aspirations Initiative    |     |     |   |                          |                           |                                     | Educational Opportunity Centers for adult learners<br>1,719 adult learners* |

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

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

# 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.

FY16 VSAC Appropriation: \$19,909,088

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

# 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.*

## **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*

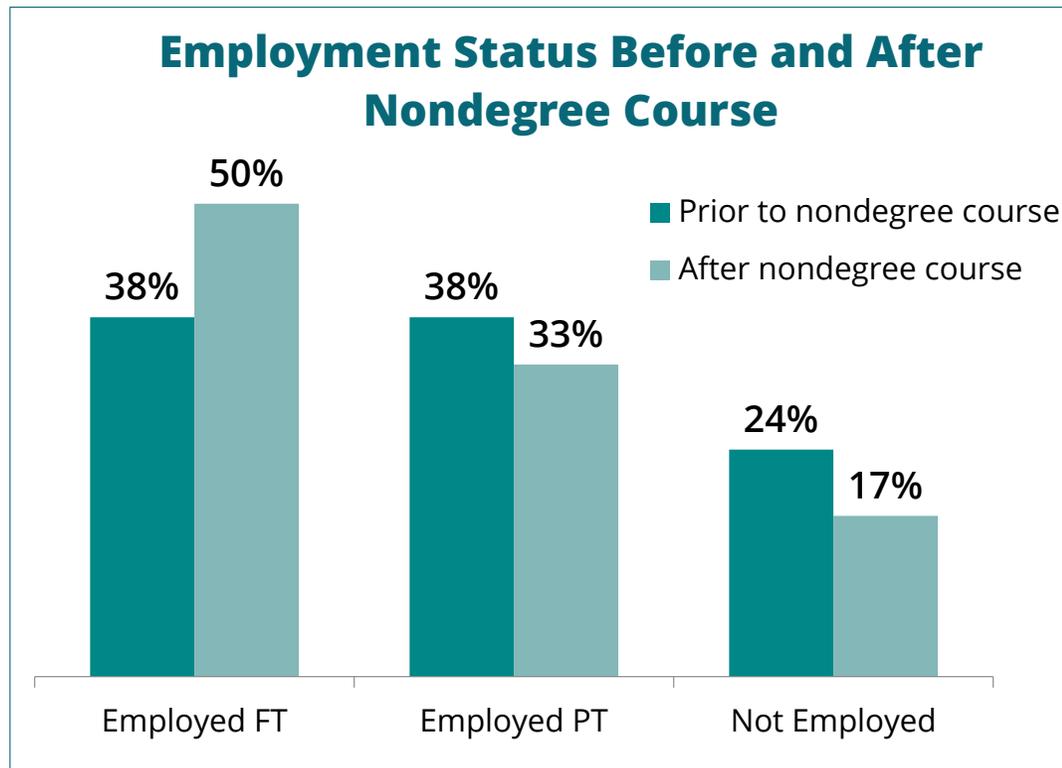
## **Nondegree courses at colleges and universities**

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

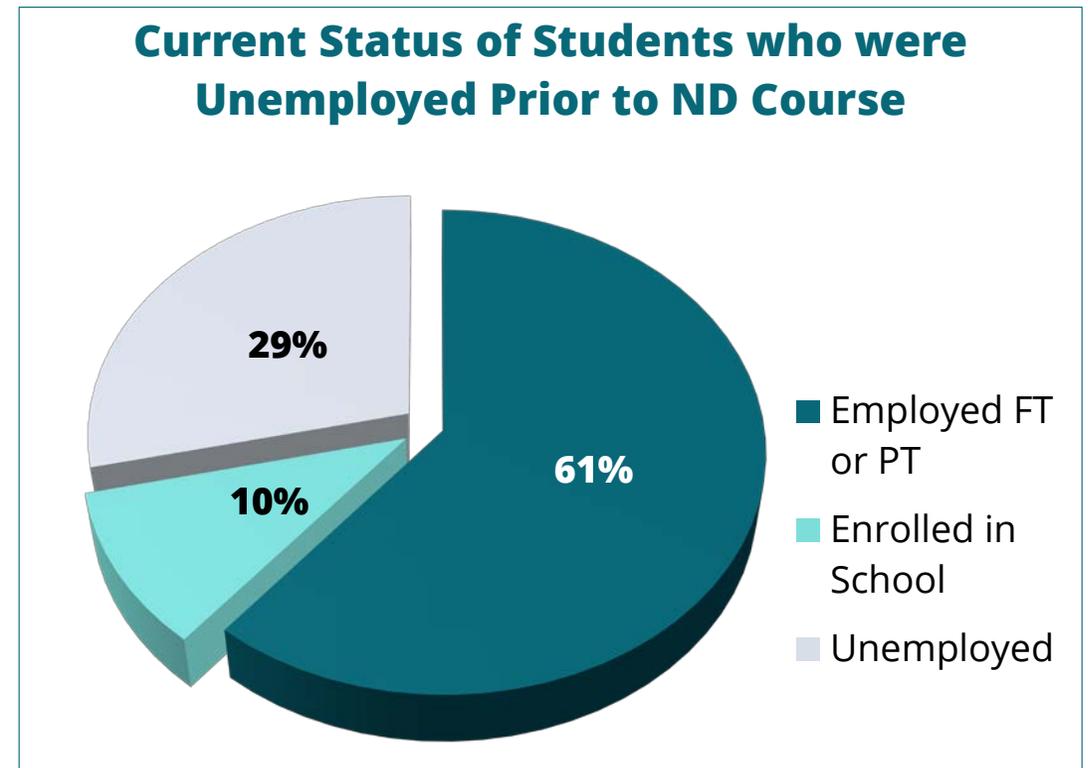
*Applicants who have prerequisites that they need to take before they can be admitted to a college*

