



Rep. O’Sullivan’s information request:  
Broken down by Community Action Agency

1. How many micro businesses started/expanded?

FY18	BROC	Capstone	CVOEO	NEKCA	SEVCA	Total
Started	11	27	12	11	8	69
Expanded	5	10	17	9	4	45

2. How many jobs created [people employed owners /employees]?

FY18	BROC	Capstone	CVOEO	NEKCA	SEVCA	Total
	13	36	21	10	7	87

3. Types of businesses?

All different types across the state: farming, yoga studio, antique sales, web design, trucking, online dating service, online sales, crafts, cleaning services, virtual assistant, deli, home-based child care provider, painting contractor, logger, tow truck operator, restaurant owner, massage therapist, breweries, florists, carpentry, photographer, computer technician, etc.

4. Capital accessed [initial investment]?

FY18	BROC	Capstone	CVOEO	NEKCA	SEVCA	Total
	\$308,311	\$187,860	\$765,471	\$166,545	\$26,069	\$1,454,256

5. Who do you partner with for training/referrals/financing?

COSA (Circles of Support & Accountability), Turning Point Centers, Adult Basic Education/VT Adult Learning, Reach Up, VT Department of Labor, VT Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Corrections & correctional facilities, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Corporations, SBDC, SCORE, SBA, Community College of Vermont, Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), and Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Generator Maker Space, City of Burlington, CPAs & other financial professionals, IRS, VT Department of Taxes, Community Capital of Vermont, community banks & credit unions, local insurance providers, and pretty much anyone else you can think of that would benefit the participants.

## What job training programs are offered?

Business Training and Technical Assistance All five agencies offer micro business training and technical assistance counseling. In addition to creating needed jobs and employment skills, business ownership offers an important pathway to economic self-sufficiency for those who struggle with barriers to traditional employment such as child care, transportation, disabilities, low literacy levels, and criminal records. We know that micro business (those with five employees or less) play a key role as they comprise 80% of the 29 million businesses in the US. Additionally, there are two often overlooked benefits associated with micro business development: helping people to make the decision to *not* start a business if they are not ready, and—for those who stay in the workforce—increasing their skillsets and confidence as employees.

Community Kitchen Academy In partnership with the VT Foodbank, CVOEO and Capstone offer this culinary job training program to underemployed and unemployed adults who have an interest in a career in the food industry. Instruction is provided during each 12-week session in hands on cooking, knife skills, teamwork, job readiness, interviewing, resume preparation, introduction to business, financial education, and many other essential skills. Hands on cooking and meal preparation occurs through repurposing donated food into ready to eat meals distributed by each agency's food shelves. In FY18, some 60 students enrolled in the program, 67% graduated, 45% of graduates earned college credits, and 68% earned ServSafe certification, and industry recognized credential. The job placement rate of graduates is 85%, and 72% retained their positions for more than 90 days. Students are referred by and supported by partnerships with VT Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services/Reach Up, VSAC, Adult Basic Education, and others. Each student undertakes an internship at a local business such as Meals on Wheels, hospitals, nursing homes, local restaurants and coops, State House and Blue Cross/Blue Shield cafeterias, and many others. Graduates are in high demand for positions in the food industry.

Capstone's Family Literacy Center program takes a two generation approach to elevate young families out of poverty. Operating out of the Brook Street School in Barre, the Center works with pregnant/parenting students between the ages of 15-25 years. Most have special learning needs and have had negative experiences in the school system; many have experienced trauma growing up. Enrolled students participate in the state certified academic program at the Family Literacy Center that leads to a high school diploma. They also receive parenting education, enjoy opportunities to bond with their infants, learn valuable financial literacy skills, and engage in career exploration and work readiness activities. The goals of the program are to empower young women with the tools, resources, and confidence to realize their potential, nurture their child's development, and break the cycle of poverty.

Students take advantage of Capstone's job readiness training that focuses on the development of essential soft skills. Financial literacy classes teach household budgeting, how the banking system works, how to establish and build credit, manage debt, purchase a vehicle, and set aside savings for emergencies. Career exploration and counseling broaden students' career awareness and provide opportunities to try out various interests. Special attention is paid to non-traditional careers for women where the earning potential is higher. Students learn about necessary

education and certification, salary levels, and job availability. They attend the *Women Can Do* conference where they actively try out non-traditional jobs and the Central Vermont Job Fair where they can talk with local employers. Career interests are then explored in real life settings through job shadowing, internships, and work experience. Recent placements have included Head Start's Learning Together Center early childhood classrooms, the Brook Street School kitchen, Barre Probation and Parole, the Salvation Army, the Family Center of Washington County, Barre Town Emergency Services, Delicate Decadence, the Vermont Arts Council, and Resource. Student outcomes in this program have included:

- 46% enrolled in post-secondary education
- 38% completed a post-secondary training program
- 92% gained and maintained employment
- 92% reduced or completely moved off of state economic services

Farm to Plate Capstone has served as the coordinator of the Central Vermont Regional Workforce Partnership, which brings together workforce development organizations with local businesses to explore opportunities for collaboration in strengthening the region's workforce. Using this venue, Capstone has worked with Farm to Plate to bring together food sector businesses with local educators and workforce development partners to explore career opportunities in the Washington WEB (workforce, education, & business) through internships and career exploration opportunities.

SEVCA's "Ready for Work" program includes a 7 session course and individualized support to help participants maximize their opportunities to become job-ready, obtain employment, and successfully transition into the workforce. The program focuses on building core workplace skills, including personal and career development strategies, resume development and interviewing, teamwork, communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, building a strong work ethic, and life skills. SEVCA delivers the program in partnership with the Phoenix House/Tapestry program for women transitioning out of prison, the state Economic Services Division for Reach Up participants, Youth Services, and VT Adult Learning.

NEKCA's Job Readiness and Community Service Placements NEKCA offers resume building, online access to applying for positions, and other job readiness activities to 18 participants (Newport office) meeting their work requirements through community service placements at NEKCA's thrift store, reception and office work, cooking and maintaining the kitchen, and working in NEKCA's food shelf. These are participants receiving Reach Up, Voc Rehab services, SNAP, and services from VT Associates. NEKCA's St. Johnsbury Office offers job coaching and worksite experiences to participants receiving Reach Up. They arrange information interviews, company tours, job shadows, internships, and work experience paid and unpaid. When an employer hires one of the participants, NEKCA's job coach continues to support the employer and employee for at least 90 days. This is where participants learn soft skills such as communication, leadership, interpersonal, influencing, emotional regulation, self confidence, resilience, work-life balance, creativity, organization, time management, customer service, etc; all these skills are highly sought after and transferable. NEKCA offers 8 different job placements for training: Administrative Assistant, Food Shelf, Reception, Chef Assistant, Interior and exterior building maintenance, warming shelter assistant, and food demonstrations.

The Transitional Training Program at BROCC Community Action primarily serves people between the age of 25 and 44; 76% of the participants are female. Transitional Training does not actively recruit for this program, but receives referrals to provide training for Reach Up participants. There are also partnerships with The New Story Center, Vermont Associates, Vocational Rehab as well as an MOU signed with Goodwill of Northern New England. During fiscal year 2018, 90 individuals took part in the Transitional Training program. Employment outcomes were 7 participants gained full-time employment and 11 participants gained part-time employment. Constant support and evaluation is provided to participants in the program to increase employment skills with a heavy emphasis on “soft skills”.