

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs to
3 which was referred House Bill No. 533 entitled “An act relating to workforce
4 development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the
7 following:

8 * * * Workforce Training; Vermont Training Program * * *

9 Sec. 1. VERMONT TRAINING PROGRAM; WORKFORCE TRAINING
10 ALLOCATIONS

11 (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall allocate
12 Vermont Training Program funding to increase by 10 percent in each of the
13 next two years:

14 (1) the number of trainees who receive a credential of value or
15 participate in a registered apprenticeship; and

16 (2) the amount of training funds provided to businesses with 50 or fewer
17 employees.

18 (b) In its annual report submitted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 531(k) the
19 Agency shall specifically address:

20 (1) whether it was able to achieve the allocations specified in subsection
21 (a) of this section, and if not, the reasons;

1 (C) training for an incumbent employee who, upon completion of
2 training, assumes a newly created position with the employer;

3 (D) training for an incumbent employee who, upon completion of
4 training assumes a different position with the employer;

5 (E) training for an incumbent employee to upgrade skills;

6 (3) for the training identified in subdivision (2) of this subsection
7 whether the training is ~~onsite~~ on-site or classroom-based;

8 (4) the number of employees served;

9 (5) the average wage by employer;

10 (6) any waivers granted;

11 (7) the identity of the employer, or, if unknown at the time of the report,
12 the category of employer;

13 (8) the identity of each training provider;

14 (9) whether training results in a wage increase for a trainee, and the
15 amount of increase; ~~and~~

16 (10) the aggregated median wage of employees invoiced for training
17 during the reporting period;

18 (11) the percentage median growth in wages for all wage earners in the
19 State during the reporting period; and

20 (12) the number, type, and description of grants for work-based learning
21 programs and activities awarded pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

1 Sec. 3. WORKFORCE TRAINING; PRIORITY SECTORS

2 The Department of Labor shall work with qualified training providers to
3 increase the availability of training programs that lead to a credential of value
4 in the health care, construction, manufacturing, and child care sectors, as
5 follows:

6 (1) The Department shall coordinate with the Office of Economic
7 Opportunity within the Department for Children and Families to support
8 training opportunities for individuals interested in becoming employed in the
9 home or commercial weatherization industry, including:

10 (A) recruiting Vermonters who are eligible for funding under the
11 federal Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act to participate in training
12 programs;

13 (B) identifying operations for weatherization training programs; and

14 (C) providing stipends and wage subsidies for training participants if
15 funding is available.

16 (2) The Department shall coordinate with the Child Development
17 Division within the Department for Children and Families to support training
18 opportunities for new or incumbent workers in the field of early care and
19 learning.

20 (3) The Department shall work to connect health care, long term care,
21 and mental health providers with postsecondary education providers, including

1 adult career and technical education, to expand pre-apprenticeships, registered
2 apprenticeships, and other occupational training programs in health care.

3 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 2846 is amended to read:

4 § 2846. ~~NONDEGREE~~ ADVANCEMENT GRANTS

5 (a) The Corporation may establish ~~grant programs~~ an advancement grant
6 program for residents pursuing nondegree education and training opportunities
7 who do not meet the definition of student in subdivision 2822(3) of this title,
8 and who may not meet the requirements of this subchapter.

9 (b) ~~Nondegree~~ Advancement grants may be used at institutions that are not
10 approved postsecondary education institutions.

11 (c) The Corporation may adopt rules or establish policies, procedures,
12 standards, and forms for ~~nondegree~~ advancement grants, including the
13 requirements for applying for and using the grants and the eligibility
14 requirements for the institutions where the grants may be used.

15 Sec. 5. 10 V.S.A. § 546 is added to read:

16 § 546. STATE POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GOAL

17 (a) It is the policy of the State of Vermont to:

18 (1) promote awareness of career pathways and the value of
19 postsecondary education and training;

20 (2) expand access to postsecondary education and training to students of
21 all ages;

1 (3) increase completion of postsecondary education and training
2 programs by ensuring that Vermonters have the supports they need to succeed;
3 and

4 (4) maximize partnerships across employment sectors to assist the State
5 in achieving its labor force and education goals.

6 (b) It shall be the goal of the State of Vermont that not less than 70 percent
7 of Vermonters will hold a credential of value by the year 2025.

8 * * * Postsecondary Career and Technical Education * * *

9 Sec. 6. POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

10 SYSTEM

11 (a) Findings; purpose.

12 (1) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

13 (A) Like many rural states, Vermont faces demographic realities
14 that have resulted in an historically low unemployment rate and created
15 obstacles for employers that seek to hire and retain enough fully trained
16 employees.

17 (B) Notwithstanding this high employer demand, due to rapidly
18 changing technology and evolving business needs, potential employees may
19 lack the particular skills and training necessary to qualify for available jobs.

