

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
and
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

2019 Regional Workforce Summit Report

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The House Committee on Commerce & Economic Development

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PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 2020

Since the day I took office, growing Vermont's workforce has been a top priority of my administration. The demographic crisis we're experiencing is all too real: In the past 12 years, only three counties have added workers, while the remaining 11 counties have lost nearly 18,000 workers total. It touches virtually every part of our lives and contributes to growing inequity among our communities. If we don't act to mitigate and reverse this trend, our people, businesses and intuitions won't be able to sustain the impact.

Despite these challenges, I'm optimistic about our future. If we, as public servants and community leaders, face this challenge head on, set clear objectives and follow through with real solutions, I'm confident we can reverse these trends.

We can ensure every Vermonter—no matter who they are, where they live, what skills they bring to the table—can find a path to meaningful employment. And with a highly skilled and growing workforce, our businesses and economy will thrive, making our communities and our people stronger and more resilient than ever before.

The contents of this report are just the beginning. The hard truths, the bright spots, the challenges, opportunities and solutions—they're all part of the foundation for action and creativity that lie ahead, and I look forward to where we'll go from here.

Thank you to the Regional Development Corporations, the State Workforce Development Board, the Department of Labor and the many partners in all regions of the state for the work they do every day to make a difference in the lives of their fellow Vermonters.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip B. Scott".

Governor Philip B. Scott

I. INTRODUCTION

A robust, well-trained workforce is critical to the State's ability to meet the business needs of employers in all regions of Vermont but ongoing demographic changes have led to a consistent decline in the number of available workers. Employers, educators, and service providers must work closely together throughout the next decade to ensure that Vermont's workers are trained for the jobs available now and in the future so that Vermont's economy remains strong.

II. BACKGROUND

In Act 189 of 2018, the Vermont Legislature found that employers throughout the state are facing a serious and ongoing skills gap due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple sectors, today and into the future.¹ With one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, Vermont lacks enough workers at all skill levels to fill job vacancies, a reality which is not projected to change in the foreseeable future. Yet many Vermonters who want to enter or advance in their career face significant barriers and require more support or services to be successful. The Legislature encouraged the State to establish a unified workforce development system rather than "a series of fragmented workforce development programs,"² and charged the Commissioner of Labor with a redesign to create a "more coherent, efficient, and effective system within which all Vermonters who want to work and all employers who want workers can connect, through education and training, with what they need to thrive; and stakeholders and programs, both inside and outside State government, are optimally connected and aligned."³

Act 189 also charged the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) to work with the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and other state agencies to conduct a stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process to ensure better coordination and agreement around the State's workforce vision and goals. The SWDB agreed on five activities to meet this charge, including conducting 12 regional workforce summits in 2019.

In the spring of 2019, VDOL solicited proposals for an organizational consultant to help the SWDB and VDOL to create, coordinate, and deliver standardized training and facilitation for a series of Regional Workforce Summits to be held in each of 12 regions across Vermont.⁴ A proposal submitted collectively by Vermont's Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) was selected. The RDCs are well situated to meet programmatic and geographical requirements, address contextual issues, and build on their current roles in the workforce development arena.

The RDCs were contracted to coordinate and conduct the 2019 Regional Workforce Summits with the support of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners: VDOL, Agency of Education (AOE), and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The summits were designed to:

- i. Facilitate cross-training among workforce training providers;
- ii. Provide employers with state and local tools and information about how and where to access resources to help them meet their labor force needs;
- iii. Generate regional feedback on pre-determined questions that would be used to inform aspects of planning a 2020 Workforce Summit and the development of the 2020 WIOA State Plan; and

¹ Attachment K, Act 189 of 2018

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, St. Johnsbury, Middlebury, Morrisville, Newport, White River Junction, Rutland, St. Albans, Springfield, and Barre.

- iv. Create a directory of local workforce education, training, and support providers, programs, and relevant resources.

The Summits took place in October and November of 2019. What follows in Section III and relevant attachments is the substantive account of these Summits, as provided to VDOL from the RDCs as the project contractor.

III. 2019 REGIONAL SUMMIT REPORT (as reported by the RDCs)

The 2019 Regional Workforce Summits built upon past collaborations among the RDCs, employers, and state and regional service providers and educators. In 2018, VDOL provided funding to several RDCs and others to carry out workforce initiatives on a regional basis, in addition to the annual statewide Workforce Summit. The 2019 Summits were meant to establish a process wherein State action reflects local realities, increasing information flow and improving transparency across a statewide workforce development system, providing both a source of knowledge and a means of advancing the conversation while avoiding duplication of past efforts.

Each summit followed a uniform format as two different audiences were engaged. The morning was designed for employers and the afternoon for workforce service providers. The two groups of attendees overlapped over lunch for networking, a presentation of local services organized by the hosting RDC, and a visit or short video from Governor Scott.

For the employer (demand side) morning session,⁵ the program built on a standard SWOT⁶ format enhanced to incorporate the real world of limits into the analysis by expanding the discussion to include Constraints (things that keep an entity from accomplishing its goals) and Strategies (concrete actions that can be taken to work toward the goal). The supply side program,⁷ held in the afternoon, employed the technique of Scenario Mapping, an exercise requiring small groups of providers to jointly address a situation ("Scenario"- provided by the facilitator⁸) and document their approach in a map.

A. Contract Objectives

The plan to achieve the contract objectives is described as follows:

- i. *Facilitate cross-training among workforce training providers:* Creating the opportunity to provide cross-training among workforce training providers was one of the reasons the summit planners, including VDOL, elected to convene separate employer and provider sessions. As further detailed in the "Structure" section below, it would have been difficult to accomplish this requirement if employers and providers were attending an all-day session together. While joined in a commitment to quality labor, the workforce system has a demand side (employers) and a supply side (workforce service providers). These two groups have very different roles and motivations.

To facilitate cross-training, the supply side program in the afternoon employed the technique of Scenario Mapping, an exercise requiring small groups of providers to jointly address a situation, or Scenario (provided by the facilitator⁹), and document their approach in a map. Concurrent with the mapping exercise, participants were also asked to capture insights into the process – what worked for the group, what didn't, how did it feel. These exchanges provided a rich learning environment

⁵ See Appendix A for Employer (demand side) slide deck

⁶ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – A popular business and project planning tool.

⁷ See Appendix B for the Provider (supply side) slide deck

⁸ See Appendix C for the set of scenarios employed – different ones were used at different Summits, per the preference of the RDC and facilitator.

⁹ See Appendix C for the set of scenarios employed – different ones were used at different Summits, per the preference of the RDC and facilitator.

as providers were directed to focus on what actually happens, instead of what ought to happen. For example, an insight that emerged from several of the scenario mapping exercises was that client success often relied on the talent and persistence of a particular provider, and whether that provider refers the person to the correct resource makes all the difference. This suggests that we have a workforce system that relies on serendipity rather than protocol.

In addition to the mapping exercise, providers participated in the lunch sessions, which were combined with employers. The lunch programs were unique for each region and planned by each RDC utilizing different formats, but the sessions involved further cross-training for providers. For example, in Addison County, five clients who attended various workforce training programs shared their experiences with the employers and providers at each table and then switched tables to speak with another group. Similarly, in Bennington, providers and employers participated in a panel to describe creative workforce development programs they have implemented at their organizations or on behalf of the region.

- ii. Provide employers with state and local tools and information about how and where to access resources that will help them meet their labor force needs:* The decision to separate employers and providers reduced the opportunity to directly provide employers with tools and information. Based on previous RDC experience and pre-design interviews, the planners believed that inundating employers with this information would cause more glazed stares than understanding and would give the summits the feel of a sales presentation. Instead, the demand side session focused on employer constraints, discussing strategies identified by peer employers, and recognizing that different strategies might be required depending on business size and level of expertise or skill (see Workforce Market Matrix at Appendix E). The Provider Directory, described further below, will be a starting point to provide this information to employers and the RDCs recommend that future convenings focus on highlighting programs and services and that other mechanisms be utilized to convey this information to employers.
- iii. Generate regional feedback on pre-determined questions that would be used to inform aspects of planning a 2020 Workforce Summit and the development of the 2020 WIOA State Plan:* Both the demand side (employer) and supply side (provider) sessions included the same “Big Question:” How has the workforce situation impacted your business or work? Using different approaches, the sessions also evoked responses regarding the constraints each side is facing and the strategies they are employing. The regional outputs are detailed below and then summarized in the seven statewide prioritized strategies and five statewide themes or learnings detailed later in this report.
- iv. Create a directory of local providers of workforce education, training, and support providers, programs, and relevant resources.* Using invitation lists initiated by VDOL, each RDC invited service providers, educators, and partners (local, regional, and statewide) to the summits. Using the same survey tool in each region, the RDCs requested that all providers (not just those that attended the summits) complete the survey. About 128 providers, educators, and partners from all regions provided the following data points:
 - Organization
 - Contact information
 - Program information for up to four programs, including:
 - Program name
 - Objective
 - Type
 - Target Audience
 - Number served
 - Funding Source
 - Relationship to other programs

This data provides the starting point for the creation of a workforce solutions directory that would require time and resources not included in the scope of this project. The creation of a directory is a laudable goal. However, as detailed in the statewide learnings below, summit discussions revealed that while a resource directory was at the top of everyone’s “wish list,” a standard catalog – hard-copy or digital – is insufficient. We believe that a “*Problem Centered Directory*” accompanied by some form of regional *guide or navigator* would, in our view, enhance effective and efficient use of available resources by all parties and would be considered a successful outcome by both the supply and demand sides.

B. Approach

It is difficult when seated at the center of an agency, in a policy position or a legislature allocating funds, to see clearly what is happening “on the ground.” Thus, the goal when designing the 2019 Regional Workforce Summit program was to facilitate information flow from the field – from people engaged in workforce activity – to the policy and budget makers in Montpelier. In this manner, experiential realities are presented in a format that operations, policy, and budget people can use to more fully inform workforce related planning and activities.

C. Standardized Summit Structure

In consultation with the RDCs, the 2019 Regional Workforce Summits were designed as two separate events – one in the morning for employers and a second in the afternoon for workforce service providers, educators, and partners. The two groups of attendees overlapped over lunch for networking, a presentation of local services organized by the RDC, and a visit or short video from Governor Scott. Separating the two groups was a purposeful decision, based on past RDC experience with workforce related events and reflecting several motives:

- To allow for clear communication from each group about their lived experience, uninfluenced by the presence of the other. Past RDC experience indicated that behavior and talk changed when the two sides were in the same room. While it is essential that both elements work together, truly productive partnerships can be based only on a clear understanding of each group’s experience, objectives, and view of the workforce system’s goals and functions, which can be quite different.
- To enable transparent evaluative discussion, not as easily accomplished in a mixed group which can have the effect of inhibiting direct assessment. Each side – demand and supply – have real needs of the other so the desire to “manage the relationship” can limit direct expression.
- To avoid having the Summits devolve into a marketing opportunity. For some providers their revenue depends on the number of clients they serve, potentially encouraging “sales” behavior to enter into the conversation. This concern was borne out when some entities, in the course of participation in Summit activities, admitted they would not make a referral if they could capture the client for themselves.

Having now established some baseline understanding of the dynamics of the workforce market in each region with the 2019 Summits, it is possible that future workforce development events may involve the parties interacting to a greater degree.

Once the basic dual-event structure was settled, each of the sessions followed two agendas, designed specifically for the employers in the morning and the providers in the afternoon¹⁰. Programming for the first hour was the same for each - a brief overview of the purpose of the

¹⁰ See Model Agenda at Appendix F

Summits and the context within which they were deemed necessary, followed by an interactive discussion around “The Big Question: ”How has the current workforce situation impacted your business (demand side) or work (supply side)?” Thereafter the employers and providers experiences diverged.¹¹ This programmatic approach was standardized across all 12 Summits.

For the employer morning session, the program built on a standard SWOT¹² format, enhanced to incorporate the real world of limits into the analysis by expanding the discussion to include Constraints (things that keep an entity from accomplishing its goals) and Strategies (concrete actions that can be taken to work toward the goal). A SWOT exercise alone can take a lot of time. In order to expedite the process and get to actionable Strategies within the session, participants built on an existing SWOT analysis created for the 2018 Workforce Summit in Addison County, available in Appendix G. A quick review and discussion allowed for any adjustments to the Addison SWOT to more accurately reflect local conditions, before moving into break-out groups for the Constraints/Strategies activity.

In order to observe how workforce service providers in each region approached workforce challenges, the supply side program in the afternoon employed the technique of Scenario Mapping. This exercise required small groups of providers to jointly address a situation, or Scenario (provided by the facilitator¹³) and document their approach in a map. Each Scenario included an individual or employer with a problem and a goal to be achieved. Concurrent with the mapping discussion at each table (3 to 5 tables in each region) participants were also asked to capture insights into the process – what worked, what didn’t, how did it feel. Focusing on the reality of the client experience versus an ideal of how the system should function can reveal unexplored strengths as well as hidden weaknesses.

D. Summit Objectives

Overall, the intention of the 2019 Regional Workforce Summit series was to get as clear a picture as possible of the dynamics of the workforce market in each region. However, there were also additional project objectives:

- A positive working experience for both employers and providers, where they did most of the talking and the organizers listened. Many people commented on how unique that experience was and how much they enjoyed it. That’s a key learning for events in the future.
- To understand as clearly as possible what employers, or the demand side, are doing to create, attract, retain, and motivate employees.
- A priority list of regionally actionable strategies (See Regional section below and Appendix B).
- An understanding of how workforce service providers approach and address situations – how the process works in reality versus how providers think it does/should work.
- Opportunity for workforce service providers to meet with each other and learn more about what they do and how they do it.
- Contact and program details for incorporation into a service directory.

E. Additional Details

Observer’s Bias – Defined as the tendency to see what you expect to see or want to see. Both facilitators, Erika Hoffman-Kiess and Jeffrey Lewis¹⁴, are knowledgeable practitioners with

¹¹ See Appendices A and B for Employer and Provider slide decks

¹² Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – A popular business and project planning tool.

¹³ See Appendix C for the set of scenarios employed – different ones were used at different Summits, per the preference of the RDC and facilitator.

¹⁴ See resumes at Appendix H

experience in workforce issues. Relying on that common background and a practice of debriefing regularly during the execution phase allowed Erika and Jeff to check themselves from influencing the results.

Scenario “clients” – Many of the scenarios used during the provider session were created by workforce service organizations. All but one of the scenarios that were focused on the experience of a specific individual (rather than on an employer) featured a male client. No other client designating features were considered or stated in the scenario itself. Going forward, it would be an interesting addition to the exercise to actively capture the different client populations served by the various workforce related provider groups – gender, race, sexual preference, marital status, etc. The scope of the activity on which we are currently reporting did not allow for this degree of specificity.

F. Outputs

The 2019 Regional Workforce Summit series generated a significant amount of information that can be categorized in several ways. For the purposes of this report, the collective output is presented from three different perspectives:

1. **Thematic** – Five Learnings as identified over the course of the Summit series. Leading multiple events over a short period of time provided the facilitators with a unique perspective on prevailing and evolving issues that were found to be in common.
2. **Statewide** – The top seven strategies as ranked by the RDCs themselves¹⁵, representing those that are considered of statewide interest and intended to inform state-level discussions, work plans, and policy objectives.
3. **Regional** – Summaries of activity outputs and reflections from each of the 12 events, providing actionable insights at the local level.

1. Thematic

Over the course of the full Summit program several themes surfaced across regions:

- Regional Leadership
- Supply-side Actor Interface – *Medical Model*
- Entry-level Imbalance – *Workforce Market Matrix*
- Ex-Offender Locus – *Emergency Room*
- Regional Resource Directories – *Problem Centered Directory with Guide*

Regional Leadership: First and foremost, the issue of regional leadership was raised in every Summit event. We have observed that a workforce system is fundamentally regional in nature because that is where workers and employers find one another, yet there is no standard system of regional leadership – no one is responsible for the smooth functioning and accountability of the regional system and this absence is sorely felt. In many regions, informal leadership structures have arisen, often led by the RDC through a coalition of parties representing both employers and workforce service providers. Those regional efforts vary in effectiveness and capacity depending on resources, willingness of people and organizations to participate, leadership talent, and perceived effectiveness (is it worth participating). What we saw at these Summits suggests that creating/identifying a regional workforce system leader would significantly enhance performance and satisfaction levels across the state, both for those using the system on the demand side and those serving the system on the supply side. Careful formulation of this leadership role and structure is crucial. Flexibility should be allowed in order to reflect regional choices, organic differences, and utilization of arising

¹⁵ From the 60+ aggregated regional strategies

talent, regardless of where it is housed. In one region it may be the RDC; in another it may be the VDOL regional manager. Designing this function effectively is a matter of some delicacy and care in that it must include responsibility, accountability, and resources in order to gain the trust and active participation of all stakeholders.

Supply-side Actor Interface: Through the Scenario mapping process it was made clear that different agencies engaged in the supply side do not always know each other, let alone know each other's goals, purposes, and capabilities. Nor are the connections between various resource groups smoothly coordinated in all settings. More to the point, we find that supply side entities tend to think in terms of "what ought to happen" rather than "what does happen." An example of this occurred in a group discussing a scenario involving a young single mother, "Jane." There was a spirited discussion following the map development about how well the entities in this small county worked together. They outlined multiple entry points and the oversight/supportive role of one person in particular: "If they get to me, I hold their hand through the process until graduation." When asked how people such as "Jane" got to this person, the answer was resounding around the table: "Crapshoot." It is not a planned system. It is by sheer luck when and if "Jane" ends up with the right person. That experience, and many others like it, suggests that re-orienting the system is crucial to success for clients. We have to move from a resource-based model, where "Jane" must find the right resource, to an outcome-oriented approach, focused on the system creating specific outcomes for clients. We call this outcome-oriented model a *Medical Model* because it is person-centered rather than resource-centered. It requires careful intake and planning, case managers, frequent cross-entity collaboration, as well as involving the client in the planning and execution.

Entry-level Imbalance: A tight labor market with unemployment at 2.1% places a great deal of focus on entry level workers as they were, until recently, plentiful. For similar reasons, many of the supply side agencies find themselves working with people whose barriers to employment are more complex than in the past, requiring far more time and resources. "If they don't have a job now, they are contending with multiple, serious problems." These issues focus effort on the entry level. In addition, current resources and approaches manage down quite effectively – targeting provision of support to those that need help to become part of the labor market while under-serving those that are currently in the market and are interested in moving up. One group described this as "the ability to manage crisis but not opportunity", another called it a "positivity penalty" – if you have anything going for you, the system will not serve you well. In both cases, the identification of this effect was a surprise to the parties at the table.

At the same time, we observed that larger employers are far more likely to receive attention than smaller ones because they are easier to work with. Larger employers have more internal human resources capacity, as well as longer horizons – they can plan further ahead. These together tilt the resource pool toward larger employers and away from smaller ones.

"We [employers] feel hostage to our employees ... we hear 'you can't fire me because you don't have anyone else' ... and they are right!"

- Rutland participant

From these observations we developed the *Workforce Market Matrix* (Graphic 1) showing nine different combinations of talent level and organization size, each with different characteristics. Workforce systems should be developed and managed in the context of the entire workforce market; the shaded area in Graphic 1 indicates current workforce system focus.

Graphic 1 - Workforce Market Matrix		Level of Expertise or Skill		
		<i>Entry level</i>	<i>Mgt / Supervisor</i>	<i>High-level professional</i>
Size of Business	<i>Large</i>	Large employers can provide more in-house training and take more risk than smaller ones.	Established training programs and criteria for advancement.	Larger external networks incorporating potential resources and access to head-hunters or national HQ recruiting resources.
	<i>Medium</i>	Trying to balance tolerance for risk in employment and narrow set of resources to invest in new entry personnel.	Need for supervision may exceed available supply or ability to train. Rely on external training sources.	Squeezed by need or desire to grow through talent and ability to recruit and train. Less experience recruiting high-level talent. Need advice and support entering that market.
	<i>Small</i>	Less available supervision and support services for entry level and new employees. May prefer to hire experienced people.	Tend to want experienced supervisors or self-motivated and trained employees who seek external training on their own.	Constrained by location and competing employers. May not offer significant upward promotion. More static positions.

Clearly VDOL will not be the principal resource for all workforce strategies and actions. But someone – a person or entity, preferably regionally (see above) – must have a view of the entire field for a workforce system to be effective for both workers and employers.

Some solutions will be provided by the private market as they should be. Nonetheless, the market is not complete without all the boxes in the matrix being served. This also points out that the workforce system is an *open system* versus a managed system. There are elements like headhunters, temporary supply firms, and some education/training entities that are not controlled by any system manager or goals but by their own performance. Because funding is often tied to case or student load, these entities may be motivated by their own needs, not those of the end client.

Ex-Offender Locus: One class of jobseeker clearly presented a unique set of needs and conditions: ex-offenders. This was demonstrated in one scenario map where, following an extended discussion, the team located all the resources needed at the left side of the map, right next to “John’s” actual departure from prison. The map visually captured the unique nature of these cases: they are not well-structured sets of needs that can be managed by drawing on fixed resources. Rather, continuing the Medical Model a further step, these required an *Emergency Room* approach where all the potential resources needed are on call immediately. The unique nature of ex-offenders with high stigma, low self-image, and risk of re-offending and returning to expensive custody suggests that at least in the early stage of re-entry, a high commitment of resources is required with substantial case management support. No such system currently exists in the state; not unlike “Jane” above, the outcome for any given ex-offender case is a “crapshoot.”

Regional Resource Directory: In closing, one requirement of the project as contracted is the creation of regional resource directories. This is a laudable goal – directories are needed. “Too many resources, too many people to contact, too much trouble,” was a common refrain from the demand side. However, Summit discussions revealed that while a resource directory was at the top of

everyone’s “wish list,” a standard catalog – hard-copy or digital – is insufficient. Drawing again on the Medical Model suggestion we believe that a *Problem Centered Directory* accompanied by some form of regional *guide or navigator* would, in our view, enhance effective and efficient use of available resources by all parties and would be considered a successful outcome by both the supply and demand sides. A web-based platform would allow for flexible structuring, ease of access, and ease of editing/updating. A directory of this type would require significant effort and extensive cross-agency/entity cooperation as not all resources are within VDOL, or even within state government. It would also require time and resources not included in the contract for the summit series. Utilizing a problem-centered approach in the design would enable clear, direct messaging and a simple user interface.

2. Statewide

In an effort to roll regional observations into a perspective more pertinent to a statewide discussion, the 11 participating RDCs¹⁶ were asked to consider the 60+ aggregated regional strategies and vote on the top seven they felt were most relevant from a statewide perspective.¹⁷

	Statewide Strategies
1	<i>Encourage and support local employers to spend more time in high school and colleges – discuss workplace, career opportunities, job shadowing, internships, workplace learning experiences; Work with students on life after graduation</i>
2	<i>Better educate guidance counselors and actively connect them to employers</i>
3	<i>Network of employers, training providers, service providers</i>
4	<i>Educate parents – “Value of Work” messaging – by developing a HS curriculum</i>
5	<i>Develop industry specific consortiums to pool funding for training programs</i>
6	<i>Additional funding for “career paths” in the education and training sectors</i>
7	<i>Advocate for childcare</i>

3. Regional

(RDC Reports can be found at Appendix D)

G. Contractor’s Observations:

1. Vermont’s workforce situation and economic condition are set in a nation and world facing increased workforce shortages, which raises hiring pressures and increases competition for labor resources beyond our borders.
2. The long term (15 year) trend based on the demographic profile presented in the Vermont Futures Project data¹⁸ forecasts increased constraints in the workforce system as the labor

¹⁶ Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation did not host a Summit; Northeast Vermont Development Association held two meetings – Lyndonville and Newport – but responded only once in the ranking exercise.

¹⁷ A complete list of the 66 aggregated strategies, as ranked by the RDCs, is available at Appendix I

¹⁸ <https://vtfuturesproject.org/vermonters-visitors/forces-of-change/>

supply continues to dwindle and retirements accelerate. Despite this outlook, no one – demand or supply side – is looking at the long term; everyone is focused on getting through today with little consideration of the challenges tomorrow brings.

3. Negative messaging – “crisis, shortage, difficulty” – and lack of coordination are alienating key populations. Young people, students, and their parents are unable to translate, in practice, the scarcity of labor into increased opportunity. Positive messaging is not yet part of the story.
4. There is a workforce system, of sorts, in Vermont. It is an open system¹⁹, composed of demand and supply sides – employers and providers, respectively – loosely organized at a regional level essentially congruent with RDC districts.
5. Several things could be done to improve system effectiveness, primary among them is leadership, with delegated authority, accountability, and a common strategy – a vision for what needs to be done.
6. The cost of making significant changes to the system should be measured against losses in state revenue from declining population and economic activity.

“Job searching in VT requires a special level of patience – watch the obits not the job postings.”

– Burlington participant

H. Participant Feedback and Evaluation

In addition to output created as noted above, it is also important to capture insights into the process itself – to measure how Summit participants viewed the events and the work done. It is also meaningful to note attendance figures; over 600 people invested significant time to attend these events.

At Appendix J you will find a set of graphs and comments capturing the following:

1. How attendance was distributed around the state.
2. How each region participated in the evaluation survey.
3. A qualitative measure of participants’ experience – ‘were you heard?’
4. A measure of effectiveness asking whether the participants left with ideas and opportunities to work on. Did the event have concrete outcomes?
5. A question about the facilitators as leaders of the event, giving a view both of the facilitators and of the participation experience—was it positive.
6. A measure of whether people would return to do this work again, quarterly, which gives a sense of how important the issue of workforce is to all participants.
7. A question of whether the event met expectations which yielded very interesting results – about half the people did not have clear expectations. When this is compared to the prior question about whether people would return to continue working on the issue, we can see that the willingness to engage to do something about workforce is a very high motivator. People are willing to come without knowing clearly what will happen and having participated with satisfaction are willing to return.
8. Narrative responses from the RDC survey of all participants.
9. Narrative responses collected by VDOL through their own survey.

¹⁹ Open versus closed systems – In an open system participating elements are not connected within a single organization, in a closed system all participating elements operate within/under a single organization.

IV. CONCLUSION

The 2019 Regional Workforce Summits provided valuable information about how our system of workforce development is currently operating and where action can be taken to make it more coherent, efficient, and effective. VDOL and the State's WIOA core partners will use the feedback, experiences, and outcomes in developing strategies to implement WIOA for the 2020 WIOA State Plan and in organizing a stronger system of collaboration between employers, education and training providers, service providers, and workers. Public and private providers of workforce preparation, education, training, and support services are responding to many recent changes in federal and state programs. The data gathered through the Summits will inform their approach to adapting services and service delivery methods to meet the more complex needs of present-day jobseekers and employers.

After VDOL and other partners have had an opportunity to collate, review, and analyze the data received through the 2019 Regional Workforce Summits, the following preliminary list of topics will be further explored:

- What tools and resources can be created and made available to employers to assist them in accessing and retaining skilled workers?
- What role can stakeholder organizations play in providing resources, information, and assistance to employers?
- What outcomes should state and local workforce education, training, and service delivery partners seek if they were to convene at the regional and state levels on a more regular basis?
- How can employers of all types and sizes be most effectively included in state and regional convenings?
- How might employers engage more directly in providing career exposure and work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults?
- What additional actions need to be developed to support the regular exchange of information about available job opportunities with educators, training providers, youth and adult career counselors, workforce service providers, and jobseekers?

In Gratitude

VDOL wishes to express its sincere thanks to each of the RDCs for their tremendous work on this project, which has helped strengthen the level of coordination and alignment within the State's workforce development system at both the state and local levels.



Vermont Regional Workforce Summits

(Location)

(Host RDC Director)

Facilitators:

Jeffrey Lewis and Erika Hoffman-Kiess



PURPOSE

- Starting a series of **Annual Workforce Summits**
- Bring together employers and providers/trainers by region to share information
- Provide insight to state policy makers about needs, challenges, limitations and successes

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- Workforce is a challenge nationally and, increasingly, globally
- In Vermont: Roundtable Survey says
 - Negative outlook on economy based on hiring difficulty
 - Business climate attitude down a bit
 - Forward looking optimism down a bit

VERMONT CONDITIONS

- Population and workforce is aging and flat to shrinking
- Workforce is aging faster than the general population
- Tightness for all employers (2.1% unemployment)
- Challenges up and down the skill ladder

TODAY'S WORK

- Look at the actual experience of Vermont Employers, Providers and Job Seekers
- At the regional level—
 - Policy and program is often state-wide
 - But workforce dynamics are largely regional
- There's going to be plenty of time to talk

THE BIG QUESTION

How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

THE LANDSCAPE

		Level of Expertise or Skill		
		Entry Level	Mgt/Supvr	High level prof
Size of Business	Large			
	Medium			
	Small			

THE LANDSCAPE

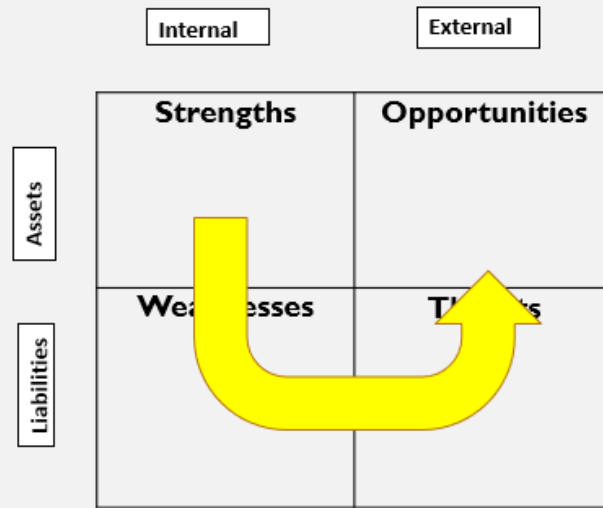
		Level of Expertise or Skill		
		Entry Level	Mgt/Supvr	High level prof
Size of Business	Large	Large Employers can supply more training and take more risk than smaller ones	Established training programs and criteria for advancement	Larger external networks into potential resources and access to head hunters or national HQ recruiting
	Medium	Try to balance tolerance for risk in employment and narrow set of resources to invest in new entry personnel	Need for supervision may exceed available supply or ability to train. Rely on external training sources.	Squeezed by need or desire to grow through talent and ability recruit and train. Less experience recruiting high level talent. Need advice and support entering that market
	Small	Less intense supervision and support services for entry level and new employees. May prefer to hire experienced people	Tend to want experienced supervisors or self-motivated and trained employees who seek external training on their own.	Constrained by location and competing employers. May not offer significant upward promotion. More static positions.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

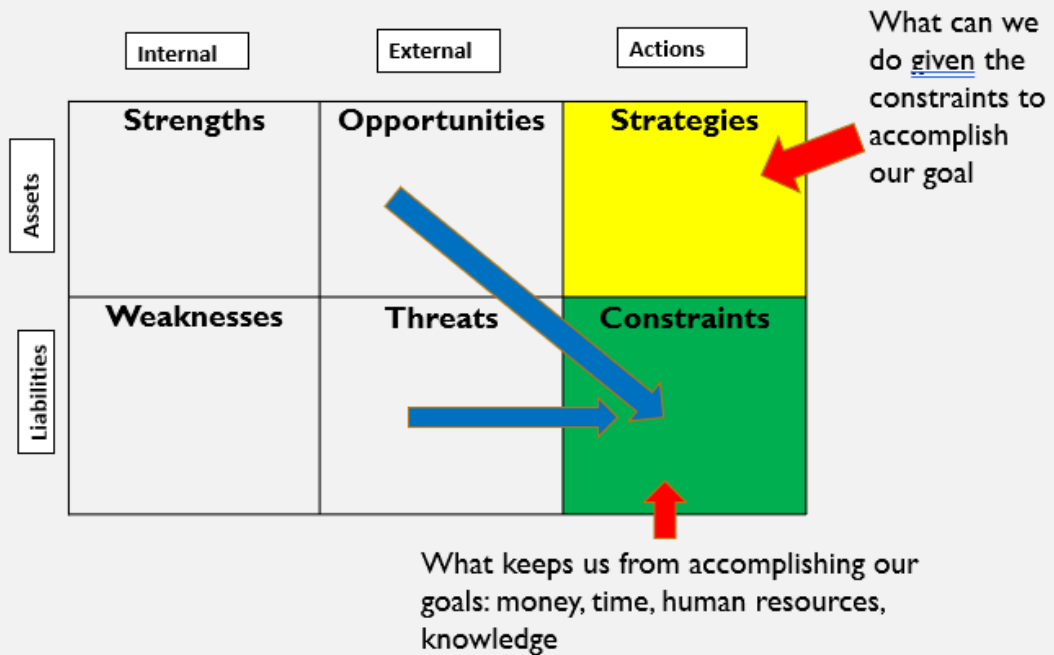
THE MAIN EVENT!!

- SWOT from work done last fall
- Extend it to cover the **Constraints** that exist in all our environments
- Create **Strategies** that can realize opportunities in view of the constraints.

SWOT



SWOT Plus



<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single courses, customized solutions available in pockets throughout Vermont • Industry Connection to training program curriculum • Resources to access skills training (CCV, PAHCC) 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility can increase retention of valued employees • Increase focus on and value of trades in K-12 • Explore partnership opportunities to address challenges in retaining employees (eg childcare) • Increasing access to internship/real life training opportunities ss pipeline to employment • Connection between industry and training can be expanded • Demand for product exists • Lifestyle draw • Need for Level 3 candidates • Provide earlier exposure to career pathways • Expand connection to robust higher ed resources
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Skills lacking (language, dress appropriateness) • Work ethic lacking among prospective employees • Insufficient feedback from employer to provider community • Livable wage • Need pre-internship opportunities • Increased communication needed between employer and provider community • Housing • Lack of consistent, adequate childcare • Entry level employees lacking basic skills • Recruiting taking longer than historically 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal employer driven or supporting training becoming more necessary to get needed skills • Lifestyle Challenge • Inadequate labor supply in Addison County

NEXT STEP

- In work groups by company size
- Identify and briefly describe constraints
- Then---
- Create strategies to meet hiring goals
 - Strategies may, even should, be multiple steps
 - And should be doable, practical, realistic

Then we'll share and score the strategies together

LUNCH

Please join us for lunch hosted by your RDC
Agencies active in workforce training, support, and identification
will be joining us. Share tables and discussion.



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THE MAIN EVENT MAPPING THE PROCESS

Each region is a bit different because of:

- Industry mix
- Demographics
- Training resources
- Proximity to workforce sources
- Leadership

We want to show what actually happens in each region for similar situations
All answers are good—we have to get the job done

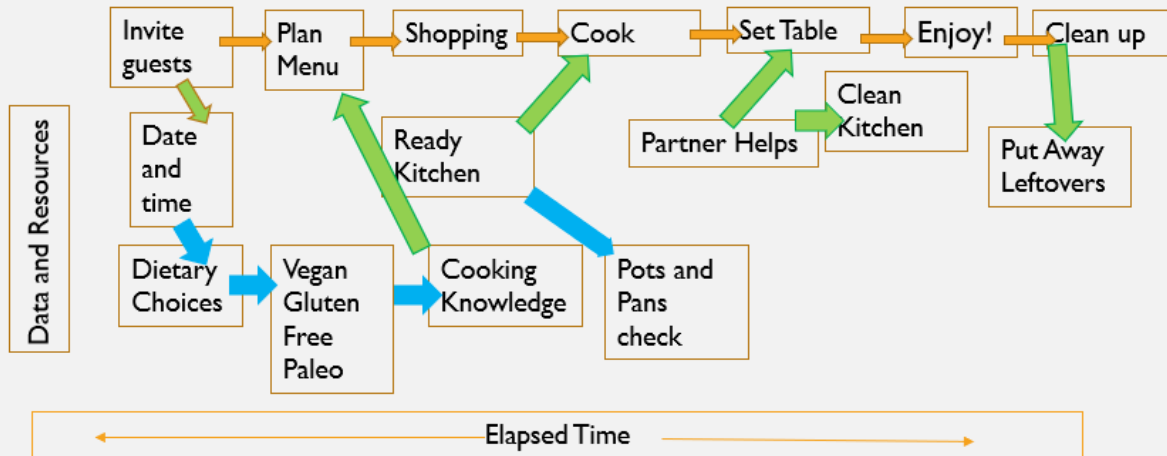
SCENARIO MAPPING

- Some systems are built, some evolve
- Workforce is an evolved and evolving system
- Affected by new challenges, new technology, shifting expectations, costs, talent
- Workforce systems are basically regional
- State resources are planned and guided from a central office

Scenario Mapping is done to discover what actually happens to real people in real situations

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE

Preparing dinner for a new friend



TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- Our scenarios begin with a person or employer with a problem
- They end with that target realizing a goal
- The Resources are the individual agencies and entities that provide service, training and support
- CTEs, VocRehab, Reach Up, Corrections, AoE, Private entities, RDCs, WIBs, CCV, VTC, etc
- Money involved may be TANF, Food Stamps, Housing, Transportation, Scholarships

HOW TO DO IT

- Work in groups of different agencies or services
- Map your scenarios efficiently-this is a sketch-we're not going to fly it
- Note empty connections, multiple choices, data transfers, costs to user

PRESENT AND DISCUSS MAPS

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

ATTACHMENT C – Scenarios

ABC Manufacturing:

ABC Manufacturing is a small family business in a Vermont population center, has landed a significant new contract to provide product beginning in spring of 2020. To respond to this contract, the employer has added 25% more capacity to their existing production. Skills required: routine manufacturing skills, ability to follow directions and monitor quality.

