

At the start of last biennium, Governor Scott directed an interagency team to develop and implement a plan to increase the number and skill level of available workers in Vermont. Three key strategies emerged and specific activities were identified that would support this goal. The strategies were as follows:

1. Increase the Labor Participation Rate of Vermonters
2. Recruit and Relocate More Workers to Vermont
3. Assist Employers in Accessing and Retaining Qualified Workers

Reloc802 is an initiative developed to advance the second strategy in the goal to , “recruit and relocate” more workers to Vermont. It’s widely agreed that Vermont’s demographic changes are causing increased pressure on the state’s labor force and, ultimately, our economy. Just last fall, Moody’s downgraded Vermont’s bond rating – citing low economic growth prospects from an aging population. Recognizing that even the most successful efforts to train and match every able-bodied worker with an existing job will still leave the state with a worker deficit, Vermont must accelerate and bolster its efforts to bring new workers into the state. *Reloc802* aligns already existing state and community systems to facilitate and expedite the successful physical transition of any person into a Vermont community by providing quick, customized information, resources, referrals, and support at the local level.

In every community across Vermont, state and federal agencies, non-profits, schools, industry groups, and other stakeholders are working to connect employers with the skilled workers they need. The relationships and localized expertise that exists already in communities is invaluable. The aforementioned entities know the specific needs of employers and availability of housing, childcare, healthcare and broadband. Using a strengths-based regional approach, the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) will launch and lead a coordinated information and support system to facilitate the successful relocation of individuals to and within Vermont. The Agencies of Human Services, Education, and Commerce and Community Development will partner with VDOL to ensure that community-level areas of expertise are integrated into this robust relocation support system known as *Reloc802*.

10 V.S.A. §540 charges the Commissioner of Labor with implementing a coordinated system to relocate workers to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont’s businesses are met. As the federally designated one-stop operator of the state’s American Job Center (AJC) network, VDOL already has the responsibility of overseeing the coordination of employment and support services for jobseekers and employers provided by over twenty different programs. Its physical and programmatic footprint connects it to a variety of community partners who play a vital role helping individuals and families access resources they might need to relocate with ease.

Overview

To accomplish a community-based, integrated relocation system, VDOL will use the following tactics:

Integrated System: VDOL will convene statewide stakeholders to assist in the design of a basic system of connecting recruited or interested individuals with the local teams. VDOL will

adapt and use existing software and systems to oversee coordination and case management of individuals interested in relocation.

Basic Community Profile: VDOL will create customized e-booklets of information for each region that will include labor market information, housing and education information, recreation information, and other relevant resources. These will be available for interested individuals and will assist in aspects of preliminary decision-making.

Integrated Regional Networks: Community based, existing regional networks will serve as multi-disciplinary teams to support local relocation activities, and will be responsible for acting as a resource for state and community partners and supporting local activities. Real estate agencies, regional transportation networks, and local community groups will also be included as part of the teams - as appropriate for each region.

Private Partnerships: VDOL will establish working agreements with key non-government organizations to ensure that subject area expertise is available to program staff and, more importantly, individuals looking to move to Vermont, through referrals or other information sharing mechanisms. Entities might include: Higher Education, Industry Groups, Vermont Realtors Association, Chambers, Religious Associations, Vermont Bar Association, etc.

Localized Support Grants: In response to the unique employment needs that exist in the different Opportunity Zone Communities, VDOL will competitively grant three awards to organizations with local expertise and the ability to support the concierge approach to relocating individuals and families, working with employers and service organizations in and around the Opportunity Zone communities. Examples of organizations that might apply are: regional development corporations, parent child centers, community action agencies, or chambers of commerce.

Reporting

VDOL will track and report on a variety of information, including:

- Number of Individuals Served
- Local Partners Involved
- Services Provided
- Geographic Area of Interest
- Demographic information
- Sector/Employment Interests
- Specific Needs/Barriers to Relocation
- Successful Employment
- Successful Relocation
- Number of New Jobs Posted
- Number of Employers Engaged

VDOL's Role

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) will assist any individual – resident or nonresident – in finding employment in Vermont. Through *Reloc802*, VDOL will provide:

- Local Job Market Information – including openings, average wage information, projected employment growth, and business and industry information.
- Community Information – including demographics, tax information, and education and service information.

