

GROW THE ECONOMY

Workforce Recruitment & Relocation Incentive Package



PART 1: RECRUIT AND RELOCATE WORKERS

- **WHAT:** The workforce recruitment and relocation incentive package is a portfolio of strategic marketing initiatives intended to attract highly-targeted audiences and to incentivize them to become Vermont residents. It is designed to expand and capitalize on the successes of 2018 initiatives to increase the number of new residents, increase the number of workers available to Vermont employers, and to support the legislative authority of the Agency of Commerce (in partnership with the Department of Labor and a variety of regional partners ranging from non-profit organizations to businesses) to perform this necessary work.
- **WHY:** Vermont's current demographic trends require significant intervention to reverse their downward trajectory. There are 23,000 fewer Vermonters under the age of 20 now than in 2000, and nearly 30,000 more Vermonters over the age of 65. Outside of Chittenden County, Vermont is estimated to be three to four years away from having only one worker for every retiree, child, or dependent of the State. A shortage of qualified workers negatively impacts every sector of business statewide and the state's tax revenue and tax capacity.
- **WHERE:** Statewide and out of state.
- **HOW:** Building on the successes of 2018, we will leverage Vermont's assets to encourage more workers to relocate to Vermont. Using sophisticated digital tools and marketing strategies, we will continue to target key demographics and individual prospects in Vermont's core markets (New England and mid-Atlantic states) and extrapolate data from newly-relocated residents to precisely focus our efforts. Sectors such as health care, technology, and hospitality will receive special emphasis. We will target mid-career professionals and young families, as well as remote workers living out-of-state who have the professional capital or resources to work from anywhere and choose to relocate to Vermont. Beyond having a robust, statewide strategy, our investments will include regional and local investments in recruitment initiatives that leverage and dovetail into the statewide effort.

We will also expand our successful Stay to Stay Weekends program, which provides white-glove concierge service and experiential opportunities for people who are interested in relocating to Vermont. This targeted three-day weekend program connects participants with community leaders, employers, realtors, entrepreneurs, and neighbors who can help them facilitate a move, while simultaneously increasing rooms and meals tax revenue. Partnering with local chambers of commerce and young professional networks, the program achieved a 32 percent conversion rate in its initial pilot year, with seven people moving to Vermont and nearly 40 more actively job hunting and planning to relocate after participating in the program.

- **FUNDING:** \$1,000,000 in the Governor's recommended budget.

- **RELEVANT BILLS:**

- Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing authority for economic development marketing: Act 51 of 2015 (pp. 119-126):
- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2016/Docs/ACTS/ACT051/ACT051%20As%20Enacted.pdf>
- Act 197 Remote Worker Grant Program
- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2018/Docs/ACTS/ACT197/ACT197%20As%20Enacted.pdf>
- H.767 ThinkVermont Innovation Initiative
- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2018/Docs/BILLS/H-0767/H-0767%20As%20passed%20by%20the%20House%20Official.pdf>

PART 2: RELOC802, AN INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNITY-BASED RELOCATION INITIATIVE

- **WHAT:** Reloc802 will be part of the portfolio of strategic initiatives included in the workforce recruitment and relocation package. Using a strengths-based regional approach, the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) will launch and lead a coordinated support system that will facilitate the successful relocation of individuals to and within Vermont. The Agencies of Human Services, Education, and Commerce will partner with VDOL to ensure that community-level areas of expertise are integrated into this robust relocation support system known as Reloc802.
- **WHY:** Even with great employment opportunities and a high quality of life, the prospect of picking up one's life and starting over elsewhere is a daunting and stressful. Reloc802 aims to remove that and other deterrents by providing an individualized support system to assist interested individuals in relocating. We will be the friend who *always* wants to help you move...to or within Vermont...and helps make it easy.

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 physical and programmatic footprint connecting a variety of community partners who play a vital role helping individuals and families identify and access resources to help relocate. In partnership with community-based organizations, VDOL will help supply localized expertise and support to people exploring employment opportunities and residency in new communities. Local strengths and challenges vary from one region of the state to another and will be accounted for in the program's implementation.

- **WHERE:** The regional approach at the heart of Reloc802 acknowledges the differing labor markets, infrastructure, attractions, economic offerings, and available resources throughout the state. With an eight-region system, the regions could be (subject to the Legislature's support): the Southern Vermont Development Zone, the Champlain Valley, Greater Burlington, Franklin/Grand Isle, the Upper Valley/Northern Connecticut River Valley, Central Vermont, NEK Northern Lamoille/Orleans, and NEK Caledonia/Essex/Orange.
- **HOW:** To accomplish a community-based, integrated relocation system, VDOL will use the following tactics:

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- **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.
 - **Basic Community Profile:** VDOL will create customized e-booklets of information for each region that will include labor market information (including wages, demand, commutes), housing and education information, recreation information, and other relevant resources.
 - **Integrated Regional Teams:** VDOL will assign a manager to each region to organize and lead the local public/private multi-disciplinary teams.
 - **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, through referrals or other information sharing mechanisms.
 - **Regional Support Grants:** In response to the unique regional employment needs that exist among rural and urban communities, VDOL will facilitate and fund systems building at the regional level. Local organizations with adequate knowledge and the capacity to provide additional consultations to interested individuals will be awarded competitive need-based grants to be the lead in each region. The regional grantees will have local expertise to support the concierge approach to relocating individuals and families, working with employers and service organizations in their community. Eligible organizations might be regional development corporations, parent child centers, community action agencies, or chambers of commerce. Grantees will be expected to work with the State to set, and work toward, measurable goals for increasing the size of the regional workforce as a percent of population.
- **FUNDING:** \$500,000 in the Governor's recommended budget.
 - **RELEVANT STATUTES:** 10 V.S.A. §540 The Commissioner of Labor as workforce education and training leader
 - 20 C.F.R §678.620 Role of the One-Stop Operator in the One-Stop Delivery System

PART 3: EXPAND WORKER RELOCATION INCENTIVE TO VERMONT-BASED EMPLOYERS

- **WHAT:** Building on the popularity and success of the Remote Worker Grant Program funded during the last legislative, we will make small updates to the program to offer relocation reimbursements to both remote workers and those relocating to Vermont to work for Vermont-based employers.
- **WHY:** Millennials are the largest working demographic nationwide. Vermont has many attributes desirable for young professionals and families: we are the safest, healthiest state with a competitive public education system. We will target these young professionals and families with messaging and incentives to create a more appealing transition and to demonstrate our commitment to their success in our state. The results will reverse our population decline and put more children in our schools.
- **WHERE:** Statewide
- **HOW:** We will capitalize on the extensive media coverage the initial Remote Worker Grant Program received and announce an expanded program. Using the same processes established for the current

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program, we will expand eligibility to those who become residents and work for Vermont-based employers. We will reduce the maximum grant award to \$5,000 to increase the number of eligible participants. Those who move to Vermont will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 as reimbursement for their relocation expenses when they file their state income tax return the year following their move to Vermont. These new Vermonters will be tracked using a new check box on the Vermont income tax return.

- **FUNDING:** \$1,000,000 in governor's recommended budget.
- **RELEVANT STATUTES:** Amendments to [Act 197](#)

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