Goal: Consider whether the company should invest in automation or plan to hire. If you decide to hire prepare an actionable plan to accomplish the hiring target. Show available inputs of information and estimate potential of success. Any question you can't answer is important.

Community Hospital:

XYZ community hospital pays a 40% premium (above average) and housing for six(6) travelling nurses to care for patients in their post-surgical wing because they can't hire enough Registered Nurses to staff three shifts. They want to find a long-term solution; as demand for health care increases staff shortages increasingly impact the hospital's ability to provide care.

Goal: A plan to reinvest the premium money in ways that address the staffing problem for the long term. Show who has to be consulted and what information is required with sources. Any question you can't answer is important.

Food Service Provider:

XYZ food service provider is a sub-contractor to the local University. They provide over 27,000 meals a week to the student body, faculty, visitors and special events, operating 7 days per week, approximately 15 hours per day. A variety of shifts exist in order to meet demand, including part-time shifts to meet peak hours (breakfast, lunch & dinner). They also staff special events throughout the week, including weekends. They began the school year with 175 staff and are seeking 25 – 30 additional staff to be considered at full employment.

Goal: A plan to maximize utilization of all potentially available workers. Analyze detailed job specifications for skill and time requirements; consider age, physical and mental ability, supervision required. Show how analysis will be done and contribute to outcome. Any question you can't answer is important.

Firm A:

Firm A is a medium business that has an entry-level employee with a strong work-ethic, great attendance record, and natural leadership or technical skills. However, this individual is under-qualified for a job that you desperately need to fill. How do you go about finding a solution that supports both your employee, and your organization?

Goal: A plan that encourages the employee to pursue training, leveraging all financial and academic resources available. Any question you can't answer is important.

Jane Doe:

Jane Doe is a 24-year-old single mother living in Swanton. She wants to make a better life for herself and her 6-year-old son. She has not graduated from high school. Currently Jane works as a helper in an assisted living home where she earns \$12.64/hr. After rent, food and car payments, there isn't enough left over to cover care for her son during the summer, which she needs now that he's in school and she no longer has subsidized childcare. Jane heard that there's a nursing shortage, and she thinks she would make a good nurse. She likes helping people, and she enjoys working with the nurses in her current work. She'd like to become an LPN, but she's concerned about losing work income to take classes.

Goal: Create a plan for Jane to finish high school and get a nursing qualification. Show available inputs of information and estimate potential of success. Any question you can't answer is important.

*Asylum Seeker: **

An asylum seeker residing in one of our larger population centers secures a work permit and is looking for a job. While the candidate has ample past work experience in their country of origin, they will need support to succeed in a new workplace, country and culture.

Goal: Create a plan for this new American to find work and start adjusting to their new life. Show available inputs of information and estimate potential of success. Any question you can't answer is important.

**After the first couple of Summit events, this scenario was mapped for a New American rather than the narrower Asylum Seeker designation*

Laborer:

John Doe is a laborer with Building Design & Construction (BDC). He injured his leg during a skiing accident in his twenties and got addicted to painkillers. It's been a long road to recovery winding through odd jobs, lost friends, and even criminal charges, for which he served 5 years. Now at 33, he's trying to make a fresh start. He has an apartment and a car that he got with help from his offender reentry program. He makes \$15.94/hr, which is enough to cover his basic needs, and he's glad to have a good job and a good employer, who gave him a "second chance." John heard that BDC is short on carpenters and he likes working with his hands. He thinks this could be a good way for him to work his way up in the company. He knows from talking with the crew that in order to be promoted to a carpenter, he'll need some certifications and have some on the job experience. It all sounds doable, but he can't figure out how to make it work in his own life, and he's worried that if he takes on too much, he'll return to old habits, which he wants to leave behind.

Goal: Create a plan for how John could approach the opportunity he sees without threatening the progress he has already made. Show available inputs of information and estimate potential of success. Any question you can't answer is important.

Ex-Offender:

John Doe is 32 years old and is transitioning to his community after a period of 18 months of incarceration. He was incarcerated for multiple violent offenses and has had previous violations of conditions of release; John is assessed as moderate to high risk of reoffending. While incarcerated, John participated in risk reduction programming, improved his basic literacy and numeracy to middle school proficiency through Community High School and worked for three months in Vermont Correctional Industries as an assembler in the wood shop. He has supervision restrictions on traveling out of county as well as residence restrictions which include a curfew and no substances or weapons in his residence. John is currently stable on medication assisted treatment and will be continuing services through the local clinic. These services include daily dosing at the clinic, usually scheduled in the morning. He has children whom he does not reside with but visits. He currently does not have a driver's license and relies on others for transportation. His previous employment history is informal, consisting of under-the-table labor in landscaping and roofing.

Goal: Create a plan for John to gain stable, accessible employment that will enable a successful transition to daily life and help him to avoid re-offending. Show available inputs of information and estimate potential of success. Any question you can't answer is important.

ATTACHMENT D – RDC Reports

Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC)

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 13, 2019:

1. Vermont 211 for employers with navigation assistance
2. Training in life skills—communications and emotional intelligence
3. Educate parents about careers (Mike Rowe Foundation)
4. Shared services
5. Vermont Go—Carpool, more flexibility, market and expand public transport, on-demand car service

RDC Executive Report:

The Addison County Economic Development Corporation organized the Addison County (Middlebury DoL Region) summit with the assistance of the newly formed (2018) Addison County Workforce Alliance ([ACWA](#)). Strategies and outcomes of the Addison County summit and the Statewide Report will be reviewed and discussed by ACWA and members will determine appropriate action steps for the region.

ACEDC invited over 170 to the summit including 84 employers and 87 service providers and educators. A broad open invitation was made, but direct email invitations were sent to employers representing all employment sectors and business sizes. Staff and ACWA members followed up with direct phone calls and emails. We had 80 registered: 30 employers, 47 service providers/educators/others, and 3 staff. But ended up with 64 attending: 19 employers, 42 service providers/educators/others and 3 staff. Having 16 no shows, especially 12 employer no-shows, some from our largest or key employers, did mean the voice of business was somewhat diminished during the day, but did not dampen the enthusiasm and participation of those present. Staff followed up with the absent employers and found that the reasons for not attending were not due to the intent, content or structure of the summit. Rather, it had to do with normal business activity and the need to attend to pressing issues.

During the Addison County summit, several students who participated in local workforce training programs were invited to join the summit. During lunch, students shared their experiences with others at the table and then moved to another table. Attendees found it very helpful to hear these first-hand experiences and learn about how the programs helped or are helping these students succeed. We wish to thank the students from Job Corps, Hannaford Career Center, United @ Work, and Community College of Vermont for participating and sharing their stories.

ACEDC also wishes to thank the members of ACWA and the ACEDC Board members and staff who worked on the summit preparations and helped as table facilitators and scribes during the summit.

Over 30 of the Addison County attendees (50%) responded to the attendee survey and the majority reported that they thought their opinions and concerns were heard and that they left the summit with a better understanding of the conditions contributing to workforce development obstacles. An equal number of attendees responded that the summit met their expectations as those who responded that they did not know what to expect. Which may mean that information about future convenings needs to provide clearer expectations and goals. One surprising response was that 72% of the attendees said they would attend regular meetings to work collaboratively to address workforce obstacles and constraints.

We will follow up on that locally by inviting the attendees to join ACWA. Many respondents to an open question suggested combining employers and providers at future convenings.

Members of ACWA affirmed some of these responses, reporting that the summit was well organized and moved efficiently, that having scribes and facilitators helped move the discussion along, and that it was helpful to hear from providers from other parts of the state or from statewide organizations. ACWA members provided the following feedback as suggestions for future convenings: combine employers and providers; provide a concrete take-away for employers; and find a way to increase buy-in and attendance by employers.

Many of the employers attending the 2019 summit did not attend the 2018 summit, so the input and discussions built on last year's outcomes. ACEDC and ACWA appreciate businesses in our region taking the time from their busy schedules to attend and participate in the 2019 summit. The themes that emerged from the employer session reflect the difficulties and challenges we consistently hear from employers during business visits. ACEDC and ACWA will continue to engage with the business community to understand and address their workforce constraints and collaborate to implement strategies.

The themes that emerged from the Addison County summit were: 1) need for easy-to-navigate workforce development resource information for employers; 2) increased interaction between employers and those who daily interact with the future workforce- teachers, guidance counselors, and parents- to increase the recognition of the variety of career pathways available in Vermont 3) strategies to grow the pool of potential employees; 4) increase business recognition of advantage of flexibility and creativity in hiring, scheduling, and use of benefits; 5) Increased life skill training; and 6) Address underlying issues such as workforce housing, childcare, and transportation.

These themes, and the strategies identified to address them -are not surprising as they are discussed by the members of ACWA at our monthly meetings. ACWA's goal is to become the connective tissue between employers, service providers, educators, students, and job seekers. Our purpose is to work collaboratively and cooperatively to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services in the region. ACWA started creating a regional directory after the 2018 summit. That work was the basis for the tool used to collect provider information as part of the 2019 summit series. Over 100 providers from around the State submitted information this year. That information will provide the starting point for the development of a statewide, comprehensive directory of workforce services.

ACWA is working to empower business/student interaction. In March 2020, ACWA will hold four Financial Reality Fairs at our three high schools for the high school students, the Hannaford Career/Tech Center students, Job Corps students, and young adults in the community. We collaborated with the workforce organizations in Bennington, Rutland, and Brattleboro to learn best practices and designed a Fair that will work best for our students. The Fairs will bring community and business representatives into the schools and expose students to the costs of real life after school, the potential for post-secondary education and training to increase incomes, and budgeting.

One of the regional conditions that impacts Addison County is the lack of Interstate access. This drives the type of businesses that are attracted to the area – those that are based primarily on Internet sales to sell outside Vermont. It also means that the hiring pool is concentrated along the primary travel route – Route 7, which means that our employment pool is regional and stretches from Burlington to Rutland.

ACWA will take regional approaches into consideration as we prioritize workforce strategies. Some members of ACWA are also involved in partnering with the State to implement a Stay-to-Stay program in the region. Many of the ACWA and summit participants will become part of the interactive team required to market the region, bring families to the region, and convince them this is where they want to live, work, and play.

The summit was an opportunity for employers to be exposed to several new alternative sources for potential employees. ACWA will continue efforts, in partnership with State and local agencies, to inform employers of the benefits of hiring job seekers with barriers and will work to develop strategies to help job seekers and employers overcome barriers to employment.

Many members of ACWA also participate in a regional collaboration we refer to as the Addison County Development Cabinet. This is a forum to discuss pressing issues such as housing, transportation, infrastructure, and childcare. Several local initiatives started at our ACDC meeting including a Disadvantaged Youth effort and the start of ACWA. Together, these community members will continue to address, at the local level, some of the issue impacting the workforce, such as housing, childcare, and transportation challenges.

The strategies identified by the Addison County summit and those identified by the Statewide report will help ACWA devise a workforce development plan for Addison County and prioritize action steps.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

1. Retention and hiring more difficult
2. Small pool of applicants
3. Secondary effects - Housing costs and availability, cost of living and support services:
 - Childcare
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Healthcare
 - Internet and communications
4. Hiring unqualified people - Low social skills, low work ethic, different demands and work culture, flexibility is a need for younger people.
5. Employers work harder to keep employees happy
6. No culture of working up the ladder
7. Harder for larger employers
8. Rising recruiting costs
9. Rising training costs
10. Lack of skilled labor
11. Scheduling delays, lack of growth
12. Budget, hits the bottom line
13. Mental health costs
14. Employers have to be flexible - mentor staff, role has expanded, be creative, offer incentives
15. Keeping young people interested, kids are heavily scheduled with limited availability for work
16. Carbon footprint for transportation options—van pools

17. Aging workforce—Employers trying to make themselves more efficient with less physical effort
18. Single moms have to tend to children, flexible schedules are important
19. High school grads are overwhelmed up to age 30 with basic life skills and communication
20. Image challenge
21. Building a respectful culture—ability to work things out
22. Generational issues
23. Additional cost to train—not enough resources
24. Need to invest in leaders—train the trainer
25. Vacancy is a strain on staff, time to fill positions may be weeks of months
26. Ability to develop staff is constrained by vacancies
27. Geographical strain
28. Unqualified applicants
29. No show candidates
30. Pressure on wages and benefits
31. Hard to hire tech people but lower cost than SW US
32. More automation
33. Need higher margins, limited pay flexibility, international competition
34. Returnees (>30) have higher salary demands and cause gentrification in area
35. Vermont is a great place to be poor
36. High school students do not want to work
37. Employees
 - Not qualified
 - Lack of confidence
 - Overly selective
 - Waiting for better offers
 - \$\$\$
38. Struggling with middle management and above
39. Offering more remote worker options
 - Need good broadband to support remote workers (Jericho out during recent storm)
 - Internal shifts in policy to support remote workers
 - Remote workers accountability and trust
40. Q3 and Q4 seasonal workers hired full time as positions open
41. Social mission (B corp) has helped hiring
42. Working with private recruiters and Vermont Adult Learning
43. Growth has necessitated using ‘known’ and ‘developed’ resources
44. Adding flexibility
 - Hiring with barriers
 - Disabilities
 - Addiction recovery
 - Vets
45. Recruiting part-time staff is very challenging
46. Changing new business development—doing work on day shift because it so hard to fill night shift
47. Would like a one-page graphic of available resources
48. Regular contact with high schools for larger employers looking for employees—College, Groceries
49. Benefits cliff can cause employees to leave
50. Hard to increase wages to get experience when product selling price is dictated by outside forces
 - Need to decrease other expenses
 - IT development

51. Hard to develop new products
52. Population decrease cuts Federal support money
53. Lack of workers raises costs of contractors and delays work
54. Flexible work hours attract employees
55. Do more with fewer people
56. In a rush to hire do not always make the best choice
57. Middlebury College
 - Facilities maintenance
 - Food service
 - Go to employment agencies
 - Performance issues, reliability issues
 - Lack of loyalty to company/employer
 - Increased costs
58. Employees jump from job to job, lack of commitment
59. Seasonal (student) fluctuations (feast or famine)
60. Difficulty recruiting skilled positions
61. Cost of living (housing and childcare)
62. Inhibits businesses from growing
63. Pay inequity—having to pay entry level people more pressures pay for more experienced workers
64. Employers competing for the same employees
65. Public transportation schedules do not match work schedules
66. Invest in training and the employee moves on

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
67. Informal networks—2 degrees of separation	85. Cross functional working groups
68. Internal recruitment and referral	86. Sharing best practices, some form of clearing house
69. Sense of place and community	87. More open conversations between employees and employers would allow solutions
70. High school connection between students and employers	88. B-Corp values embraced by younger workers
71. Lot of agencies helping people get to work	89. Age differentials/culture
72. Diverse recruitment opportunities	90. Academic corridor: path to keep students in region
73. Safety	91. Businesses can take advantage of partnerships to market themselves as places to work
74. Vt lifestyle	92. Self-funding HAS—educate about
75. Employee/employer loyalty—long service	93. Shared services
76. Sense of community	94. Multigenerational workforce
77. HS, HCC, CCV, VTC, VAL	95. Build out broadband
78. Support services	96. Promote VT lifestyle
79. Quality of Life	97. Sharing resources/collaboration
80. Grant funding for training	98. High School involvement
81. Philanthropic activity	
82. Rising number of college educated	
83. Small business community	
84. Small supportive community	

Weaknesses	Threats
<p>99. Businesses not aware of all VT supports available—make information end user friendly</p> <p>100. Hard to break into informal networks for new Vermonters</p> <p>101. Lack of resources like childcare</p> <p>102. Insufficient marketing of employment and other opportunities</p> <p>103. Transportation—public or affordable</p> <p>104. Benefits cliff</p> <p>105. Cost of health insurance and high deductibles</p> <p>106. 24/7 workforce challenges</p> <p>107. Vermont politics</p> <p>108. Cost of living vs. income levels</p> <p>109. VT Government generates high cost of employment</p> <p>110. Some employees have no ambition (manufacturing)</p> <p>111. Small town pool of workers</p> <p>112. Housing/ cost of living</p> <p>113. Lack of diversity</p> <p>114. Broadband</p> <p>115. Rural economy</p>	<p>116. Wages—wage scale too low</p> <p>117. Employees unwilling to share challenges w/employer</p> <p>118. Employee turnover</p> <p>119. Cumulative effect of weaknesses are a threat that impacts the bottom line</p> <p>120. Required training not offered consistently at state level</p> <p>121. Lack of workers</p> <p>122. Lack of scale</p> <p>123. Worker retention</p>

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>124. Lack of knowledge about resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connection of these to employees <p>125. Lack of resources or time to be creative and strategize</p> <p>126. Lack of workforce</p> <p>127. Cost of total compensation—salary, benefits, administration</p> <p>128. Impacted profit margin from increased EE costs</p> <p>129. Lack of transportation and childcare</p> <p>130. Lack of access point to information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o New resident o Employer <p>131. Partner of employee needs</p> <p>132. Lack of coordination between groups in education and training</p> <p>133. Time</p>	<p>163. Vermont 211 for employers with navigation assistance (12)</p> <p>164. Training in life skills—communications emotional intelligence (12)</p> <p>165. Educate parents about careers (11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mike Rowe foundation <p>166. Shared services (9)</p> <p>167. Vermont Go—Carpool, more flexibility (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public Trans o Market and expand o On demand car service <p>168. Directory of workforce development services with navigation assistance (7)</p> <p>169. Provide transportation for unexpected or unique employee needs (7)</p> <p>170. Marketing –boast about benefits—out of state (6)</p>

134. Financial literacy	171. Mentor programs for workers (6)
135. Lack of career education/career ladders/understanding of necessary skills	○ Young professionals
136. Transportation/childcare/housing	172. Hire people with barriers (6)
137. Intergenerational communications	173. Reverse marketing (6)
138. Businesses can only change their business models so fast	174. Expand workforce with elderly, ex-offenders, disabled, substance abuse disorder (5)
139. Local needs are not effectively communicated to the state	○ Create training programs and support services for these populations
140. Student debt	○ Funds to help employers' access Voc Rehab, VABIR, DoL
141. Parental thoughts on careers	○ Job sharing among employees
142. Regulations/laws both Federal and state	175. Professional development of small business –resources at the state level (5)
143. Funding—lack of restrictions n use reporting and tracking	176. Housing—more housing vouchers (4)
144. Population	177. Vermont leaders to meet for 3 hours, quarterly statewide (4)
145. Time and cost of professional development	178. Internships with local colleges (4)
146. Social preparation	179. Linking employers (4)
147. Workforce readiness	180. Employers in similar industries (4)
148. Digital natives' inability to focus	○ Share workers
149. Boundaries	○ Co-training
150. Insufficient infrastructure for communication and coordination among employers and support services	○ Landscaping/Ski areas seasonal link
151. Timely right information at the right time	○ Share referrals
152. Customer service needs to drive timing and ability to deliver (working from home, schedule and hours etc)	181. Unified website ³ on VT job opportunities (3)
153. Limited career ladders	182. Retraining—new skills for new jobs (3)
154. Stagnant population growth	183. Expect companies to do the right thing (less regulation) (3)
155. Cost of living	184. Better gov't advocacy and lobbying (3)
156. Aging population	185. Regional HR support provided by DoL (2)
157. Inadequate professional opportunities for young workers	186. VT Wheels program (2)
158. Companies have limited funds	187. Flexibility on location (1)
159. Small companies don't have enough staff for strategic planning	188. Snow tire subsidy (1)
160. Children—work/life balance	189. Educate employees on use of FSA and HAS (1)
161. VT regulations and what's coming next	190. Create a safe haven for business questions ex: Project Work Save
162. Public transport and roads	191. Business mentoring in exchange for tax credits
	192. Addison Co Uber
	193. Targeted cross-sector job fairs
	194. Life-long Learning

4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

195. Wages are increasing

- 196. Employers are more willing to invest in workforce
 - 197. More open to hire marginalized workers
 - 198. Disability, recovery, offenders, mature workers
 - 199. Skills of the un or under employed are very low but are being hired
 - 200. Increased interest in VT non-degree grant, funding is running out each year
 - 201. Non-degree grants are being used to train for a new career
 - 202. Students looking for certificate or credential
 - 203. Credential is not enough for employers—many times people lack other professional skills
 - 204. Technical/trade training is low cost pathway to good pay. Going to college is not necessary.
- Youth are choosing non-traditional pathways that have a pay as you go feature
- 205. Provide system training for those already employed
 - 206. Disconnect between training opportunities and transportation to access them
 - 207. Need for STEM degrees
 - 208. Career center sees desperate employers competing for co-op students
 - 209. Larger number of students being hired directly from Co-op experience
 - 210. Criminal backgrounds, lack of education, transportation
 - 211. No computer literacy
 - 212. No HS diploma
 - 213. Population >30See very few younger job seekers
 - 214. Not thinking about the world of work
 - 215. First thought is not about improving skills
 - 216. Need to pay for training
 - 217. Some professions/jobs have not time or interest for training (i.e. childcare)
 - 218. Community program and connections getting stronger
 - 219. Launched 3 new apprenticeships
 - 220. Shortage of apprenticeship sponsors
 - 221. Lack of employees
 - 222. Upscaling
 - 223. Develop skills and mind set
 - 224. On the job training/work experience
 - 225. Barriers to employment—transportation and childcare
 - 226. Strain of additional work
 - 227. Life distractions
 - 228. Lack of funding for training
 - 229. Exposure to Vermont
 - 230. Manage employee expectations
 - 231. Available workforce has high barriers
 - 232. Expectations of employers around career path/ladder
 - 233. Schools encouraging trades, vocational path
 - 234. Employer not willing to take on mature apprentice
 - 235. Expectation gap between employee and employer
 - 236. Start early on 3 A's: Attitude, Accountability, Ability to focus
 - 237. Challenge to be more flexible to attract younger workers
 - 238. Work-based PLP's in schools

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Community Hospital

239. How does Porter's relationship [with UVM impact their staffing and training
240. Do they have the capacity to train in-house
241. Some places have training partnerships
242. We need to learn from other models

Single Mother (Jane Doe)

- Lots of entry points and training options
- Not sure who to call about childcare subsidy
 - Parent child center
 - 211
 - Mary Johnson childcare
 - Dept of Children—Building Bright Futures
- Shepherd person through process—VAL, VSAC, VTC depends on entry point
- Have to work nights and weekends
- Lots of acronyms
- Life pieces are the tricky bit

Training for Growth (Laborer)

- Employer on-site training
- Credential on line—VSAC, Voc Rehab, VDoL
- Employee continues to work for employer
- OJT through Voc Rehab—reimbursement
- Lots of connections with Agencies and referrals
- If no onsite training the career path is more difficult, longer, expensive and stressful
- Not all industries are willing to do OJT
- Sources of funding; impact of eligibility/success

Bennington County Industrial Corporation:
2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 24, 2019:

1. Mentor program for new employees
2. Create a local center of excellence for ‘Systems thinking’ that will raise awareness at the state level
- Bennington College already working on this at CAPA
3. Develop training for management – Values based leadership, recognition drives behavior and retention, collaborate with resources and businesses
4. Marketing Southern Vermont with all businesses in mind – Access as a platform to market Southern VT stronger
5. Flexible scheduling

RDC Executive Report:

The Bennington Region Workforce Development Summit hosted at the Bennington Museum on October 24, 2019 was one of twelve such regional summits around the Vermont. In the Bennington region the summit was a new addition to the long-standing efforts to produce and provide a wide variety of workforce development and career exposure events and activities throughout the year.

These events and activities are coordinated through the Bennington County Industrial Corporation (BCIC) Workforce & Education Committee. The BCIC Workforce & Education Committee features broad representation from the region’s employers, education community, public and elected officials and not-for-profit organizations. The committee’s work has been recognized by the Vermont Department of Economic Development as a best practice and has served as a model for other regions in Vermont looking to establish similar programs.

BCIC Workforce & Education Committee’s efforts are especially highlighted each April when it produces Career Month, a wide variety of events, activities and open houses showcasing the region’s educational and employment opportunities. Initiated in 2011 as Career Week and running the first week of April, the series of events was expanded to a month-long schedule in 2015. In 2019 over forty events were scheduled for the month.

Two of the most enduring activities featured each Career Month are the Sophomore Summit and a series of op-ed columns by area employers that run in the *Bennington Banner*.

The 14th annual Sophomore Summit last April brought together the sophomore classes from all the high schools in Bennington County to hear from hundreds of professionals from virtually every field. These professionals shared what it is like to work in their respective industries and outlined how they arrived at their occupations.

2019 was the eighth year of op-ed columns by regional employers in a series entitled, “We Do Cool Things”. These pieces provide an opportunity for local companies to articulate why working there provides interesting, meaningful and rewarding careers. This series has been particularly helpful in changing the dialogue around what it means to work in a 21st Century manufacturing environment.

The *Bennington Banner* is a key supporter of the April Career Month. In addition to dedicating space to the employer op-ed columns, the paper does a kick-off article at the beginning of the month which

highlights many of the coming activities and does a tremendous job of covering the events. In 2019 the paper printed eighteen articles on Career Month events, thirteen of which ran on the front page.

The Bennington Region Workforce Development Summit brought together over forty local employers and service providers over the course of the day. Some of the region's largest employers including Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Mack Molding were in attendance. While there was a good cross-section of businesses, given the challenges of freeing up time during the day to attend, very small businesses were perhaps not as well represented as would have been ideal.

At lunch when employers and service providers came together panelists from Southwestern Vermont Health Care, Bennington Rescue Squad, Mack Molding and the Community College of Vermont discussed creative workforce development programs they have implemented at their organizations or on behalf of the region. Topics included college internships, VDOL-partnered apprenticeships, college tuition remission and guaranteed job placements, and entrepreneurial mindset training and startup coaching. This panel was very well received.

Ironically, the Bennington Region Workforce Summit took place on the same day that Energizer announced it would be closing its Bennington manufacturing facility, which has operated in town for over fifty years. Reaching a peak employment of approximately seven hundred workers in the 1950s the current employment census is less than one hundred. While the news was incredibly disappointing and will be disruptive to a number of local families it was not unexpected. Of interest and why we raise this in the context of the regional summit is the fact that just the employers present at the summit had over twice the number of open jobs as the current number of local Energizer employees.

Not surprisingly, and as is certain to be the case at all the regional summits, the availability of qualified workforce was at the top of the list of concerns of both employers and service providers. It was noted by both employers and providers that any employee with the ability and willingness to show up to work on time would be provided training opportunities. There was some difference of opinion among employers at the summit as the caliber of the regional workforce in general, the majority of employers felt the local workforce was of above-average quality.

One issue raised repeatedly by both employers and service providers was the impact of the availability of quality housing at all price points on the workforce. The age of the housing stock in the region makes this issue a particularly challenging one to solve. While the local affordable housing organization, the regional planning commission, the Bennington Redevelopment Group, the municipality and others are all working on plans and projects to address the availability and affordability of housing this work will need to be ongoing for an extended period.

The ***top five strategy recommendations*** are as noted above. In an effort to place these in the context of currently ongoing efforts in which BCIC and its partner organizations are involved, let's take them in order:

1. Develop mentorship program for new employees

While this would most logically sit within individual business onboarding efforts there are some related activities in this space currently underway. These include an expanded internship program being undertaken by the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) and mentorship activities sponsored by the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, the Shires Young Professionals and the Lightning Jar Coworking Space.

2. Create a local center or excellence for 'systems thinking' that will raise awareness at the state level

The Center for the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) at Bennington College is a program within the school with a mission “to be a catalyst, convener and creative space for social change; and to design solutions to the urgent social, political and environmental problems of our time”. Recently CAPA has examined the challenges and possible solutions to the PFOA contamination crisis in the Bennington area and has received a \$1,000,000 grant to explore significant systemic change around food systems in the region.

Even more recently, the BCRC, the Town of Bennington, the Lightning Jar, Bennington Area Makers and the Community College of Vermont have partnered on a Working Communities Challenge grant application which, if funded, would create new systems for economic empowerment within the community and enable the intergenerational transfer of cross-disciplinary skills among area residents.

Building off these and any similar other efforts within the community to address workforce challenges presents real opportunities for the region.

3. Develop training for management

This suggestion is another which would rely heavily on the internal programs and resources of individual employers. That said there are a number of training opportunities and programs in the region which could be added to or modified to address business leadership training around workforce. The Lightning Jar, BCRC, the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, Shires Young Professionals and Vermont Small Business Development Center are among the entities in the region which offer business training programs. Additionally, for large scale in-house training programs the Vermont Training Program may be a possible means of assisting businesses with their training needs in this space.

4. Market Southern Vermont with all businesses in mind

BCIC, BCRC and their partners in Windham County are actively engaged in this effort. The Southern Vermont Recruitment and Marketing Program (SMRP - <https://sovermont.com/>) is designed specifically as a tool to recruit workforce from outside the area to Southern Vermont. The establishment of such a program was a primary recommendation of the *Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone Report* presented to the legislature in 2016. The program is designed to show off Southern Vermont’s great attributes not only as a place of opportunity for high-quality careers but also as a great location to live, socialize, recreate and raise a family. SMRP has broad support from local governments and businesses of all sizes across Southern Vermont, but the fact that marketing the region for this purpose was a one of the top recommendations coming out of the summit suggests there is significant additional opportunity to expand understanding of and participation in the effort.

5. Implement more flexible scheduling where possible

This recommendation is another which will largely depend upon the policies and possibilities existing within individual businesses. BCIC and its partners may be helpful in trying to line up training in best practices and creative programming along these lines as well as in continuing its “We Do Cool Things” series each April and showcasing employers with flexible scheduling and other programs that help to change the perceptions of what it means to work in today’s manufacturing environment or at other local companies.

The recommendations noted here as well as all the other documents coming out of the Bennington Region Workforce Development Summit have been shared with the BCIC Workforce & Education Committee as well as with the BCIC Board of Directors. Both groups will look for opportunities to further

the recommendations noted and to generally continue their efforts to assist regional employers with their largest stated need – finding qualified workforce.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- 243. Filling gaps with TEMP employees
- 244. POACHING employees
- 245. Retention challenges/ employee churn
- 246. Use Remote workers for Higher level/skilled positions
 - o Expense of tools to support remote workers
 - o Learning how to work with remote contributors
- 247. H2B visa/cost associated but prevalent in hospitality
- 248. Customers skeptical of workforce projections in Vermont
- 249. How do we get younger demographically
- 250. How do we deal with generational poverty
- 251. Continual push for higher education (college) in secondary schools against career/technical education
- 252. How do we address the need for better management in employers to deal with workforce issues
- 253. Younger workforce has unreal expectations
- 254. ‘Ghosting’—early turnover—employees disappear
- 255. Attitudes about inclusivity and diversity differ in new generation
- 256. Older workers challenged technologically
- 257. Demographics issues makes succession planning hard
- 258. Continual challenge of housing cost/availability particularly for working people
- 259. Pay in Vermont is low making housing issues worse
- 260. How to educate legacy employees as technology and culture change
- 261. Coping with the need for automation—cost and training

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
262. Availability of training is better than ever (Access is a different question)	283. Flight from cities to rural areas
263. VT hard working demographic by historic nature (self-reliant)	284. Lifestyle
264. Small communities	285. Internship programs
265. VT access to government officials	286. Looking at every position as a ‘key position’
266. Lifestyle (missed opportunity)	287. Invitation for more community partners to be part of ‘experiences’ for HS students
267. Exposure of opportunities to local students	288. Stay to stay program
268. Variety of careers	289. Apprenticeship programs

<p>269. CDC courses—Rapport developed with CDC</p> <p>270. Workforce development—collect Unemployment while training</p> <p>271. CCV classes</p> <p>272. State promoted Stay to Stay program</p> <p>273. Flexible work schedules</p> <p>274. Overtime from some employers</p> <p>275. Quality of life</p> <p>276. CDC</p> <p>277. Proximity</p> <p>278. WIOA</p> <p>279. Home buying opportunity (hospital?)</p> <p>280. Environment</p> <p>281. Global companies</p> <p>282. More impact on community</p>	
Weaknesses	Threats
<p>290. Prevailing wages low - Albany nearby</p> <p>291. Talent pool</p> <p>292. Transportation</p> <p>293. Small employee pool</p> <p>294. Poaching</p> <p>295. Affordable housing</p> <p>296. Reliable transportation for employees</p> <p>297. Wages for entry level are ow</p> <p>298. Keep and retain employees</p> <p>299. Lack of career pathway understanding</p> <p>300. Retaining educated youth</p> <p>301. Transportation</p> <p>302. Value of total compensation</p> <p>303. Generational poverty</p> <p>304. Town government not involved in solutions</p> <p>305. Social programs</p>	<p>306. Employee willingness to access training may be an issue</p> <p>307. Self-reliance leads to limiting resources</p> <p>308. More restrictions on compliance</p> <p>309. Connection to Albany</p> <p>310. Lack of connectivity throughout the state</p> <p>311. Youth moving out of state</p> <p>312. Proximity</p>

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>313. Aging workforce-competency to develop (change management)</p> <p>314. Leadership (cultural belief system)</p> <p>315. Improvement on views toward people with barriers to employment, and resource to support individuals</p> <p>316. Money—business (capital?)</p> <p>317. SVC closing, higher education opportunities limited</p>	<p>343. Mentor program for new employees (9)</p> <p>344. Create a local center or excellence for ‘Systems thinking’ that will raise awareness at the state level (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bennington already working on this at CAPA <p>345. Develop training for management (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Values based leadership

318. Less access to social life (“things to do”) locally	○ Recognition drives behavior and retention
319. Lack of money in budget for training and hiring	○ Collaborate with resources and businesses
320. Childcare—need longer hours	346. Marketing Southern Vermont with all businesses in mind (7)
321. Younger generation mentality	○ Access as a platform to market Southern VT more strongly
322. Lack of work ethic and soft skills	347. Flexible scheduling (7)
323. Small pool of employees	348. Align existing resources (transportation and childcare)
324. Community lacking mental health specialists	349. Town government involved more (7)
325. Train/invest in employee to gain credential which allows them to leave for another job	350. Pilot ‘civic Engagement’ program to show public as a way to expand civic engagement across all public community sectors (7)
326. Lack of core values gets handed down with some	351. Employer collaboration for childcare perhaps with hospital (6)
327. Proximity to Montpelier	352. More internships for high school students, community college students and adults (6)
328. Diverse county needs	353. Target marketing for people looking to move back to VT (5)
329. Time and distance to collaborate	354. Create part time jobs for youth after school (5)
330. Costs of technology	355. Design process to deal with ‘benefits cliffs’ (5)
331. Funds for marketing region	356. Tech courses offered at all high schools not just the career center (5)
332. Substance abuse/testing	357. Putnam redevelopment is a great example (2)
333. Proximity (not) to treatment facilities (nearest suboxone clinics in Rutland and Brattleboro)	358. Business and employer involvement in high schools (2)
334. Scale	359. Identify at risk youth at earlier age and provide instructional programs to help them (IIEP?) (2)
335. Status quo prevents pivot to change for policy and investments	360. Market to 30 year old’s in other states to move to Vermont (2)
336. Over analyze—inefficient decision and policy making systems	361. Flexibility for working parents (1)
337. Act 250/permitting	362. Tech work ethic at early age
338. Reactive vs pro active	
339. Late to the party—reluctance to change	
340. Lack of ‘systems thinking’	
341. General understanding—How much do we know about the ‘root cause’	
342. Perceptions are sometimes reality—i.e. pay structure	

4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 363. How do we find the best way to assist employers in recruitment, training and delivery of services
- 364. Creating meaningful connections and relationships with employers
- 365. Lack of human capital (supply) to provide to employers
- 366. Supply systems stretched for resources
- 367. Candidate pool has serious issues and skill deficiencies

- 368. Stigma of being connected to a service
- 369. Low wages
- 370. Transient workforce
- 371. Importance of shorter trainings and certification
- 372. Accessibility of training
- 373. Lack of employer involvement for Apprenticeships
- 374. Lack of youth employment opportunities
- 375. Lack of soft skills
- 376. Businesses unwilling to change hiring practices
- 377. Too many new programs and initiatives
- 378. Gender components (no sure what this means)
- 379. First generation employees from long term poverty families
- 380. Lack of job experience in young people
- 381. Employers not letting people work remotely
- 382. Technology!
- 383. Transportation
- 384. HOUSING

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

ABC Manufacturing

- 385. A lot of input (and time) is needed to decide whether to automate
- 386. Manufacturer might not know about resources
- 387. Path is contingent on network access point
 - Service provider may respond with what is easiest
 - Or what benefits their performance metrics (butts in seats)
- 388. Bennington has a monthly manufacturer’s meeting that might provide a comprehensive access point (Bill thinks this might not work well as the group had a specific purpose)

Single Mother (Jane Doe)

- Case management is paramount to completing the entire program
- Need a resource website
- Learn to efficiently service individuals
 - Less duplication of services
- Small community makes it easier to keep in touch
- Employers demand for credentialing changes depending on the economy (on demand)

Laborer

- 389. Details can ‘knot’ you up and hold back progress
- 390. Scenario mapping is ‘hard’
- 391. We had to make assumptions
- 392. Recovery clients have a more difficult time up skilling and moving forward and the need to make connections
- 393. A lot of support in the community but it’s hard to connect the dots—takes time
- 394. Trained to focus on disasters not opportunities
- 395. We have more gaps than we think we do that need to be fixed

Brattleboro Development and Credit Corporation:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 3, 2019:

1. Wrap around support services – Housing directories, transportation coordination, employer vouchers
2. Pipeline: Partnering with orgs like BDCC to attract outside talent, put SoVermont on company pages, expand or add unique benefits
3. State mandated MHW credentialing/licensing in partnership with state system
4. Cooperative learning on benefits and training for small companies
5. Catalog of contacts—know who to contact

RDC Executive Report:

Big Questions for Employers and Providers:

In the RDC Summit held in Windham County, the single biggest question for employers was how to better support, recruit, train, and retain a shrinking workforce with increasing barriers to employability. Despite continuing to raise wages, providing greater flexibility to workers, engaging in state-funded workforce training programs, employers have faced increasing challenges. These include the need to hire less and less qualified workers to fill low- and moderate- skill jobs, and jobs going unfilled. While increasing automation can solve some of these issues, it also requires existing and new workers to invest in a different set of skills.