# Nondegree grant: changing futures

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



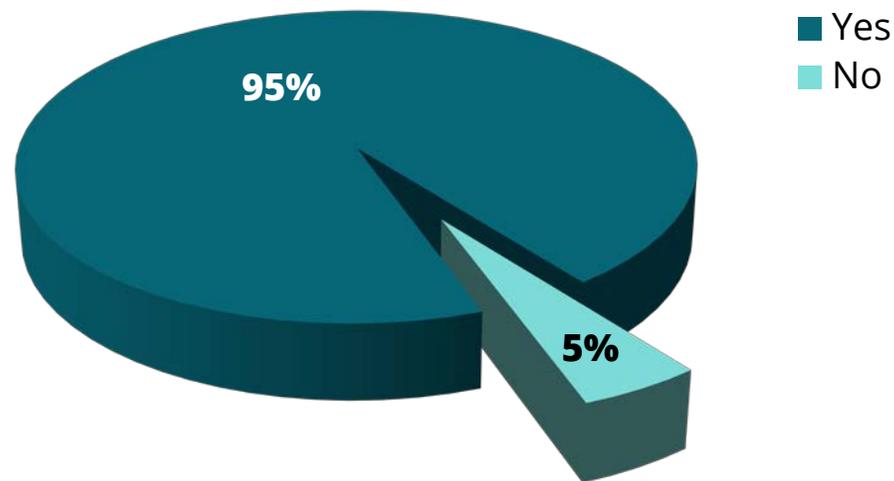
7 out of 10 unemployed adult students were either working or in school after completing the nondegree course



# Nondegree grant: changing lives

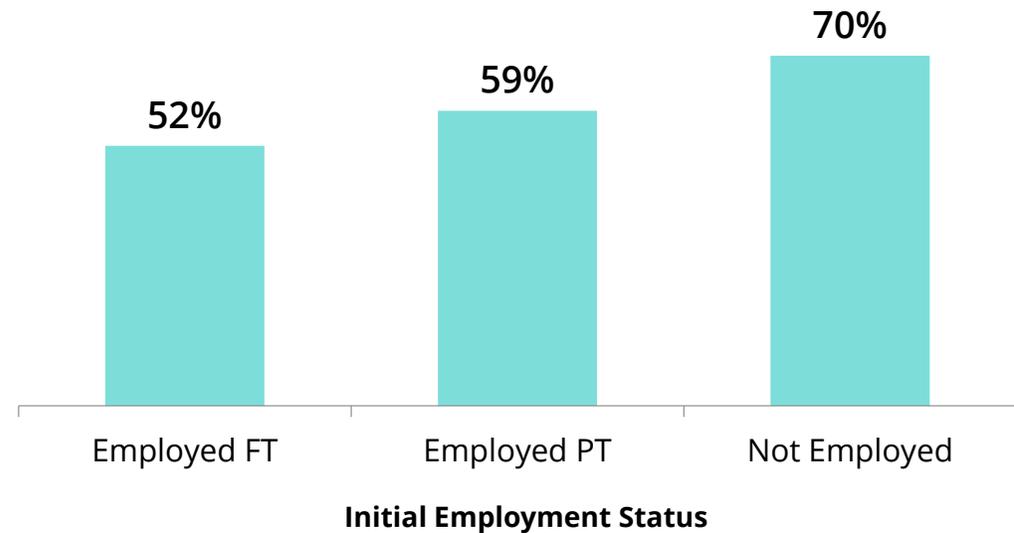
Overwhelmingly report they gained skills that will help them in their current or future jobs

