

ACT 189 of 2018 IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Submitted to

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
House Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Education

Submitted by

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This report is submitted to fulfill the requirements of Act 189 of 2018, *An Act Relating to Workforce Development*. This report provides an update on the progress made in the implementation of each section in Act 189 as required by the State Workforce Development Board per Act 189 13(a), and includes the Department of Labor's required report regarding the availability and expansion of apprenticeship opportunities per Act 189 13(b) and reporting requirements per Act 189 6(c).

Section A. Stakeholder Alignment, Coordination, and Engagement Process; Vision; Goals – Implementation Update

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) approved the following plan for implementing Act 189 1(a) on December 6, 2018.

Activity 1: Regional Workforce Summits: Building on activities already planned or anticipated, the SWDB will hire a consultant to assist with coordinating a standardized day-long summit in each region that would:

- Meet service-delivery providers need to conduct a regional cross-trainings in the state plan
- Provide employers with state and localized tools & information about how and where to access workforce resources
- Generate regional feedback to inform aspects of the 2020 WIOA State Plan.
- Create, through planning process, a directory of local providers of workforce education and training providers, programs, and resources.

Activity 2: (Joint) State Workforce Summit: The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and the SWDB, in partnership with the Vermont Chamber of Commerce is working to plan, organize, promote, and support a State Workforce Summit in Burlington this spring. Working together, we will use the event planning expertise and resources of the VT Chamber, and the organizational outreach support of VDOL/SWDB, to host **one event** that meets the needs of the SWDB, core WIOA partners, and interested stakeholder groups (e.g. Advance VT). The day will include key participants who will learn, engage, and inform one another through carefully structured activities throughout the day.

Activity 3: Aligning Plans and Goals: The SWDB, through the Policy Committee, is working to create a directory of relevant state plans and planning requirements, understand where areas of overlap exist, and codify agreements among state agency leaders to ensure uniformity in commitment language, efficiency and inclusion in planning engagement processes, and alignment in implementation where possible.

Activity 4(a): Establishing Performance Measures & Dashboard – The SWDB and VDOL are working to establish universal workforce *system* performance measures that public and private stakeholders can look to in evaluating how well Vermont is meeting its labor force education, training, and employment needs. This “dashboard” will assist the SWDB in carrying out its statutory oversight duties and support the legislative and executive branches efforts to standardize and operationalize the measurement of programs and systems. This activity should

be informed by existing requirements to report workforce education, training, and employment service *program* performance.

Activity 4(b): Program Inventory Data – Consensus is needed around what *program* data must be collected regularly for the purposes of maintaining robust and accurate workforce program inventory. Information about what is regularly reported, available, and the workload associated with collecting data from different sources and systems will be reviewed by the Policy Committee of the SWDB.

Section B. Workforce Development Action Plan Creation Update

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) approved the following plan for implementing Act 189 1(b) on December 6, 2018:

Activity 1: 2020 WIOA State Plan: The SWDB will appoint an ad-hoc committee tasked with leading SWDB-related work on the 2020 WIOA Unified State Plan.

Activity 2: State Workforce Development Board Website Creation: The SWDB now hosts a website (vwdb.vermont.gov) that features information about the SWDB and its activities . Additionally, the SWDB sends out a monthly newsletter to roughly 500 interested parties and stakeholders with information about initiatives and activities related to workforce development. Copies of recent newsletters are available upon request or may viewed at vwdb.vermont.gov. This mechanism will also be used to post and promote the WIOA Unified State Plan per Act 189 1(b)(2).

Section C. State Workforce Development Board Permissive Activities

Permissive Activities as described and outlined in Act 189 1(e):

- The SWDB has continued to develop and populate an online tool that visually depicts connections between individuals and organizations in the workforce development system.
- The Department of Labor is exploring new tools (with the help of regional and federal partners) to understand program connectivity and achieve greater system alignment.
- In June, the SWDB received technical assistance funding and support for a comprehensive board training from Region 1 ETA. See Appendix A for the slides used for this training.
- Appropriate workforce partners (identified) are leading the exploration of the strategies outlined below and will report any recommendations to the SWDB when they are developed:
 - Sharing employer-outreach positions in the field [*VDOL & the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation(VR)*]
 - Better coordination of services to and for employers [*VDOL, Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) & Department of Economic Development (DED)*]
 - Creating a One-Stop Job Center in Rutland (*VDOL*)

- Scaling middle-and high-school career readiness pilots [*VDOL & Agency of Education(AOE)*]
- The SWDB and VDOL funded a representative delegation from Vermont to participate in a New England-based initiative that is designing and promoting a Whole Family approach to employment. The delegation included representation from VDOL, Reach-Up, Child Development Division, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Vermont Community Foundation, as well as a parent, a member of the House, and a representative of a parent child center. See Appendix B for a summary of the most recent regional meeting in Portsmouth, NH. A workgroup with greater membership continues to meet to develop recommendations for Vermont-specific policies and practices.