Other significant questions revolved around how to engage young people, how to link employers and the education system more effectively, and how to increase hiring and recruitment capacity. All of these priorities are currently being addressed by existing BDCC programming and initiatives through the [Southern Vermont Workforce Center of Excellence](#) via the Pipelines and Pathways program, quarterly meetings of the Windham Workforce Development Network, and the Targeted Expertise Recruitment and Retention program. Increased investment and capacity in school guidance and career counseling systems will complement activity by employers and RDC's around industry mapping and career pathways. A more systematized and collaborative HR and workforce partner network would support statewide and regional collaborations like Stay-to-Stay, SoVermont Marketing & Recruitment, ThinkVermont and other recruitment initiatives.

Big questions from Service Providers focused more heavily on collaboration and communication, with particular emphasis on promoting a more positive message about the existing labor force and the support services available to both employers and jobseekers. In instances where an employee may be engaged with multiple service providers, increased understanding from employers about what's being provided is also important.

With regards to fostering better collaboration between service providers, employers, and the education system, more communication is needed to better align training and support services to address the skills gaps jobseekers may be facing. While this work is also a significant component of the Workforce Center of Excellence, these questions indicate a greater awareness is needed from all stakeholders of the work already being done in order for these solutions to scale.

In every scenario, a central convener and/organizer is required to transition informal networks into functional systems, allowing them to collaborate, strategize, and scale solutions more effectively. A key observation from both the employer and provider sessions was a desire for better awareness and connection. This finding supports the development of systems approach in which all partners possess a high degree of mutual awareness and confidence in the ability to locate, or manifest, solutions.

SWOT Additions from Employer Session:

Many of the Strengths and Opportunities highlighted at the summit relate to the southern Vermont region's geographic proximity to larger labor markets, and the abundance of high-demand, high-wage, high growth, high opportunity careers.

Windham County's proximity to both New Hampshire and Massachusetts is unique to southeastern Vermont, in that the labor shed and potential recruitment market is a Tri-State region. This is an inherent strength relative to other Vermont communities of similar size, but many employers suggested that this inherent strength only provides opportunity for employers that are able to invest in hiring and recruitment strategies that engage markets outside of Windham County.

The most significant opportunities identified by employers is that, with increased human resources and recruitment capacity (internally and as a region), their businesses will be able to capitalize more significantly on the opportunity a Tri-State laborshed provides. This includes, but is not limited to, leveraging new technologies, expanding human resource networks, more prominent and widely shared job-posting mechanisms, and better support services to address relocation and/or training needs in a manner that leverages the Tri-State region's assets. At this time the jurisdictional boundaries create real impediments to collaboration and access.

Many of the weaknesses and threats mentioned revolved around the growing impact of the opiate crisis and generational poverty on the workforce, especially with regard to the lack of work-ready young adults. Greater investment in our regions' ability to effectively support individuals with barriers to employment, and the organizations that employ them, is necessary in order to increase workforce participation rates and raise median incomes.

Additional weaknesses include the conditions and infrastructure needed to support a working population, like housing, transportation, and access to education, are all in need of stronger organization and/or investments

In summary, the SWOT exercise identified the need to better communicate the availability of high-wage jobs throughout the Tri-State Region, including but not limited to the opportunities for upward mobility within an organization or industry sector; better mapping and communicating regional career pathways may support these efforts.

There is also a need for better and more effective services to support a workforce population with greater barriers to employment. The re-alignment of workforce funding for employers and job-seekers, as well as a re-alignment of service providers to meet the needs of individuals pursuing employment, is imperative to successfully mitigating the real and perceived threats to the Windham County workforce. Transportation and housing infrastructure investments must also more effectively serve individuals intending to enter the workforce.

A weakness in the analysis and observations provided by participants is that there was mainly focus on the existing workforce, with little attention to or understanding of the underlying conditions of population loss, low unemployment, and a shrinking labor force. This, despite the RDC's focus on these high-level drivers through our planning, communications and programming.

Constraints and Strategies:

As mentioned above, many of the constraints in the workforce system revolve around the societal and economic issues that have removed working-age populations from the labor market. These include substance-use disorder, lack of population growth, and limited relocation/recruitment infrastructure within the Tri-State labor shed.

The "Big Strategies" identified by the group, unsurprisingly, directly address the constraints that were raised. Strengthening the coordination and integration of wrap-around support services, especially as they relate to housing, transportation, and on-the-job case management in partnership with employers. More specific ideas include a reference catalogue of organizations and contacts for employers to better understand (and engage with) the service provider network, and better collaboration and communication between multiple service providers supporting the same individual.

While the top five strategies as identified at the Summit are captured above, another major strategy for employers is to work collaboratively within sectors, industries, and/or similarly sized businesses to achieve economies of scale. The need for a centralized organization, in this case the BDCC, was identified as a key component of achieving economies of scale to ensure every business, regardless of size, can train, recruit, and retain the workforce needed to grow the regional economy.

Lastly, increased investment in mental health and addiction services, and the workforce needed to support the mental healthcare system, is absolutely imperative to providing struggling Vermonters with the resources needed to enter or re-enter the labor market.

Scenario Learnings:

The learnings from the scenarios highlighted many of the weaknesses expressed by the employer community. First and foremost, service providers involved in the scenarios described the state service provider system as "non-linear", "complex", and geographically "scattered". Many restrictions and regulations, theoretically designed to protect vulnerable populations, stifle important collaboration, with providers stating that "each segment has a firewall, even in the same institution". Providers articulated a struggle with the silos in which they operate.

Another learning is that better awareness of the needs of the local labor force, and the education and training available that fits those needs, is necessary for service providers to best serve their clients. Again, operating within silos can make it difficult to address what is often a complex suite of issues, and the need for multiple partners to provide necessary support or training.

It was acknowledged that there is "no one place to find detailed, clear information for someone to figure out how to map out the steps." Many of the strategies proposed above are designed to develop a workforce system that can effectively support a jobseeker from cradle to career and beyond, regardless of any and all barriers the jobseeker may face. So long as foundational services within the system are means-tested or built around a single problem, a holistic, inclusive workforce system will struggle to develop.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- Stalled growth—now and going ahead
- Have used state programs
- Accessibility (location)
- Unable to provide services they are set up for—unsustainable, part of larger org so some flex, but need to look at business model because of WF shortage
- Revenue/cost/quality balance challenge
- Burn out on employees due to overuse of OT, leads to turnover
- Hiring lower quality than preferred impacts efficiency and productivity
- Increased outsourced—but they are WF limited
- Increased automation—increased investment and training costs
- Turning away work
- Raised starting wages to tap into other markets (603) squeezes margins, increases prices
- Input supplier can’t scale up so output can’t grow despite demand
- Increased creativity with benefits; some copycat effect but not on big items like health care
- Small business owners are more focused on shutting down when they cannot find successor.
- More discussion around retention
- Increased focus on workplace flexibility (impact of more millennials)
- Generational culture clash creates internal tension
- Cut back on shifts
- Working with the most challenged populations
- Lower skills and preparedness
- Specific pops—ex-offenders and recovery
- Skills vs opportunity
- Stigma against education pathways
- External conditions are worse
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Regulations force adverse decisions
- Specialization is excluding people
- Concentration of people with mental health issues
- Need to work with younger folks
- Priorities of employers in a tight market get ‘shorter’
- Value proposition changes

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
396. Lifestyle	407. Awareness of jobs—making sure they are on the app/where you can (?) 408. Understanding how search algorithms work
397. Awareness around specific sectors	
398. B-Corp, employee owned, VBSR	
399. Opportunity	

<p>400. Network of HR professionals</p> <p>401. Clusters (employers and employees)</p> <p>402. 3 State labor shed</p> <p>403. Interesting, diverse, innovative careers</p> <p>404. Service large markets from small area— attract ‘escapees’</p> <p>405. Family support/recreation</p> <p>406. Current strengths are not in all industries</p>	<p>409. Talent recruitment</p> <p>410. Central state job data board/Job link/DED is scraping jobs</p> <p>411. Make it easier to post jobs</p> <p>412. ‘Hot Jobs’, like NH program/state resource to amplify to whole state</p> <p>413. Change mindset with possible candidates</p> <p>414. Rutland YP matching spouses</p> <p>415. Healthcare/housing/ childcare/ incentives</p> <p>416. Midlevel transitions</p> <p>417. Manage benefit cliffs</p>
Weaknesses	Threats
<p>418. Yes to everything</p> <p>419. Hiring takes forever</p> <p>420. Burnout of existing employees</p> <p>421. Tarnishing of business reputation</p> <p>422. Work ethic</p> <p>423. Work readiness, attendance, childcare</p> <p>424. Available workforce has barriers</p> <p>425. Workforce requires dealing with red tape—ex-offenders</p> <p>426. Employers need to adapt to support systems like recovery</p> <p>427. Trying to balance privacy with need to communicate</p> <p>428. Agency contact points and people always changing</p>	<p>429. Motivation is down, culture and values clashes</p> <p>430. Opioid epidemic</p> <p>431. Limited availability of specific infrastructure (commercial kitchen)</p> <p>432. Strength of school systems/quality?</p> <p>433. Transportation</p> <p>434. Advertising not working</p> <p>435. Funding for HR development</p> <p>436. Expensive to train and increasing over time</p> <p>437. Lack staff to train—fragments staff</p> <p>438. Proper training=higher job satisfaction</p> <p>439. 9-5 mindset of employers/ culture clash</p> <p>440. Short staff</p> <p>441. Misalignment of funds for WF training</p>

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>442. Time</p> <p>443. Money—Benefits/Training for new hires</p> <p>444. Available labor pool</p> <p>445. Dedicated recruitment capacity</p> <p>446. Qualified entry level applicants</p> <p>447. Proactive public investment in healthcare training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Proactive instead of reactive o Public/private <p>448. Disconnect between education, state and employers</p> <p>449. Lack of mental health care licensure training needed like LNA (for Retreat)</p>	<p>462. Partner with Career Centers</p> <p>463. Pre-apprentice and Apprentice (4G)</p> <p>464. Resources—commitment to training (1G)</p> <p>465. Catalog of contacts—know who to contact (8G)</p> <p>466. Better on Boarding (1Y)</p> <p>467. Better Mgt training: Expectations/ Value workers (3G,2Y)</p> <p>468. Basic Day to Day employee appreciation (2G)</p> <p>469. Higher focus on retention/psychological satisfaction (4G2Y1B)</p>

450. Quality of Life Barriers—Broadband and technology	470. Create systems to document jobs and retain knowledge (off boarding) 1G
451. Transportation	471. Succession planning for people 2G
452. Housing	472. Help employers understand 'job workplans' 1B
453. Cost of Living	473. State mandated MHW credentialing/licensing in partnership with state system 11G
454. Are limits for internships (can't touch tools under 18 years old)	474. Cooperative learning on benefits and training for small companies (3G6Y)
455. Focus on trees not forest—operational focus not strategic	475. Pipeline: partnering wit orgs like BDCC (11G1Y)
456. Vermont wages low, housing high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To attract outside talent ○ SoVermont on company pages ○ Expand benefits unique benefits
457. Talented spouses—where is opportunity for them	476. Connectivity—Cell and Broadband (1G)
458. Mismatched expectation on social culture	477. Internal or partnership training
459. Connectivity issues (Broadband)	478. Wrap around support services (12G)
460. Transportation (vulnerability of transportation methods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing directories ○ Transportation coordination ▪ Employer vouchers
461. Student debt!	479. Sharing resources with other companies (seasonal scheduling) (2G4Y)
	480. Engage industry groups and unions
	481. Worker recruitment \$ for down-payment

4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- Negative messaging around workforce situation
- Asking for positive messaging
- Mismatch between students and job opportunities
- Employer engagement ins Schools not strong enough
- Tech skills needed, consistently increasing
- Lack of curiosity
- Disconnect between taught (school) and need (emp)
- Trends that put different pressures on the system
- Different populations by region
- Individuals with more complex situations
- Multiple orgs need to work together
- Employer attitude/not understanding
- Anger, conflict, and frustration
- Training programs and pathways are limited
- People are expected to fill positions above their level of skill
- High turnover
- Consumer demand for experience
- Skills faps are unique, no universal similarities
- Can't do programs—had to return funding—no staff to execute

- Entry level job secured, drop out of program, then left without services and support
- Lots of people with real and self-perceived barriers (so not enough ?) (prior record-policy and employment specific)
- Dealing with people with little ability to engage with employer, advocate, negotiate (social skills and trauma)

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Community Hospital

- 482. No one holds the BIG PICTURE
- 483. Each Segment has a firewall even in the same institution
- 484. Each branch of the pipeline has its own challenges
- 485. Sustainability--\$, Community Capital
- 486. There is a solution, but it is expensive ... so a current failure and poor care
- 487. Solution will require regulations and relations to align
 - Non-linear, complex solution
 - Long timeline, big partnerships
 - New actions at scale (more \$ awarded, more internal pipelines)
- 488. So much wasted already
- 489. National disinvestment in education is counter productive

Post incarceration (Ex-Offender)

- 490. Not full understanding among partners about corrections process around release
- 491. Differences between policy and practice
- 492. Providers trained to talk and operate in a ‘what should’ mindset instead of ‘what is’
- 493. Future focused, what could be

Laborer

- Does the employer know the available resources?
- Eligibility requirement for employer and employee may be too strict
- Too many unknowns and possibilities
- To whom are candidates underqualified (employers or regulator/funder)
- Differences in motivation between employer and employee

? Carpenter ?

- No one place to find detailed, clear information for someone to figure out how to map out the steps
 - Professionals don’t know all the answers
 - Services very scattered (locations) make it harder for people to access things quickly and limit collaboration
 - Easy to put cart before the horse
 - There are alternative to the obvious but absent services and resources
 - Easier to ID issues instead of strengths
 - Many processes may not be linear
494. Communication is paramount: prof to prof, prof to client

Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five²⁰ strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 6, 2019:

1. Industry specific educational opportunities for students and educators, to alter perceptions:
 - Marketing of company versus industry
 - Industry and regional collaboration to build interest in job opportunities
 - Video campaign/series highlighting work “behind the curtain”
2. Flexibility, more tailored offerings for specific employee needs – Non-traditional labor, PT, on-call Uber, flexible spending “accounts” for child/elder care, transportation
3. Fully identify and exploit Vermont’s points of excellence and desirability to create a unified goal and FOCUS on that ... apply all resources to build on that common foundation
4. Loan forgiveness – Access to/education about
5. Additional funding for “career paths” in the education and training sectors
6. Communication regarding resources – Navigator, technology platform/clearinghouse

RDC Executive Report:

This year’s summit was an opportunity to build on discussions held last year and begin to deliver a process that will drive change. With the consistently low unemployment rate, slow re-entry rate of people into the workforce, and the aging demographic and stagnant population of Vermont, workforce recruitment, development, and training continue to be of paramount concern. What we heard from the Summit attendees was a willingness by employers to look at non-traditional populations for entry level work. At the same time, they are trying to find the right balance of pay increases and more incentive based benefits to retain their current workforce.

We have identified the myriad of obstacles to growing the workforce, and many of these are recurring issues that are difficult to address due to their scope and scale. Affordable housing, access to daycare, the opioid crisis, and Vermont’s aging workforce are issues that the business community is trying to understand and predict how they will impact their company’s ability to grow. The lack of an available labor pool has caused both service providers and employers to look more creatively at ways to address the issues. It has also opened the door for greater cooperation and collaboration at many levels between employers and providers. There was a clear message from participants that future meetings needed to allow for more integration of employers and providers.

1. Industry Specific Educational Opportunities
Participants discussed the need to focus on career exploration opportunities for student populations. There continues to be a perceived gap between student and parent perceptions of a variety of industries that do not match current reality. Equally there is a lack of understanding of the skills needed to rapidly progress in many of our core sectors. There was a belief that through a more collaborative approach including employers, tech-centers, and work-based learning coordinators, that we could possibly increase the number of students who find meaningful careers here in Vermont with employers they know today. This model is currently being utilized effectively in the granite industry and medical fields, but lacks the robust support needed to grow the program to a scale that would make a significant difference.
2. Flex Workforce Strategy

²⁰ Items 5 and 6 were tied in voting

This discussion centered around how to fully embrace “non-traditional” labor, or how to provide support systems that accommodate the needs of the workforce. Part-time labor sharing, transportation assistance, child-care subsidies from employers, and other ideas were listed as potential strategies for both finding and retaining labor. It was widely acknowledged that people just reaching retirement age could potentially be part of an answer if the proper job modifications could be created.

3. Workforce Recruitment

Regionally, and in Vermont as a whole, we need to do a better job at identifying our strengths and communicating them to a targeted market. While the State has traditionally promoted Vermont for its scenic beauty, we have not done a good job at understanding what aspects appeal most to the market we are trying to influence. If we want to attract a younger demographic, then attention to lifestyle activities like mountain biking, tech centers of excellence, affordable housing in close-knit communities, and other attributes that will resonate with this demographic will need to be emphasized.

4. Education Loan Forgiveness

The burden of education debt is preventing many young professionals from being able to afford to take a job in Vermont. Programs that assist people with their debt has the potential of being a powerful tool for recruitment of young skilled professionals. Additionally, employers are developing programs to provide educational assistance for current employees as a retention tool. Expansion of these programs, possibly with a State sponsored program, could make Vermont an affordable option for a large potential market.

5. Greater funding of Career Paths/Communication of Resource Options

- a. There was a belief that more resources for training would provide additional and better outcomes. Also, there was an expression of need for programing that would lead to skills development within an industry other than a standardized certificate or structured apprenticeship program.
- b. We need to build a better resource guide that provides a method for navigating the system bureaucracy and identifying the correct resource. The hope was a system that would allow an employer to ask what is available to address “x” (i.e. their specific need). Currently the system can tell you what they offer, which may or may not address the employer’s stated need. It also requires the employer to know the full system well enough to research what everyone provides. One option discussed was a system that brought providers together within a region to discuss clients and form collaborative approaches to meet their needs. This could be by focusing on the stated need of an employer, or by focusing on individual clients needing a more holistic approach to prepare them for employment.

Everything discussed at the Summit were potential actionable steps that could address aspects of the workforce development need. Many require some level of investment, and all require additional commitment of human resources with the associated cost. Work Based Learning Coordinators are an effective tool in career exploration in Central Vermont, but not all WBL programs are equally funded, staffed, or supported. As a result, the outcomes vary significantly from one school system to another. RDC’s can (and CVEDC does) play a significant role in building the relationships between academic centers and employers by building partnerships.

There is an opportunity that exists today due to the tight labor market. Job seekers from populations that traditionally find it more difficult to secure career-oriented employment are now a more viable option for employers. This includes people with some criminal background for entry level positions. It

also means looking at different populations and skill sets as indicators of a strong work ethic. If someone can demonstrate soft skills through work experience, then employers are more willing to provide them with the hard skills necessary to succeed in a career. Again, the key to success will be a coordinated effort between State agencies and employers to create a system that makes the best possible matches and leads to positive outcomes for employer and employee.

The most important outcome of the Summit was a continued commitment of many of the key players, from educators and service providers to employers, to work on expanding the conversation and improving the collaboration. Success will breed success, so seeking positive steps that can be replicated will help to grow the partnerships and create a more effective system of workforce development.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- More proactive in looking at pay scales and using incremental adjustments as retention tools before people try to leave
- Corporate planning capacity constrained by lack of adequate workforce
- Senior care sector – Increased demand because of changing demographics has led to burnout of existing staff and loss of staff to remain at home to care for their own elders
- Increased substance abuse issue complicate everything
- Growth limited by workforce availability – firms with national level HQ finding it increasingly challenging to meet national growth targets in-state, creating perceived performance issues between state and national management
- Any senior level management positions require national search wherein low VT pay rates and high VT cost of living become deal-breakers
- More focus on making FTE out of seasonal workforce roles, but players not at point where collaboration/cooperation works very smoothly – almost a miracle when it does happen, and only by individual case

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to train (employers) and learn (workers) • Passion/pride for work • Aging demographic has created a strong work ethic in that population • Resilient population • Lots of established networks – formal and informal • Exceptional access to politicians for advocacy/information sharing • State’s willingness to partner and provide resources (DoL, Voc Rehab) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship program – Networked (workplace mentors, teachers, students) and paying • Standardized career programming in high schools and colleges • Sector specific certifications • Incumbent worker training and mentoring (building internal pipeline) • Flexible job pathways • VT is a small state – pick a focus/target and put all your resources, programming, advocacy into meeting those objectives, then move on to a next selected focus/target

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortification of workers: 401K conversion for student debt relief, financial partnerships for housing/transportation Incentivize staying in Vermont
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Transportation Lack of adequate/affordable childcare Lack of soft skills/workplace readiness Competition with higher paying regions/employers Access to benefits is complex and convoluted Aging workforce and shrinking/stagnant population Lack of state-focused, skilled recruiters Education – inadequate career paths/choices shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adequate/affordable childcare Lack of adequate/affordable housing Affordability of the state Age – Older workers, younger workers leaving Communications channels – too many, not transparent across all users (coms silos) Perception of work today in different sectors – impressions still stuck in “manual” labor days, not updated to incorporate all of the technology, tasks, roles (marketing challenge versus industry challenge) Increased benefits required to secure employees “affinity” for job/work – values challenge Access to (state) technical training

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of collaboration between education/training programs, for both new (needed) programs and those already existing Public misconceptions of industries due to lack of adequate/accurate exposure \$\$\$\$\$\$ - for everything, marketing, training, education, retention, merit-based increases, benefits Not enough people applying Affordability of and access to housing / childcare / transportation Eligibility criteria to get funding (complex, onerous) Mandated education (? Position requirements?) Diversity of employment needs across different sectors Employees need an increasingly lengthy array of support Different sectors have different types of employment packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry specific educational opportunities for students and educators, to alter perceptions: <13 dots> Marketing of company versus industry Industry and regional collaboration to build interest in job opportunities Video campaign/series highlighting work “behind the curtain” Flexibility, more tailored offerings for specific employee needs – Non-traditional labor, PT, on-call Uber, flexible spending “accounts” for child/elder care, transportation <9 dots> Fully identify and exploit Vermont’s points of excellence and desirability to create a unified goal and FOCUS on that ... apply all resources to build on that common foundation <6 dots> Loan forgiveness – Access to/education about <6 dots> Additional funding for “career paths” in the education and training sectors <5 dots>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of diversity (in population) • Generational gaps • Cost of living • Lots of competition for limited resource (workers) • Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication regarding resources – Navigator, technology platform/clearinghouse <5 dots> • Build out collaboration: shared resources (childcare, transportation, housing); seasonal FTE roles <1 dot>; job share database <4 dots> • HR training/collaboration to educate HR offices on different/better approaches: identify and educate new workers on career pathways within the business; share HR resources for smaller businesses <3 dots> • Develop regionally based collaboration structure to better access available resources <2 dots> • Better PR campaign <2 dots> • Re-prioritize federal funding (\$25 M regardless of unemployment rate) – “up-skilling” <1 dot> • Take a close look at developing better retention strategies: EAP; Working Bridges; Wellness initiatives; Creative benefits (food trucks) • Building incentive through clear career path for young workers via apprenticeship • WOTC (???)
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- Seeing an increased awareness of and interest in non-traditional applicants, on the part of employers
- Feeling the presence of a skills gap between supply and demand
- Businesses lack capacity
- Difficult to engage with business
- Experiencing an expansion in demand for tech center services and programs
- Employers are casting a wider net than they have before
- Demand for soft skills/workplace readiness/life skills training integrated into technical training
- More difficult to recruit people into their service programs
- Employers are increasingly hiring then training
- Employers are using training programs as a pipeline – part of the recruitment process – to “serve” applicants
- Seeing more barriers to employment, and employment becoming more complex for those candidates
- State funding increasingly tied to industry-recognized credentials/hard-skills training, but population providers are working with need to focus on “soft skills” first
- Losing people in the funding pipeline process

- Difficulty recruiting folks for long-term training commitments

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

ABC Manufacturing

- Is there enough time for planning and implementation? Don't know, don't know where there is help to learn
- There are MANY resources available – How to employers know? Regional concierge/navigator – one-point contact
- There are lots of factors that go into decisions

Jane Doe

- Goals are long-term and in trying to meet them, funding for participants could be exhausted
- Compassion fatigue on the part of service providers
Regional Resource Guide would be hugely valuable, even better as an app that students/clients could then carry with them

Laborer

- Collaboration, communication, coordination essential
- Source of challenge was the pinch point (?)
- Conceptually it was easy – reality was much more complex
- Need to plan for both success and failure
- Approach is not client-centered, it is process driven on the part of the various providers – should have John in the middle.

Ex-Offender

- Additional information, such as exact charges, can have significant impact on approach and possible outcomes
- Opportunity for better outreach to employers about the services that are available
- Opportunity for better outreach between service agencies about services that are available
- Success requires a significant input of time and other investment on the part of employers
- Process is taking longer due to more complex barriers
- Lots of different points of contact for different services but does not necessarily mean easy to find access
- Lack of values and soft skills
- Benefits slope – replace services with income slowly

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 22, 2019:

1. Encourage and support local employers to spend more time in high school and colleges – discuss workplace, career opportunities, job shadowing, internships, workplace learning experiences; Work with students on life after graduation
2. Sliding scale of benefits offered through state to address benefits cliffs
3. Promote recovery/criminal record (second chance) friendly workplaces
4. Create Resource Coordinators, use Working Bridges, Association for training and development?
5. Childcare – reevaluate regulations to support shorter term, home based entities

RDC Executive Report:

At the Franklin County Workforce Summit we had approximately 75 people attend. We had an estimated 30 businesses represented and 40 partners attend. We thought we had a good diversity of business types i.e. services, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, convenience stores and banks. Probably the biggest disappointment was the absence of some of the larger employers, mainly in the manufacturing sector i.e. Mylan Technologies, Ben and Jerry's, Barry Callebaut, Peerless Clothing and Perrigo Nutritionals. In other cases, such as with the local hospital, we were not able to attract the decision makers/management teams. It is these companies whom you would think would be the most engaged as their need has proven to be that much greater. Organizers were unsure of how we could have got past the "just another summit" attitude. We did extensive outreach in an effort to recruit businesses and it seemed to have gone on deaf ears.

During the Summit conversation it appeared that there seemed to be certain populations, with the right support, that could add to the current workforce shortage. For example, there appears to be a large number of working individuals who would be impacted by the "benefits cliff" if their pay were to increase. This applies to those individuals who may be underemployed or remaining in a job refusing advancement and pay increases for fear of losing some State benefits. There were also some Summit attendees who believed the State has a number of individuals who are of able mind and body drawing down social services instead of working. The State makes it too easy not to work!!!

As strong as the local Tech Center relationship is to the business community, the traditional high school is just as weak in its career/job guidance for those individuals who choose not to pursue postsecondary education. State funding was cut for Next Generation Programs and Workforce Investment Boards. When active, both programs proved to be very successful in training individuals for a variety of jobs and educating students regarding the work/career opportunities within the region. To give an indication of the success, over a seven year period more than 500 students were placed in good jobs that provided good pay, skill improvement and potential for advancement. The jobs that students were placed in were more than retail and McDonald's. The need to have a career coach in every high school is huge to fill jobs as well as keeping students in state upon their high school graduation.

There are two major opportunities to grow the workforce in Franklin County and they include reaching out to a segment of the population which has taken college level courses but have never received any form of a degree. We believe if we can re-engage that segment of the population, we should create a more educated workforce with a higher skill set. The second opportunity is, we currently have 12,500 getting on the Interstate to head to points south to go to work and we have 6,500 commuting into Franklin County on a daily basis to come to work. That leaves our net out-migration at 6,000 individuals.

We fully understand that by keeping workers in the county, does nothing to solve the statewide problem; from a selfish perspective, it can help to keep business in the State by meeting their workforce needs here in Franklin County.

State policies play a big role in how we progress from here. As mentioned previously the excessive social services program, the reduction of workforce funding programs, lack of career focus in our schools and the need to remedy the benefits cliff should all be prioritized if the State is to move forward. It is great to have programs to do worker recruitment into Vermont from other parts of the country, but the policy changes listed above could have a larger immediate impact. It is understood that in many cases, the worker recruitment program may actually have a more professional target and the improvements to the in-state programs/policies may impact more of a manufacturing entry position/blue collar and the trades.

It was mentioned earlier about the lack of our larger manufacturers being present for this discussion and to be quite honest this comes as no surprise. Over the last ten years we have seen some changes regarding the local manufacturing sector; more consolidation which leads to less local control and less community interaction. What we see a lot of is the corporate office will assign a plant manager to a Franklin County facility and almost without fail that individual chooses to live in Chittenden County thereby having no community interaction. You don't run into them at the grocery store or the hockey rink or our schools. They come in, do their job and go home. Local community needs/programs currently are not aligned with corporate goals; thus those needs prove not to be a priority. During the summit there were a number of discussions re: the interaction between schools and businesses and building those relationships that ultimately could benefit both parties. What we are finding in Franklin County is it has become increasingly difficult to engage large manufacturers to have a presence in the schools or to allow tours. The strategy to connect schools and businesses will require much networking and relationship building with hopes that whoever you build partnering with does not get a transfer or retire.

As an RDC our fear is that if we (FCIDC, State of Vermont etc) cannot come up with a plan to fill jobs then companies will slowly start to pull production lines and relocate to other parts of the country or the world. The local region has worked hard to get where we are i.e. low employment, substantial capital investment, improved infrastructure etc. The workforce shortage should be all hands-on deck, but that type of urgency does not seem to be playing out in Montpelier and the Statehouse. The focus of the Legislature appears to be misguided as they focus on climate change and marijuana; lets focus on the health and well-being of our employees and companies first and foremost and that does not seem to be apparent.