**Gained Skills that Could Help in Current or Future Job**



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

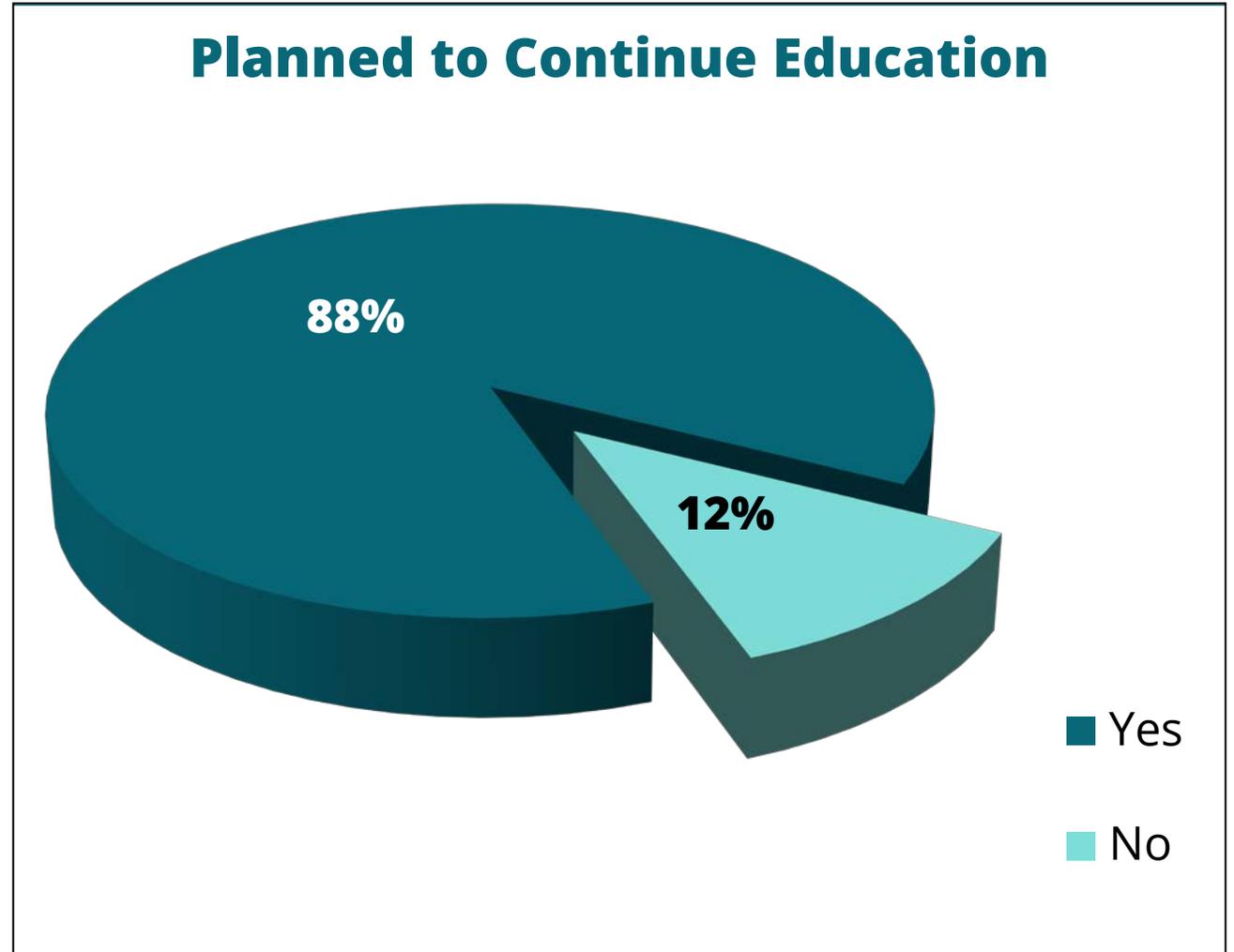
**Percentage who Reported Increased Earnings after Nondegree Course**



# 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.
  - \$600,000 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

# Saving for the future generation

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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.