20 (C) In order to assist employers and employees in matching demand
21 to requisite skills, Vermont has a broad diversity of adult workforce

1 education and training programs offered by multiple providers, including
2 programs administered or funded by State government, educational
3 institutions, and business-lead groups such as the Vermont Talent Pipeline
4 Management Project. The State should continue to work closely with these
5 providers to identify and meet the needs of employers and employees.

6 (2) Purpose. Consistent with the goals and purposes of 2018 Acts and
7 Resolves No. 189, pursuant to which the State Workforce Development
8 Board and other stakeholders are currently engaged in planning the design
9 and implementation of a fully integrated workforce development system, it is
10 the purpose of the General Assembly to explore the creation of a fully
11 integrated adult career and technical education system that:

12 (A) provides Vermonters throughout the State with high quality
13 programs that are standardized, replicable, and offered with regularity and
14 consistency;

15 (B) coordinates, or integrates where appropriate, the many
16 programs and providers to maximize the efficient use of training resources;
17 and

18 (C) features a governance structure that provides consistency across
19 the system whenever appropriate, but also provides the flexibility necessary
20 to respond to local and regional workforce demands.

1 (b) Report. On or before January 15, 2020, the Department of Labor shall
2 design a coordinated plan for an integrated postsecondary career and technical
3 education system, and shall provide a progress report and request for any
4 necessary legislative changes to the House and Senate committees of
5 jurisdiction, in consultation with the following stakeholders:

6 (1) the Agency of Education;

7 (2) the Agency of Commerce and Community Development;

8 (3) the Agency of Human Services;

9 (4) the Vermont State Colleges;

10 (5) the State Workforce Development Board;

11 (6) the Vermont Adult Technical Education Association;

12 (7) the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education

13 Directors;

14 (8) the regional development corporations;

15 (9) Vermont employers and industry organizations;

16 (10) the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation; and

17 (11) the Vermont Superintendents Association.

18 * * * Military Recruitment * * *

19 Sec. 7. MILITARY RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

20 (a) The Department of Labor shall work with the Vermont National Guard
21 and public and private employers to design and implement an on-site military

1 base and installation recruitment program that encourages service members
2 separating from military service to relocate to Vermont.

3 (b) The Department shall coordinate with the Agency of Commerce and
4 Community Development to support marketing and outreach for recruitment
5 events.

6 (c) The Department shall report to the House Committees on Commerce
7 and Economic Development and on Appropriations and to the Senate
8 Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on
9 Appropriations concerning implementation and outcomes of this program
10 during the 2020 legislative session.

11 * * * Workforce Training and Credentialing; Nurse Educators;
12 New Americans; Workers with Barriers to Employment * * *

13 Sec. 8. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; REPORT

14 (a) The Office of Professional Regulation, in consultation with the
15 Vermont Board of Nursing, Vermont State Colleges, the University of
16 Vermont, Norwich University, and other interested stakeholders, shall review
17 statutory, regulatory, and accreditation standards for nursing programs within
18 the State and nationally with the purpose of identifying barriers to recruitment
19 and retention of nurse educators in nursing education programs.

1 (b) The Office of Professional Regulation shall evaluate the
2 appropriateness of the level of credential and experience currently required for
3 nurse educators in clinical settings.

4 (c) On or before December 15, 2019, the Office of Professional Regulation
5 shall report its findings, including recommendations for any statutory or
6 regulatory changes, or economic development initiatives, to facilitate
7 recruitment and retention of nurse faculty, to the House Committees on
8 Commerce and Economic Development and on Government Operations and to
9 the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General
10 Affairs and on Government Operations.

11 Sec. 9. SUPPORTING NEW AMERICANS IN THE WORKFORCE

12 (a) The State of Vermont shall take steps necessary to provide support to
13 employers and to New Americans in the Vermont workforce as follows:

14 (1) The Department of Labor shall simplify the process and reduce
15 barriers for employers seeking to access Department funding for English
16 language classes.

17 (2) The Department of Labor shall work with U.S. Committee for
18 Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Vermont to increase employers' awareness
19 of free services available through USCRI Vermont, including on site English
20 language classes.

1 (3) The Department of Labor shall develop and make available to
2 employers a collection of best practices for addressing the unique language,
3 transportation, cultural, and other challenges New Americans face in the
4 workforce.

5 (4) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Community
6 College of Vermont or other partners, shall explore the development of a work
7 readiness certificate or program for New American employees.

8 (5) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Vermont
9 Chamber of Commerce or other partners, shall explore the development of a
10 “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity” certificate or program, or similar initiative,
11 for employers seeking to establish a New American–friendly workplace.