We understand that transportation, housing, childcare are all issues that prevent individuals from working on a regular basis. Each individual topic is overwhelming within itself much less focusing on all three and they are all prevalent throughout the state. Franklin County is fortunate enough to have working groups meeting regularly throughout our region to create small remedies for the three areas. But, ultimately the three areas need big money and resources not available in our communities.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers "Big Question" – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

7. Having to consider more automation to offset inability to find labor
8. Entry level labor increasingly difficult to find

9. Employees do not stay
10. Lack of access to and affordability of childcare has impact on ability to hire
11. Have had to restructure HR department – hire more people, more focused on recruiting than anything else
12. Find that HR must be VERY responsive to potential candidates – if HR process takes too long, candidates get picked up elsewhere
13. A lot of wasted recruitment time when many candidates do not show up in the end
14. Overall decrease in reliability, skill-level coming in, work ethic
15. Forced to increase wages to remain competitive, not as a reflection of quality of candidates
16. Negative impact on morale and engagement of existing staff – higher workload, pushes OT which people like but only to a degree, higher entry-level wages creates inequalities, all of which impacts revenues
17. Have had to increase investments in retention
18. Need help with resource navigation – looking for support but confused about what, where, how

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
19. Population growth 20. Downtown revitalization 21. Strong community partnerships 22. Proximity to interstate/access to Chittenden county 23. Higher/advanced ed resources – NWTC, CHCC, CCV 24. Established resource offices – VDOL, Voc Rehab, RDC 25. Growing area but with rural feel sought by many 26. Diversity of employment options 27. Strong employer engagement 28. Recreational opportunities 29. Agricultural opportunities	30. Extend internships to high school students during entire school year 31. Establish internships in businesses for educators during summer (outreach/informational tools) 32. Develop position as competitive with Chittenden County – wage and benefit analysis 33. Capitalize on “flexibility” concepts
Weaknesses	Threats
34. Housing 35. Transportation 36. Lack of adequate/affordable childcare 37. Lack of soft skills/workplace readiness 38. Lack of technical savvy – young and older workers (Google Voice is a problem in terms of developing comprehension of other methods of delivery) 39. Connectivity (cell, internet) poor 40. “Everyone” has a phone but not necessarily the \$\$ to put minutes into it – ?poverty level?	41. Lack of adequate/affordable childcare 42. Benefits cliff/trap/box 43. Cultural shift in work ethic and value of soft skills 44. Overall inadequate labor supply beyond FC as well 45. Lack of loyalty to single employer, constant turn over 46. Cultural change in expectations of wages over time 47. Restrictions on immigration 48. Substance use disorders

	<p>49. Regulations regarding criminal records in some industries</p> <p>50. Pull factors of other regions of the country</p> <p>51. Student debt</p>
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3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>52. Limited HR capacity at small/medium companies – training and development as well as hiring process</p> <p>53. Lack of money</p> <p>54. Regulations</p> <p>55. Productivity improvement – time, resources, expertise</p> <p>56. No system for integration between employers and public-school system</p> <p>57. Lack of continuity in government programs/initiatives</p> <p>58. Demand for technical skills is diverse within FC</p> <p>59. Difficult to collaborate because of competitive manufacturing environment = more expensive</p> <p>60. Banking sector hiring strategy uses stepping-stone (hiring from within) approach but currently employees get experience and then leave, and it is more difficult to fill mid-level positions</p> <p>61. Middle management glut or constraint limits upward mobility</p> <p>62. \$ available for salaries is not high enough for the competitive environment which is driving wages up</p> <p>63. Increased PTO constrains productivity</p> <p>64. Increased benefits = increased costs = decreased margins</p> <p>65. Employee loyalty and expectation of multiple jobs</p> <p>66. At senior levels, PTO is not as much of a differentiator – they can get the same with other employers</p> <p>67. Decreased pay for increased time</p> <p>68. Pay equity</p> <p>69. Inadequate support within the companies for the changes needed</p>	<p>86. Encourage and support local employers to spend more time in high school and colleges – discuss workplace, career opportunities, job shadowing, internships, workplace learning experiences; Work with students on life after graduation <14G, 3Y, 1B></p> <p>87. Sliding scale of benefits offered through state <13G, 1B></p> <p>88. Promote recovery/criminal record (second chance) friendly workplaces <10G, 2B></p> <p>89. Create Resource Coordinators, use Working Bridges, Association for training and development? <8G, 4Y, 1B></p> <p>90. Childcare – reevaluate regulations to support shorter term, home based entities <8G, 2B></p> <p>91. Address transportation challenges – vans like GoVT, use of school buses, public transit route survey <8G, 1B></p> <p>92. Embed career counselor/navigator/integrator to link candidates and employers at regional level – VDOL? <6G></p> <p>93. Incentivize “fringe” population <6G></p> <p>94. Evaluate roles for remote work opportunities, develop policies to support them <5G, 1Y></p> <p>95. Develop formalized mentorship programs <4G></p> <p>96. Promote Rhino Foods model of Income Advance Loans for employees <3G, 2Y></p> <p>97. Small businesses combining efforts for HR and training/professional development <2G, 4Y, 1B></p> <p>98. Review wage scales to match \$ to meaningful measures – tech skills, time attendance, responsibilities <2G, 1Y, 2B></p> <p>99. Develop internal (to businesses) career ladders, pathways and career development objectives <2G></p> <p>100. Advocate for greater access to New Americans <2G></p>

<p>70. Too many communications channels available</p> <p>71. Lack of accessible skills training matching skills demand (nursing example)</p> <p>72. Not enough exposure to career opportunities and ladders</p> <p>73. Instant gratification mentality</p> <p>74. Lack/shortage of mental healthcare services</p> <p>75. Inadequate financial literacy</p> <p>76. Lack of training</p> <p>77. Public benefits do not have a long-term view – responsive</p> <p>78. Burdensome paperwork/time involved in accessing populations with barriers to entry</p> <p>79. Difficult to find potential employees with superstar skills/qualities or those that have the potential to be superstars</p> <p>80. Lack of capacity to provide formalized mentorship programs</p> <p>81. Lack of childcare</p> <p>82. Union regulations and other barriers</p> <p>83. Inadequate resources at the state level</p> <p>84. Complex, individualized database and accounting systems across state programs</p> <p>85. Perceived risk of flexible schedules</p>	<p>101. More pay levels/responsibilities w/in lower wage brackets – avoid Peter Principle <1G, 2Y, 1B></p> <p>102. Create/promote workplace readiness standards – 3As; Attitude – good enough, Accountable – show up on time etc., Ability to stay focused (no iphone, FB, etc) <1G, 1Y></p> <p>103. Internship design – spectrum approach, not just entry level <1G, 1B></p> <p>104. Create longevity and continuity for public/private partnerships – SWIB needs to have a structure that allows a presence in each community (WIB) that can sustain relationships and move strategic projects forward <1G></p> <p>105. State benefits tied to length of employment <1G></p> <p>106. Creative workplace benefits approach – increased PTO for lower wages? Loyalty goes two ways <3Y></p> <p>107. Develop financial literacy programs for middle and high school students <1Y></p> <p>108. Take a closer look at data/stats around population on benefits that is NOT working; Cost/Benefit Analysis on getting that population back into the workforce <1Y></p> <p>109. Common database for information sharing across program resources <1Y></p> <p>110. Exposure to career opportunities at younger ages</p> <p>111. Develop regional strategic compensation plans inclusive of more frequent reviews tied to increases in compensation</p> <p>112. Train HR professionals to support Canadian/NY applicants; Increase understanding of what types of training are available</p> <p>113. Grow VT New Worker initiative – increase \$\$\$\$</p>
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- Funding is stuck in silos – supporting disparate objectives rather than holistic solutions
- Funding is going to credential and certificate-bearing programs and not workplace readiness/soft skills programs
- Women have different challenges due to family obligations – how do we address these through flexibility in the workplace

- Funding methodology is a barrier to access for potential students – competitive between HS and CTE rather than collaborative
- Voc Rehab considers that the landscape is now more accessible for partnerships and placements
- FCRP (?) – Extending deadlines because they do not have enough staff
- Childcare landscape is confusing and wage scale is not adequate to support new entries into the field meeting the required regulatory hurdles and educational requirements
- People are not as eager to invest in the long-term gain of higher education

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Asylum Seeker²¹

114. There is a lot of upfront support available
115. A lot of agencies help with New Americans, but no one point person
116. There are many potential roadblocks along the way
117. Very complicated process
118. It takes a village – collaboration
119. Process of scenario mapping is not easy

Ex-Offender

- WF can take more referrals and process is inconsistent – depends entirely on the Probation/Parole Officer (PO)
- Objective of getting to stable employment may take plan with more than one job; stepping-stone or part-time roles
- Many agencies for referrals (support organizations) very confusing
- Getting to success is not a straight line
- Job/work Readiness Assessment should be done one on one, not in a group
- Most recovery support is time-limited; it should be ongoing

Jane Doe

- Knowledge and connections of case manager/resource navigator determine client’s path
- As people “move up” due to knowledge and wages, a benefits reassessment is needed in order to avoid loss
- Lack of long-term planning resources
- “When is my Reach Up case manager available?” Navigating support to accomplish goals and get through day to day is challenging, especially when service providers operate with limited hours, during traditional work week
- IT’S SO CONFUSING!!! So many resources, which is great, but lack of centralized information center
- All about the \$\$\$
- Life is stressful and work is not always #1 priority

ABC Manufacturing

- Could use more information and assistance around automation versus hiring decision
- Noted a lack of group understanding of resources available on the management side in terms of small companies looking to grow
- There are MANY support agencies – How to choose? How to streamline process? Both would be helpful to business.

²¹ The Asylum Seeker scenario was run from the more expansive New American perspective

- Lacked understanding about challenges new employees likely face, and therefore could not decide where to go for support in helping them to make a successful transition, which would influence cost side of hiring

7. Other Comments / Questions

Use of technology in hiring/HR processes (employer to employer discussion):

- Works for most candidates, get a few who ask for help and they walk them through the process
- Employers fine tune job description to include only actual needs, not “what they have always asked for” and use technology to filter applications per those actual needs
- Some businesses saw technology (multiple digital platforms, social media) as a means to increase the number of applications for all jobs – it is a tool to get more candidates into the system. They then use online testing/follow-up as a way of filtering by level of interest/commitment – if you are serious you will jump through those hoops.
- Others use technology as a means of expanding the geographical scope of their recruitment – can advertise more broadly for your \$\$ by using digital tools than by using traditional print media
- Some employers – mostly in construction today – use digital platforms for everything BUT entry-level and see the more personal touch as a means to test workplace readiness through how candidates handle hiring process.

Question to attending employers about how situation has specifically affected HR department:

- Seeing more challenges in how to connect with applicants with low level of tech skill – older population
- Losing as much as 20% of candidates that make it through initial screenings to inability to pass background check/drug screening
- Relying on referrals more for access to access immigrant/new American population
- Increased level of interest in Career Fairs to access college student’s pre-graduation
- Facing challenges in that career changers and many candidates want flexibility, but some employers are facing constraints from their national corporate offices that make flexibility in scheduling more difficult than in the past

Comments/discussion regarding labor participation rates:

- Many people on “benefits” not in the workforce or seeking employment – generosity of social benefits keeping people from seeking work
- Those in work are disincentivized to progress by “benefits cliff”
- Incentive to work is lacking
- Interest in program targeting those people and the “benefits cliff” to return them to productive work
- Example of new Americans hired as temp workers who get transportation as part of support package, but lose it if their employment is regularized, which means they can no longer work. Company has conspired with workers to keep them as temps so they will not lose their transport

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five²² strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 15, 2019:

1. Create a resource coordinator to serve employers and employees
2. Measuring standards for engaging educators and workforce (accountability)
3. Educate parents – “Value of Work” messaging – by developing a HS curriculum
4. Develop industry specific consortiums to pool funding for training programs
5. Communicate progress – by job opportunities, wages
6. Partnerships with high school and college placement offices – Vermont Employer’s Career Fair

RDC Executive Report:

Business Participation:

While we had a good cross-section of industries represented at the meeting, it was only a very small percentage of area employers, which significantly reduces our ability to recognize the outcomes as guiding measures for state policy direction. GBIC’s database of “key” employers is over 200. Fewer than 20 of these attended. Businesses are busy and frustrated with having attended workforce meetings in the past for multiple organizations/agencies and have seen little or no recognizable results or improvements in the workforce landscape they experience. While GBIC’s main focus is value-adding businesses that export goods and services (frequently larger employers), the employment needs of small businesses were not as clearly vocalized at the event and should be considered.

What we saw at the summit, and continue to see in these settings, is that there are a few regional employers who are highly keyed into the workforce challenge policy discussions. Broadly speaking, these employers are some of the larger businesses in the region.

The current workforce situation impact on business:

- Business operations are increasingly directly impacted by inability to fill needed workforce positions, overtime required from trusted employees, workers obtained have challenges (transportation, childcare, lack of basic work ethic, substance misuse.)
- Increased HR and management workload and cost to onboard and retain individuals who have higher barriers to entry

The current workforce situation impact on providers:

- Complex system that frequently relies on individual connections for “handoffs” to other complementary services (individual accessing a program is often, or should be, accessing other programs)
- CTE, VTC, CCV pushed to do more with inadequate funding formula

Employers SWOT:

Reflects what was heard at the summit, however, much of the input relates to low skill or entry level jobs. While these are a critical component of the labor force, our region’s workforce needs also include significant numbers of higher skilled labor, creative positions, management, and those with some sort of applicable degree or credential. Higher skill positions also tend to be more specific, and with a different

²² Items 5 and 6 were tied in voting

set of associated recruitment challenges (other opportunities in the area if position doesn't work, trailing spouse with high wage position, etc.)

Chittenden County benefits from having access to the airport, multiple institutions of higher education, access to services, more diverse workforce, and higher density of employment opportunities. Significant shortcomings reflect statewide challenges that are exacerbated by northwest Vermont's desirability: housing availability and affordability remain extremely challenged, often forcing transportation issues with employees having to live some distance away; childcare is both difficult to find and expensive (though it was noted that there is high quality child care in the region); and external competition is high for qualified candidates.

Employer Constraints and Strategies:

The constraints listed are accurate and the strategies represent a variety of excellent systematic approaches. In general, the challenges expressed by employers reflect our demographic and workforce challenges as a state: there are not enough qualified workers at every stage of need, which leads to increased costs (both real and in sunk time), higher turnover, and retention of employees who would otherwise be let go just to keep operations going.

While Chittenden County benefits from increased diversity relative to the rest of the state, the increased language and cultural challenges were apparent in certain work settings (ensuring safe operation of tools and machinery, best practices, etc).

There was additional conversation and concern over the perceived "opportunity chasm" where employers felt that young Vermonters were not as aware of regional opportunities, associated career ladders, and the education required to pursue those opportunities. That final point, particularly in relation to the trades and vocational industries not requiring higher education but requiring skill development, was seen as a reason that many employees or potential employees lacked work preparedness.

As an addendum to what was discussed in the meeting, it's clear that employers do not have a full understanding of the services and resources that are available from the service provider community. Particularly for smaller employers without HR departments, the ability to know what external resources are available to support their employees is an ad-hoc process.

Provider feedback:

In aggregate, it became apparent that the wide scope of needs and challenges faced by our workforce necessitated a broad and diverse range of support services and intervention strategies. It was noted multiple times that the barriers to work that clients faced were more significant than in years past. What was not apparent, however, was if a coordinated system existed to ensure that a client of the services would have the knowledge or wherewithal to navigate the different resources. Connections between resource centers/service providers often relied on personal relationships, rather than on structured connections for wraparound services.

There was significant discussion on the importance of CTE, career pathways, VTC, and CCV to the overall workforce system. It was also clear that although there was increased pressure for these services to align with employer needs, they were not being resourced to fulfill that role.

Top Strategies:

The clear high scoring strategies chosen by employers at the summit were to:

1. Create a resource coordinator to serve employers and employees; and,

2. Develop measurement standards for engaging educators and the workforce to help provide accountability.

Although not fully captured in (1), the discussions in the employer grouping often came back to services or resources provided by programs such as “Working Bridges” that has been supported and championed by the United Way. Expanding this service (or like services) for employers seemed to have broad support during discussions. Those employers who already took advantage of the program spoke highly of its ability to mitigate some of the challenges they experienced with their current workforce.

In regard to (2), this has been an area of interest for some time. Measuring educator and provider outcomes has faced significant pushback, however, and may be either challenging or counterproductive if it restricts or negatively impacts the resources provided for high at-risk populations.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

120. Basic workplace readiness becoming much more of an issue than ever before
121. How will we keep the operations going? Must fill entry level positions or operations are threatened
122. Involuntary turn-over rates increasing – must let people go because they lack work ethic
123. Increased use of social media on the job, impacting efficiency and effectiveness
124. Increased labor costs due to more overtime – fewer people doing the same or more work
125. Being forced to invest in automation
126. Recognize need for wrap-around services to help ensure that second-chance hires are successful
127. Hearing that the cost of daycare is cancelling out the incentive of increased wages
128. Hard to fill third shift due to transportation issues – public transport system stops running in timeframe that would support third shift
129. Unsuccessful in recruiting to increase diversity (more of a general workforce development challenge, but one that is increasingly difficult with increasingly tight labor market overall)

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
130. Burlington and its cultural activities and opportunities	144. FSA Employer Match for childcare
131. Large number and larger size of companies and organizations offer a variety of shift work options	145. STEM and K12 educational system
132. VT Brand central	146. Increased employer presence in middle schools
133. Public transportation	147. Partnering with higher ed institutions for continued educational opportunities to support upskilling/internal growth
134. Diversity	148. Relocation costs and/or loan reimbursement benefits to attract more candidates
135. Good access to general mental health and other support services	149. Employers re-thinking what really matters/attracts in terms of benefits
136. Higher wages (than other areas of VT)	
137. Airport	
138. Quality educational system, lots of higher ed options	

139. Migration portal (in/out of state)	
140. Working Bridges community	
141. Supportive employment access	
142. VT Refugee Resettlement offices	
143. Childcare	
Weaknesses	Threats
150. Housing is insufficient/unaffordable	159. High cost of living
151. Transportation	160. Lack of access to transportation
152. Lack of liveable wages across county	161. High cost and lack of adequate supply – housing and childcare
153. Job hopping/nomadic/revolving workforce	162. External competition (poaching)
154. People holding multiple PT jobs increases negative impact to each through lack of coordination	163. High turnover impacts ability to promote from within
155. Lack of adequate/affordable childcare	164. Disconnect between employers and providers – Lack of outreach (both ways), misaligned priorities
156. Not enough skilled workers	
157. High level of New American population increases language/cultural barriers and there is a lack of understanding of the basic skills training concepts	
158. Lack of soft skills	

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies*
165. Budget availability limits # of positions, wages, compensation package	193. Create a resource coordinator to serve employers and employees <8G>
166. Lack of outreach from providers/support services makes it harder to seek their services with limited resources	194. Measuring standards for engaging educators and workforce (accountability) <8G>
167. Cannot easily access information about resources (programs/support) available to businesses	195. Educate parents – “Value of Work” messaging – by developing a HS curriculum <4G>
168. Limited communication from educators	196. Develop industry specific consortiums to pool funding for training programs <4G>
169. High costs associated with work-based learning	197. Communicate progress – by job opportunities, wages <3G, 1Y>
170. Lack of internal resources for training staff	198. Partnerships with high school and college placement offices – Vermont Employers Career Fair <3G, 1Y>
171. Agility of educators to meet evolving employer needs – slow adaptation	199. Career educators available in public schools, engaging students AND parents (current Guidance Counselors are not perceived as informed or motivated in this regard) <3G>
172. Lack of \$, time, energy, focus, priority	
173. Benefits packages do not reflect target market considerations – student loan repayment, further ed/training (professional development, defined career path), relocation assistance, childcare,	

<p>transportation – and this impacts recruitment and retention</p> <p>174. Lack of HR expertise for small companies (<20 employees)</p> <p>175. Lack of awareness of career opportunities on the part of educators, parents, students – nursing, trades, what is needed? Both where there are opportunities, and what it takes to get there</p> <p>176. Chasm of productivity between programs</p> <p>177. Opportunity chasm – space between actual opportunities and the people that need to know about them (labor market)</p> <p>178. Soft skills/workplace readiness MISSING</p> <p>179. Not enough people – general demographic trends</p> <p>180. Immigration policies unfriendly to New Americans</p> <p>181. High cost of living</p> <p>182. Shortage of affordable housing</p> <p>183. Lack of overall leadership on the issue of workforce development</p> <p>184. Local competition</p> <p>185. Poor financial incentives – salary, benefits</p> <p>186. Shortage of specialized training</p> <p>187. Internship dead-end – no real job opportunities after internship, forces movement out of state for greater job/growth opportunities</p> <p>188. Expectations regarding the pace of advancement – young workforce expects things to happen faster than they do in reality, and VT is slower than most – “watch the obits not the job postings”</p> <p>189. Younger workforce <ED. I think they meant that due to the tight market, many of those coming into employment> lack work experience, work ethic, job skills. “Adult Enablers” (?)</p> <p>190. Lack of knowledge of and support for change management – general perception that flexibility isn’t feasible</p> <p>191. Employer fatigue</p> <p>192. Difficulty in implementing/scaling solutions that are working in some places</p>	<p>200. Student debt relief incentives <2G, 1Y, 1B></p> <p>201. PR redesign and campaign around Career Pathways and meeting employer needs <2G, 1B></p> <p>202. Publicizing and diversifying apprenticeship opportunities <2G></p> <p>203. Increase awareness of parents, educators, students, and employers – messaging “We are all responsible”; Incentives for participation in awareness process activities – attend session, get a “grant” etc. <2G></p> <p>204. Communications and outreach <2G></p> <p>205. High School – Exposure to career opportunities in the state. What is realistic? Use of predictive index? <1G, 2Y></p> <p>206. Increased accountability for workplace readiness skills in middle/HS through stronger employer/educator partnerships (data sharing between employers and educators) <1G, 1Y></p> <p>207. Employer incentives from state for internships <1G, 1Y></p> <p>208. Internal development and training for higher skill-level roles <1G></p> <p>209. Sharing seasonal workers (ED. To create FTE) <2Y, 1B></p> <p>210. Create visions of what these jobs look like – help all stakeholders understand the jobs themselves (not a lot of clarity now) <1Y></p> <p>211. Externships <1Y></p> <p>212. Returnships mentoring “apprentices” <1B></p> <p>213. Manufacturing Day – partnering with/participation by schools</p> <p>214. Internships</p> <p>215. Change mindset regarding flexibility/schedules</p> <p>216. Central headhunter to evaluate, coach and identify transferable skills</p> <p>217. Employee housing (VISA)– share/collaborate with other employers</p> <p>218. Providing transportation alternatives</p> <p>219. Uniting regional businesses by sector to promote careers to youth</p> <p>220. Optimizing online “one-stop/step” resources</p>
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	221. Inventory of available resources 222. Leverage existing distribution networks to share success stories
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* Ranking process not popular here; Fewer people participated than in previous events, even with reminders

4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- CTE centers are mandated to be workforce development hubs as well – more work than time/resources/training
 - Desire for more alignment with the work that AoE is doing with regard to Career Pathways (legislative response that there is a push in the legislature in this direction – partnership btw VTC and adult CTE on the Career Pathways design/model)
 - Hearing more of a push from employers around need for greater gender equity, and seeing more interest in this issue as well
 - Increasing focus on credentials/certificates is taking funding away from programs who don’t do credentialed/certificate work, but DO support workplace readiness/soft skills
223. More clients/applicants with higher barriers to entry than historical norm More employers approaching CCV to help with recruiting side of hosting training programs – shift of recruiting piece away from employers themselves to training institution
224. Funding model for CTEs does a disservice to the centers – disincentive for recruitment and increases competition between educators. CTEs increasingly feeling the effect and desire a comprehensive funding approach to education and more of an incorporation of flexible pathways – across the board.
225. Harder for clients to qualify for WIOA funding
226. Providers across the board seeing an increased focus on preparing ex-offenders for re-entry into the workforce
227. Spending more time trying to identify the good/best fit to strengthen job retention
- Seeing an increase in the number of people going to work before finishing school – without a degree/credential; Increased vulnerability to macro-economic changes

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Asylum Seeker

- No dedicated provider for asylum seekers (those still awaiting asylum status) with work permits
- General lack of knowledge about which entities serving New Americans provide what services, to which distinct communities within the broadly drawn immigrant community
- This is a really hard process for people who navigate their own provider processes every day ... imagine how hard it would be for someone without: language proficiency, transportation, housing, childcare, income
- A huge number of different agencies and programs doing job “placement” but without adequate communication between them and without knowledge of employer needs – places a big demand on employer time/resources

Ex-Offender

- It’s complicated?
- Need a reliable resource coordinator
- Need more/better training for existing Resource Coordinator roles
- There are not enough pre-release resources – only 1 Voc Rehab person for 4 correctional facilities

- VT Works for Women program “Realities of Re-entry” through their work with women’s correctional facility – may be a good model for something state-wide
- Lose a lot of access to potential support through process of having to opt-in – very complicated, time-consuming, resource dependent; Like the idea of creating it as an Opt-Out system where all ex-offenders are automatically enrolled in all available, relevant support programs upon release
- Employment is not always the first priority

Firm A

- Need for HR consultants to direct employers to services and providers
- Need for expanding services to include incentives for those that are “over-income” or otherwise ineligible for funding or support
- Interested to note that while there are a lot of programs and resources for those with any kind of barrier to entry, the bar for having “made it” is pretty low and there is a continued need for support and resources to help with professional development and upskilling

Laborer

- Need a go-to place for access to further support/training opportunities such as independent non-profits doing training, VDoL programs/resources, union training, apprenticeship information, educational options (VTC, CCV, etc)

Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 19, 2019:

1. Excluding kids' income from family total for benefit qualification
2. Creative ways to address paying down student debt as employment incentive
3. Policies and programs to work with kids and families to break out of poverty
4. Sustained exposure to workplace like GW Plastics
5. Breaking down silos

RDC Executive Report:

This is a summary of the GMEDC 2019 Regional Workforce Summit Meeting convened as a daylong session at the Langevin Conference Center on the VTC campus in Randolph Vermont on November 19, 2019.

This was a component of the statewide effort to both inform and seek input from important employers and service providers, in our case, from Orange and Windsor Counties. GMEDC marketed the day by explaining that all of the 12 Regional Development Corporations would be holding similar sessions to be led by Jeff Lewis who was principally involved in the Vermont Futures Project, and his business associate Erika Hoffman-Kiess, in collaboration with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Vermont Department of Labor. GMEDC staff and several board members assisted as break-out session leaders and note takers.

Our collective goal/hope was to have a large number of people assembled in separate sessions (morning for employers and afternoon for providers) with a group lunch with presentations for both groups, to wrestle with the factors effecting difficulties experienced by our workforce and recruiting efforts, share observations and suggestions for improvements. 26 people registered for the morning session but unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate, and a snowstorm resulted in numerous cancellations; only 15 participants were able to attend. Similarly, the afternoon session had 34 registered but only 22 participated. None the less, the assembled groups were motivated and comfortable discussing sensitive topics throughout the day. This led to numerous introductions and new contacts as well as a general feeling the event was valuable and worthwhile.

We were hoping to have better attendance from the Bradford / Newbury area but again the weather conspired against us. We would also like to have seen more folks from the healthcare sector, specifically our two hospitals (Gifford and the Veterans' Center). Two legislators joined us, namely Senator Clarkson from Woodstock and Representative Maslin from Thetford, who is also a GMEDC Board Member. Both of them are deeply involved in these issues and added to the discussions.

An important accomplishment from our perspective was sharing knowledge about the actual state of the job market and high number of excellent jobs available with strong salaries and benefits particularly in advanced manufacturing, healthcare and construction.

There was great interest in expanding educational opportunities for high school students and adults who are hoping to change careers. For example, the highest-ranking suggestion from the participants was the need to strengthen the curriculum at our regional high schools and tech centers where career and

technical education takes place. Strong consensus supported discussion of career opportunities at an earlier age (begin in elementary school) and more active support from high school career and guidance counselors, some of whom prefer to focus on college track students. There is growing awareness that a college degree is not necessarily the only formula for success.

It was agreed that a better understanding and awareness by the general public should be stimulated by the school educators and business leaders with respect to the numerous successful partnerships that have been developed between employers and students including opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships. The desire to create better and easier to access apprenticeships and skills training programs in more locations was universally supported.

In addition to the lack of affordable housing for all income levels, the second most important need expressed was for childcare and early education programs, especially for low- and moderate-income families. In both cases it was agreed that more partnerships are needed between employers and developers or operators of multifamily housing projects and healthcare establishments to stimulate their evolution and success.

Virtually every conversation and breakout discussion emphasized the group's frustration with the chronic shortage of skilled and even low-skilled workers in all businesses and organizations. This is compounded by a static population, a declining birth rate, and a rapidly aging workforce. All of these are enormously difficult factors to overcome. Recruitment of large numbers of employees from elsewhere seemed unlikely rather than focusing on our young folks (elementary and HS students). Success in retaining them in-state as well as convincing non-resident college students to remain in Vermont once they graduate seemed more logical and easily done to most of the attendees.

Another group consensus opinion was this is likely to get worse over time, as a high percentage of the population retires. First this creates openings, but also experience gaps in knowledge and proficiency. Moreover, the discussions also focused on the fact that a smaller number of working people will be needed to support the state treasury (taxes will increase). The realization that 50% of the population would soon (2025) be supporting the other, non-working 50% was deeply disturbing.

The overall conclusion was that employers, legislators, workers and taxpayers should stay connected, continue to exchange ideas and observations and advocate for the items suggested above, more vocally and more often. Letters to the Editor and position pieces as well as continued contact with local and state representatives were highly encouraged. Finally, a follow-up event(s) including members of the press should be planned to happen in 6-9 months to reflect on changes to the current status (improvements or worsening) as well as effective tools and strategies that are discovered, as an excellent use of time, effort, and money. That is exactly the position held by GMEDC's board and staff, except they feel it more emphatically perhaps.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers "Big Question" – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- H2B visas are too burdensome for small companies
- Use requires additional inputs like transportation and housing

- Benefits cliff is playing a role when family income is too high
- HS pool is shrinking
- Higher Ed profile of internship or other activity is better \$ wise and competitive admission wise than work
- See a lot of challenges from the parental role
- Looking at ancillary services need to get the job done using remote workers like connectivity.
- More opportunities for populations with barriers to work getting jobs (Recovery Friendly workplaces in NH)
- Increased struggle for those using seasonal help
- Turning away work (75% of bookings)
- Increased use of equipment to offset lack of bodies
- Maxed out J1 program but still have to balance out schedules with visa period
- Increased creativity with businesses as they access talent
- Remote work
- Generational messaging
- Building new 'muscles' getting more competitive in talent acquisition
- Finding good models in tech and health care
- Involve existing employees, asking them about the thoughts and needs, referrals
- Increased focus on pipeline programs like internship
- Market purpose like B-Corp Decreased productivity impacts sales
- Doing same work with fewer people
- Decreased work/life balance for leadership team (leaders also doing production)
- Increased OT, burn out
- Changing the HR role to include a more external perspective
- Challenge regulatory and policy barriers
- Invest in partnership for advocacy—larger numbers mean more impact
- Unfilled positions mean unable to meet needs of community

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
228. Adult classes at CTE's - Program needs a director - RTCC has no adult classes 229. quality of life 230. Outdoor recreation 231. No billboards! No traffic! 232. Vermont work ethic 233. Safer than other places 234. Relationships (community network)	235. Individualized learning plans, getting kinds engaged in CTEs 236. Apprenticeships—many in region 237. Career fairs etc 238. Transportation free to users in some parts of region 239. Next Generation Funds grant opportunities - K-12 stand to lose access to funds 240. Build out adult CTE to full time 241. More professional association develop apprenticeships 242. Homeshare to address housing crisis 243. At 'college night' at HS present other opportunities 244. Addressing Student Debt

	- Gradify company does this as an incentive product
Weaknesses	Threats
245. Bradford area geography isolation—challenges to CTE 246. Cultural barriers to engagement in CTE programs 247. Transportation—geography and timing 248. Lower wages and higher cost of living, impact on student debt 249. Geography for commuting 250. Lack of transportation 251. Connectivity 252. Affordable housing 253. Affordable day care 254. Lack of advancement/promotion opportunities for higher level people/positions	255. Decreasing workforce 256. Lack of work ethic 257. Generational differences 258. Cost of living 259. Urban migration 260. Cost of health care

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
261. Lack of housing - Mass housing - High density housing - Lack of affordability 262. Generational poverty ‘stigmatized’ 263. # of people of working age 264. Cost of education, including UVM 265. Knowledge of opportunities and work being done 266. Daycare and eldercare - Salary does not match value - Required education 267. Climate change and effect on industries 268. Limited locations for adult CTE 269. Grant requirements from DoL can unintentionally restrict non-profit access, plus the administrative burden 270. Income tax competition with NH, much easier to fill a branch position in NH	271. Excluding kids’ income from family total for benefit qualification (9) 272. Creative ways to address paying down student debt as employment incentive (6) 273. Policies and programs to work with kids and families to break out of poverty (4) 274. Sustained exposure to workplace like GW Plastics (4) 275. Breaking down silos (3) 276. Getting every profession on board with offering apprenticeships ((3) 277. Invite people in even before they think of applying—assist HR (3) 278. Workplace learning (3) 279. Marketing VT building awareness of opportunities (the careers we do have) (2) 280. More opportunities like this workshop for all stakeholders (2) 281. More remote workers especially for state employees (1) - Consider how to structure and post jobs - Collaborate between companies and state - Cultural shift, campaign on the benefits

	<p>282. Tap into resources, leveraging strengths, social media (1)</p> <p>283. Employability skills (1)</p> <p>284. Improve marketing of ‘careers’ (1)</p> <p>285. Social capital</p> <p>286. Addressing taxes—competition for customers with NH companies</p>
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 287. Opportunity to break down ‘BA’ degree into manageable chunks of ed to make attainment possible
- 288. Stale, pale and male
- 289. Teacher training includes career development/exploration in coursework, curriculum and training
 - Has not yet affected teacher training
- 290. Challenge finding opportunities for job shadowing in healthcare because they can’t afford time away from service provision.
- 291. Noticing more negative messages in presenting SF situation instead of vocalizing ‘opportunity’ students hear ‘get out’
- 292. A lot of parental influence tending toward negative impression
- 293. Still facing challenges in communicating full scope of possibilities, rigidity of thinking
- 294. Preparedness of students coming out of HS is decreasing
- 295. Lack of commonality across educational districts makes it harder to integrate students in higher ed
- 296. Have to learn more about short timer training opportunities
 - Need portal of who is doing what
- 297. HS students see themselves as a commodity with lots of options
- 298. Increase students in CTE from more schools
- 299. Accessing employees is easier for people working with populations with barriers to entry
 - Making fundamental relationships with employers now
- 300. Employers becoming more flexible and inventive in how they access and upskill employees
- 301. More interest in employer partnerships with education
- 302. Employers willing to take in employees with lower skills and training in house
- 303. Demand for non-traditional working adults increases

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Community Hospital

- 304. We need better employee data
 - What incentives matter
 - Why do they stay or leave
- 305. Long term employment outlook
 - Immediate need or permanent condition
- 306. Need for community development to be part of workforce development
 - Housing, childcare, transportation, culture, belonging
- 307. What bi-state challenges are there?

Single Mother (Jane Doe)

- If she didn't have a car it would drastically change the process
- Entry points:
 - VT211, CAP agency, local former school
- Referrals
 - Voc Rehab, VABIR, VDoL, Reach UP
 - DA/SSA case manager/coach
- Then
 - VAL, employment (with childcare?) w/education benefit for PNA, LPN
- Progress
 - GED, Continued training (VSAC non degree)
- A lot of unknown resources/programs

Training for Growth (Laborer)

- Is this an individual solution or is it significant enough for a systemic approach?
- Who can lead him through the process?
- Lots of resources, not a lot of clarity/understanding of who all is doing what

Lamoille Economic Development Corporation:
2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five²³ strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 14, 2019:

1. Forgiveness of higher ed loans in exchange for a commitment to work
2. Lower taxes (income, property)
3. Simplify/streamline taxes/fees/government regulatory burden (daycare, skills licenses)
4. Better marketing to students and parents of career opportunities to be found locally
5. Brand Lamoille County as a lifestyle destination (Live, Work, Play) with a spotlight on the opportunity side
6. Create network between employers and educational institutions
7. Off-hour school bus usage

RDC Executive Report:

Our Summit was held on November 14th at Green Mountain Technology and Career Center in Hyde Park. Attendance was strong with 32 representatives from Employers in attendance and 25 Service Providers.

I believe that all discussions at both the morning session for employers and the afternoon portion for providers could be described as robust and productive. From a logistical point of view, I think the only part of the day that could have possibly been done differently in order to allow for more networking between both group was the lunch period which was the only time when both groups were there together.

In going over the raw data that came out of the event, I doubt that there was anything that was substantially different from what came out of the other summits. It is clear that the State has a Workforce problem, much of it to do with demographics and, outside of Chittenden County, a lack of jobs that pay well and are with employers with clearly defined career paths. What I am saying, is there is no doubt that Lamoille County like the rest of the state is crying for qualified tradesmen in all areas, medical professionals, food service and hospitality professionals, middle and senior managers, and entry level factory workers and assemblers, the real opportunities, especially in the tech area, lie in Chittenden County. In fact, WalletHub just selected South Burlington as the second-best city in the U.S. to find a job.

So, just where do things stand in Lamoille? According to the U.S. Census, Lamoille is one of only two counties in the state that has gained population since the last census. Most of this gain is due to people taking advantage of lower housing costs compared to Chittenden and Washington Counties which has made Lamoille something of a bedroom community.

Looking at the Top Five Strategies that came out of the Summit, 3 of the 5 in some way were tied to economic issues. A) student loan forgiveness B) Lower taxes C) Simplify/streamline taxes/fees/government regulatory burden. This would seem to indicate that the Summit attendees believe that the underlying issues that negatively affect the workforce in Lamoille are most financially based. I would agree and would only add that I believe this is true of the whole state as well as for the Northeast in general.

For a very long time, Vermont employers have been able to get away with paying lower wages and salaries by saying that people would accept lower compensation in exchange for being able to live somewhere with the lifestyle we enjoy in Vermont. While I am not sure this was ever really the case, it is a mantra I have heard from Vermont employers with which I have worked for the last 20 years. Looking at recent statistics

²³ Items 5, 6 and 7 were tied in voting

(<https://www.areavibes.com/cost-of-living-calculator/>) you will see that the cost of living in Boston is now only 25% higher than Burlington and is actually 7% LESS in Atlanta, GA, just to state a couple of examples. It is interesting to note that the cost of living in Morrisville vs. Burlington is only 11% less and in Stowe is actually almost 14% MORE than Burlington.

Looking at this further reveals that the four biggest underlying issues that must be solved in order to make headway in both regional and statewide workforce development issues are 1) affordable housing 2) affordable transportation 3) affordable, high quality child care 4) workforce skills development at all levels. All of this is wrapped up in effecting higher wages and salaries at all levels as well.

As was determined by the Vermont Future's Project, the state needs to figure out a way to bring in 8,000 new workers every year just to stay even with our current workforce needs. We are not currently doing that and are a long way away from figuring out innovative and even radical ways to make that happen.