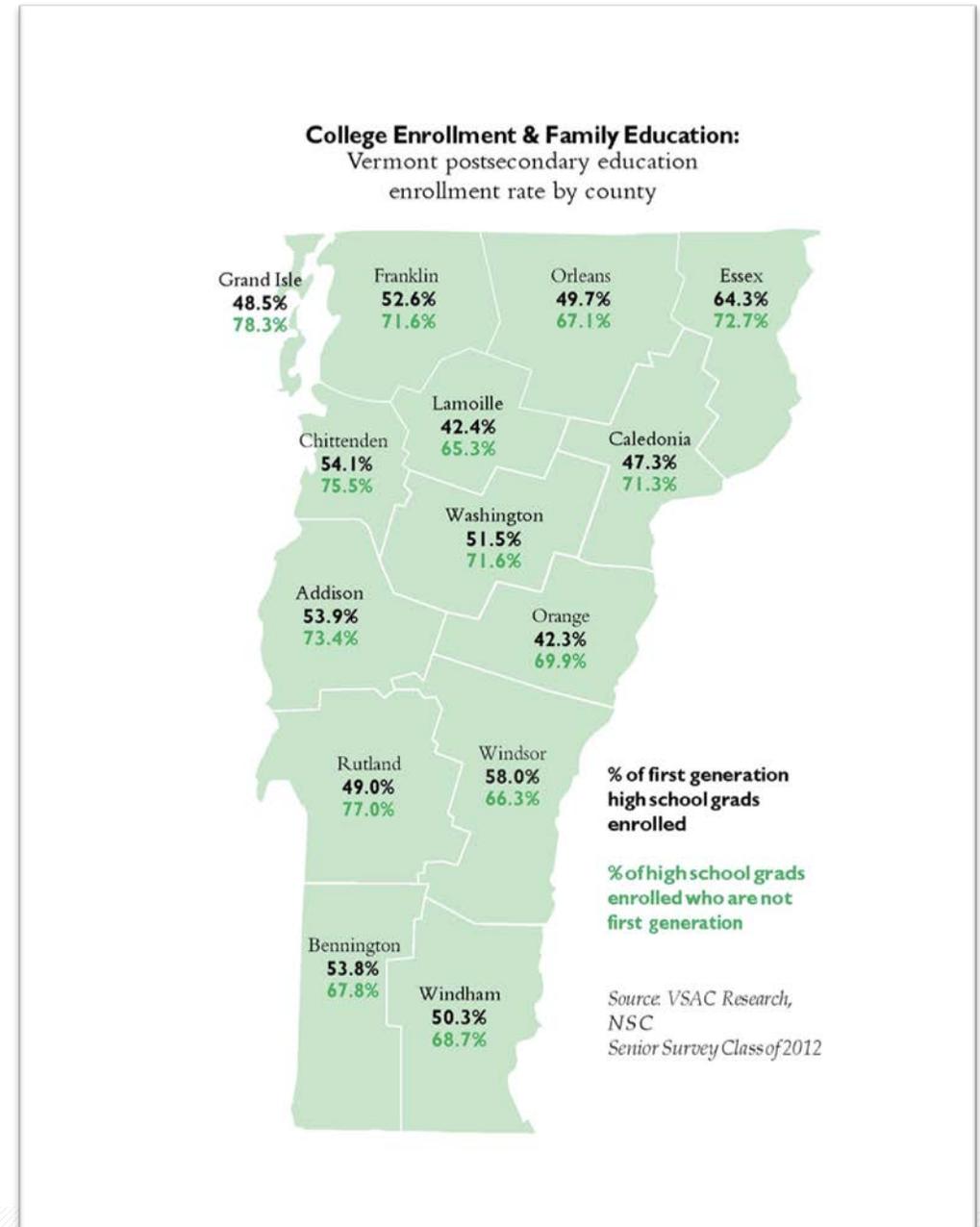
# Aspiration initiatives

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.



# High school juniors and seniors

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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

- 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**

# Portability: Vermont's policy

## What is it?

“Portability” is a policy that allows low-income grant recipients to choose academic programs that best meet their education goals, regardless of geographic location.

**Groundbreaking 1965 state legislation established VSAC's role to specifically serve Vermont's students. Portability became a fundamental principle of the State's need-based grant programs.**

By enabling grant recipients to choose from an array of academic programs and institutions regardless of geographic location, portability expands education opportunities for eligible Vermonters far beyond that which a small state of limited resources could offer.

The goal was, and continues to be, to provide these students with the same academic and training opportunities that exist for those who have greater financial means. The student's choices are dependent on ability, aspirations, and preparation.