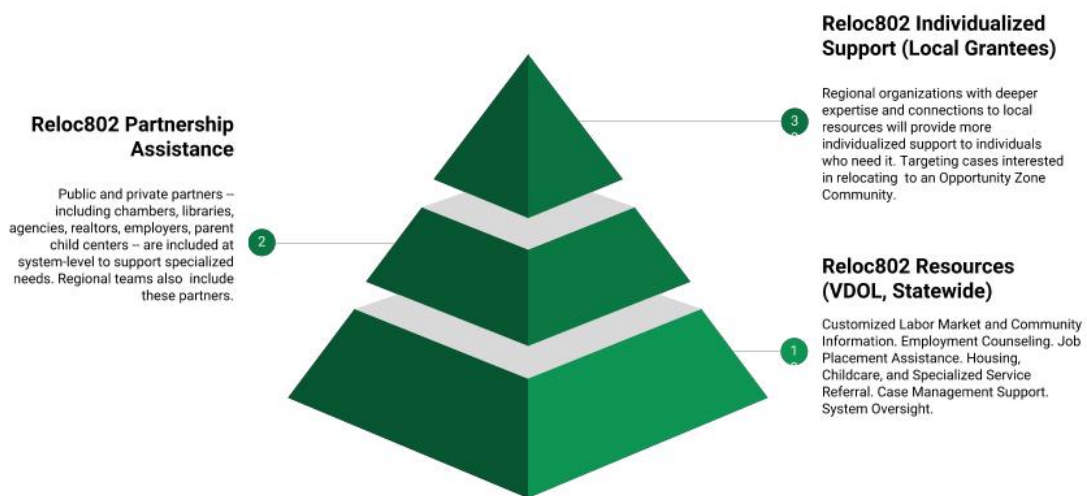
- Recreation and Leisure Information – including public parks and recreational areas, arts and cultural activities, and shopping and commercial information.
- Service Information – including state services, childcare referrals, faith and worship centers, health care information, insurance information, and transportation information.
- Housing Information – including information on renting or buying a home, local real estate agencies, and local realtors.

While VDOL has experience in providing employment and relocation support (see www.careeronestop.org for sampling of services and resources under US DOL), other regional and local organizations and private partners have greater familiarity and expertise in some forms of support that customers will be seeking. Local chambers of commerce, realtors, parent child centers, schools, and service organizations will be vital state and regional partners. As part of implementing Reloc802, VDOL will execute agreements and develop referral processes tailored for each partner or purpose, so that the collective impact of all knowledge and resources are made available to all. VDOL will create and manage a system for supporting customers, a “no wrong door” approach will be adopted so that a customer’s relocation support needs are met however they become known.

In partnership with these community organizations, VDOL will ensure that each person interested in relocating has at least one local point of contact equipped to provide information, find information, make referrals, and follow-up on contacts in support of the customer. Information will be tracked in a customer management system so that partners are accountable for ensuring every need is met. This system will also provide useful data on barriers to relocation, demographic information, and effectiveness of the Reloc802 project.

Reloc802

A strength-based system to maximize current expertise and resources.



Priority Communities

The first year of Reloc802 will focus on supporting relocation efforts in and around Vermont's 17 Opportunity Zone Communities. Those communities are: Barre City, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Johnson, Lyndon, Newport City, Randolph, Rockingham, Royalton, Rutland City, St. Albans City, St. Johnsbury, South Burlington, Springfield, Vergennes, and Winooski. Three \$50k grants will be competitively awarded to regional organizations with local expertise and the ability to support the concierge approach to relocating individuals and families, working with employers and service organizations in and around the Opportunity Zone communities.

Funding

A rough estimate of the cost of this project is as follows. Activities that may be funded with federal funds will also be incorporated and are not reflected in this budget.

Staff Costs: (Salary, Fringe, Indirects)	
Project Leader	\$129,000
Concierge Coordinator	\$91,000
Other:	
Training, Memberships	\$20,000
Localized e-booklets	\$75,000
Travel	\$15,000
Information Technology Costs	\$20,000
SUBTOTAL:	\$350,000
Competitive Local Grants (3 x \$50k)	\$150,000
TOTAL	\$500,000