In reading through the data that came out of the afternoon Service Provider section, the one statement in the Big Question section that really jumped out at me was "Feeling lack of leadership at state level regarding workforce development – too many programs and not enough actual leadership." I have been saying very much the same thing for years. The time for talk, studies, surveys, and other information gathering efforts is over. It is time to get real and change the status quo of hand wringing to one of positive, dynamic action.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers "Big Question" – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

308. Consolidating duties of multiple jobs within a single role (employee burnout, OT costs)
309. Impacts ability to provide services
310. Increased labor costs – use of travelling and temp staff, OT, benefits to be competitive, increased training/time due to workforce quality decline
311. Missing order deadlines
312. Turning down business due to lack of staff
313. Increased competition to retain staff
314. Unable to pay competitive wage rate
315. Low staff levels lead to high turnover rate
316. Thinking more about alternatives to promote available work/life balance and draw people in from out of state
317. Not able to function at 100% capacity
318. Changes in operations – early closing hours, fewer days
319. Increased safety concerns due to burnout, lower skill-level of staff they are able to find, deadline pressure
320. Unable to fill supervisory/middle management roles so move up from line staff – not prepared, unwilling, increases pressure on management; bodies filling roes but not actually performing duties
321. Unable to undertake succession planning due to inability to determine future to an adequate degree – volatile
322. Increased demand for flexibility, a particular challenge for operations that have less capacity to BE flexible
323. Ghosting existing employees due to burnout and housing challenges

- 324. Increasing housing costs and decreasing available housing stock make it harder and harder to recruit
- 325. Bleeding \$\$ on lots of issues so hard to spend on existing employees; increased operational costs causing wage compression
- 326. Resentment - If everyone is moving out (demographics) then why is housing and land so expensive and unavailable?
- 327. Seasonal employee demand extra hard to fill in current labor market and Lamoille has a high demand for seasonal labor so increased interest in accessing international labor pools
- 328. Unreliable/inconsistent younger workers; lacking soft skills such as communications and interpersonal relations; sense of entitlement
- 329. Increased competition among all groups seeking workers (including State)
- 330. Hard to professionalize and pull resources away from operations
- 331. Spending more time and effort looking at "alternative" populations – older, otherwise abled, ex-offenders, those in recovery
- 332. Limited interest in any roles requiring customer service / interaction (possible impact of technology?)

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
333. Workshops/skills training from LEDC 334. Rural lifestyle, work/life balance, good quality of life 335. Cross-pollination of employees due to small population 336. Tech center is great – good at promoting career paths 337. Other higher ed options locally 338. Resorts – outdoor recreation economy 339. ReSource (?) 340. Vail footprint 341. Second home economy supports small service businesses	342. Better Vermont state branding – good outside of the state, but not within state – so people want to stay/come back 343. Student loan forgiveness to relocate 344. Ski resorts offer platform for partnerships with complimentary companies for FTE w/ seasonal roles 345. Development of transportation system 346. Active Chamber of Commerce could do promotions 347. Deeper dive into cost-of-living/productivity question 348. Develop more internal training programs 349. Better marketing of local employers to local population – what do they do?
Weaknesses	Threats
350. Limited availability of services (hospital, stores, etc) 351. No connectivity – high speed internet, cellular 352. School curriculum does not reflect skills needed in local economy 353. Don't market career paths to potential new hires 354. No national profile of VT situation / needs / opportunities 355. Lack of public transit	360. State regulations – specifically childcare 361. Housing market 362. Cost of living and low productivity 363. Lack of local medical residencies 364. Rising healthcare costs 365. Onerous occupational licensing requirements drive new talent to other states 366. Mental health community lacking resources/services 367. Transportation service available is regionally restrictive

356. Second home economy does not support community investments	
357. Rural area	
358. No industrial clusters	
359. Bedroom community	

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
368. State regulations and policy (Act 250, taxes)	381. Forgiveness of higher ed loans in exchange for a commitment to work <20>
369. Transportation	382. Lower taxes (income, property) <16>
370. Increasing student debt burden impacts hiring	383. Simplify/streamline taxes/fees/government regulatory burden (daycare, skills licenses) <12>
371. Lack of communication channels between employers and educators	384. Better marketing to students and parents of career opportunities to be found locally <10>
372. Inadequate lifestyle (life and work) branding at state and regional levels	385. Brand Lamoille County as a lifestyle destination (Live, Work, Play) with a spotlight on the opportunity side <9>
373. Inadequate school guidance offices/officers	386. Create network between employers and educational institutions <9>
374. Not enough potential workers	387. Off-hour school bus usage <9>
375. Inadequate support for training of existing employees	388. More effective marketing of existing government resources such as Workforce Experience Program, apprenticeships <7>
376. Cost of, and access to, employment benefits	389. Partner with Chamber of Commerce to create effective workgroups to address specific concerns and act as an employment advertising/information sharing resource <7>
377. Limited loyalty of existing employees – “Won’t fire me because you can’t replace me!”	390. Study cost of living/productivity issues in VT – understand and address this before relying on wage increases to solve problem of affordability <6>
378. Vermont government program and regulatory opacity and useless when you talk to a lot of them – good ones not properly acknowledged	391. Support programs to build affordable housing <6>
379. Inadequate mental health services and increasing demand for mental health care	392. Educate community about what you do, who you are, where you are located, not just about product <5>
380. Ability for local action to have impact on broader obstacles is limited	393. Look outside of VT for models in other states <5>
	394. Employment Promotion Board structured like the tourism board <5>
	395. Foster more feeder programs to increase numbers in potential workforce <4>

	<p>396. Create network between employers, Chamber of Commerce and providers at a regional level <4></p> <p>397. Incentivize current employees to provide referrals <3></p> <p>398. Regional “Hospitality Showcases” (not job fairs) <3></p> <p>399. Legislators go and do other people’s jobs for a while <2></p> <p>400. Restructure/upskill high school guidance staff and process to raise awareness of non-traditional college track opportunities <2></p> <p>401. Job-sharing programs to meet seasonal needs and FTE <2></p> <p>402. Reconsider hiring process – advertise that you train people who “sort of” fit, gather general resumes to create a resume bank for future hires, craft job postings so you attract competent people that may not appear to be a perfect match <2></p> <p>403. Host a “Best Place to Work” contest – increases awareness and provides good data <1></p> <p>404. Sell the future that existing employees have with you – career paths transparent and accessible <1></p> <p>405. Develop community identity and use that as part of branding/marketing to stop brain drain and decrease degeneracy <1></p> <p>406. Evening job fairs to draw working professionals <1></p> <p>407. Increase medical residencies and include covenants to improve access to healthcare (Teach for America model)</p> <p>408. “Uber” for business, van pool, ride/car-share</p>
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 409. More opportunities to collaborate across boundaries (agency, program, etc)
- 410. People they work with now are the hardest cases – if you are unemployed in current environment you have complex needs
- 411. Working with fewer people, but working with them longer and to overcome more complex challenges
- 412. Current environment is great for those working with students because there are lots of opportunities BUT matching students to opportunities is still too confusing

413. For educators, students are pursuing educational goals at a slower pace, taking longer and increasing vulnerability to challenges
414. For those working with businesses there is no succession planning at a point when transitions are happening (aging out of workforce) and ...
415. ... in many cases (agricultural, manufacturing) the infrastructure is being lost when businesses fold and expense of retooling/restoring farm implements, etc is prohibitive.
416. Feeling lack of leadership at senior levels in the education sector ... the time has come to change the approach to education, and no one is stepping up.
417. Feeling lack of leadership at state level regarding workforce development – too many programs and not enough actual leadership.
418. Appreciating more that housing plays a huge role in the workforce dilemma
419. Employers working through service providers to access candidates have much better luck with those candidates showing up for interviews, as opposed to when they are trying to get people to show up for interviews without working through service providers
420. Worried about the impact of proficiency-based grading on the graduation rate – impact of new approach has been uneven across regions
421. Policy implementation has been rough and that is at least partially due to unmet workforce needs at the state agency level
422. Seeing more employers showing up at the CTE – students have their pick!

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Firm A

423. Resources available are very industry specific
424. Large employers have more access to information and resources
425. VERY time consuming and complex for the employer
426. Single point of contact for up-skilling would be helpful
427. Capacity and accessibility are an issue for both the employer and the service providers
428. How can employers possibly know all of the resources and know how best to meet their needs?
429. Services offered need to be general but customizable
How do new employers get “in the know”? Access in Lamoille county is heavily based on relationships

Jane Doe

- Informal networks can support Jane but there is a need for a formal network for someone of her age, to help facilitate a new career
- Outcome is a crapshoot
- Lack of knowledge about all the resources available and requirements to secure support – found it VERY complicated even for people who do this all day.
- Cultural impact – breaking cultural norms
- Timeline is highly variable

Ex-Offender

430. Not everyone knows what to do with an Ex-Offender
431. Learned about new programs (Creative Workforce Solutions)
432. Low awareness of employers who are hiring ex-Offenders
433. Lack of connection btw resources serving client – systemic problem that does align with desired outcomes

- 434. Local clinics – Good because they provide social connection with other ex-Offenders, Bad because of negative pressure
- 435. No “system” in place, client has to figure it out and create their own system; employ personal network which can be negative thing – job in exchange for “favors”
- 436. Lack of success (due to more, and more complex, cases with fewer dedicated resources) results in lower budgets
- 437. Support would be best provided before client left jail
- 438. Medical treatment requirements very difficult in rural areas – look for creative solutions? In-house?
- 439. No one stop shop for whatever issue client faces at given point
- 440. When resources constrict, DoC takes on a larger public safety role
- 441. VERY FRUSTRATING

Northeast Vermont Development Association - Lyndonville:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 18, 2019:

1. Better communication around job opportunities for ‘feeder’ organizations
2. Advocate for childcare
3. Share training resources
4. Network of employers, training providers, service providers
5. Intentional Communication for training clearing house (ETPC)

RDC Executive Report:

Big Questions:

Important issues raised by **employers** at the Lyndon event seemed to follow a couple of themes – employee costs, awareness of employees, and barriers to employment: 1) employee costs are increasing – overtime, pay increases, benefits, workplace improvements (including technology), plus more training for lower skilled applicants; 2) awareness of employees – upper level (or those with local ties) employees may be less likely to move, salary is not the sole motivator, there are multi-generational issues between employees, and employees can be part of a recruitment strategy - especially with families; and, 3) barriers to employment – lack of transportation, lack of child care, flexible schedules, special needs, and skills gaps with older & younger employees.

SWOT:

As seen by employers from the Lyndon event, **strengths** of the area (although not discussed in detail but comments noted) – the proximity to outdoor lifestyle & recreation; Quebec & interstate transportation; and educational institutions & regional technical centers. Identified **weaknesses** of the area included inability to offer flexible schedules; generational differences - including where time has a greater value than money; competitiveness in a small employee pool; and, employee pay and work expectations.

Opportunities identified by employers included 2nd & 3rd shift childcare; apprenticeships; making recreation & social connections; employer open houses; and, increased use of existing workforce training programs like VTP. **Threats** that were identified by employers included: external competition where competitors may have less fixed costs; perceptions of rural, lack of cultural opportunities, northern climate, and the lack of racial/cultural diversity.

Constraints:

The majority of workforce constraints listed by employers included a small pool of applicants; rural environment and lack of modern infrastructure (cellular/broadband); lack of affordable childcare, housing & transportation; lack of time & ability to connect with available education and training resources due to small/absent HR staff; and, inability to keep up with the pace of technology for small businesses.

Strategies:

The top strategies that were identified included: improving communications around job opportunities for ‘feeder’ organizations; making childcare options more affordable and available; improve the sharing of training opportunities; building a network of employers, training and service providers; and, creating a clearinghouse for training opportunities.

Scenario Learnings:

Similar to the earlier workforce event in Newport, the most striking finding from the scenarios presented during the service provider session was that no matter the scenario, there can be an incredible number of providers and programs ‘touching’ the individual seeking employment. It was also very evident that there are multiple entry points for an individual entering the workforce. Because of the number of entry points and service providers and programs greater coordination is needed (employers are overwhelmed by # of service providers), although there appeared to be a high level of coordination between some providers. Additionally, it was noted in Lyndon that external funding should not be relied upon to address workforce needs; partnerships are important when possible; employers work in the moment & at least cost; employers are overwhelmed by # of providers, acronyms and would like a list of training resources.

Key employers and service providers:

At the October 18th event in Lyndon there was a good representation of larger employers and business sectors from the southern part of the region. Although the number of employers attending (10) wasn’t a large group, the manufacturing, construction, childcare, education, small business, and public institution sectors were all represented. Service providers (20) were well represented in the event’s afternoon session, and included state agencies and institutions, educational institutions, business service providers, and non-profit agencies. Although employer attendance was less than anticipated, many sectors were represented. Service providers were well represented.

Regional conditions:

Regional conditions that may have affected the perceptions and comments for attendees at both sessions would be that the Northeast Kingdom is geographically isolated from larger urban centers; sparsely populated and has longstanding economic challenges (lower incomes and higher poverty rates).

RDC perspectives:

For **employers**, NVDA sees that labor shortages in the region are critical. The lack of an available workforce limits the ability of businesses to grow and be more productive. This will worsen as the existing workforce ages out if there are no new workers coming in. Efforts to attract new residents & workers to the region is something that should be attempted, but this will take time. Connecting graduating high school, technical center, and college students to employment opportunities in the region is a solution that could be implemented sooner with a more significant impact. Similarly, working with businesses to consider hiring non-traditional workers (seniors, disabled, etc.) is another opportunity to improve the situation. We believe that there much work to do to better connect employers and these potential employees – by employers, educational institutions, and service providers.

It was surprising to see the large number of **service providers** in the region but reassuring to see there is some level of coordination of services when aiding individuals. There is probably an opportunity for even greater coordination and streamlining of services as there appeared to be some overlap in the services and programs offered. This is important in an environment where there is competition for funding.

Based on the strategies identified, efforts already underway could be assessed as follows:

- Increasing the awareness of employment opportunities in the region to educational institutions and service providers has been attempted, but not to a significant degree. Three years ago, NVDA and VDOL organized visits to manufacturers in the northern and southern parts of the region. Invited to attend these visits were guidance counselors, career center staff, and math and science teachers

with goal of demonstrating what manufacturing looks like today and learn what employers were looking for in their employees. Since then, this has been done to a lesser extent through promoting Manufacturing Day/month events. There has also been more success in connecting employers with local Career Fairs at the high schools and colleges in the area.

- Connecting employers in the construction, advanced manufacturing, and health care sectors with the VTPM (VT Talent Pipeline Management) initiative has led to assessments of workforce needs by industry sector; development of industry career ladders, and discussions of employer-driven solutions to meet employer needs. VTPM is now connecting with educational institutions to share their employer findings and information.
- Connecting employers with VDOL and the Think VT job posting sites is ongoing.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- 442. Delays Growth
- 443. Higher level employees won’t/don’t want to risk moving
- 444. Money is not the only currency—other values
- 445. Multigenerational issues
 - Learning to work with Millennials
 - Internal culture clashes
- 446. Need to invest in technology
 - Different investment strategy
 - Need capital
- 447. Had to learn to match people better to jobs
- 448. Support employees to interact with each other
- 449. Costs a lot of money
 - Overtime
 - Pay increases
 - Cost to improve workplace
 - Benefits
- 450. Lower skill applicants
 - More training
 - Higher risks
 - Lost productivity
- 451. Employees cycle among companies for a small raise
- 452. Industry opportunity known to parents and families
- 453. Have to involve families in recruiting younger workers

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
	454. 2 nd and 3 rd shift childcare
	455. Affordable childcare
	456. Use apprenticeships more broadly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for change in insurance and workers' comp policy to allow students in workplace <p>457. Recreation and social connections</p> <p>458. Change the information sharing platforms—envision virtual tours of workplaces and area</p> <p>459. Expanded use of Open houses</p> <p>460. HS guidance language on work—early exposure to trades</p> <p>461. HS alumni database for tracking and recruiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catch college dropouts - Increase use of VTP and VEGI because of rising wages
Weaknesses	Threats
<p>462. Flexibility not always an option</p> <p>463. Generational differences over values (time over money)</p> <p>464. Higher pay expectations</p> <p>465. Potential workforce with 'history'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incarceration, loss of license, etc <p>466. Active military (guard) deployment</p> <p>467. Fishing in the same pool of candidates</p> <p>468. Recruiting from other systems—different policies and behavior</p> <p>469. Hours so extensive partner has to be at home (no second job)</p> <p>470. Abuse in environment (corrections)</p>	<p>471. External competition (fixed costs for local companies)</p> <p>472. External perception (rural, limited culture, drug problem)</p> <p>473. Xenophobia</p> <p>474. Lack of public transportation</p> <p>475. Climate can be isolating</p> <p>476. High risk to relocate out of region</p> <p>477. Union issues (Corrections)</p>

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>478. Very small pool of applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Corrections-compete with courts, sheriff, police and local businesses <p>479. Environment—NEK, remote and rural</p> <p>480. Image issue for Corrections</p> <p>481. Stress</p> <p>482. Inability of recruiters and applicants to see entire system</p> <p>483. Competing family concerns—much OT and risk</p> <p>484. Attendance policy—mandatory OT</p> <p>485. Flex Schedules don't work in every industry or with short staffing</p>	<p>497. Advocate for childcare (7B)</p> <p>498. Advocate for college tuition benefit</p> <p>499. Get a comprehensive view of the system (where are the \$ going or 'bleeding out' that could be used differently—overtime, childcare, sign-on bonus, recruitment) (1B)</p> <p>500. Cross business cooperation—housing (3B1Y)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think of yourself as a business related to other business with similar challenges <p>501. Better communication around job opportunities for 'feeder' organizations (9B)</p> <p>502. Create recruiters for the region (3B)</p>

486. Employer/candidate/school relationship is hard to build and implement—who steps up	503. Advocate for housing (1B)
487. Public transportation	504. Educate communities on what constitutes ‘workforce housing’ as opposed to ‘affordable housing’
488. Stigma, judgment and bias against some jobs and people in housing	- End stigma
489. Insurance expense	505. Adjust housing options to meet workforce wants
490. Affordable housing for employee	- Efficiency, 6-month lease, coupons
491. Cost of creating a childcare facility in a workplace	506. Educate tenants on housing rules and expectations
492. Cost of childcare as a benefit	507. Broadband (1B)
493. Lack of off shift childcare (2 nd and 3 rd shift)	508. More co-working spaces (1B)
494. Older workforce—aging out	509. Network of employers, training providers, service providers (5B)
495. Pace of technology change	510. Match making—visual, online—up to date! ((3B)
496. HR Process challenge for small businesses	511. Ticket payoff to overcome loss of license—better marketing/communication of success stories
	512. Better Marketing for existing transportation options (1B)
	513. Community visit like VCRD for employers (4B)
	514. Provide childcare subsidy (2B1Y)
	515. Establish a BIG vision (like JFK moon shot) (4B)
	516. Make Vermont the #1 place to be educated from secondary to higher ed (2B)
	517. Public/private partnerships (2B1Y)
	518. Share training resources (4B2Y)
	519. Accountability for outcomes (1B)
	520. Create Navigators/facilitators (3B)
	521. Intentional Communication for training clearing house (ETPC) (5B)

4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 522. Tight labor market affects recruitment (now recognized at the state level)
- 523. Difficult recruiting—55+, special skills and technology
- 524. Many barriers in the unemployed
 - Transportation
 - Training
 - Underemployment
 - Need for flexibility—employers provide tools/hours
- 525. Stigma around mental health issues
- 526. Conversations with employers to adapt/change structures
- 527. Increase wages

- 528. Lower expectations—consider people would not have hired in previous years
- 529. Current low unemployment rate
- 530. Skills gaps
- 531. State doesn't properly fund state college system
- 532. Student grants can go to out of state students
- 533. Have to do a better job of graduating students from HS and preparing them for college/work
- 534. Need more intensive work/support for job seekers
- 535. Introduce manufacturing courses in HS and college
- 536. Respond to employers needs
- 537. Address retention issues for businesses and employees
- 538. Seeing job seekers with more barriers
 - Incarceration background, substance abuse/recovery
- 539. Identify skills and strengths
- 540. Available jobs don't match the workforce

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Community Hospital

- 541. To find a solution it's going to take time
- 542. Multi-pronged approach
- 543. Study internal/external input
- 544. Can't rely on external funding (need to invest in the solution)
- 545. Solution must be both short and long term
- 546. After finding satisfactory plan
 - Take future action
 - Need to highlight medical careers
 - Establish wellness programs
 - Plan ahead for changes in funding or reimbursements
- 547. Facility upgrades

Single Mother (Jane Doe)

- Teaming is crucial
- Networking identifies resources
- Good communication about resource limitations is important
- Knowledge of regulations and eligibility is required
- Consider what options best fit the individual's unique needs
- Success is creating self-sufficiency and building confidence and resiliency

Training for Growth (Laborer)

- Businesses harvest their peers and counterparts first
- Diverse team working on a solution
- Acronyms/options are very confusing and overlap
- HR people need to be trained in Available options and resources
- Is there a director/list of all training providers/funding options?
- Not all employers have documentation and evaluation process to know what skills their employees need
- Employers think differently than Providers
- Employers overwhelmed by all the providers

- Employers work in the current moment and at least cost

Post incarceration (Ex-Offender)

- 548. A **LOT** of resources and time for 1 person before they get out
- 549. Uncertain outcome of success despite costs and resources
- 550. Overlap of resources
- 551. Need for communication
- 552. Require ongoing encouragement and support
- 553. What are the costs—how do we evaluate the cost/benefit?

Northeast Vermont Development Association - Newport:

2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on October 7, 2019:

1. Increase age of acceptance in Career Center programs to 21
2. Better educate guidance counselors and actively connect them to employers
3. Increase involvement of parents in the discussion of alternative career/work opportunities
4. Start considering career/work opportunities at a younger age – junior high
5. Create a “navigator” position as hub of knowledge about employers and providers programs

RDC Executive Report:

Big Questions:

Important issues raised by **employers** at the Newport event were: 1) labor costs have increased due to rising overtime costs; hiring temporary employees; and subcontracting work, and 2) lack of staffing has created a need to merge positions and/or cross-train employees and this has affected accountability and the quality of outputs. Important considerations raised by **service providers** were: 1) entry level workers have increasingly significant barriers to be successful (health, transportation, etc.) and require higher levels of support than in the past, and 2) employers are needing to make changes to attract and retain workers.

SWOT:

As seen by employers from the Newport event, a **strength** of the area is its location – the proximity to both outdoor lifestyle choices and Quebec. Another identified strength were the regional technical centers for the variety of programs they offer and their ability to provide customized training. An identified **weakness** of the area included infrastructure – lack of housing, public transportation, and cellular & internet service. Another weakness was the perception of the area lacking opportunities compared to elsewhere, which contributes to youth flight. **Opportunities** identified by employers to address workforce challenges included: improving internal flexibility that could allow cross-training, flexible scheduling, and updated policies & procedures; becoming more creative with benefits; and, improving marketing to promote the area’s low housing costs and lifestyle and recreational opportunities. **Threats** that were identified by employers included: a competitive job market where employees are often looking for better pay and benefits; barriers to employment – lack of transportation, child care, skills, and substance abuse; and, the continued aging of the existing workforce in an area with low labor force participation.

Constraints:

The majority of workforce constraints listed by employers seemed to be focused on the available workforce and a lack of awareness of the available employment opportunities in the area. Employers noted the small number of potential workers available and that many employers are already operating with lean staffs which makes cross-training and flexible schedules difficult. There is also a hesitancy by employers to hire non-traditional workers. And, of people available for hire, many are lacking basic employment skills and others who cannot pass background or drug screening tests. Importantly, and something that could readily be addressed, is that many employers felt that there is a general lack of awareness about employment opportunities in the area. There remains too much emphasis on moving secondary students into college and not enough discussion on opportunities in the skilled trades and manufacturing sectors. There is a lack of communication between employers and students, including at the secondary and college levels.

Strategies:

The top strategies that were identified to improve the workforce system revolved around improved education and making better connections between institutions and employers. Educating guidance counselors, students, and even parents on career and work opportunities was important. This includes exposing younger students to opportunities and allowing more people into Career Center programs. To make better connections, creating a 'navigator' position that would serve as a knowledge hub about employers and the programs of service providers. Also, improved marketing by the employers of their work opportunities was suggested, including marketing efforts that are more 'outside the box'.

Scenario Learnings:

The most striking finding from the scenarios presented during the service provider session was that no matter the scenario, there can be an incredible number of providers and programs 'touching' the individual seeking employment. It was also very evident that there are multiple entry points for an individual entering the workforce. Because of the number of entry points and service providers and programs greater coordination is needed, although there appeared to be a high level of coordination between some providers.

Key employers and service providers:

At the October 7th event in Newport there was a good representation of larger employers and business sectors from the northern part of the region. Although the number of employers attending (10) wasn't a large group, the manufacturing, health care, construction, finance, and public institution sectors were all represented. Service providers (14) were well represented in the event's afternoon session, and included state agencies and institutions, educational institutions, business service providers, and non-profit agencies. The small business sector wasn't represented in the employer session, but there were business service providers in attendance who did add perspective to the session. There were no notable absences in the service provider session.

Regional conditions:

Regional conditions that may have affected the perceptions and comments for attendees at both sessions would be that the Northeast Kingdom is geographically isolated from larger urban centers; sparsely populated and has longstanding economic challenges (lower incomes and higher poverty rates).

RDC perspectives:

For **employers**, NVDA sees that labor shortages in the region are critical. The lack of an available workforce limits the ability of businesses to grow and be more productive. This will worsen as the existing workforce ages out if there are no new workers coming in. Efforts to attract new residents & workers to the region is something that should be attempted, but this will take time. Connecting graduating high school, technical center, and college students to employment opportunities in the region is a solution that could be implemented sooner with a more significant impact. Similarly, working with businesses to consider hiring non-traditional workers (seniors, disabled, etc.) is another opportunity to improve the situation. We believe that there much work to do to better connect employers and these potential employees – by employers, educational institutions, and service providers.

It was surprising to see the large number of **service providers** in the region but reassuring to see there is some level of coordination of services when aiding individuals. There is probably an opportunity for even greater coordination and streamlining of services as there appeared to be some overlap in the

services and programs offered. This is important in an environment where there is competition for funding.

Based on the strategies identified, efforts already underway could be assessed as follows:

- Increasing the awareness of employment opportunities in the region to educational institutions and service providers has been attempted, but not to a significant degree. Three years ago, NVDA and VDOL organized visits to manufacturers in the northern and southern parts of the region. Invited to attend these visits were guidance counselors, career center staff, and math and science teachers with goal of demonstrating what manufacturing looks like today and learn what employers were looking for in their employees. Since then, this has been done to a lesser extent through promoting Manufacturing Day/month events. There has also been more success in connecting employers with local Career Fairs at the high schools and colleges in the area.
- Connecting employers in the construction, advanced manufacturing, and health care sectors with the VTTPM (VT Talent Pipeline Management) initiative has led to assessments of workforce needs by industry sector; development of industry career ladders, and discussions of employer-driven solutions to meet employer needs. VTTPM is now connecting with educational institutions to share their employer findings and information.
- Connecting employers with VDOL and the Think VT job posting sites is ongoing.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- 554. Labor costs up due to temporary hires
- 555. Lack of staff forcing merging of positions, impacting checks/balances, accountability
- 556. Rising overtime costs
- 557. Increased subbing out—but they are WF limited
- 558. Quality of outputs is down as a result of lower skill levels of new hires
- 559. Transportation challenges leads to a lack of reliability
- 560. Geographical remoteness becoming more of a hiring challenge as labor market tightens

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
561. Location – Proximity to outdoor lifestyle choices (ski, hike, bike, etc.)	566. Increase internal flexibility (cross-training, flex hours, policies and procedures, ditching how-we-always-do-it attitude) 567. Understanding workforce (generational) expectations 568. Creativity with benefits – speaks to above about understanding expectations ... time is more highly valued than money 569. Leadership development 570. Lifestyle and recreational opportunities 571. Low housing costs
562. Career Center – customized training program capacity	
563. Technical Education programs available at Lyndon Institute and St. Johnsbury	
564. Diversity of opportunities	
565. Proximity to Canada is good for customers	

Weaknesses	Threats
573. Housing is insufficient 574. Transportation 575. Proximity to Canada (some markets closed to US-side businesses, difficult to make international border crossing for employment work in reality) 576. Poor infrastructure – cable, cell service, internet 577. Youth flight 578. Perception of area as insufficient in comparison to elsewhere – poor/ineffective promotion	572. Improved marketing of opportunities in new and unusual markets 579. Other employer’s offerings (benefits versus pay) 580. Market 581. Multiple barriers – transportation, childcare, prison time 582. Older/aging workforce/retirees 583. Low labor force participation rates 584. “grass is greener” job hopping 585. Low computer literacy and barriers to internet access 586. High rates of active/new substance recovery clients 587. Lack of clusters of similar businesses

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
588. Small number of potential workers 589. Culture of poverty – less likely to seek out and/or take advantage of available opportunities 590. High level of people that will not pass background checks and/or drug screening 591. Job postings are too technical – do not reflect actual requirements of available positions 592. Current staffing rates are too lean to allow for cross-training and/or flexible schedules 593. Lack of aspiration/drive in potential workforce population 594. Opportunities are not available for younger kids 595. Corporate headquarters located elsewhere – out of touch with situation on the ground here 596. Poor cell service 597. No Young Professionals network 598. Lack of awareness of available opportunities at high school level 599. Structure of Career Center funding – if they get students, takes funding away from school 600. Availability/affordability of childcare	617. Increase age of acceptance in Career Center programs to 21 <10G, 1Y> 618. Better educate guidance counselors and actively connect them to employers <9G, 1B> 619. Increase involvement of parents in the discussion of alternative career/work opportunities <2G, 6Y, 1B> 620. Start considering career/work opportunities at a younger age – junior high <2G, 3Y, 2B> 621. Create a “navigator” position as hub of knowledge about employers and providers programs <4G, 1Y, 1B> 622. Tech/Career Center event(s) for employers – Open House <5G> 623. Engage NEKTV in the promotion of opportunities, increase employer involvement in the promotions process, and make information local – highlight local success stories <5G> 624. Consider non-traditional recruitment efforts – military, mountain biking magazines <3G, 1B> 625. Increase work-based training opportunities for students through employer advisors <2G, 3Y>

<p>601. Poor transportation options</p> <p>602. State-run health insurance</p> <p>603. Work opportunity tax credits</p> <p>604. Increased number of news/information outlets makes it hard to reach large numbers, easily</p> <p>605. Marketing challenges (lifestyle, number of opportunities, etc) too big for any one employer to tackle</p> <p>606. Communication barriers between trainers and employers</p> <p>607. Too much emphasis on college degree, not enough on trades and work opportunities</p> <p>608. Harsh physical environment – cold, snowy, remote</p> <p>609. Hesitancy on part of employers to hire non-traditional employees or those with barriers to entry</p> <p>610. Some of the big employers are restricted in who they can hire</p> <p>611. Lack of general awareness as to available opportunities of all kinds</p> <p>612. Lack of time to explore opportunities</p> <p>613. Lack of staff to explore opportunities</p> <p>614. Flexibility, which is attractive to younger workers, is difficult in some industries</p> <p>615. Monetary constraints – limited budgets</p> <p>616. Poor employer reputations and inherently cyclical employment cycles in some industries</p>	<p>626. Look at structure of school year <2G, 1Y, 1B></p> <p>627. Catalog for employers of service providers, their programs, and their representatives <2G, 1Y></p> <p>628. Create workforce strategy guide for employers <2G></p> <p>629. Basic business/budget/financial literacy classes or content integrated into curriculum <1G, 4Y></p> <p>630. Encourage employers to take a deep internal look at their own policies, processes and procedures to identify barriers to success that are within their own control to influence (scheduling, skills requirements, screenings) <1G, 2Y, 2B></p> <p>631. Increase opportunities for adult skills training <1G, 2Y, 1B></p> <p>632. Combine various employer positions to create FTE <1G, 2Y></p> <p>633. Explore data and promising practices – Labor Market Information, other statistics, experiential learning from other parts of the state <1G, 2Y></p> <p>634. Reconsider structure and content of benefits programs – fiscal cliff <1G, 1Y, 2B></p> <p>635. 10-week curriculum focused on businesses introducing opportunities to students <1G, 1Y, 1B></p> <p>636. Separate health care from employment <1G, 1Y, 2R></p> <p>637. Increase general employer involvement in all student events – games, performances, etc. – to normalize relationships <1G, 2B></p> <p>638. Create an employer “collaborative” as tool for cooperation and information sharing <1G></p> <p>639. Make Career/Tech Center electives mandatory across entire student body (address stigma) <1G></p> <p>640. Better utilize existing programs such as Downtown Program. Think VT, Chamber, and Front Porch Forum to create an inclusive promotions process <5Y></p> <p>641. Review child labor laws to identify opportunities to involve younger children in experiential learning <3Y, 4B></p>
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	<p>642. Create paid internship opportunities <2Y, 2B></p> <p>643. Identify networks/opportunities where employers and Providers cross paths <1Y></p> <p>644. Simplify job postings to capture actual requirements of the positions <1Y></p> <p>645. Encourage remote workers <2B></p> <p>646. Re-evaluate model – look at proficiencies <1B></p>
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 647. Entry level workers have increasingly significant barriers to success (mental health, transportation, hygiene)
- 648. Job seekers need a higher level of support than in the past
- 649. Workload has increased
- 650. People require intensive support even for basic life activities
- 651. More difficult to move from entry level, up
- 652. Employers are more open to making changes to retain and/or attract workers
- 653. Poverty is more difficult – used to be able to afford a car and upkeep even if you were under poverty threshold, no longer possible
- 654. Providers forced to change service delivery models
- 655. Overall case numbers dropping but remaining cases are more entrenched and time consuming so taking more of a time commitment in the end
- 656. Providers seeking out service consumers – doing more outreach to encourage accessing support
- 657. Increasing need for services in more and more outlying areas

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Jane Doe

- 658. Teamwork + caseworkers = collaboration required for ongoing support
- 659. Individual needs to be at the center of the process, not the process itself
- 660. Process is not linear so flexibility is required in programs to allow for process to meet needs where they are
- 661. Need for a common data base/ dashboard accessible for all providers on case, as is possible recognizing regulatory hurdles around information access

Post-incarceration (Ex-Offender)

- 662. Have empathy but don’t feel sorry
- 663. Soooo much needs to be done before you can even think about looking for work
- 664. There are lots of existing resources already
Self-motivation of the client is essential

ABC Manufacturing

- When considering solutions, it is normal and should be expected that resources internal to the program at the point of entry will be used first prior to considering other, external resources
- RAB meetings need to be strengthened

- There are multiple entry points to every scenario

Rutland Economic Development Corporation:
2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 21, 2019:

1. Incentivize development of existing housing stock to meet today's needs – old hotels, old factories, large houses
2. Better development with zoning – reduce development restrictions
3. Systematize HR association: Increased hiring options for trailing spouses; create talent network to expand access to greater number of opportunities across multiple participating employers; could create cross-business career pathways and leadership trades; could work to keep people in VT
4. Diversify meaning of “quality of life” to go beyond employee attraction – schools, neighboring cities
5. Create coalition of employers to discuss opportunities with developers; specifically, mall-type housing properties (village-center style)

RDC Executive Report:

General Comments & Review

With a declining population and changes to the culture of our younger generations, our employers and providers are facing the challenges and negative effects being had on their businesses and organizations.

Looking specifically at *employers*, there is a pressure of increased costs to recruit and retain employees without any visible returns on investments. Employers are having to turn away work because they are unable to provide the necessary services given their shortage of employees. Despite some of these challenges, the Rutland Region has seen great success in partnerships with area providers such as Community College of Vermont and Castleton University to provide training opportunities and direct pipelines to our employers. However, the closure of two area higher education institutions has resulted in its own increased new challenges around this approach. Not only is our declining population having a negative effect on our workforce, but there are also other unique challenges that are primary reasons for individuals to be unable to enter the workforce in Vermont. Some of these challenges include lack of transportation, quality and affordable childcare, and affordable housing. These various challenges result in loss of revenue for our local businesses, fewer investments going back into our local economy, lack of developmental skills in youth who will later be entering our workforce, and the rising costs of these services to our residents due to the high demand.