12 (6) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Department of
13 Human Resources, shall explore measures to ensure that the State’s Employee
14 Assistance Program offers services and support that is responsive to the
15 particular pressures and challenges facing New Americans. The Departments
16 shall share best practices with private employers that offer similar employee
17 assistance programs.

18 (7) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall
19 explore whether State marketing funds should be targeted to New Americans
20 in other states to inform them of Vermont’s inclusive workplace practices and
21 employment opportunities.

1 (b) To the extent not otherwise addressed in its work pursuant to subsection

2 (a) of this section, the Department shall assess:

3 (1) recommendations identified in relevant studies and reports;

4 (2) cultural competency support needed in Vermont's employment

5 settings;

6 (3) training, apprenticeship, and mentorship needs and opportunities;

7 (4) tools and supports needed for refugees to effectively apply

8 preexisting educational and professional credentials in Vermont settings; and

9 (5) additional supports needed to ensure employment opportunities,

10 including child care and transportation.

11 (c) The State entities named in subsection (a) of this section shall report to

12 the General Assembly concerning the implementation of this section on or

13 before January 15, 2020.

14 Sec. 10. CORRECTIONS; WORKFORCE TRAINING

15 (a) The Department of Corrections, the Department of Labor, the Division

16 of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Department of Economic Development

17 shall work together and with other relevant partners to develop an outreach

18 strategy to provide Vermont employers with information, strategies, and best

19 practices in hiring and retaining employees who are New Americans, in

20 recovery from substance misuse, or have been involved with the justice

21 system. The outreach strategy will include components related to:

1 (1) minimizing barriers for offenders to obtaining and maintaining
2 employment; and

3 (2) minimizing the impact of program and supervision requirements on
4 the offender’s employment, including monitoring and facilitating compliance
5 with Department of Corrections case plan goals based on best practices and
6 consistent with public safety.

7 (b) On or before December 1, 2019, the Departments of Corrections and
8 Labor shall report to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic
9 Development and on Corrections and Institutions and to the Senate
10 Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on
11 Institutions concerning the implementation of this section.

12 * * * Relocation Incentives * * *

13 Sec. 11. NEW WORKER RELOCATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

14 (a) The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall design
15 and implement the New Worker Relocation Incentive Program, which shall
16 include a simple certification process to certify new workers and certify
17 qualifying expenses for a grant under this section.

18 (b) A new worker may be eligible for a grant under the Program for
19 qualifying expenses in the amount of not more than \$7,500.00, consistent with
20 the following limitations, and subject to available funding and procedures the
21 Agency adopts to implement the program:

1 (1) A base grant for relocation to any area in Vermont shall be
2 \$5,000.00.

3 (2) A grant for relocation to a designated labor market area may be
4 enhanced, not to exceed \$7,500.00.

5 (3) The Agency shall assess applications on a rolling basis and give first
6 priority, at any point in the application process, to workers in identified priority
7 sectors, which may include health care, early child care and learning, lodging
8 and restaurant industry, manufacturing, technology, and construction trades.

9 (4) A new worker may apply for a grant beginning January 1, 2020 and
10 shall be paid when proof of residency and tax liability reaches the equivalent of
11 the amount claimed.

12 (5) A remote worker may apply for a grant under the Program when all
13 funds from the New Remote Worker Grant Program created in 2018 Acts and
14 Resolves No. 197, Sec. 1 are encumbered.

15 (c) The Agency shall:

16 (1) adopt procedures for implementing the Program;

17 (2) promote awareness of the Program, including through coordination
18 with relevant trade groups and by integration into the Agency's economic
19 development marketing campaigns; and

20 (3) adopt measurable goals, performance measures, and an audit strategy
21 to assess the utilization and performance of the Program.

1 (d) As used in this section:

2 (1) “New worker” means an individual who:

3 (A)(i) is a full-time employee of a business with its domicile or
4 primary place of business outside Vermont and performs the majority of his or
5 her employment duties remotely from a home office or a coworking space
6 located in this State; or

7 (ii) is a full-time employee of a business located in Vermont; and

8 (B) becomes a full-time resident of this State on or after January 1,
9 2020.

10 (2) “Qualifying expenses” mean actual costs that a new worker
11 incurs for:

12 (A) moving expenses;

13 (B) payment of student loan debt;

14 (C) down payment assistance; and

15 (D) initial rental deposits.

16 (e) On or before October 1, 2020, the Agency shall submit a report to the
17 House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate
18 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
19 concerning the implementation of this section, including:

20 (1) a description of the procedures adopted to implement the Program;

21 (2) the promotion and marketing of the Program;

1 (3) any additional recommendations for qualifying new worker expenses
2 or qualifying workers that should be eligible under the Program, and

3 (4) any recommendations for the maximum amount of the grant.