Section D. Career Pathways, CTE and Adult Technical Education – Implementation Update

The summary below describes progress made by the SWDB, AOE, and VDOL to implement a process for developing career pathways per Act 189 3(b).

The SWDB created a Career Pathways Committee charged with reviewing and approving state-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving employment outcomes, meeting employers’ and workers’ needs, and leveraging available State and federal funding. Members of the Committee (below) represent stakeholders across the business community, higher and career technical education, veterans’ services, and state government, and is chaired by Eileen Illuzzi (North Country Career Center) and vice chaired by Melissa Hersh (Answers Within, LLC). The full Committee has met twice since its appointment to examine and define its charge and scope in reviewing and approving Career Pathways, and is undertaking work to establish additional minimal criteria for all Career Pathways beyond the statutory definitions in Act 189. The Committee will also establish an official approval process, including a timeline that reflects AOE’s work around each Career Pathway, better define its collaborative relationship with the AOE in developing Career Pathways, and create strategies to publicize approved Career Pathways.

- Heather Bouchey (AOE)
- Alison Clarkson (SENATE)
- Diane Dalmasse (VR)
- Joan Goldstein (ACCD)
- Laurie Gunn (BUSINESS)
- Melissa Hersh (BUSINESS)
- Eileen Illuzzi (CTE)
- Lindsay Kurrle (VDOL)
- Jeb Spaulding (VSC)
- Dave Wheel (VETERANS)

Section E. Career Readiness, and CTE Pilot Creation

As authorized in Act 189 of 2018, Section 6(b), the Agency of Education (AOE) established guidelines, proposal submissions requirements, and a review process for proposals for pilot project. As authorized in the law, these proposals will identify “novel ways of integrating funding for CTE and general education and new governance structures for regional CTE, centers, including unified governance structures between regional CTE centers and high schools, or both.” The AOE identified and reserved carryover funds totaling \$160,000 over two years to be granted to support implementation of approved proposals.

The request for proposals was released on December 3, 2018, with written questions due on January 4, 2019. The AOE held a conference call with interested applicants to discuss the nature of the proposals, to answer questions that were submitted in advance, and to allow applicants to ask additional questions. The deadline for proposals to be submitted is February 15. The AOE has created a process to review and select up to four proposals.

The anticipated start date of selected proposals will be April 1, 2019 with a requirement for status reports to be submitted every six months until April 1, 2021 when the final reports will be due. AOE expects to provide ongoing technical assistance to each of the selected sites over the two-year period.

Section F. Adult Training Programs and Adult CTE

VDOL continues to ensure effective use of State investments per Act 189 5(a), and by overseeing and maintaining the federally-required “Eligible Training Provider List,” to ensure that training programs delivered by Career & Technical Education (CTE) centers, non-profit and private entities, and higher education institutions are included in the system per Act 189 5(b). VDOL collaborated with the SWDB’s Policy Committee to make initial amendments to the Eligible Training Provider procedures and eligibility criteria, which were approved by the full SWDB in December. A more comprehensive assessment will occur in the next year, but this process will not begin until VDOL submits a waiver request for some reporting requirements.

This year, VDOL funded a series of regional convenings (led by RDCs) that delivered locally-tailored sets of labor market information to employers and adult training providers to facilitate more robust, diverse, and responsive solutions to employers’ training needs. The regional reports were generated by CTE region, rather than economic development region, to support a closer connection between employers and training providers in developing trainings. See Appendix C for a copy of those reports.

Much has been accomplished in examining different delivery methods of secondary and post-secondary CTE across the state. Beginning last spring, CTE directors, staff, and instructors (in addition to dozens of other stakeholders) were asked to participate in numerous projects, meetings, and activities related to the operation and future of both secondary and post-secondary CTE. VDOL and the SWDB have supported AOE’s lead in developing a unifying strategic plan that clearly articulates the role of CTE in Vermont’s education and workforce development systems.

Phase one included thirty-minute interviews with dozens of stakeholders across the state and 1,472 respondents completing a 50-question online survey. In Phase 2, carried out this past June, an advisory committee representing secondary education, colleges and universities, employers, policy makers, and workforce development entities convened. The group developed goals and identified initial strategies requiring implementation to achieve collective aims. AOE continued to gather information, feedback, and perspectives on the CTE system in Vermont by conducting multiple listening sessions throughout the state. In addition to 165 students from 27 sending schools, 43 CTE faculty members also participated in the events. As the Agency wraps up its analyses, it is continuing to share information and findings with VDOL. VDOL is also sharing its information on how Adult CTE programs are using their workforce education and training fund grants, equipment grants, and other resources, in order to provide a full picture of how CTE is delivered throughout the state.