After reviewing the SWOT Analysis as well as the Constraints and Strategies, it appears that the commonality is our younger generations - the future of our workforce. Almost all employers agreed that additional programming and work with students from kindergarten and up needs to be increased through in-school programming, additional outside training, work with parents, pipelines, etc.

In reviewing the topics of conversations with *providers*, the need for increased work with students continued. Some areas of focus consisted of lack of funding in higher educational institutions, the need to increase workforce reading programming/training, the need to expand partnerships among organizations, and the incredible number of available resources to individuals but not a clear direction of where these individuals would benefit the most.

There are several available resources and opportunities for our students in our region. However, if students can't find these programs, they aren't achieving the highest positive impact. This creates

confusion for users and potentially even duplicate funding for similar programs due to the lack of clarity and direction on what is already available.

Attendance

Each breakout session of employers and providers presented a wide variety to represent the various sectors within our region. Six of our 11 major employers attended our Summit including Rutland Regional Medical Center, GE Aviation, Killington/Pico Ski Resort, Community Care Network, Hubbardton Forge, and Omya. In addition to our larger employers, other employers of various industries included Rob Stubbins Electric, Isovolta, At Home Senior Care, Heritage Family Credit Union, Casella Construction, as well as others. Area providers in attendance included Vermont Adult Learning, Castleton University, Community College of Vermont, Department of Corrections, Real Careers @ Rutland County, principals of various high schools, as well as others. Given this representation, we believe that sufficient key employers and providers were present for our Regional Workforce Summit.

Substantial Regional Conditions

The Rutland Region faced two higher educational institutions closing this past year - highly impacting our workforce, area partnerships, and the overall economy. Given these closures, many attendees experienced higher impacts as a result. For example, Community Care Network had a strong pipeline with College St. Joseph which resulted in a substantial decline of applicants in the area. However, it should be noted that with the desire for increased partnerships from Community College of Vermont and Castleton University, other opportunities may be available to develop new pipelines.

RDC Perspectives

We believe that the conversations conducted with our Rutland Region employers and providers are primarily the same conversations we have been having on our own level. We are aware of the need to increase our work with the student populations and that many programming/training opportunities exist, but the lack of clarity/alignment/direction is a huge barrier for many individuals. The negative effects of the workforce situation for both employers and providers were increasingly more eye-opening and impactful for all attendees, including staff.

Top Five Strategies Assessment

Despite the commonality in the conversations around work with students, the most popular strategies were not as strong of a focus in this area as we would have expected. Some of these developed strategies currently have high-quality work being done and are outlined below:

1. Incentivize development of existing housing stock to meet today's needs - old hotels, old factories, large houses
 - a. The Rutland Region has experienced two college closures in 2019 and the reimagining of each of these campuses has been a strong topic of conversation for community members, leaders, and state organizations. College St. Joseph is working to develop the "CSJ Center for Excellence & Innovation" for co-working and co-living. Meanwhile, Green Mountain College (and those affiliated) continue to brainstorm opportunities for the campus. Recently, the Town of Poultney worked with the Vermont Council on Rural Development and developed the "Poultney Comes Together" task forces to determine the next steps for the town as a whole and attracting businesses/organizations to the town and the campus.
 - b. Two years ago, Green Mountain Power (GMP) purchased and renovated a home within the City of Rutland that needed substantial updates to provide updated housing within the city and help

- redevelop the area in which the house was located. GMP opened an application process for any individuals to apply to receive the home for free.
2. Better development with zoning - reduce development restrictions
 - a. The Policy and Real Estate Committee within REDC bring together community leaders around Rutland County to address relating issues, specifically, the 3-acre rule regulations, opportunity zones, and Act 250. Working with these committees along with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission for collaborative discussions and development of better zoning/development restrictions to bring forward to our local municipalities and regional delegation.
 3. Systematize HR associations: increased hiring options for trailing spouses; create talent network to expand access to a greater number of opportunities across multiple participating employers; could create cross-business career pathways and leadership trades; could work to keep people in VT
 - a. An increased number of employers are using regional programs such as the *Rutland Red Carpet* and *Let's Dish (a program under the Rutland Young Professionals)* to allow prospective employees (and interested potential residents) and their families the opportunity to hear from current residents on life in the area and increase their network before they make the move to our region.
 - b. There have also been instances with some of our larger employers in our area who have offered positions to their prospective employee's spouse to provide an easier transition to our region.
 4. Diversity meaning of "quality of life" to go beyond employee attraction - schools, neighboring cities
 - a. Over the last few years, the *Regional Marketing Campaign* has been working to market the region to individuals and families across the country and encourage them to move to our region. These efforts have been targeting young professionals, job seekers, and individuals looking for a change of life. This is developing a pool of potential residents that are attracted to the area before finding employment - highlighting the "quality of life" outside the employee realm.
 5. Create a coalition of employers to discuss opportunities with developers; specifically, mall-type housing properties (village-center style)
 - a. Specific REDC committee's and surrounding groups/organizations continue to work together and brainstorm avenues to redevelop properties in our region. In partnership with developers, municipalities, and the State of Vermont, efforts to promote activity within Opportunity Zones in our area are underway. Most recently, College St. Joseph (located within an Opportunity Zone) has been working to reimagine their campus as the "CSJ Center for Excellence & Innovation" as well as allowing other organizations to utilize their space such as the Rutland Recreation Department. In addition, the Downtown Rutland Partnership and the Rutland Redevelopment Authority continue to address local housing studies and downtown assessments on a broader level.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers "Big Question" – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- Increased job shopping
- Increased number of people going out on their own after being trained up by an employer
- Lack of loyalty – no "long haul" perspective, despite employers giving employees a lot of slack. Seen as a cultural change
- Lots of turn-over due to lack of workplace readiness/ life skills – did not mention earlier because everyone considered it SO obvious; a "new" baseline for business
- Feel like they are "held hostage to employee demands" – can't fire me ...

- Spending more of everything – time, money, social capital – on hiring, with little or no return; there is no ROI on recruitment efforts
- Drug policy – finding a lack of understanding on the part of potential employees of what constitutes a “drug” and increasing pressure to do away with drug testing
- Turning down business
- Expanding, but in other areas of the state
- Different values – traditional benefits and higher pay is not what motivates them. Generational change? How can I work with them?
- Seeing more employees paying out covenants; “This is what I owe you – I am out of here.”
- More people leaving – for relationships, perceived opportunity, “setting out”
- Having to consider the curtailment of selected services
- Increased admin costs – HR, OT, wages, healthcare
- Increased/improved/expanded partnerships
- Operational management more complex as more and more time and effort is spent on “negotiating” with employees, not primary business objectives
- Demanding ever increasing flexibility
- Challenges to employee accountability; increasing burden on existing employees and resentment of new hires
- Higher levels of burnout for existing employees; increased spending of resources to improve health of all kinds, but labor crunch in healthcare is keeping people out of work longer, until they can get the help needed
- Exploring more creative recruitment methods but up against their own learning curves
- Feeling the \$\$ crunch required to entice new employees – increased competition and wage inflation even while facing more complex barriers with newer hires
- Bidding short – not incorporating full costs of HR
- Increasing mental health first aid skills for staff, to try and catch problems before they grow into a crisis
- Greater reliance on international work visas (J1 and H1b)

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>665. Resources to access training/skills: CCV, Castleton, Stafford Tech, VTC, VT Adult Learning</p> <p>666. Good quality of life: access to outdoor recreation (ski areas, mountain biking); access to the arts/culture (Paramount Theater); Small town atmosphere with lots of connections – “localism” ex. farmers market</p> <p>667. “Heft” – Able to support and sustain a good quality of life (as above), transportation services and hubs</p>	<p>671. Possibility for shift rotation and work hours</p> <p>672. Pulling talent from other states, through partner plants</p> <p>673. Build on existing virtual job fair platform</p> <p>674. Mentorship program</p> <p>675. Personal development</p> <p>676. “Stay” interviews to connect with people around why they stay, to better understand how to encourage more of it</p>

<p>668. Housing available as compared to neighboring communities (Addison County)</p> <p>669. Support of big business (GE, Cassella's, Killington, RRMC)</p> <p>670. Castleton U. working on addressing childcare</p>	
Weaknesses	Threats
<p>677. High expectations but low work ethic, and sense of responsibility – teach?</p> <p>678. Lacking skills – industry specific technical, life, and workplace readiness skills</p> <p>679. Resource rich for programs but lacking coordination</p> <p>680. Focus on short term outcomes versus sustainability</p> <p>681. Changing work-life priorities create pressure – grandparents becoming caregivers</p> <p>682. Cultural shift where people are losing the connection with what they are doing in the moment – constant distraction of increased information flow</p>	<p>683. Lack of skilled labor at all levels – entry through leadership</p> <p>684. Population demographics</p> <p>685. Empty storefronts – changing retail environment</p> <p>686. Living wage in VT – hard to keep up with cost of living</p> <p>687. Lack of transportation options in rural state</p> <p>688. Lack of affordable housing stock – available but unaffordable to live and/or own</p> <p>689. Lack of time to source/understand state help available</p> <p>690. Absence of affordable childcare options takes people out of workforce</p> <p>691. Instability of personal finances/work-life demands makes succession planning in business impossible</p> <p>692. Ghosting practice</p>

3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints	Strategies
<p>693. Wide variety of skilled training needs locally</p> <p>694. Economic limitations</p> <p>695. Lack of diversity/unwelcoming to diversity</p> <p>696. Overly generous government assistance programs</p> <p>697. Poor connectivity</p> <p>698. Zoning</p> <p>699. Lack of housing (for young professionals)</p> <p>700. Ineffective relationships with labor-supplying neighboring states</p> <p>701. Perception of limited career pathways within state – “get out to move up”</p>	<p>723. Incentivize development of existing housing stock to meet today's needs – old hotels, old factories, large houses <12></p> <p>724. Better development with zoning – reduce development restrictions <10></p> <p>725. Systematize HR association: Increased hiring options for trailing spouses; create talent network to expand access to greater number of opportunities across multiple participating employers; could create cross-business career pathways and leadership trades; could work to keep people in VT <8></p>

<p>702. ROI on recruiting efforts</p> <p>703. Training costs and limited retention post-training</p> <p>704. Technology in hiring</p> <p>705. Difficult to access/entice teachers to work with employers</p> <p>706. Education sector: Perception in secondary Ed that college is next step, not work; Lack of school-to-work offices; insufficient funding for career offices; not just kids that have struggles – parents, too</p> <p>707. Lack of high-trust relationships like mentoring – only support if you are going to college, not work</p> <p>708. Design of K-12 Guidance Office mechanism</p> <p>709. Too much responsibility on schools</p> <p>710. Cultural constraints</p> <p>711. Need skilled workforce before interns/apprentices</p> <p>712. No more resources - \$\$\$ or time</p> <p>713. Limited transportation options – routing, timing</p> <p>714. Aging population retiring out of workforce, limited access to younger population</p> <p>715. Lack of entertainment options in state</p> <p>716. Competing with out-of-state wages</p> <p>717. Motivating people to actually work a FT job</p> <p>718. Drug problem and negative national reputation of Rutland</p> <p>719. Failure of immigration relocation program</p> <p>720. Access to childcare, quality of existing childcare options and no night childcare</p> <p>721. Lack of “3rd place”, such as church – work, home, ?</p> <p>722. Benefits cliff</p>	<p>726. Diversify meaning of “quality of life” to go beyond employee attraction – schools, neighboring cities <7></p> <p>727. Create coalition of employers to discuss opportunities with developers; specifically, mall-type housing properties (village-center style) <6></p> <p>728. Increased labor market education with teachers <5></p> <p>729. Market toward HS and college grads that have moved out of state and might want to move back <5></p> <p>730. Small business network linked to larger business to access state programs <5></p> <p>731. Identify and develop transportation options beyond The Bus (mass transit) <4></p> <p>732. Expand career education to more grade levels <4></p> <p>733. Capitalize on outdoor activities to appeal to youth market <3></p> <p>734. State programs – provide a bonus for staying in job <3></p> <p>735. Daycare hubs of multiple home daycare providers (lower cost and training barriers to certification) <3></p> <p>736. Improve relationships with border states <2></p> <p>737. Mentors at work <2></p> <p>738. Increase opportunities for indoor activities to expand “3rd place” options <2></p> <p>739. Technology – get creative with ways to focus on personality and fit as opposed to “screening out”; remove barriers to application process; engage wider scope of applicants – they are all going to need training so accept a broader selection <1></p> <p>740. State programs focused on providing resources to small business: health benefits, HR support and hiring incentives, tuition reimbursement, unemployment</p> <p>741. Newer technology <1></p> <p>742. Tap into international employment programs to bring in more immigrants for job openings <1></p> <p>743. Use more “employee share” approaches to create FTE out of multiple seasonal options <1></p>
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	<p>744. Drop “minimum” requirements to meet actual needs</p> <p>745. Develop robust internal promotion capacity to maximize return on training costs and improve retention rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer ambassadors
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4. Providers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

746. Higher barriers to entry and employers with jobs that they would have gone to previously are gone
747. More “taboo” effect around hiring from certain groups
748. Local employers that deal with a remote corporate entity are having a difficult time responding locally
749. One-off interest in creative solutions on the part of employers but no long-term commitment
750. More challenging dealing with potential employers than in the past
751. Burdensome application process with more importance placed on references
752. Higher wages required to get new employees
753. New hires are first to lose jobs in economic downturn – bumps up training needs to decrease vulnerability to job loss
754. Mission creep into more HR type support as opposed to placement along strictly programmatic lines
755. More opportunities for students than ever before
756. Demand and support for all trades training has gone up
757. Would like to see the successful Stafford CTE model replicated elsewhere
758. Need more collaboration
759. Schools having difficulty hiring everyone and they have the positions to fill
760. Transportation is increasingly a make or break part of the equation, while costs of owning and running a vehicle continue to rise; public transportation available but extremely limited as to frequency and routing
761. Functionality of institutions of higher ed. in VT threatened for a number of reasons including funding levels and difficulty attracting students and new hires
762. VT has high HS grad rate, but low higher ed. participation rate. It also has a shrinking population of traditional college-age students.
763. VT is among lowest in nation for state investment in higher Ed and the percentage of the VSCS budget covered by State appropriation has declined dramatically over the past decade.
764. VT’s very low pay for new faculty in particular – mid \$40’s for assistant professors – makes hiring particularly difficult
765. Capacity of students to pay for higher ed. has decreased causing scholarship aid to go up, exacerbating funding challenges and making it harder for students to complete school.
766. Even where attendance rates have gone up – such as at CU – faculty/staff numbers have gone down 25% or more (due to previously mentioned funding challenges and hiring difficulties) straining the capacity to innovate
767. VSCs schools are looking to develop partnering relationships to expand work force development in concert with employers and to reach out to non-traditional student populations but need investment capital to have the capacity to do so successfully.

768. VT's institutions of higher education are critical to economic development and reversing the trend toward an aging population.²⁴ They prepare traditional and non-traditional aged Vermonters to be a highly qualified work force and they attract young people from out of state to move to VT. However, the funding challenges described above make it increasingly difficult for them to succeed.

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

ABC Manufacturing

- 769. A lot of different agencies involved
- 770. Lack of interest from younger generation

Ex-Offender

- 771. No cookie cutter approach, all support needed is on an individual basis
- 772. Lack of motivation a challenge on the part of the ex-Offender and those providing support – no overarching shared objective
- 773. Soooo many variables
- 774. Managing expectations all around is essential
- 775. Empathy is important but difficult

Laborer

- John would be lucky if he had a probation/parole officer
- A lot of available resources but navigation is challenging without a support person well-versed in the system
- Connections to resources are personal and often tied to longevity of tenure – “talk to Martha” as opposed to “talk to VSAC” – difficult to institutionalize

New American (Asylum Seeker²⁵)

- So MANY resources but without any connection to each other
- Resource agencies are just the tip of the iceberg
- Easy to get lost in the resources without guide
- Community networks are essential
- Short-term training programs are not well known
- Stigma of social service agencies for some populations makes it difficult to realize/access support of services offered (role of previous trauma?)

²⁴ Educators attending the Provider session offered these solutions in response to their own critical reflections:

- More \$ for early college or dual enrollment and incentivize participation
- College coursework in correctional facilities
- Pre-apprenticeships in correctional facilities
- Increase appeal of manufacturing – companies create co-working spaces where people can work in a more public facing venue (engineers/drafting/creatives)

²⁵ The Asylum Seeker scenario was run from the more expansive New American perspective

Springfield Regional Development Corporation:
2019 Regional Workforce Summit – Regional Report

Top five strategies that emerged from the Summit conducted in your region on November 20, 2019:

1. Regional Brand marketing
2. Career Mapping
3. Employer networks
4. Social media outreach/Web/Video Arts
5. Engage youth—career awareness

RDC Executive Report:

Strategies:

The only “surprise” was the focus on the need for better regional marketing. My only comment on that is that it’s reflective of the need for more funds/coordination of non-tourism-related marketing in Vermont. ACCD has done a good job with this over the last few years (e.g. remote workers incentive), but the amount of funding dedicated to it is miniscule.

While not entirely reflected in the “five strategies”, it was clear that the employers were anxious for an opportunity to be engaged on this on a regular basis, at least annually. Organizations like SRDC and the area Chambers need to do a better job of providing those forums in the region.

Big Questions/SWOT/Constraints:

On the employer side, most of the points were things that employers have been saying to us for some time related to not being able to find people and/or churn in workforce and the causes for that. What was a bit startling was to hear several businesses comment that the lack of workforce is directly impacting company’s productivity and ability to maximize sales.

The one constant between the two sessions was the interrelationship between socioeconomic issues and workforce. Employer acknowledge that childcare, transportation, ACES and substance use are all areas that they have had to attempt to educate themselves about and deal with. It was also obvious that the coordination of services for individuals, both from the provider and employer side, is haphazard and woefully understaffed. The larger employers have more capacity to attempt to work through this, but even they are really struggling.

Key employers and providers:

We were happy with the regional representation of the employer group, but disappointed that some key employers were not present, such as Black River Produce, VTel, Jeld-Wen, Okemo. Despite this, there was good sector diversity and people who were familiar with the missing players enabled a good discussion.

On the provider side, it demonstrated that there are good existing partnerships between many regional players, as reflected in our still-existing WIB. AHS, DOL, the CTE, the RDC, the Chamber, among others – all work together very well. DOL has been significantly weakened, but now has a new Regional Manager who we are optimistic about.

Relevant regional conditions:

Much of the discussion reflected the long-term economic challenges of this region, post machine tool. We have seen the impacts of generational poverty ahead of many other areas of the state.

Context and reality check:

There are strong partnerships already in place in this region and a good infrastructure to support and nurture workforce development. The RDC Chair is also the Chair of the CTE Board (which is one of 3 independent CTE school districts in the State) as well as the WIB Chair. The RDC has a strong historic partnership with the players in workforce development.

River Valley Tech Center (the CTE) is part of a pilot project through Act 189 to attempt to address barriers to CTE for secondary students. Assuming those issues can be addressed (along with improved middle school exposure), the real Achilles heel in this region is adult education. The local CCV branch has struggled for enrollment for many years and is a shell of the operation they used to be when they moved to the Howard Dean Education Center (HDEC). HDEC is an example of a failed model for collaboration in workforce development/adult education and the lack of higher education resources in this part of Vermont.

There is an active Vermont Adult Learning site in the region as well as some nursing training (although Vermont Tech recently pulled back on its involvement here, due to lack of resources).

The other, more nebulous, challenge relates to the social conditions of the region. Housing prices are depressed in Springfield, particularly (average sale price in 2018 - \$133,700 – down 14.6% from ten years ago). The social need is significant (18.3% of households in the SRDC service region are on Reach Up/3 Squares, with Springfield at 27.5%). That permeates everything – from school quality to social infrastructure to a population with serious needs. It presents “workforce” challenges not only for those in the workforce and those that should be participating, but also for those we’re trying to attract and retain in the region, particularly professionals.

It’s not enough to have a “training program” or to offer occasional workshops. There needs to be a commitment to developing, and sustaining, a workforce system that not only provides “credentials”, but one that can incorporate everything from basic employment skills to the ongoing professional upskilling our residents need to allow our companies to be competitive in a global economy. There has to be recognition that having strong employers is a good thing for the state and that a solid workforce is perhaps the most critical component of that.

But there also has to be acceptance and awareness that “workforce development” is really an increasingly broad tent that includes human services as well as skill training in a coordinated, holistic way.

Summit Session Activity Output:

1. Employers “Big Question” – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?

- Burnout for existing staff/more stress also
- Health—quality of care is challenging
- Finances—Competitive salary environment
- Turning down business

- Lots of overtime
- Lots of vacancies and for longer periods
- Hire Slow, Fire fast
- More injuries
- More agency outreach/positive
- Workplace personal problems
- Changing needs of employees
- Posting earlier/proactive
- Generational differences
- More support for existing staff
 - Wellness related
- More flexible scheduling/work from home requests
- Childcare availability/ time/ have to leave early
- Housing availability/ affordability
- Taxing levels in Vermont
- Transportation
- Social scene for young people
 - Friends groups
- Partner can't stay—issue above
- Substance recovery issues
- Workplace violence worries, news impact
- Challenges with turnover
- Costs:
 - Overtime
 - Childcare
 - Stress
- Carries to client in hospitality
 - Schedule shifting
- Need supervisors and managers
- Have to recruit outside of Vermont for upper level positions
- Benefits needs
- Projecting needs with retiring staff
 - People work longer
 - Succession planning
- More internal leadership training
- Creative recruiting
- Younger workers expect more compensation and training
- Southern Vermont has less available higher education options
- Need more employers to sponsor apprenticeships
- Disconnect between education and employers
- Good ideas need to be implemented
- Had to increase compensation
- Not left a good hand to play with workforce
- Struggle to find managers and entry level supervisors
- Hard to find entry level staff
- Offer better benefits—free lunch once a month

- Heard that's a great place to work
- Turned down opportunities because of staff shortage
- Lose time to train
- Pick and choose what to bid on
- Bid challenge bringing in qualified/educated people

2. Employer SWOT Analysis Additions:

Strengths	Opportunities
776. VT Job Link—statewide 777. Affordable housing 778. Quality of Life, safe and healthy 779. State services infrastructure 780. Plenty of employers 781. Strong online network 782. RVTC/BRIC 783. Location I91 access 784. VTP/resources 785. Tourism/visitors workforce? 786. Internet speed/ BRIC 787. VT Brand outdoor rec 788. AHAC in healthcare 789. VT is beautiful 790. Vt products and branding 791. Sense of community 792. Quality of life 793. RUTC/Asset 794. Ownership/obligation 795. DoL responsive with grants and support	796. Higher Ed 797. Trades Ed 798. High Tech infrastructure 799. H1B 800. Fiber internet for remote workers 801. Improve social life 802. Paid family leave 803. Training 804. Mapping pathways for Career ladder 805. Remote worker program in VT 806. Promote visit Vermont 807. Quality schools 808. Childcare 809. Workplace wellness
Weaknesses	Threats
810. State services infrastructure 811. Dearth of higher ed 812. Property taxes are high 813. Cost to maintain infrastructure 814. Aging population (2) 815. Demographics 816. Opioids 817. Work Ethic 818. Housing rentals 819. Property taxes 820. Lack of social life 821. Work ethic/sense of entitlement 822. Housing/Transportation 823. More vulnerable employees need help and support 824. Compensation ceiling by employers 825. Lower salary/cost of living	827. Climate change 828. Aging workforce 829. Work ethic 830. Greater burden on each person as population shrinks 831. Capital access 832. SH/SMCS 833. Opioids 834. Poaching 835. Gov regulation 836. Succession for family owned businesses 837. Concerns about growth 838. Future—dairy and ag 839. Climate change 840. Social service lifestyle 841. Childcare/cost deal breaker

826.	Balance in Populations	
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3. Employers Constraints and Strategies

Constraints		Strategies	
842.	Getting people to stay in VT	864.	Regional Brand marketing (14)
843.	Access to Capital	865.	Career Mapping (10)
844.	Tax rate for individuals	866.	Employer networks (8)
845.	NH grass greener	867.	Social media outreach/Web/Video Arts
846.	Number of people/not enough	(7)	
847.	Time: not enough time to recruit and train	868.	Engage youth—career awareness (7)
848.	Childcare	869.	Face to face networking (6)
849.	Lack of higher Ed	870.	Apprenticeships (6)
850.	Work Ethic affects production, reliability, attitude	871.	Young professional concierge service (5)
851.	Access to capital	872.	Family leave (5)
852.	Future for the trades	873.	Job Fairs (5)
853.	Lack density of business	874.	Job Bank (4)
854.	Transportation challenges	875.	Communications (4)
855.	Childcare costs and availability	876.	Teamwork, we're in it together, coordination of efforts (3)
856.	Local consensus on growth: NIMBY	877.	Brokering the gap, problem solving (3)
857.	Personal challenges: Opioids	-	People and opportunities
858.	Human capacity, family stretched	-	Matchmaking person to person
859.	Access to Capital	-	Triage
860.	Policy stagnation, nativists	878.	Personal finance training (3)
861.	Benefit thresholds/childcare	879.	Awareness/partnership/creating relationships (2)
862.	Wage Compression	880.	System coordination—fix it (2)
863.	Stigma of CTE	881.	Work with Realtors for rentals and referrals (1)
		882.	Healthcare policy (1)
		883.	Poaching—face to face
		884.	Pathways for seniors/career counseling (1)

4. Providers "Big Question" – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?

- 885. Workforce available and types of workers force collaboration with other parties and specialists
- 886. Today's unemployed have high needs, are vulnerable, with barriers to success
- 887. Companies more willing to train/hire unskilled labor
- 888. Free class, wraparound services, free transportation
- 889. Many of today's unemployed don't have the history of support and social experience that most people do
- 890. Needs are so great that providing training has many barriers
- 891. Idea: what does the population think their barriers to employment are
- 892. Completely focus on education and workforce development

- 893. This is an opportunity for us
- 894. ACES and Trauma complicate work for providers
- 895. Workforce readiness is a challenge
- 896. Employers reaching out and being flexible
- 897. Caseloads rising
- 898. People need support, more barriers
- 899. Wait list for childcare, need providers
- 900. Hearing frustration from employers and seekers
- 901. More wraparound services
- 902. Have to be creative to meet needs
- 903. Less engagement with families
 - Fear
 - I do it alone
 - Inundated with services
- 904. Looking for a job has changed
 - Online applications
 - Need technology skills
 - Complex and impersonal
- 905. More employers needed for apprenticeships
- 906. Enrollments are down at CCV
- 907. Employer expectations versus available talent/prospects
- 908. Support programming needed
- 909. Healthcare cost of nursing
 - Expensive to fill needs
 - Travelling personnel
- 910. Transportation/access to training and jobs
- 911. Online classes are the preferred method of training
- 912. Affordable childcare waiting list
- 913. Benefits cliff and program thresholds
- 914. Wage and job jumping, business to business
- 915. Affordable housing, rental and owner. Quality questions
- 916. Employability skills
- 917. Generation gap
 - Career fairs in high schools

5. Providers – Scenario Learnings

Community Hospital

- 918. BMH and CCV have a program
 - Available scholarships
- 919. VSAC works with adults
- 920. Lots of acronyms
 - OJT, WIOA, AHEC, VDoL

Single Mother

- VAL leads to GED/HSD college classes
- AHAC
- Drill down triage
 - Voc Rehab

- Missing supports based on the scenario
- Overwhelmed by the process and options
- Does connection really happen
- Staff turnover impacts connection
- Case management
- Can't lose income in process
- YMCA camp for child
- Vermont training program for work training
- See through the process, many steps

Training for Growth (Laborer)

- Is this an individual solution or is it significant enough for a systemic approach?
- Who can lead him through the process?
- Lots of resources, not a lot of clarity/understanding of who all is doing what

ATTACHMENT E – Workforce Market Matrix

		Level of Expertise or Skill		
		<i>Entry level</i>	<i>Mgt / Supervisor</i>	<i>High-level professional</i>
Size of Business	<i>Large</i>	Large employers can provide more in-house training and take more risk than smaller ones.	Established training programs and criteria for advancement.	Larger external networks incorporating potential resources and access to head-hunters or national HQ recruiting resources.
	<i>Medium</i>	Trying to balance tolerance for risk in employment and narrow set of resources to invest in new entry personnel.	Need for supervision may exceed available supply or ability to train. Rely on external training sources.	Squeezed by need or desire to grow through talent and ability to recruit and train. Less experience recruiting high-level talent. Need advice and support entering that market.
	<i>Small</i>	Less available supervision and support services for entry level and new employees. May prefer to hire experienced people.	Tend to want experienced supervisors or self-motivated and trained employees who seek external training on their own.	Constrained by location and competing employers. May not offer significant upward promotion. More static positions.

ATTACHMENT F – Model Summit Agenda

2019 REGIONAL WORKFORCE SUMMIT
Insert region and RDC name

Morning Session: Employers

- 8:30** Doors Open/Check-in
- 9:00** Welcome by RDC Director insert name
- 9:05** Session Introduction
- 9:15** The Big Question – How has the workforce situation impacted your business?
- 9:30** Activity introduction – Hiring Matrix, Constraints and Strategies
-
- 10:00** Break and shift to small groups, by company size
-
- 10:15** Constraints and Strategies exercise
- 11:15** Report out and rank
- 11:45** RDC Director insert name closes morning session

12:00 Lunch with Employers, Educators, Workforce Service Providers

12:15 Governor’s Remarks & Lunch Program – *Insert title of program and any speakers*

Afternoon session: Educators, trainers and other workforce service providers

- 1:15** Assemble in workroom from lunch
- 1:20** Welcome by RDC Director insert name
- 1:25** Session Introduction
- 1:30** The Big Question – How has the workforce situation impacted your work?
- 1:45** Scenario Mapping introduction
-
- 2:00** Break and shift to small groups
-
- 2:15** Scenario Mapping exercise
- 3:15** Map presentation and discussion
- 3:55** RDC Director insert name closes afternoon session

ATTACHMENT G – Addison County SWOT

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single courses, customized solutions available in pockets throughout Vermont • Industry Connection to training program curriculum • Resources to access skills training (CCV, PAHCC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility can increase retention of valued employees • Increase focus on and value of trades in K-12 • Explore partnership opportunities to address challenges in retaining employees (eg childcare) • Increasing access to internship/real like training opportunities ss pipeline to employment • Connection between industry and training can be expanded • Demand for product exists • Lifestyle draw • Need for Level 3 candidates • Provide earlier exposure to career pathways • Expand connection to robust higher ed resources
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Skills lacking (language, dress appropriateness) • Work ethic lacking among prospective employees • Insufficient feedback from employer to provider community • Livable wage • Need pre-internship opportunities • Increased communication needed between employer and provider community • Housing • Lack of consistent, adequate childcare • Entry level employees lacking basic skills • Recruiting taking longer than historically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal employer driven or supporting training becoming more necessary to get needed skills • Lifestyle Challenge • Inadequate labor supply in Addison County

ATTACHMENT H – Facilitator Resumes

Erika C. Hoffman-Kiess

East Thetford, VT

Hoffman.Kiess@gmail.com

1.802.299.5769

Profile: Master of Public Administration and 15+ years' experience designing, managing and evaluating US government and other donor funded workforce and economic development initiatives. Provide organizational leadership and representation, administer ongoing activities, and design and implement new program opportunities through partnerships with government representatives, the private sector, educators and relevant community groups.

Expertise: Partnership development & collaboration
Coordination & facilitation in complex operational environments
Program representation & promotion
Exceptional written/verbal communication and organizational skills

Experience:

Empower Success Corps (ESC)

Provides consulting expertise to help non-profits across New England succeed

Strategic Planning/Organizational Development Consultant November 2018 – present

- Board of Director's strategic planning meeting facilitation – RAIN for the Sahel and Sahara
- Management review, organizational development – Windham County Sheriff's Department

ACDI/VOCA

Economic development organization that fosters broad-based, market-driven economic growth.

New Business Development Consultant - Bangladesh March – April 2018

- Wrote technical and country-specific input for response to USAID Request for Information
- Led field visit, met with private sector, partners and donors to inform go/no-go bidding decision

Job Opportunities and Business Support (JOBS) Trust – Pakistan

Independent charitable trust facilitating skills development and income generation.

Global Project Review Consultant August 2014 – March 2016

Member of six-person team, reviewed 100+ economic growth projects to identify successful components for potential replication in US-funded projects.

- Led two field visits: Interviewed employers, employees and trainees; Identified "lessons learned" to improve outcomes of job creation efforts in the Middle East North Africa region.
- Authored three(3) project Case Studies that were subsequently published by USAID and made available globally through the Development Expertise Clearinghouse.

Organizational Development Consultant August 2012 – November 2014

Advised JOBS Trust on methods to improve program administration and professionalism and identified opportunities for business growth. Provided technical expertise on existing contracts.

Abt Associates, Inc.

Global leader in research and program implementation in international development and other fields.

Career Development Center (CDC) Lead

June – November 2010

When project was unexpectedly curtailed by the US government, redesigned and successfully closed-out the countrywide CDC activity for the \$80M USAID *Empower Pakistan Jobs Project*.

- In the face of lost trust, established Task Force of implementation partners to improve communications, operational efficiency, and strategic alignment of activities.

JOBS Trust – Bangladesh

Independent charitable trust working in private sector development, employment generation and poverty alleviation.

Interim Country Director / Country Director

October 2006 – October 2009

Deputy Country Director

October 2005 – September 2006

Led evolution of organization from single donor funded project (below) to multi-donor funded, locally registered charity with upwards of \$1.5M in project funding. Diversified business opportunities, managed proposal development and contracting processes and represented organization both nationally and globally. Supervised all operations and staff of 30.

- Designed innovative economic development applications, such as *Economic Rehabilitation for Injecting Drug Users* pilot with Family Health International.
- Redefined roles and reallocated resources to rescue failing partnership with Save the Children Uganda and Makerere University on an agriculture value chain project.

JOBS Project

\$12.5M USAID-funded project in Bangladesh focused on poverty alleviation through increased employment and income generation in over 15 different business sectors.

Deputy Project Director – JOBS / Deputy Country Director – IRIS

January 2004 – September 2005

Oversaw administration, operations and contracts for JOBS Project and all other in-country IRIS initiatives. Led Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector activities with staff of 10+.

- With technical team, wrote and advocated for passage of Bangladesh's first ever ICT law.
- Managed two business-linkage projects between US and leading Bangladeshi ICT companies.
- Supported private sector participation in international trade fairs.

Cisco Networking Academy Program Country Coordinator

February 2003 – September 2005

Led countrywide implementation of Cisco Networking Academy Program for USAID, United Nations, Cisco Systems, Inc. and participating universities across Bangladesh.

- Led labor market needs assessment in partnership with ICT sector business associations.
- Designed and implemented visionary \$3M program rollout and expansion, creating the fastest growing program within the global *Least Developed Countries Initiative*.

Education:

- **Master of Public Administration**, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
- **Bachelor of Arts - Political Science**, Goucher College, Baltimore, Maryland and University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Carmarthen, Wales
- **USAID Administrative Compliance** and **Financial Management of USAID Awards**, Center for Public Management; Bangkok, Thailand sessions

Volunteer Positions:

- **President, Friends of Pakistan USA**: Supporting women's empowerment in Pakistan
- **President, Tabitha USA**: Supporting community development in Cambodia

Jeffrey M. Lewis
166 Meeting House Lane
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
802-579-3877

Experience:

Economic Development

Lewis&Stromsten, LLC. 2015 to present. Partner in small economic development consulting firm.

- Company provides advice, strategy development, community engagement, along with data research and presentation.
- Current major project is creating and operating the Vermont Futures Project (vtfuturesproject.org).

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, 2006 to 2013. Executive director.