4 * * * Business Portal * * *

5 Sec. 12. 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 196, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

6 Sec. 1. SIMPLIFYING GOVERNMENT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

7 (a) The Secretary of State shall serve as the chair of a steering committee,
8 composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce and
9 Community Development, and the Secretary of Digital Services or their
10 designees.

11 (b) The Secretary of State, in collaboration with the steering committee,
12 and in collaboration with other State agencies and departments and interested
13 stakeholders as necessary, shall:

14 (1) review and consider the necessary procedural and substantive steps
15 to enhance the Secretary of State’s one-stop business portal for businesses,
16 entrepreneurs, and citizens to provide information about starting and operating
17 a business in Vermont; and

18 (2) submit on or before December 15, ~~2018~~ 2019:

19 (A) a design proposal that includes a project scope, timeline,
20 roadmap, and cost projections; ~~and~~

1 (B) any statutory or regulatory changes needed to implement the
2 proposal; and

3 (C) a sustainable funding model for the portal.

4 (c) The steering committee shall evaluate the cost and efficacy, and
5 integrate into the current one-stop portal to the extent feasible, features that:

6 (1) enhance State websites to simplify registrations and provide a clear
7 compilation of other State business requirements, including permits and
8 licenses;

9 (2) simplify the mechanism for making payments to the State by
10 allowing a person to pay amounts he or she owes to the State for taxes, fees, or
11 other charges to a single recipient within State government;

12 (3) simplify annual filing requirements by allowing a person to make a
13 single filing to a single recipient within State government and check a box if
14 nothing substantive has changed from the prior year;

15 (4) provide guidance, assistance with navigation, and other support to
16 persons who are forming or operating a small business;

17 (5) after registration, provide information about additional and ongoing
18 State requirements and a point of contact to discuss questions or explore any
19 assistance needed;

1 (6) provide guidance and information about State and federal programs
2 and initiatives, as well as State partner organizations and Vermont-based
3 businesses of interest; and

4 (7) map communication channels for project updates, including digital
5 channels such as e-mail, social media, and other communications.

6 (d) State agencies and departments shall provide assistance to the steering
7 committee upon its request.

8 (e) The steering committee shall focus its review on providing services
9 through the one-stop business portal primarily for the benefit of businesses
10 with 20 or fewer employees.

11 (f) The Agency of Digital Services shall assign a project manager or
12 business analyst to report directly to the Secretary of State to assist with the
13 implementation of this act through June 30, ~~2019~~ 2020 for the purpose of
14 developing and implementing a one-stop navigable portal for businesses,
15 entrepreneurs, and citizens to access information about starting a business in
16 Vermont, and to provide ongoing support to businesses interfacing with State
17 government.

1 * * * Agency of Commerce and Community Development;

2 Structure and Organization * * *

3 Sec. 13. AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY

4 DEVELOPMENT; STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION;

5 REPORT

6 On or before January 15, 2020, the Secretary of Commerce and Community
7 Development shall review and report to the House Committees on Commerce
8 and Economic Development and on Appropriations and to the Senate
9 Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on
10 Appropriations concerning the organization of the Agency's workforce
11 recruitment efforts and related functions.

12 * * * Appropriations * * *

13 Sec. 14. APPROPRIATIONS

14 Of the \$2,000,000.00 appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of
15 Commerce and Community Development in Sec. B.1101(23) of H.542 (2019),
16 the Agency shall use the funding for the following economic development
17 initiatives in the amount specified:

18 (1) \$1,725,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community
19 Development:

20 (A) \$225,000.00 to identify, recruit, and provide relocation assistance
21 to workers, including:

- 1 (i) identifying target audiences;
- 2 (ii) targeting through digital and social media;
- 3 (iii) executing the State’s core Economic Development Marketing
4 Plan through paid, owned, and earned media, utilizing technology, data, and
5 analysis tools; and
- 6 (iv) implementing strategies that convert visitors to residents and
7 awarding grants for regional partnerships to help recruitment efforts at the
8 local and regional levels; and
- 9 (B) \$1,500,000.00 to provide incentives that assist workers and
10 families relocating to Vermont under the New Worker Relocation Incentive
11 Program created in Sec. 11 of this act; and
- 12 (2) \$275,000.00 to the Department of Labor to expand opportunities for
13 apprenticeships, training, and postsecondary career and technical education
14 through the workforce education and training fund created in 10 V.S.A. § 543
15 and to perform its duties pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 540(1).
- 16 (b) Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Labor for the
17 workforce education and training fund created in 10 V.S.A. § 543, the
18 Department shall use \$70,000.00 to design a coordinated plan for an integrated
19 postsecondary career and technical education system pursuant to Sec. 6 of this
20 act and to provide services and support for New Americans pursuant to Sec. 9
21 of this act.

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* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019, except that Sec. 6 (postsecondary career and technical education system) shall take effect on passage.

(Committee vote: _____)

Senator _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE