



FUTURE READY VERMONT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Background

Advance Vermont has received a \$75,000 grant from Jane's Trust to build a public-facing, user-friendly web portal for education and employment opportunities in Vermont. A beta site will launch by the end of 2020.

Why a portal?

- The J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation (McClure Foundation) and Vermont Department of Labor produce a trusted and valued resource showcasing Vermont's high-demand, high-wage careers (Pathways to Promising Careers). The popularity of this resource has demonstrated the value of pairing education and employment information and sharing it in an accessible format. A portal will both bring new visibility to Pathways to Promising Careers and further its reach by connecting it to a comprehensive clearinghouse of education and employment resources.
- Other states are already taking their high-demand, high-wage jobs data and building it out to create an interactive portal which the public can use as a one-stop shop for education and employment information (see [Future Ready Iowa](#) and [Launch Oklahoma](#)).
- Some of Advance Vermont's partner organizations have shared that they're struggling with the visibility of their programs and services, especially with populations who are focused on their basic needs and don't have the time/ability to navigate multiple options.
- Advance Vermont's research on [Today's Students](#) has shown that Vermonters enrolling in postsecondary credential programs are increasingly juggling multiple responsibilities (parenting, working full-time etc.), and need clear, easy-to-use resources that take their 21st Century needs into account. These include the ability to evaluate education and training programs by time commitment, cost, and delivery mode (online, in-person), and custom resources for populations with unique needs (i.e. New Americans, people with disabilities).

Vision

Advance Vermont has been working closely with the Vermont Department of Labor, McClure Foundation, VSAC, and others to ensure that Vermont's portal (working name: Future Ready Vermont) will be a long-standing, sustainable resource that brings new visibility to existing resources, communicates the diversity and accessibility of career and education pathways in Vermont, and creates public awareness of the state's high-demand, high-wage jobs and priority sectors.

The target audience for the portal will be:

- Prospective students of any age, and particularly
 - Low income
 - First generation
 - Historically marginalized (HM) Vermonters
- "Navigators" such as school counselors and service providers
- Parents, guardians, and other influential family members

Content will be driven by input from stakeholders, including the target audience, but is likely to include:

- The value of postsecondary credentials
- The diversity of career and education pathways available
- Information on Vermont's high-demand, high-wage careers
- Where to obtain education and training for these careers in Vermont
- Spotlights on priority sectors, including profiles of Vermonters in these fields
- Links to job boards
- How to pay for education and training programs
- Links to tools, guides, and support services

Project Goals

The goals of the portal are two-fold:

1. Create a user-friendly, web-based resource for the public and navigators that will:

- Serve as a one-stop shop for those seeking postsecondary education, training, or employment in Vermont
- Increase awareness of Vermont's high-demand, high-wage jobs and priority sectors
- Increase awareness of Vermont's education and training programs
- Increase awareness of high-value opportunities for accelerated learning and training, such as credit for prior learning, Dual Enrollment, Early College, Fast Forward, Strengthening Working Families Initiative and credit-bearing apprenticeships.
- Grow visibility for the programs, services, guides, financial supports, and other resources designed to support those looking for postsecondary education, training, or employment
- Make it easy to find and understand information on postsecondary education, training, and employment in Vermont - regardless of experience, knowledge, language level, or ability

2. Through the portal, achieve systems-level change by:

- Growing awareness of the importance of education after high school and the diversity of postsecondary options
- Demystifying and destigmatizing postsecondary pathways, particularly non-degree pathways
- Making access to opportunities, information, and supports for education, training, and employment more equitable
- Strengthening the connections between education, training, and employment

Approach

- Increase visibility for existing information, resources, and efforts - avoid duplication
- Adopt language, concepts, and imagery already in use by key project partners (VDOL, AOE, McClure, VSC, VSAC etc.)
- Employ visuals/icons to increase accessibility of information
- Adopt principles of Universal Design to ensure site is accessible to all users
- Design a resource informed by the target audience - not just leaders