- Founded SeVEDS (Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies), award winning regional organization that created a benchmark federally approved CEDS.
- Delivered over \$2million of CDBG funds for Irene recovery.
- Secured \$500,000 in USEDA funds for Irene Recovery
- Achieved full occupancy of 500,000sqf of commercial property.
- Managed 130 small businesses tenants providing advice and support as well as space.
- Advised many local and regional businesses on strategy and tactics.
- Managed \$2million annual budget
- Grew the staff of BDCC from 5 to 13.
- Increased reach and influence.
- Wrote and published op-eds on state economic development policy.

Institute for Nuclear Host Communities. 2013-present.

- Executive director and co-founder of a new research, education and policy advocacy entity aimed at improving the post closure outcomes for communities that host nuclear power plants.

Business Management and Consulting:

Customer Driven Market Strategy, Principal.

- Business strategy consulting firm. Recently worked with a medium sized local firm in generational transition.

2000-2001: **Patricia Seybold Group,**

- Senior consultant. Wrote articles and book (The Customer Revolution).

- Spoke widely on technology and internet mediated customer relationships.
- Consulted with companies in Europe and the US on technology use in customer relationships.

2001-2003: **Monster.com,**

- SVP and Chief Customer Officer.
- First chief customer officer for a \$600 million dollar industry leading job board.
- Principal responsibility was effecting a culture change from a hard-edge sales driven business to more customer focused loyalty driven model.

Marlboro College and School for International Training:

- Adjunct Faculty in Business Management and Technology.

Insurance and General Business:

Apetrop USA:

- Senior Vice President and CEO. 2010-present.
- Entrepreneurial start up in global insurance runoff market.
- Drafted and succeeded in having Vermont legislature pass landmark act to structure and permit unique transaction type allowing insurance companies to sell a portion of a closed portfolio.
- Industry interest is growing.

1980 to 2000: **Phoenix Home Life Company and Mass Mutual.**

- Various roles of increasing responsibility in technology and planning. Retired in 2000.

JML Photo, Owner..

- A fine art photography business with a presence in local galleries.
- Particular attention to jazz, circus and dance photography, plus the coast of Maine.

1971 to 1979: Parish minister in South Hadley, Mass., and Springfield, Mass.

Education:

M. Div. (Master of Divinity), Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Ct. Three year professional degree.

B.A. University of Hartford. Hartford, Ct. Philosophy and mathematics.

Publications:

The Customer Revolution: with Patty Seybold and Ronnie Marshak. 2000

Articles and speeches for Patricia Seybold Group, 2000-2001

Multiple Op-ed articles in Vermont news media from 2007 to 2013.

Co-author, *A Vision for Vermont's Economy*, Vermont Futures Project.

ATTACHMENT I – Strategy Ranking

Line	Votes	Value	STRATEGIES
23	XXXXXXX	14	Encourage and support local employers to spend more time in high school and colleges – discuss workplace, career opportunities, job shadowing, internships, workplace learning experiences; Work with students on life after graduation
8	XXXXX	15	Better educate guidance counselors and actively connect them to employer
21	XXXX	9	Network of employers, training providers, service providers
14	XXXX	11	Educate parents – “Value of Work” messaging – by developing a HS curriculum
15	XXXX	11	Develop industry specific consortiums to pool funding for training programs
38	XXXX	11	Additional funding for “career paths” in the education and training sectors
19	XXX	7	Advocate for childcare
6	XXX	8	Catalog of contacts - know who to contact, for what
12	XXX	8	Create a resource coordinator to serve employers and employees
64	XXX	8	Systematize HR association: Increased hiring options for trailing spouses; create talent network to expand access to greater number of opportunities across multiple participating employers; could create cross-business career pathways and leadership trades; could work to keep people in VT
3	XXX	9	Pipeline partnering with organizations like the RDCs (attract outside talent, regional representation on corporate web pages, expand benefits/unique benefits)
62	XXX	12	Incentivize development of existing housing stock to meet today’s needs – old hotels, old factories, large houses
2	XX	4	Wrap-around services (housing directories, transportation coordination, employer vouchers)
27	XX	5	Childcare – reevaluate regulations to support shorter term, home based entities
39	XX	6	Communication regarding resources – Navigator, technology platform/clearinghouse
13	XX	7	Measuring standards for engaging educators and workforce (accountability)
37	XX	7	Loan forgiveness – Access to/education about
50	XX	7	Create network between employers and educational institutions

17	XX	8	Partnerships with high school and college placement offices – Vermont Employer’s Career Fair
57	XX	8	Regional Brand marketing
25	XX	9	Promote recovery/criminal record (second chance) friendly workplaces
24	X	1	Sliding scale of benefits offered through state
33	X	1	Industry specific educational opportunities for students and educators, to alter perceptions
54	X	1	Policies and programs to work with kinds and families to break out of poverty
61	X	1	Engage youth—career awareness
11	X	2	Consider non-traditional recruitment efforts – military, mountain biking magazines
36	X	2	Fully identify and exploit Vermont’s points of excellence and desirability to create a unified goal and FOCUS on that ... apply all resources to build on that common foundation
30	X	3	Develop training for management (values based leadership, recognition drives behavior and retention, collaborate with resources and businesses)
44	X	3	Vermont Go—Carpool, more flexibility (market and expand public transportation, on-demand car service)
56	X	3	Breaking down silos
59	X	3	Employer networks
9	X	4	Tech/Career Center event(s) for employers – Open House
35	X	4	Flexibility, more tailored offerings for specific employee needs – Non-traditional labor, PT, on-call Uber, flexible spending “accounts” for child/elder care, transportation
66	X	5	Create coalition of employers to discuss opportunities with developers; specifically, mall-type housing properties (village-center style)
4			State-mandated Mental Health Worker credentialing/licensing in partnership with state system
5			Cooperative learning on benefits and training for companies
7			Increase age of acceptance in Career Center programs to 21

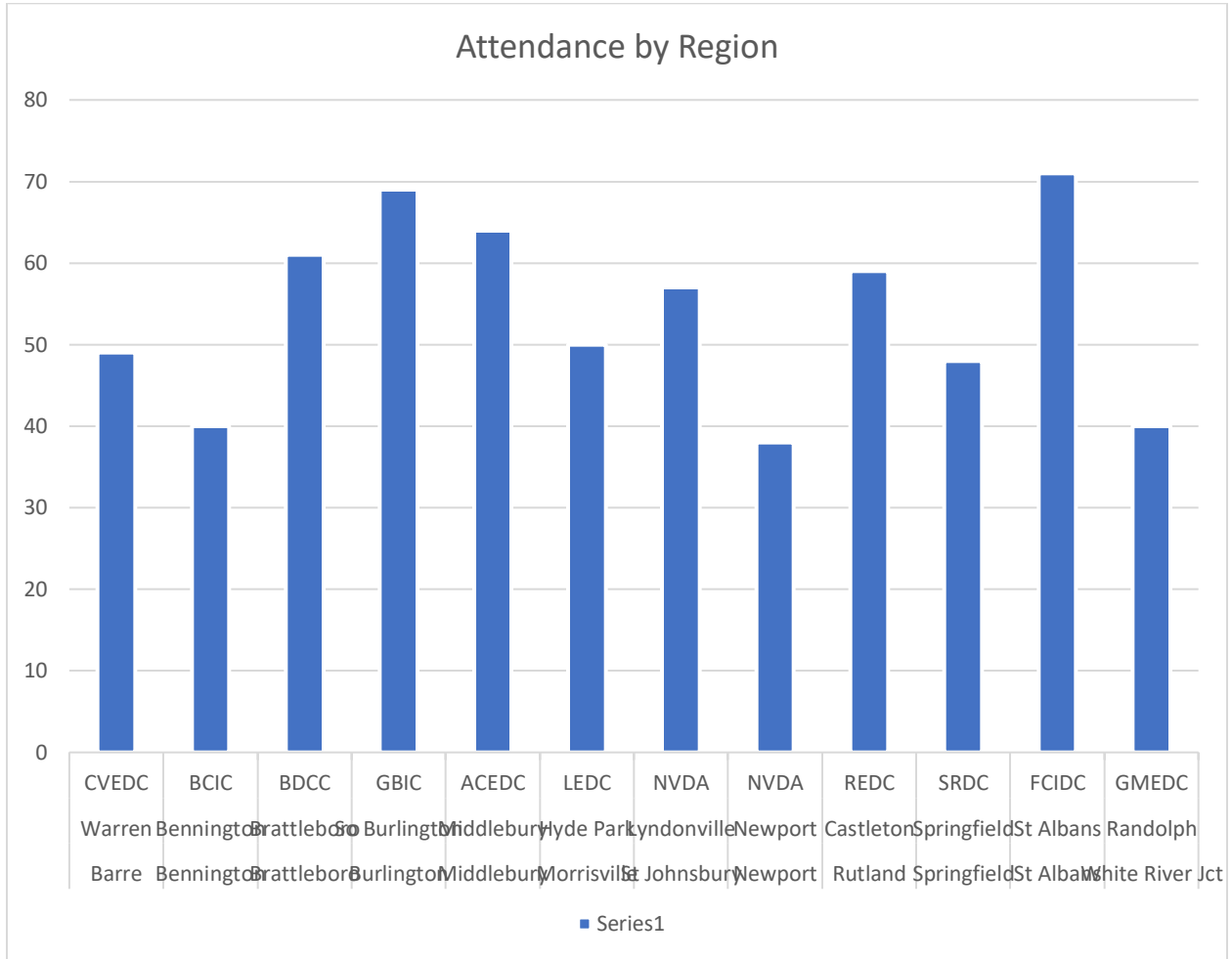
10		Engage NEKTV in the promotion of opportunities, increase employer involvement in the promotions process, and make information local – highlight local success stories
16		Communicate progress – by job opportunities, wages
18		Better communication around job opportunities for ‘feeder’ organizations
20		Share training resources
22		Intentional communication for training clearing house (ETPC)
26		Create Resource Coordinators, use Working Bridges, Association for training and development?
28		Mentor program for new employees
29		Create a local center of excellence for ‘Systems Thinking’ that will raise awareness at the state level (Bennington College already working on this at CAPA)
31		Marketing Southern Vermont with all businesses in mind (access as a platform to market Southern VT stronger)
32		Flexible scheduling
34		Marketing of company versus industry - Industry and regional collaboration to build interest in job opportunities - Video campaign/series highlighting work “behind the curtain”
40		Vermont 211 for employers with navigation assistance
41		Training in life skills—communications emotional intelligence
42		Educate parents about careers (Mike Rowe foundation)
43		Shared services
45		Forgiveness of higher ed loans in exchange for a commitment to work
46		Lower taxes (income, property)
47		Simplify/streamline taxes/fees/government regulatory burden (daycare, skills licenses)
48		Better marketing to students and parents of career opportunities to be found locally
49		Brand Lamoille County as a lifestyle destination (Live, Work, Play) with a spotlight on the opportunity side
51		Off-hour school bus usage

52			Exclude kids' income from family total for benefit qualification
53			Creative ways to address paying down student debt as employment incentive
55			Sustained exposure to workplace like GW Plastics
58			Career Mapping
60			Social media outreach/Web/Video Arts
63			Better development with zoning – reduce development restrictions
65			Diversify meaning of “quality of life” to go beyond employee attraction – schools, neighboring cities

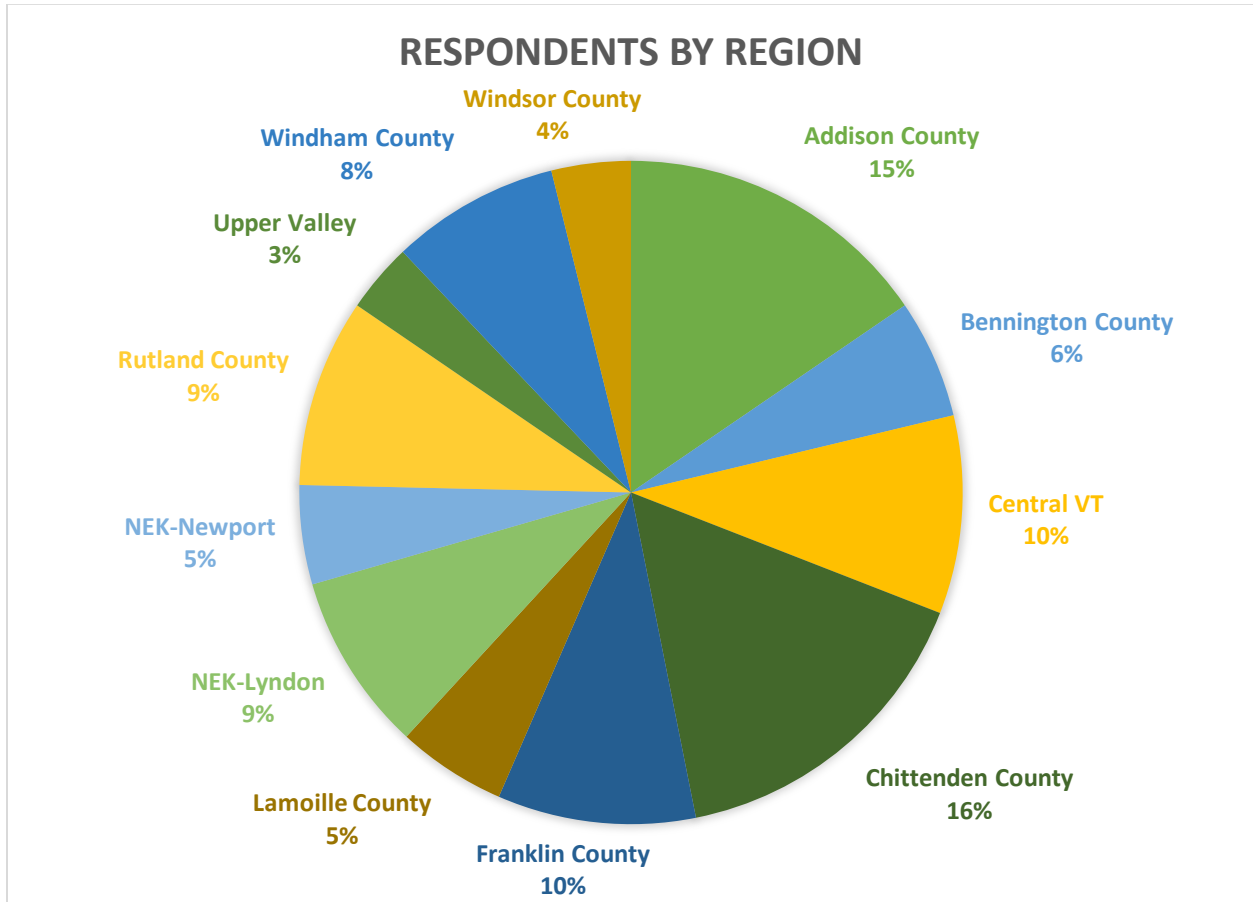
ATTACHMENT J – Survey Feedback

Summary Results of RDC Participant Survey

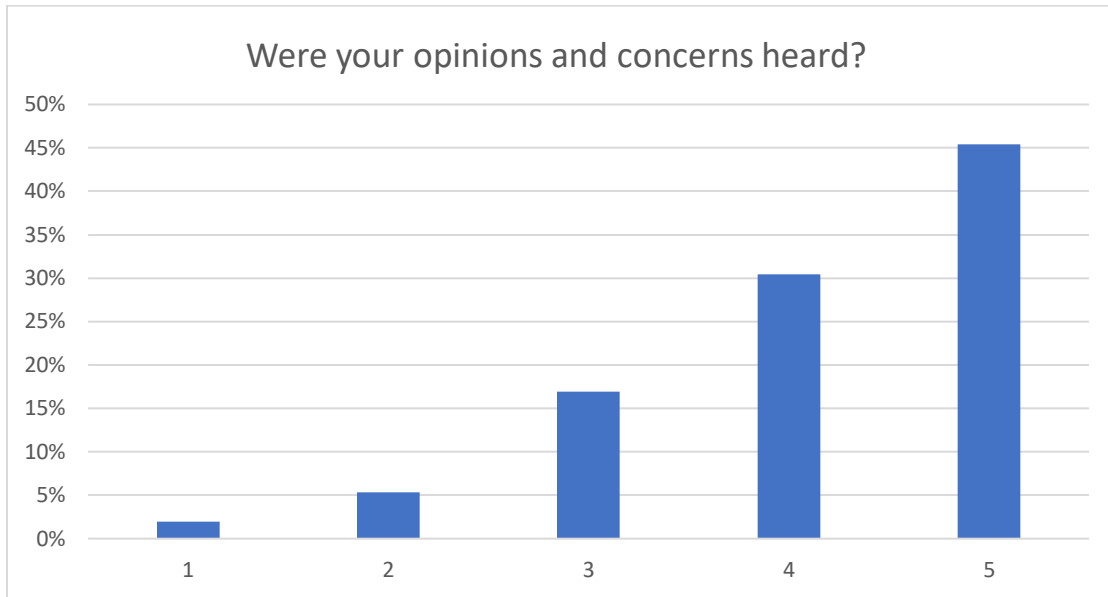
A **total of 646 people** attended the 12 events. Franklin County and Burlington Region led the way in attendance, with Addison and Windham Counties right behind them.



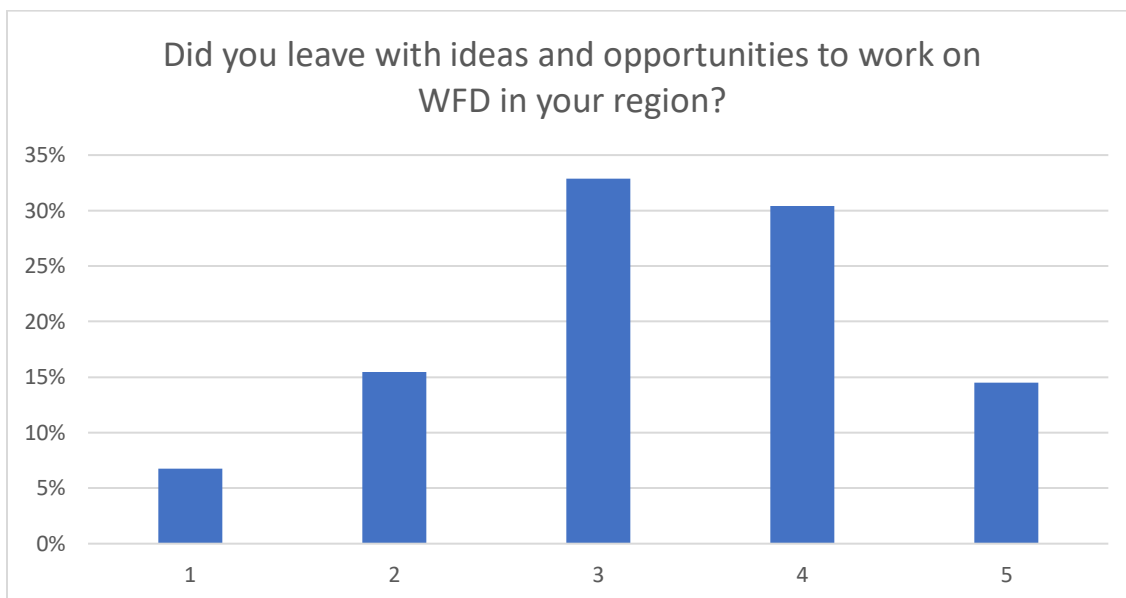
Following each Summit event attendees were provided an on-line survey to gauge their satisfaction and to help in planning the next cycle of events. Responses were quite robust in quantity, more than expected. The following graph is the distribution of responses by region. There were a total of 207 responses out of a total attendance of 646 - a response rate of 32%, a very respectable rate.



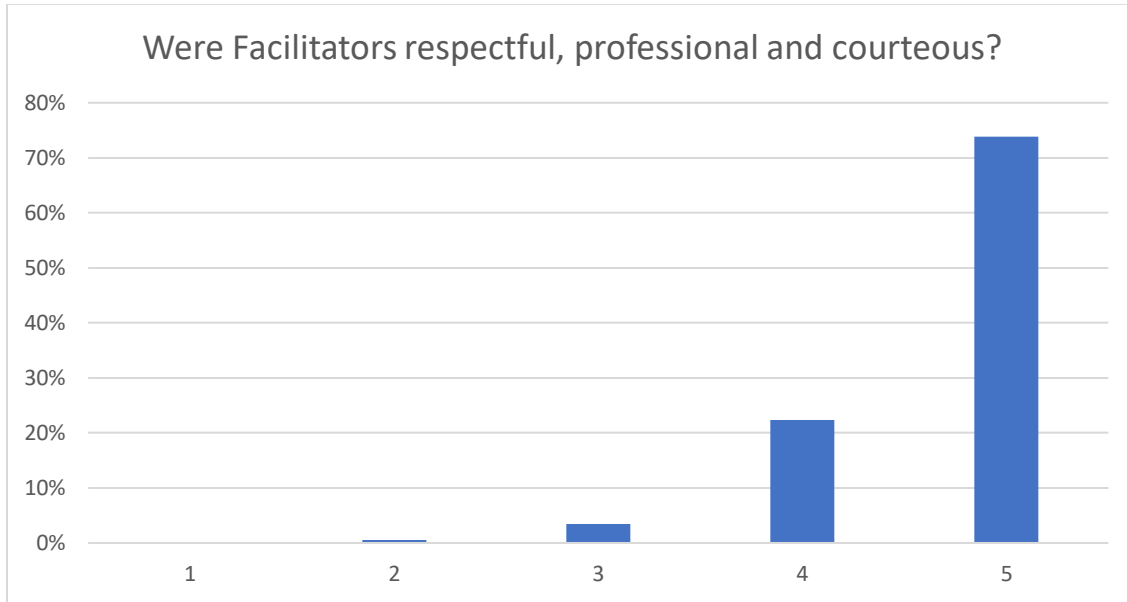
This graph measures the attitude of participants to the overall experience, from presentation to discussion. The vast majority of participants had a favorable or very favorable attitude.



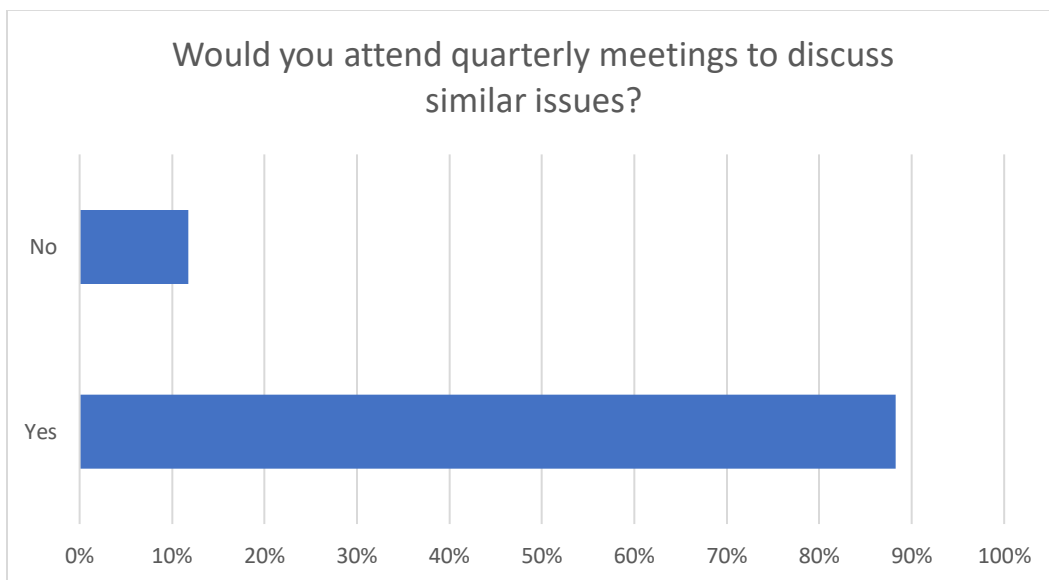
In this graph we see a somewhat less favorable reaction to the results suggesting that people did not, on the whole, leave feeling they had a work plan or goals.



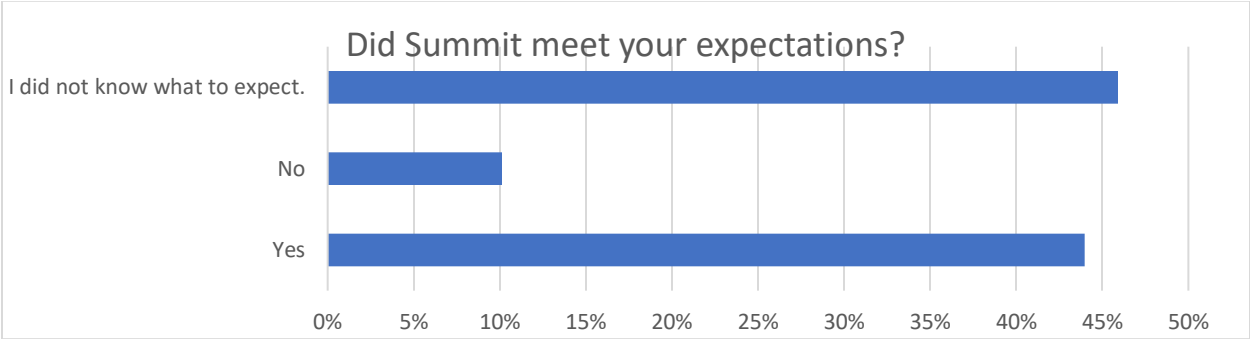
For the sake of future planning we wanted to get a view of how the facilitators were viewed. This graph shows that the vast majority viewed the facilitators favorably. That contributes greatly to a positive experience and is the result of a positive experience. People like leaders who lead, doing things they value and appreciate.



The following graph is significant in that people indicated overwhelmingly that they would return to continue this discussion and at an increased frequency—not annually but quarterly—suggesting this is a very high priority for them, on both the provider and employers sides.



The final graph is interesting when taken in the context of the one immediately prior (willingness to attend further meetings) which suggested a high willingness to return. That willingness is despite this data which shows that people did not know what to expect at the meeting. That piece of data by itself suggests that the communication may need attention, but it also suggests that people – employers and providers – have a high degree of trust in the regional RDC to deliver a quality experience even without a great deal of advance detail. That speaks very well for the relationships built and sustained by the RDCs as well as to the critical nature of the issue—workforce development.



Narrative Results of RDC Participant Survey

1. What workforce issues or concerns do you feel were not addressed at the summit?
A broader view from employers
Childcare/Housing/Transportation was addressed but not dealt with very much...it seems to always be someone else's responsibility.
lack of unskilled and semi skilled workforce
Not really any time spent on housing, we did talk about affordability in general
The problems addressed were relatively immediate in nature (though understood that the demographic challenge seems to be long term), but there wasn't any effort out project what the future holds. For example, businesses have immediate openings but what happens in a recession, in a future with more automation or more virtual work? Many of the solutions addressed things that will take time to implement, perhaps long enough for the problem to change. So, timescales do matter.
Carving tasks out of jobs. Creative, Quick methods to train up and share workers.
how will these changes be funded?
the role of migrant workers and immigration
It would have been good to have the employers in the same room like last year. It seems the afternoon session was too isolating from what the morning session.
Since I represent higher ed institution, I have very different point of view and questions around workforce. I felt that the exercise was valuable for a lot of my colleagues working for state agencies to discuss issues (the scenario mapping) but I Did not feel that I was able to contribute or that it was a good use of my time. I would love to have conversations about what educators can do to connect into the employment gaps, etc.
I think that is too big of a question. Understanding what Vermont wants its future state to be would help. Does it want to stay flat, grow slow, grow fast, have booming startups, spread wealth to all citizens, get younger people, tech focused, ag focused, etc. There seems to be a lot of different wants and no clear single forward direction to move.
None
Welfare Reform
The need for training in this area for hiring managers and other managers to understand the new workforce and how to best use their abilities.
No real solutions, just the same old conversation we've been having.

We have ongoing needs that need to be addressed over time. For example, Bennington needs some solutions that will help attract businesses and improve transportation barriers for low income employees.
What is currently being worked on or implemented in different parts of the state.
I don't feel like the issue of VT's aging and declining population was given enough attention. Nor were there any solutions proposed to address that issue.
Having the service providers and employers meet separately was not optimum from my perspective. I think the work that has to be done needs to happen in collaboration and partnership.
employers were not there. people whose lives we were talking about were not there.
The big issue is how employers and providers can work together to solve a problem. It will take a deep level of facilitation and collaboration between the stakeholders to make a real difference. This wasn't addressed at all, and having separate summits for the employers and providers maintains the divide.
next steps
Focused conversation was kept on track and well managed, not getting too "high-level" in nature and dissipating on things beyond our local scope and practice.
Livable wages, transportation & housing, cost of living, access to hiring managers, access to business to provide direct service to available trained and untrained job seekers, networking, opportunity to mass communicate with area VT businesses on training methods available at local level
Don't think we dove deep enough in addressing looming demographic challenged in the state.
seasonal employees
We focused on potential workers with lots of challenges to entering the workforce but they represent a small part of our potential newly trained and re-trained adults. We need to initiate strategies to bring larger numbers into the workforce.
Lack of real solutions
We did not talk enough about innovative ideas and what was working, we talked a lot about what the existing processes were but not enough to find where the breakdowns are. From what we discussed, you would think that the Department of Labor had it all buttoned up, but I know from experience that there are many folks who are falling through the cracks, or who don't know what DOL does and how they can be helped by DOL programs. Particularly people who are employed but are underemployed, who are employed but living in poverty, people who are challenged by transportation, etc.

2. What would you like to see at the next regional workforce summit?

More participation from employers, mixing of employers and providers, and no breakout groups with hands-on projects
I think the scenario mapping or case studies would be really interesting with a mix of employers presenting scenarios and providers trying to solve them.
It would be great to have employers AND providers in the same room at the same time, more overlap, really important to share ideas across those groups.
A directory created for employees and job seekers on resources
More strategic problem solving and collaboration across networks.
Introduction of participant and more explicit System map Interactive visualization of interconnections. Agencies, providers, etc.
specific workforce challenges be of focus
More employer participation- small businesses, not just Middlebury College.
more employers in attendance, more input from those on the bottom
I don't have a good answer.
Combine programs with employers.
Not sure
Opportunity to make connections between resources.
Not have the employers and agencies separated.
A scenario where both employers and providers work together to build an understanding of the system. It will also help both parties think of ways of improving the system.
Better employer/and provider/education partners.
Welfare Reform
Some actionable items
Some goals for future projects will hopefully be set so that we can work on them.
The scores of (3s) provided above are not by reason of content or facilitation; but because the solutions are very difficult to achieve and identify. I concur, a routine cycle to meet and further work the issue is a good idea. Follow through is important.
More engagement from employers
Current programs that are/are not working to help create a larger workforce in Vermont.
I feel like more time should have been given to addressing the underlying factors precipitating the impending demographic cliff.

More collaboration between businesses and service providers. It would have been helpful for businesses to stay for the afternoon portion to gain an understanding of the barriers candidates face
See answer above
more employers and actual people who are unemployed/underemployed.
The businesses and providers NEED to be together and work together. In essence, we spent the afternoon rehashing what we already know about the barriers.
I am looking forward to a synopsis of our information in comparison to other sections of the state - where are we the same? where are we different?
don't know
Ideas for what is working-- who is having success in meeting the challenge and why?
Businesses attending services provider sessions
Service providers and Employers in the same sessions.
Businesses and educators and providers should absolutely be there at the same time and be able to network and collaborate.
How CTE can help with labor issues
A chance for providers and employers to sit together.
More mixing of businesses and service providers. I know that there are challenges with that, but we find that this is a great way for innovation to happen and for biases, assumptions, and guesses to be really talked through, and to educate everyone about the real challenges and real solutions available.
conversations between providers and employers.
Curated groups of partners to work on different aspects of workforce development,e.g. technical training for youth/career tech ed, people in recovery, New Americans, etc.
Integration with the Talent Development Pipeline Management initiative.
More time to chat in smaller groups.
Changes to the educational system (k-12 school)
Lt Gov stays around, along with House Speaker, and President Pro temp
Collaboration between parent/family groups, service providers, educators and industry
Steps for resolution
You brought a great and diverse group of people together. Maybe a presentation from a company that tried something innovative to hire/retain workers like free bus passes. With a time for Q&A and sharing.

Businesses and providers attending and working together.
It would be great to see what proposed solutions came out of these summits and to allow discussion about these solutions.
Working groups
More opportunities to collaborate with employers
A broader representation of providers so we can really get into the discussion on collaboration and gaps.
Opportunities for employers, service providers, and job seekers to learn and collaborate together!
I think more of what I was referring to in my last answer. We talked a lot, which is amazing and helpful, but more of what we can all do as professionals and as a community.
Discussing solutions. Diving deeper.
Great facilitation - keep it going! I'd meet 2x/year but quarterly is too much for our workforce needs/cycle.
none
Report of any actions made on action items.
unsure
Responses from the Educators / Providers
High Schools perspective
I'd like to see more focus on policy solutions to these challenges.
More focus on solving the major barriers to employment - 1. transportation, 2. childcare, 3. housing, 4. working with people in recovery
Concrete action to encourage a revitalized 'work ethic'.
time for human services to interact with business
More time allotted for employers and various facilitators to share concerns, thoughts, and possible solutions
An integrated program between the workforce development organizations and the businesses of the region.
Presentation from Working Bridges - they can be a great resource for employees and would love to see expansion of their services in Franklin County.
More of a representation from small employers - farm and food businesses.

More discussion about the benefits cliff, and ways to make it more of a slope by modeling programs after how the childcare subsidy works.
Some information on some best practices, or what some local (Vermont?) employers have done or are doing to meet the challenges with some degree of success.
Each business is unique. Although everyone faces the same crisis it would be more beneficial to focus on your own line of work related issues.
Solutions .
I do believe better coordination of resources is a need, because we can't really waste any time and energy on duplication or inefficiency. I think we need to map our resources and assets better. CTE's and high schools need to have much more transparent conversations about how to share the mission and vision of supporting all students to be college and career ready with our combined resources. The employer/business side and service side need to share the room to talk about the challenges of transportation, barriers to employment, etc...we need to work together to solve the challenges ahead.
Reports on how data was interpreted and used.
Solutions to similar problems that have worked in other regions and/or states with similar demographics. There has been a lot of discussion and talk on the workforce dilemma. When will we meet to discuss plans for action? What resources can be brought to bear to ensure success of these plans?
a statewide "map" of all of the workforce development programs out there regionally, and then state-wide
A path to solutions.
I would be interested to hear more about plans to bring in new employees from out of state potentially.
networking
Extend for a second day to allow for more collaboration on ideas for implementation and next steps.
Need to focus on some aspect of the problem my opinion is that if we could identify the people to work, then training is the easy part. Who might be the people to work - - - A. People living in the Region B. People outside the Region. Then break down Who are the people in the Region available to work A1. currently unemployed, A2 being released from prison A3 retired people A4 need to know WHO is available to work and then creative solutions from there . . .
solutions to work on
MORE EMPLOYERS!
full day sessions

How the "What Is" vision can become or merge with the "What Ought" vision. We can work with what we have while also reaching for an ideal.
More Employers, Examples of local innovative solutions/proven strategies, a networking activity
Less pointed questions to free up the opportunity for more discussion
See above. Because the employers worked in the morning the lunch overlap was ineffective since the employers stayed at their tables and the newcomers found seats at other tables.
Maybe "speed dating" style, direct networking meetings between employers and service providers in which employers talk about their challenges, and service providers offer solutions - and each walk away with an actionable step.
So much of the conversation is about the training and work aspects of the workforce, but in my work I see life challenges derailing employees or potential employees. People are staying home to take care of children or parents, they are choosing part time work over full time to take care of their family or to pursue education, but the workforce development conversations are still focused on how to get people into entry level 9-5 jobs full time. I would love to see more conversations about how we might start to work together to support working people with policies or structural changes.
more ways to collaborate
More answers about transportation, some answers on flexibility of corrections and there mid day groups.
There really weren't that many employers, appeared to be predominantly providers.
See above - more detail. More discussion on proposed solutions / partnerships / resources / collaboration
I think we are on the right path I just want to see what other regions are seeing and doing as well.
more providers on the case manager level
not sure. This seems like it was a way to gather information about the community and how agencies utilize each other around workforce issues. I would have to attend more I think to know what it could offer.
I think there should have been some time for employers to interact with the providers - just so both get more familiar with the other's perspective.
I loved the presentation by CCV and most important that there is opportunity for our business to work on developing a similar apprentice program. Some more of that type of thing. That program seemed great because they do all the admin for us and we just build up the people and the business.
more exercises
Perhaps some input from ESGR?
More discussions on how to address the issue above

Information and resources for small businesses from the Dept. of Labor to help better manage current work force landscape.
Business and Service Providers together throughout the summit
From the ideas brought up at this session, I would love to see some actual real data to show that something is being done to implement and address them.
I think it would be better to keep employers and providers together and not separate them out. It does not help providers assist employers in their needs if not everyone is at the table together. In addition, employers do not get to see who is available in their area to work with and how each provider works.
Representatives from the 2 departments at a state level DOL/DOE, not just local
An opportunity to meet with businesses - don't have it all separate.
Would like to see a regional map of needs and solutions.
Employers and service providers and educators all together
a plan of action with specific time lines and who will do what
I felt the audience could have had more time to talk. There was an individual in the session that I felt monopolized some of the conversations. I think this individual felt as though she had all of the answers. It felt a little confrontational.
Specific to the food and agriculture industry. Farms and restaurants face unique challenges.
Employee voices, youth voices, examples of potential solutions, calls to action, specific ways to get involved, success stories, provider cross-walk to identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration, etc.
See above + dialogue between an employer (no HR) and service provider that illustrates how they can work together, open invitation to the quarterly workforce meetings that take place (BDCC hosted)
Identification of one or more tangible, achievable goals along with plan development.
A game plan. Less discussion about what everyone already knows in regards to the lack of qualified potential employees.
Maybe this wasn't really designed for my organizations participation but if they do want to have another workforce summit they should bring in more community partners and employers and have more realistic conversations about what needs to be addressed. The goal of this summit isn't really clear to me either.
Concrete actions that will address getting the workforce to the level that we can employ
More emphasis on how to network the various 'partners' for exponential effects.