As AOE wraps up its review and analysis of the information gathered in order to present recommendations, VDOL is respectful of the ways that secondary and post-secondary CTE are co-delivered in the state. Further, as anticipated, Perkins V legislation was finally reauthorized. This federal law funds secondary and postsecondary CTE programs in the state. The bulk of relevant AOE staff time this coming year will be focused on designing and writing the new required state plan for Perkins. Because the Agency's attention will necessarily be turned toward this required work, it will reduce resources available for their participation in Adult CTE this year. We recommend considering a "pause" on any adult-specific work and recommendations, so that any future changes linked to Perkins might be contemplated in the context of a system realignment.

Sec. G: Strengthening and Aligning Workforce Training

Per Act 189 7(1), the SWDB created a "Training and Credentialing" workgroup (membership listed below). This limited-duration work group is charged with recommending the charge and initial membership of the SWDB's standing Training and Credentialing Committee. In addition to overseeing WIOA eligible training provider eligibility and approval process, the Committee will likely be responsible for approving state-endorsed and industry-recognized credentials and certificates.

The full work group has met once since its appointment, while a subset has met several times for purposes of strategic planning. The co-chairs, Jay Ramsey (AOE) and Marilyn Cargill (VSAC), are leading the group in a thorough process designed to inform the creation of a credential recognition and evaluation system for the state. The group has planned a series of meetings throughout January and February, facilitated by a performance improvement specialist, to define "credential of value," establish a process by which the standing committee will review and approve credentials of value, define the standing committee and/or SWDB's role in managing the approval process, consult with employers and other stakeholders, and recommend the standing committee's charge and initial membership.

- Hugh Bradshaw (VR)

- Kim Bushey (DOC)
- Marilyn Cargill (VSAC)
- Jane Fortin (VDOL)
- Maureen Hebert (VTC)
- S. Lauren Hibbert (OPR)
- Sharon Parker (AOE)
- Jay Ramsey (AOE)
- Mary Anne Sheahan (VTPM)
- Joe Teegarden (CTE)

Sec. H: Workforce Education and Training Fund and Grant Programs

Per Act 189 8(g), all training funds awarded under the Workforce Education and Training Grant Fund (WETF) are now required to demonstrate alignment with a career pathway.

Sec. I: Vermont Returnship Program – Program Creation and Implementation Update

Per Act 189 10(3), VDOL and Associates for Training and Development (A4TD) have partnered to create the Vermont Returnship Program, an innovative project designed to address Vermont’s skilled labor shortages and pair employers with experienced workers. A “returnship” is a position similar to an internship, designed specifically for adults with previous experience in the workplace who have taken time away from their careers and seek to reenter the workforce. The Vermont Returnship Program mitigates the shrinking of the state’s workforce by bringing back into work those who are not currently engaged and retaining those who are otherwise poised to retire.

The program has been launched and includes staffing, online and print resources, a participant and employer outreach plan, and a series of agency and partner informational webinars to promote and further align this program with the employment and training offerings available throughout the state. VDOL will recommend continued funding for this program in FY2020.

Sec. J: Vermont Talent Pipeline Project – Funding Update

Per Act 189 16(b), VDOL was able to subgrant a portion of a federal grant to support the work of the Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project to support development and rollout of career pathways across the state.

Sec. K: Results-Based Monitoring and Data Collection

See Section A, Activity 4(a) and 4(b) above.

Sec. L: Apprenticeships – Report and Update

This section serves as the report required per Act 189 18(a).

In 2018, VDOL applied for and received new funding for a national apprenticeship expansion grant. The grant led to the creation of a State Apprenticeship Team that is charged with:

- Gaining expertise in federal Registered Apprenticeship program requirements;
- Designing tools and common outreach practices for engaging and supporting employers and apprentices;
- Establishing efficient systems to develop apprenticeship models quickly, including the standards of apprenticeship, related instruction curriculum, work plan, employer agreement, connection to a career pathway, and any other related component;
- Creating support service models for employers and apprentices that can be replicated throughout the system;
- Accelerating and strengthening the connections of their agency to apprenticeship work throughout the state;
- Developing mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the system and promote continuous improvement; and
- Identifying opportunities to leverage resources and support for apprenticeship opportunities.

The six team members are: VDOL, VR, AOE, DED, Community College of Vermont, and Vermont Technical College. The team has met several times during the summer and fall and is creating an action plan for accomplishing the goals above. The grant provides limited support from a consultant, who facilitated a successful Apprenticeship Summit in October.