# Portability's Impact

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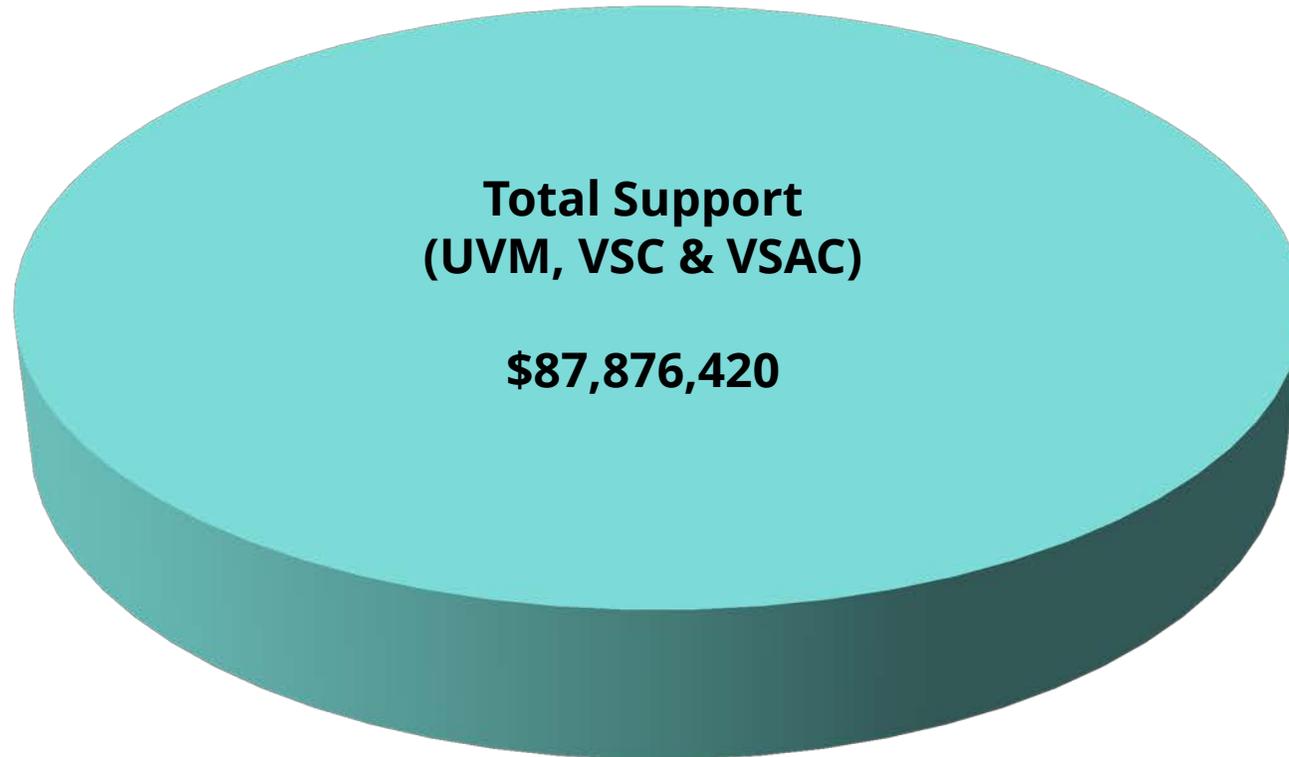
**Provides more than 4,000 low-income Vermonters with:**

- Access to the nation's most rigorous academic institutions
- Access to programs not available in Vermont
- Access to cultural and urban environments not available in Vermont
- Access, in some border areas, to institutions and programs closer to home than the nearest Vermont institution



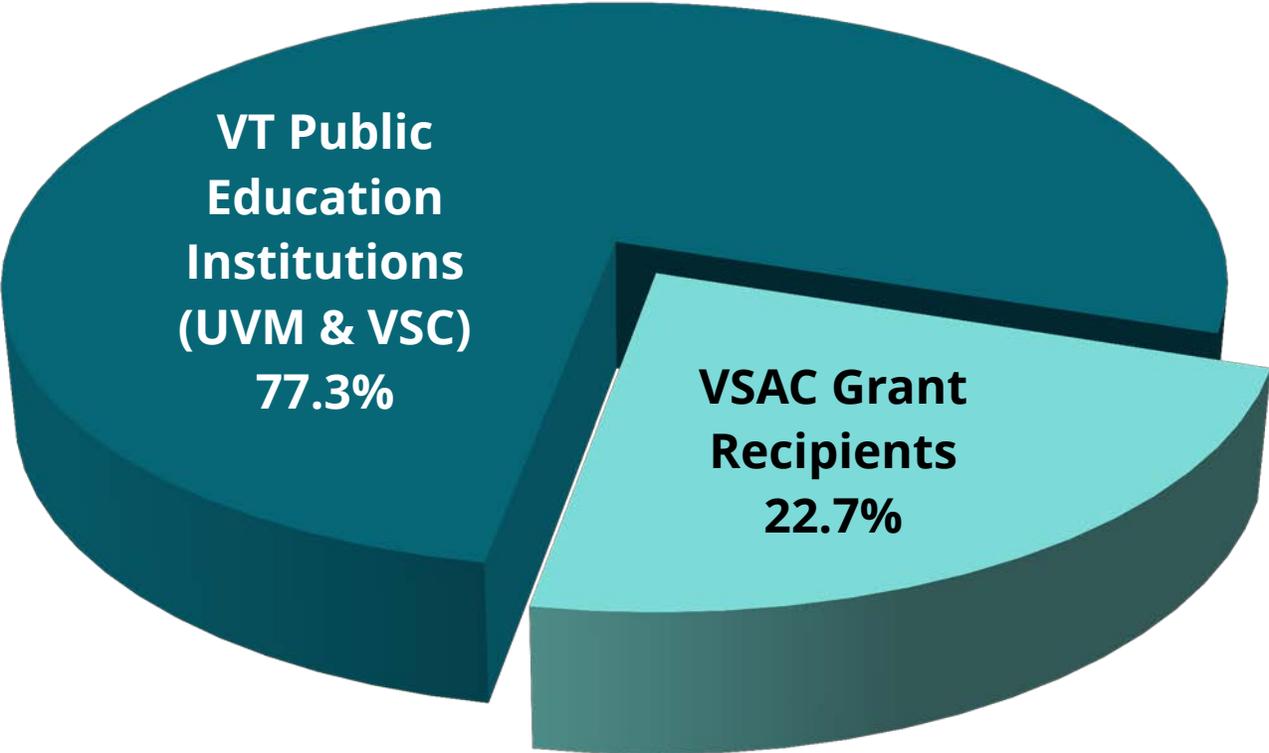
# State funding for higher education

Fiscal Year '16



# Distribution of state funding for HE

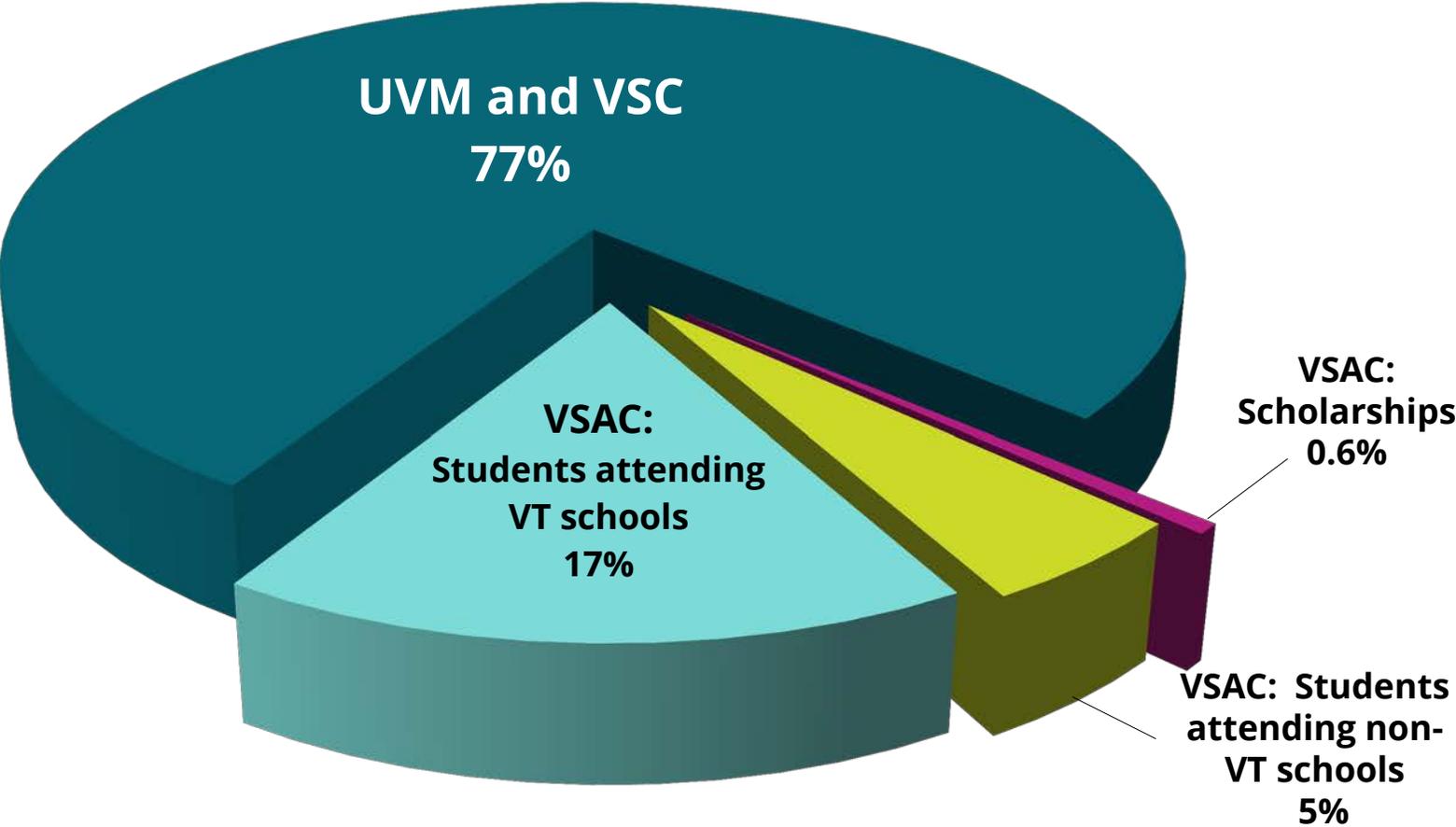
Fiscal Year '16



VT Public Higher Education includes UVM & VSC.  
Source: Joint Fiscal Office, 2016 Joint Fiscal Facts; VSAC percentage includes Next Generation Scholarships

# Vermont's HE funding priorities

Fiscal Year '16

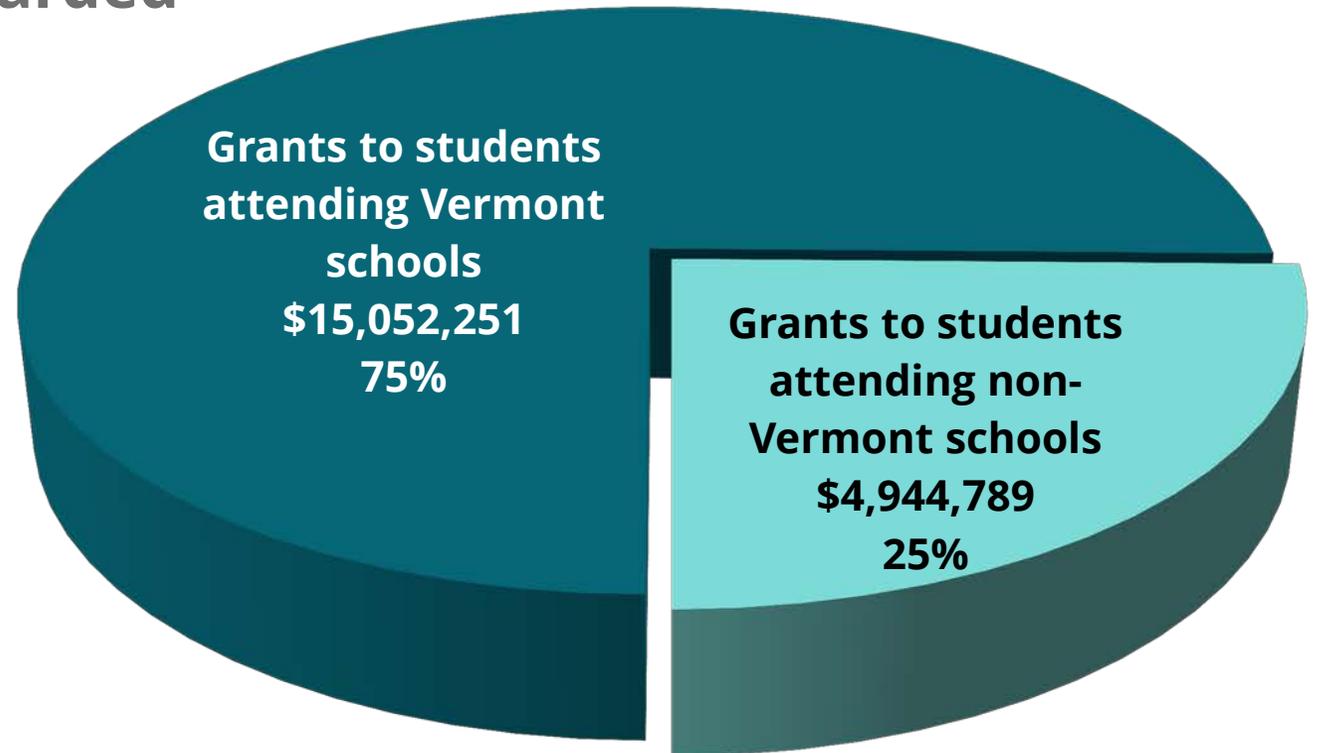


Sources: Joint Fiscal Office, 2016 Joint Fiscal Facts (VSAC amount includes Next Generation Scholarships); VSAC Grant Files