The team has identified both aims in Act 189 Sec.18(b)(1) and (2)—encouraging more businesses to offer registered apprenticeships and encouraging more participants to enroll in registered apprenticeships—as foundational for its work. Three activities it has undertaken to further these goals are:

1. Promote awareness of registered apprenticeship opportunities to meet workforce needs and advance employment opportunities. Partners have participated in a series of publicity activities throughout the fall, including a joint press conference during National Apprenticeship Week in November.
2. Increasing the inclusion of Vermont State Colleges as a related instruction partner. The Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College have been past instructional partners in programs like early childcare, electrical, and plumbing. VDOL has expanded that partnership in programs in the healthcare, construction, and manufacturing fields.
3. Stronger collaboration between agency partners. By bringing internal attention to the expansion of apprenticeships, AOE, the Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD), VDOL, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Aging and Independent Living have united around various partnerships aimed at expanding apprenticeships in cybersecurity, health care, manufacturing, and the trades.

There are four sectors that should be enhanced in Vermont: Health Care (including at the mid-career level), Construction, Manufacturing, and Business Services (including IT and accounting).

VDOL also took steps to strengthen its Apprenticeship Division. New oversight and additional staff support were added this fall to support changes that will improve outreach, coordination, and support for prospective and current apprentices and apprenticeship sponsors.

Sec M: WIOA Youth Funds Use

VDOL has reviewed the use of its federal Youth Program funding, including how it funds youth employment during the summer (formerly a federally-required Summer Youth Employment Opportunity Program). Though the reauthorization of WIOA no longer requires states to implement a Summer Youth Employment program, VDOL continued to allocate funds in the summers of 2017 and 2018. After reviewing the outcomes of this investment and the spending of the funds in general (including the number of youth served, the number of employers served, and the youth employment outcomes after participating in the program), VDOL has decided to pursue an outcome-driven approach to its use of federal Youth Program funds.

First, VDOL will pursue a federal waiver that will allow VDOL to alter the ratio of youth demographics served. Currently, WIOA requires a minimum of 75% of federal funds to be used serving “out of school youth,” allowing 25% to be spent serving “in school youth.” Vermont ranks among the highest states in high school completion rates, and the number of out of school youth is small compared to the number of in school youth. In addition to out of school youth, VDOL is interested in supporting more at-risk youth who are still considered “in school” according to federal eligibility requirements. Therefore, VDOL will be asking for a federal waiver that will allow VDOL to use a minimum of 60% of its funding to support out of school youth.

Second, VDOL will pursue a new youth employment strategy that is not limited to summer months and engages more employers. Federal law requires that 20% of WIOA Youth Program funds are spent on youth work experiences. This includes payment of wages for employment, internships, apprenticeships, and other forms of on-the-job training. VDOL is developing a new approach that is not limited to seasonal end-dates, engaging employers and employing more youth in jobs that offer career experience and an opportunity for permanent employment by the partner-employer.

Sec N: Film and Television Trades Opportunities Update

In the summer of 2018, VDOL was contacted to participate in a meeting with training providers in the film and television sector to discuss apprenticeship funding opportunities. Because registered apprenticeships require an employer sponsor, VDOL requested that the training provider locate a potential employer who would be interested in pursuing workforce expansion options that could include work-based training. VDOL will pursue such opportunities when a

possible employer-sponsor is located. Concurrently, ACCD continues to pursue economic development initiatives that consider and include expansion of the film and television industry. Those activities are ongoing.

Sec O: Workforce Development; Green Energy and Technology

This work is ongoing. VDOL offers a number of apprenticeship opportunities in these sectors and continues to engage business sponsors and education providers to refine career pathways and employment opportunities.

Sec P: Reservation of Funds

VDOL obligated funds for activities per Act 189 section 4, including:

- Over \$8,000 for SWDB and Committee meetings, trainings, and activities.
- Hiring a permanent, full-time state employee to assist in the ongoing implementation of SWDB activities, coordination, and alignment with state workforce initiatives.
- Anticipated \$40,000 for contracting services in support of regional alignment, information sharing, feedback, and development of local directories.
- \$150,000k in a federal DWG Sector grant to support the creation of regional industry and labor market information reports.
- \$180,000k in a federal DWG Sector grant to support regional convenings that further outline local sector strategies and employer-demand.
- Approximately \$20,000 in staff funding to support State Workforce Development Board and Committee work.

Report Review

This report will be reviewed by the State Workforce Development Board at its February 7, 2019 meeting. Any further recommendations will be offered to the legislative committees of jurisdiction within 10 days.