# Distribution of state grant dollars



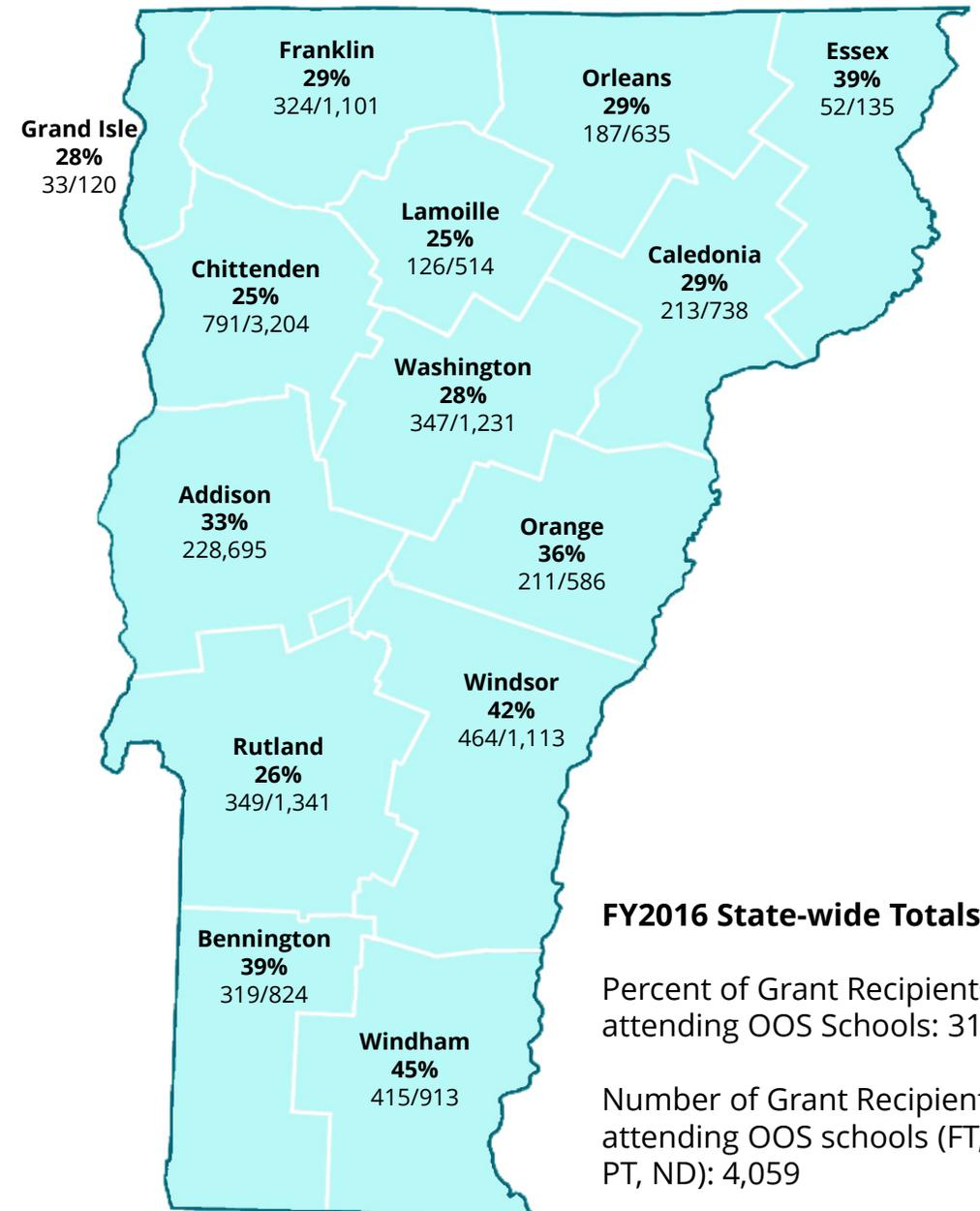
## In-State/Out-of-State Distribution of VT Student Grant Dollars Awarded FY '16



# Vermont grant recipients, out-of-state institutions

## By county of residence

This map shows the number of low-income Vermonters who used grants to pursue their education goals at out-of-state institutions in FY16 and where they live.



# Where Full-Time Grant Recipients Enrolled

- Nearly 6 in 10 full-time grant recipients attended schools in Vermont.
- Vermonters who attended non-Vermont institutions remain in the region:
  - 30% of full-time Vermont grant recipients go to schools in NY or other New England states.

| State                | FY16 FT Grant Recipients (% enrolled) |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Vermont              | 58.5                                  |
| New York             | 8.8                                   |
| Massachusetts        | 8.6                                   |
| New Hampshire        | 6.8                                   |
| Maine                | 3.3                                   |
| Pennsylvania         | 1.5                                   |
| Rhode Island         | 1.4                                   |
| Florida              | 1.3                                   |
| Connecticut          | 1.1                                   |
| Ohio                 | 0.8                                   |
| <b>Top 10 States</b> | <b>92.1</b>                           |

# Leveraging out-of-state institutional aid

Additional aid awarded to full-time grant recipients attending out-of-state institutions



Institutional Work-Study  
\$3.4

Institutional Loans  
\$1.7

Scholarships  
\$7.5

Institutional Grants  
\$47.1

Total Aid= \$59.6 Million