Add educators; more not just one, all of the superintendents, principles from county schools. We need to start with high schools.
industry focus groups / collaboration in order to come up with real time creative solutions
Include youth workforce development topics in the conversation: career pathways, use real cases and give participants a chance to select which case to provide input on for a better alignment of experience and knowledge with identifying current systems and proposing workable solutions.
Further discussion about actual strategies we can implement to start moving the needle in the right direction with regard to workforce issues.
More of the same

3. In your opinion, is there anything that could have gone better or differently?
Better attendance from both groups.
A lot of redundancy in the group work
Not that I can think of
Prep was good. Idea for mapping good. Knowledge of who was available to get insight from could have been helpful. For example, Working mapping session facilitation at the tables needed introduction to who was there, and an acknowledgement of who in the network wasn't present and what information we may not have had as a result.
less time in huddles, this allows too much time for some with political agendas or ideas to take over the conversation.
too much "top-down" brainstorming - need more input from those on the bottom
No. I liked the format and engagement
No
I enjoyed the middle portion when employers and agencies were all there. I think it would have been interesting at tables to hear from both sides of the workforce.
I thought the afternoon was very poorly attended, which contributed to limited conversations.
Same players, same conversations, left unfulfilled. We need action plans for the county, not just conversation after conversation about how there aren't enough good workers to go around.
Nothing major. Jeff Lewis did a great job running the summit and we had good discussions. Hopefully Montpelier hears us.
Mix the morning group and the afternoon! Both groups complained about lack of good communication channels, but they were by the very nature of the event segregated!

The afternoon activity didn't really help to move the needle on the work that needs to happen.
the man who lead the event dominated the discussion too much in the small group.
There needs to be a focus, a goal. I'm not sure what the intended outcome of the day was.
don't know
Well done. Been nice if there was wider participation by business community.
Both the morning and the afternoon groups complained about a lack of communication. Bring them together!
Have the work trainers and employers meet.
I loved the format last year, I thought that was more effective than the format this year. I did not love the mapping exercise, I thought it pigeon-holed things too much and did not allow me to understand what my fellow participants were bringing to the table and favored folks who were inside the programs that were being described (for example, I ended up in the group with the parolee as an example and the parole officers there knew the "right" answers but no one else knew enough to figure out how that process really worked - not how it was supposed to work, but how it REALLY worked - and there was not even enough time to hash out the details we didn't know about). If those specific examples are used, then more details are needed for those scenarios so participants have enough time to work through the scenario or each group gets an expert in that area for advice or to answer questions, etc. It left me with the notion that we don't know all of the ways that individuals are being helped into or back into our workforce, but also that there are SO many details to each of the programs that folks are eligible for that there is literally NO way to get all that info down. Additionally, there was no voice for the employer who might have been looking to hire someone like our parolee example, so we didn't know the barriers that person really faced, we could just make assumptions from our own experience as employers. It made it really challenging to come out feeling like we had found common ground or we had found the true pitfalls, it just seemed like an arbitrary exercise.
The facilitator was skilled and professional.
The scenarios seemed built to generate a preordained answer: create regional referral specialist positions. This is a band-aid solution adding another layer on top of too much existing complexity. Using the group wisdom to cut through the complexity, for instance by compiling meaningful case studies that could then live on the DOL website, would be more useful and lasting.
No.
No
Very good conference, although perhaps an hour or so to long
More explicit contact and collaboration between se five providers and educators. The implicit separation that we should be in two sessions implies something that suggests there are differing priorities.

I have never been to one of these events before, so I wasn't filled with expectations, just an open mind.
I was very pleasantly surprised; thank you.
As a provider, I didn't find the afternoon very productive. I think it would have been a much better summit had the providers and businesses attended and sat together and not had 2 separate sessions. This would have afforded all of us the opportunity to network and for the businesses and providers to better understand each other's needs, what we each offer and how we could work better together.
No
The effort was very well facilitated and an interesting approach to gathering information. But the outcomes seemed to be a rehash of what has been discussed for the last two years. We already know it's complicated; we already know there are many actors doing things and not a good way of sharing information. There will certainly be value in identifying regional differences. It was unclear to me how the outcomes would be used to inform future action.
It should've been more specific and targeted - the general lumping together of all the service providers in the afternoon was not productive
Combine the educators with the employers.
(I participated in the PM session) Service providers were oriented to the conditions creating obstacles in our workforce environment. My impression is many service providers work within these conditions everyday, and the organizations they represent have been aware of these conditions for decades. Nice to get on the same page by going over definitions/reasons for these conditions on your powerpoint, but I suggest allowing MORE time for service providers to comment on what they see/experience, and LESS time for the facilitator to give that explanation.
Everyone was great!
Yes.
Event management (welcome table, greeter, etc.); start on time;
none
No. I feel it was a suitable starting point for a challenging dilemma.
it was very well done (the food was excellent as well)
I didn't get a lot out of the scenario mapping.
more overlap between employers and service providers during the day.
I simply look forward to the outcomes to see if anything really gets done or is this another nod to business that ultimately goes nowhere.
thank you! great start.

<p>It generally seems to be the same people in the room that have been committed to working on the topic for many years at this point. I wonder how we can capture greater participation for such a critical topic.</p>
<p>I think the group activities were a good way to share insight about some of the resources available, but those resources could have just as easily been exchanged through a condensed discussion of case studies. As it was, the group activity largely ended up feeling ineffective, and the subsequent time devoted to sharing each group's work was an anticlimactic.</p>
<p>Have both the employers and service providers attend together. It would help with networking and opening the lines of communication.</p>
<p>Nope, it was great to connect with people locally. Loved having schools in the room.</p>
<p>I attended the afternoon session. I feel like it would have been nice to have more of a wrap up comment time after the groups split out to work on scenarios to discuss lots of misconceptions that became clear regarding what supports people assume are available. Thank you for your time and efforts!</p>
<p>Well done. Particular kudos to the GMTCC Culinary Program and Chef Becker!!</p>
<p>Great beginning to a problem that will become more of an issue in the very near future.</p>
<p>Agenda prior to meeting.</p>
<p>Employers and service providers should be working together. I would have preferred meeting alongside employers, we need to solve these challenges together.</p>
<p>An agenda posted and better description of what would happen vs what did happen at this summit. Myself and peers where disappointed</p>
<p>Employer participation was small.</p>
<p>The lunch period was a little odd with people coming and going before the second session started. Also, could more organizations be invited to ensure the discussions are as well rounded as possible?</p>
<p>It sounded a bit like the state already had an idea of what they wanted to do. I.e. create a new position to coordinate agencies. That could work but it could also flop. I hope that the state listens at all 12 summits to get a rounded idea of the situation we are experiencing on the ground and that the state has an appropriate response.</p>
<p>no</p>
<p>More data analysis as describe above - - - - other sets of data that would also be useful.</p>
<p>no</p>
<p>We need to find ways to bring more NEK employers to the table for these conversations.</p>
<p>network network..... network</p>

<p>The event functioned as expected, and perhaps that is itself how it could have gone better. We are charged with thinking outside of the box but we still use the same methods for getting there. We might have more courage to entertain ridiculous playful brainstorming to find an unusual solution.</p> <p>Also there was an uncomfortable Us / Them sense of the Professional Problem Solvers finding Answers for the Unemployed Workers whose lives are in disarray.</p> <p>In the absence of specifics for the sample narratives in the workshop, the Us Professionals created a very bleak Them in Crisis picture. That data point is worth noting across all of the summits. Until "Us" includes All of Us, there will be insufficient empathy to solve problems.</p>
<p>More structure and variety to the afternoon service provider session.</p>
<p>My group had two or three people that dominated the conversation and didn't allow others to speak or share ideas. I never got the chance to talk. Facilitators could help manage the floor space</p>
<p>Please see above. By the end of the case study session in the afternoon we were just making stuff up since the people who knew what we didn't know weren't there.</p>
<p>Less of the same thing. Less money applied to talking about and studying the issues, and more resources put into areas where resources are needed.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>No all was good</p>
<p>Yes - more detail. More substance. More Business Participation (maybe timing). Businesses and Providers meet together not separately.</p>
<p>I thought it was done very well.</p>
<p>I felt the employer and services mingling time could have been done differently as people sat with who they knew and didn't necessarily know what to do with the time.</p>
<p>I thought the moderator in Newport was much more sensitive to the issues discussed than the moderator at NVU-Lyndon. I was a little surprised at some of the NVU-Lyndon moderator's seemingly negative comments about our solutions to the different scenarios.</p>
<p>I'm not sure how to deal with issues across sectors and whether it would be helpful to talk about certain sectors, but I did wonder about that issue during the meeting. It was probably more helpful that we were able to discover our SHARED problems and challenges, not matter our sectors. We didn't hear about the talent pipeline management work at all.</p>
<p>no it went great</p>
<p>I though that this was an excellent use of time, thank you.</p>
<p>no</p>

I believe it would be helpful to have more government and regional decision makers present at these if possible
A more historical lookout at the VT workforce scene and why it's changed or not.
I'm not sure why the employers were split into a different session then the providers. It seems like we should have been in one session so that we could all come together with a plan to address the issues we are facing.
REDC did an amazing job hosting!
I think it would have been good for both employers and providers (at least for part of the time) to be involved in the summit together. Feedback on the survey: I attended three summits because I work in three counties and the survey only allows one option to indicate which summit attended. I know that other participants attended more than one summit as well.
Connect the employers and providers to clear up misunderstandings and work together to form solutions.
Well run, open and free flowing discussion.
need the establishment of a coordinated effort
I think if someone signs up for one session please clarify whether he/she is aware there are 2 sessions in one day. I very much enjoyed the session. I think you should offer "maybe" as a choice as to whether we would like to attend quarterly meetings. Thx. Lori Bartlett . lori.bartlett@headrest.org. Feel free to contact me to clarify my answers if needed.
Less group work and brainstorming. Identified many problems but few solutions.
I like the two high school/CTE presentations during lunch - that helps attendees consider where the pipeline starts. Maybe have students share their experiences next time?
It was awkward to enter an event already in progress and have to introduce myself to those already there (over lunch) and have no sense of what the morning (employer) conversation had entailed. The speakers also did not re-introduce themselves to the afternoon audience.
Excellent event with variety of interactions. Thanks!
From my understanding this was just a brainstorming session. So I am not sure if it could have gone better being that there was lots of brainstorming. The next step from what I understand is for a number of more discussions and then some state resource brainstorming and then at some point in the future some kind of game plan. I would like to see in the future a distinct effort to help small business under 20 employees. These company seem to make up a lot of Vermont when considered a group. Though due to either publicity issues or someone else they are left to struggle much more than the larger small businesses over 20 employees.

<p>I think the mapping exercise would be better if there were people who had knowledge of the systems that they're working in at each table. I noticed that I contributed very little meaningful information to the mapping at my table because I have absolutely no knowledge of the system to even ask intelligent questions. I also noticed that the table that had a scenario relating to my field of work was way off base with what they thought was or was not happening already in that area. Felt like we spent a lot of time spinning wheels and not enough time identifying actual issues or potential solutions.</p>
<p>I would have liked an agenda ahead of time, and wasn't sure whether or not lunch was provided.</p>
<p>I have been to a number of these summits and while the talk is interesting, there seems to be no real movement on actually addressing the problem with some solutions. Much of what was and has been said in the past is similar if not exactly the same. I would like to see some action being done - anything! It seems that we talk an awful lot but the situation has not changed and nothing (at least overtly visible) is being done. I would love to see a plan in place and benchmarks for goals to be reached. I sincerely apologize if this sounds a bit curt, the conference was very thought provoking and interesting. The sharpness of this is more out of frustration. Thank you for your attention and understanding.</p>
<p>I would have liked an agenda ahead of time, and wasn't sure whether or not lunch was provided.</p>
<p>Assign 'case studies' to groups based on our knowledge set and experience.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Great start to the conversation!</p>
<p>Consider balancing the negative workforce data with more success stories and opportunities for collaboration and participation.</p>
<p>I thought it was great and we should have more of these! Thank you</p>
<p>No</p>

Narrative Responses to VDoL Survey

When asked "What did you expect prior to attending?" here is what some people had to say:

- An opportunity to build collaboration as a regional team.
- Meet with employers.
- A day of learning about businesses workforce needs and challenges. What the service providers in the region can do and what they already do to support them.
- A discussion about overcoming the obstacles presented by a small or dwindling workforce.
- A conversation with some of the partners and businesses that have already collaborated.
- Opportunity to connect with area business leaders, small business owners, and individuals considering start-ups.
- Connect with new faces and better understand workforce challenges facing out region from an employer perspective.
- A chance to meet partners and brainstorm together.
- To learn how agencies can collaborate better because of service overlap.
- Case manager training to support case managers in new ideas and to stay current in some learning.
- The ability to promote services offered by my department.
- To hear about workforce challenges that impact the area.
- Employers looking to fill their positions.
- Strategic discussions about the workforce system
- I was expecting more opportunities to better understand gaps on the provider and employers' side and didn't feel I walked away with anything new other than what I already know.
- I expected the morning to be a discussion with business owners/leadership on how VDOL and other agencies could best serve their needs. I expected a bigger crowd of service providers for the afternoon giving all the opportunity to collaborate and ultimately provide better services to employers and job seekers alike.
- Agencies and Employers coming together to share ideas.
- I had read the information provided and my expectations was gaining information on strengths and barriers for the regions in which I work.

When asked "What did you find useful about these summits?" here is what some people had to say:

- Collaborative work and information shared by team members in small group settings led to deeper interaction.
- Networking with staff from other agencies.
- The tight facilitation helped to keep discussions from becoming negative and generalized.
- People seemed generally hopeful to find solutions and establish connections.
- The conversation. No thought was incorrect, your station or level of expertise did not stop you from voicing an idea.
- It is always positive to highlight VDOL resources and that VDOL is business friendly.
- The employer perspective.
- Brainstorming and learning more about area partners and how we can team together for our clients.

- Working through scenarios with people from other agencies. I was able to learn more about what they provide for services.
- The facilitators kept us on track.
- The constant flow of conversation.
- Letting employers express their concerns, and then brainstorming with them on possible solutions to improve the economic situation.
- The group problem think scenarios at the end were very interesting for hearing various points of view.
- Learned that employers are experiencing similar problems but deal with them differently regionally and have different opinions on the cause.
- Learning what other small communities were doing and how they were able to accomplish their goals.
- The merging of agencies and employers, how they were separated to an extent but also inclusive.
- A good understanding of how difficult it is to fill certain positions in Vermont.
- Getting together and meeting employers and providers we may not have a relationship with.
- The morning portion and hearing from businesses.
- I thoroughly enjoyed the exercises that we did in the afternoon. It was amazing to see what could be accomplished when all of the local partners worked together!
- That we all share similar obstacles.
- It was interesting to hear the thoughts of other community members.
- I appreciated the information which was shared via the partners. I was able to attend the am session with the employers and found this to be additionally beneficial. The information obtained from the employers reaffirmed what our local office believed which was employers are unaware of the many services the Dept. of Labor offers.

When asked "Was there anything that disappointed you about the summits?" here is what some people had to say:

- Didn't get to meet employers.
- While I understand the reasoning about keeping the two groups (businesses/service providers) separate, I think it may have been helpful to have mixed them in order to get both groups involved into a conversation.
- Unfortunately, some people used the summits as a platform to dote about their programs or businesses and did not seemingly try to find solutions with the group.
- Although the attendance was good, I would have liked to see more agencies and employers there.
- Not having access to the full day events made it difficult to communicate the range of services available to businesses, employers, and community members considering engaging in creating a business. There was a level of assumption of what the Department has to offer and what the area community support system has to offer without the ability to provide those details. Many business professionals did not attend the service provider sessions and a networking opportunity was missed.
- Low employer attendance.
- Yes, the employers and service providers did not attend the same session. Employers had their own session to attend.
- I was there for the service provider session. I would have liked to have heard directly for employers also.

- It would be nice to have case managers and employers in the same room together when discussing struggles and needs. I was disappointed, when doing the group activity, that one person would like to dominate the area in services and forgets sometimes other agencies are first point of contact/services.
- I wish we had done more exercises.
- Low number of employers.
- The afternoon group of people were not told that lunch would be available- we all got there at 12 thinking the meeting would start right up, most of us had lunch prior to getting to the site. Seems like there was not a lot of information given to us ahead of time. Also, I would have liked the option of attending the morning session. I can understand that it was for employers but would have liked to listen to their concerns.
- I was slightly disappointed by employer turn out, however with the lack of workforce, it is to be expected that employers may not have had availability to break free.
- Vendors in the hall, made it feel a bit creepy and off topic.
- I was very disappointed that there weren't more businesses in attendance.
- I think having the businesses and providers meeting separately was not a good model. For instance, the mapping exercise would have been tremendously informative if BOTH cohorts worked together on that. Businesses would have a better understanding of the work that goes into preparing individuals, and the providers would have an opportunity to understand how the "end user" perceives services, supports and the quality of candidates being referred for consideration.
- Attendance on the provider side was dismal in 2 of the summits I attended. I expected to see others that should have been there and weren't. IE...DOC, ESD, VR & VABIR (counselors and job developers), Tutorial Center (Bennington), job coaches from DS, employer training and development reps etc.
- The afternoon portion. There was a lack of providers in the afternoon and many of the people I work with on a daily basis were not at the event.
- I was unable to stay for the duration of the event.
- It would have been beneficial to have employers and support service providers attending the same sessions to learn of the other options which exist. VDOL is more than unemployment insurance and worker's compensation. The Chittenden County session was much different than that of Franklin County as expected. Chittenden County had more of a AOE focus and the need to educate at a much earlier age but who should that be and when. No resolve seemed to occur. Thoughts and ideas were posted but now what???

When asked "What would you change if these summits were held again next year?" here is what some people had to say:

- Meet with employers.
- Possibly 1/2 day with both groups present. But would need a clear, well-facilitated session. It also be great next year to share some action/outcomes that came out of this year that were implemented.

- I would make sure that businesses and professional services were separated by utilizing a check in system.
- Have a larger session with employers AND providers and assign seating so that new connections can be made.
- A half day agenda only, attended by both business and service community for networking. Create resource materials in a two-pocket folder that explain the job and training services in the field and the business and regulation services at the Central Office level. Allow staff to utilize the remainder of the day to connect with businesses around the county who were not able to be present of 5 industries in need that are not client based/driven for outreach.
- Format for the afternoon (service provider) session. I liked the point of the exercise...to get people thinking about what ought to happen vs what actually does, but I think the exercise could have been facilitated as a full team exercise w/breakout sessions aimed at solutions focused brainstorming...i.e....we all know the weak links/struggles, but what's inspiring and helpful is populating and discussing ideas for change in service delivery.
- More time to understand what is available in the community for supports and programs and how to work together.
- Employers and the service providers need to be together at the same session. This will allow for an open line of communication between both.
- Possible look at a better way of mapping what each agency does before the summit. Look at who all the stakeholders are internal and external.
- More information about the newest apprenticeships
- Open it up to more employers, to include the trades.
- Publicize them more. I never heard mention of them anywhere except within my own Department. I think it would have boosted participation.
- More interaction with the guest speaker. He was awesome, and I'm sorry I don't remember his name. There wasn't enough time for us to absorb what he was presenting and think about how it would apply.
- The employers should be a part of the afternoon session, not just the morning session.
- More feedback from employers.
- Spend an entire day TOGETHER
- Clearly, we continue to have a wide gap between the employer and provider side. The only way to begin to bridge the gap, is for both to engage in the same discussion; hear, learn and understand each other.
- Employers and support service providers attend the event together. I believe it should be via invitation only with a focus on smaller businesses. Statistics presented at the event highlighted there is more than the "regular" large businesses and not just manufacturing (Chittenden County focus).

When asked "Is there any other feedback you would like to share?" here is what some people had to say:

- LMI data across the county and VT needs would be helpful. Having Mat and his team breakdown the data per county and then snapshot the state would be helpful handouts for all involved. Many walked away discussing the statistic quoted that in 10 years VT will need 4000 RNs. Some were questioning the validity of that statement and others were wondering about a county breakdown of

other needs with the changing age demographic with Boomers entering retirement and needing more health care.

- I really enjoyed the exercise with mapping, I'd like to see more exercises and different type of exercises.
- Only that progress should be demonstrated at future annual summits.
- Again, the guest speaker, discussion urban planning, and how malls, parking lots, etc. are not as profitable as re-using existing facilities and building up is more advantageous than out. In Vermont, the more land we save the better, building 2 and 3 stories would be a great asset, and it would save our land (reputation for small cities) and increase our town revenue at the same time. The thought that a large parking lot, or a 10-year life span department chain is not producing money for our towns was a new concept, one that I would like our town administrators to seriously learn. Great job!
- One participant said this was just another effort by the RDC's to "meet, eat and retreat," That the information that was shared won't amount to any actionable plan.
- I found the speakers to be engaging, and I did follow up on the site VT futures project, very enlightening!
- I overheard the consultant prepping the table facilitators and was somewhat mortified to hear him say "you need to understand that the providers don't have the same sense of urgency as the business community, so waiting 2 weeks to respond is not unusual". I felt this was a clear bias and should not have been the way the day was framed. It left me wondering if the right consultant was chosen (former RCD Director)?
- The employer activities were ok, and some good stuff came out of them. I'm concerned that nothing will happen with and it will only add to the frustrations the employer communities have. The activity on the provider side was quite weak and I don't feel, was really helpful. Two of the mapping activities I was involved in, were employer based and nearly impossible to do as none of us were employers. We could only complete the activity assuming we knew what action steps an employer might take. The mapping activities may be better utilized with mixed groups of employers and providers where the takeaway is not...what did we learn...BUT...what are missing with process and where is the duplication occurring.
- Overall, I took some great information back to our local office to share.
- The presenter was very engaging. It was very nice that the Governor stopped in and took the time to talk with us.
- As a member of VDOL I believed the am session with the employers was of great benefit. I learned what we knew and know all along most employers are unaware of what VDOL does. Support Service providers are aware of what we do, and we were a vital part of the afternoon discussion. I believe this conversation was a step in the right direction. AOE, VDOL, and VR are key to Vermont's future workforce and we need to work on how we can get to the same page for the betterment of Vermont.

ATTACHMENT K – Act 189

No. 189. An act relating to workforce development.
(H.919)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Stakeholder Alignment, Coordination, and Engagement * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

(1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic vitality of Vermont. However, as with all states throughout New England, Vermont currently faces several key labor market challenges:

(A) Employers throughout our State are facing an extremely serious and ongoing skills gap due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple sectors, today and into the future.

(B) Vermont has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current job vacancies.

(C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and require training to update their skills and find job opportunities that match their interests.

(D) Many Vermonters who are unemployed or underemployed face significant barriers to employment and require more support to overcome these barriers.

(E) Vermont youth currently access postsecondary learning at the lowest rates in New England and with significant inequities of access that are correlated with family income and background. A strategic focus on addressing equity in postsecondary learning opportunities, in alignment with workforce needs, will ensure Vermont maximizes the potential of every Vermonter to participate in the labor market.

(F) Parents, youths, and families are facing a future in which the next generation of workers may not have the same opportunities to prosper as the previous generation.

(G) Vermont has a series of fragmented workforce development programs, but not a unified workforce development system. The recently reconstituted State Workforce Development Board is central to creating such a system.

(2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont's building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is a diverse public-private partnership among employers, government, and education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the skills businesses need.

(b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

(1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont’s workforce development and training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the Commissioner of Labor in collaboration with key administration partners, the education and training communities, and other stakeholders from business and government.

(2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will result in a more coherent, efficient, and effective workforce development system within which:

(A) all Vermonters who want to work and all employers who want workers can connect, through education and training, with what they need to thrive; and

(B) stakeholders and programs, both inside and outside State government, are optimally connected and aligned.

Sec. 2. STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT, COORDINATION, AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS; VISION; GOALS

(a) Stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement. The State Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with the Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, of Human Services, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, of Natural Resources, and of Transportation shall:

(1) conduct a stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process, consistent with 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.100 and 679.130 and 10 V.S.A. § 541a, to ensure and promote better coordination and agreement around the State’s vision and shared goals for meeting Vermont’s 21st-century workforce education, training, recruitment, and retention needs;

(2) design the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process to inform workforce-related aspects of other State strategic plans and reports, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan, the State Economic Development Marketing Plan, and the Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; and

(3) in the course of the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process, solicit the perspectives of job seekers, incumbent workers, employers, industry representatives, program administrators, and workforce service delivery providers.

(b) Action plan. In adopting an action plan, the State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) on or before February 1, 2020, describe the State’s collective vision and goals for workforce development, which shall serve as the basis for an action plan to revitalize Vermont’s workforce development system;

(2) post online the vision, goals, and any findings or recommendations; and

(3) provide advance notice to the Chair and Vice Chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs if the recommendations may require legislative action during the 2020 legislative session.

(c) Regional delivery systems. The State Workforce Development Board shall review how functions performed by local workforce investment boards, career technical education regional advisory boards,

regional planning commissions, regional development corporations, and other regional economic development and workforce-related boards could be more equitably executed from region to region and recommend structures that would foster better regional collaboration, alignment, and employer participation.

(d) Information sharing. The Department of Labor, with assistance from the State Workforce Development Board, shall facilitate the sharing of information among workforce development and training-delivery organizations during and following the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process so they may stay current with initiatives and plans related to building an effective workforce development system.

(e) Board authority; permissive activities. The State Workforce Development Board may:

(1) create a workforce development social network map of workforce service delivery providers, employers, workforce program administrators, and industry representatives to:

(A) develop baseline data in conformance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act about how individuals, including new Americans, and organizations, both within and outside State government, are involved with workforce development and training around the State;

(B) analyze the relative level of connectivity of people and programs managed inside and outside State government; and

(C) identify opportunities to strengthen connectivity to achieve greater program alignment toward, and realize the Board's vision for, the State's workforce development and training system;

(2) identify the resources necessary to maintain the workforce development social network map over time and track changes in levels of connectivity and alignment across the stakeholder community;

(3) in compliance with employment and confidentiality regulations, and after reviewing currently available data and resources, collect information from:

(A) "front line" service delivery providers to understand how the current system is and is not serving the needs of job seekers and employers;

(B) employers and employees to understand the effectiveness of existing workforce programs; and

(C) past and present participants of training programs to understand whether the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of interest or training;

(4) initiate activities to improve stakeholders' understanding concerning:

(A) the workforce development system;

(B) the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (Act);

(C) the role of the Board; and

(D) how the Act governs workforce development funding and policies implemented by the State;

(5) recommend strategies to improve:

(A) how employer-outreach positions in each of the State-funded field offices might be shared;

(B) what type of coordination is needed between the State-level employer-outreach staff and local workforce organizations, including staff of the regional development corporations and regional planning commissions, to better serve employers;

(C) whether establishing a One-Stop American Job Center in each region to provide comprehensive customer-driven services for employers and job seekers could better serve businesses, improve responsiveness to the needs of emerging sectors, and increase access to qualified, available workers through direct outreach and recruitment;

(D) scaling or expanding pilot projects that link experts who have career and industry knowledge directly with middle schools or high schools, or both, to foster career readiness and exploration;

(E) ways to share data and information collected from employers among parties who implement workforce development programs; and

(F) what knowledge and education employers may require better to respond to their employees as workers and as members of a family; and

(6) following the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process outlined in subsection (a) of this section, make recommendations to align relevant funding sources to promote:

(A) employer-driven workforce education and training opportunities;

(B) results-based outcomes;

(C) innovative and effective initiatives, pilots, or demonstration programs that can be scaled to the rest of the State;

(D) access to federal resources that enable more innovative programs and initiatives in Vermont;

(E) equitable access to employment and training opportunities for women and underrepresented populations in Vermont; and

(F) best practices aligned with a two-generation approach to eliminating poverty, as identified by the Vermont Work Group on Whole Family Approach to Jobs.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 541a is amended to read:

§ 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 3111, the Governor shall establish a the State Workforce Development Board to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

(b) Additional duties; planning; process.

(1) In order to inform its decision-making decision making and to provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board shall:

(A) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the State that brings together employers and potential employees, including students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training, to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and training needs; and

(2)(B) maintain familiarity and promote alignment with the federal, State, and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategies and other economic development planning processes, and coordinate workforce and education activities in the State, including the development and implementation of the State plan required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic development planning processes occurring in the State, as appropriate.

(2) To ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the State’s workforce and economic goals, the Board shall regularly:

(A) review and approve 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; and

(B) publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways, including on websites managed by the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Economic Development.

(3) The Board shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and industry-recognized credentials and certificates, excluding high school diplomas and postsecondary academic degrees, that are aligned with the Career Pathways.

* * *

Sec. 4. RESERVATION OF FUNDS; IMPLEMENTATION

In fiscal year 2019, the Department of Labor shall reserve the amount of \$40,000.00 from the Workforce Development Council Fund and the amount of \$40,000.00 of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds reserved by the Governor for statewide workforce investment activities, subject to permissible use, to assist the State Workforce Development Board in performing the duties specified in this act.

* * * CTE and Adult Technical Education; Career Pathways * * *

Sec. 5. CAREER PATHWAYS

(a) Definition. As used in this section, “Career Pathways” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality educational, training, and other experiences and services, beginning not later than seventh grade, that:

- (1) at the secondary level, integrates the academic and technical skills required for postsecondary success;
- (2) is developed in partnership with business and industry and aligns with the skill needs of industries in the local, regional, and State economies;
- (3) prepares an individual to transition seamlessly from secondary to postsecondary or adult technical education experiences and be successful in any of a full range of secondary, postsecondary, or adult technical education options, including registered apprenticeships;
- (4) includes career counseling and work-based learning experiences to support an individual in achieving the individual’s educational and career goals;
- (5) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (6) organizes educational, training, and other experiences and services, with multiple entry and exit points along a training progression, to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- (7) enables an individual to gain a secondary-school diploma or its recognized equivalent and allow postsecondary credit and industry certifications to be earned in high school; and
- (8) prepares an individual to enter, or to advance within, a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

(b) Development of Career Pathways. The Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall implement a process for developing Career Pathways that considers

- (1) State and local labor market demands;
- (2) the recommendations of regional career technical education advisory boards or other employer-based boards;
- (3) alignment with postsecondary education and training opportunities; and
- (4) students’ ability to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment credits, postsecondary credentials or degrees, and employment.

(c) Reporting. The Agency of Education shall report its progress in developing Career Pathways to the Board on at least an annual basis.

(d) The Board may identify opportunities to leverage Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, Carl D. Perkins Act postsecondary funds, Next Generation funds, Vermont Training Program funds, and other relevant funding to develop community-based Career Pathways that respond to local occupational demands.

Sec. 6. CAREER READINESS; CTE PILOTS

(a) Collaboration. The Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall promote collaboration among middle schools and regional career technical education (CTE) centers to engage in activities including:

- (1) developing and delivering introductory CTE courses or lessons to middle school students that are part of broader career education, exploration, and development programs and that are connected to Career Pathways and CTE programs, as appropriate;
- (2) increasing student exposure to local career opportunities through activities such as business tours, guest lectures, career fairs, and career-awareness days; and
- (3) increasing student exposure to CTE programs through activities such as tours of regional CTE centers, virtual field trips, and CTE guest visits.

(b) Pilot projects. The Agency of Education shall approve up to four pilot projects in a variety of CTE settings. These pilot projects shall propose 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. Pilot projects shall require both high school and regional CTE center involvement, and shall be designed to enhance the delivery of educational experiences to both high school students and CTE students while addressing the current competitive nature of funding CTE programs.

- (1) A pilot project shall extend not longer than two years.
- (2) The Agency shall establish guidelines, proposal submission requirements, and a review process to approve pilot projects.
- (3) On or before January 15, 2020, the Agency shall report on the outcomes of the pilot projects to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

(c) Recommendation on CTE pre-tech programs. On or before January 15, 2020, the Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall recommend to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs flexible and student-centered policies that support equitable access and opportunity to participate in CTE pre-tech foundation and exploratory programs for students in grades 9 and 10. This recommendation shall include building such activities into students' personalized learning plans when appropriate, so that students are exposed to a wide variety of career choices in their areas of interest. In making its recommendation, the Agency shall consider:

- (1) the existing practices of regional CTE centers currently offering CTE pre-tech foundation and exploratory programs for students in grades 9 and 10;

(2) the results of the collaborative efforts made between regional CTE centers and middle schools as required under subsection (a) of this section; and

(3) the results of the pilot projects under subsection (b) of this section.

(d) Technical assistance.

(1) The Agency of Education shall provide technical assistance to schools to help them develop career education, exploration, and development, beginning in middle school, and introduce opportunities available through the regional CTE centers.

(2) The Agency of Education shall offer technical assistance so that regional CTE centers provide rigorous programs of study to students that are aligned with approved Career Pathways. Such programs of study may be combined with a registered apprenticeship program when the registered apprenticeship program is included in a student's personalized learning plan.

(3) The Agency of Education shall offer technical assistance to local education agencies to ensure that each high school student has the opportunity to experience meaningful work-based learning when included in the student's personalized learning plan, and that high schools coordinate effectively with regional CTE centers to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs of student placements and study already provided by the centers.

(e) Definition. As used in this section, "Career Pathways" shall have the same meaning as in Sec. 4 of this act.

Sec. 7. ADULT TRAINING PROGRAMS

(a) Effective use of State investments. The Department of Labor shall ensure that the State's investments in adult training programs are part of a system that is responsive to labor-market demands, provides equitable access to a broad variety of training opportunities, and provides to those jobseekers with barriers to employment the accommodations or services they need to be successful.

(b) Delivery of training programs. Training programs delivered by regional CTE centers, nonprofit and private entities, and institutions of higher education shall be included in the system.

(c) Technical assistance. The Agency of Education shall provide technical and programmatic guidance and assistance, as appropriate, to the Department of Labor to ensure alignment between secondary and postsecondary programs, policies, funding, and institutions.

Sec. 8. ADULT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

(a) Regional career technical education (CTE) centers. Vermont's regional CTE centers shall offer adult CTE programs that:

(1) develop technical courses for adults, aligned with a career pathway when possible, that support the occupational training needs of Vermonters seeking to up-skill, re-skill, and obtain credentials leading to employment;

(2) ensure that new and existing training responds to local or Statewide labor market demands;

(3) coordinate with State and regional partners, including other CTE centers, high schools, postsecondary educational institutions, and private training providers, to ensure quality, consistency, efficiency, and efficacy of State and federally funded training opportunities;

(4) support expansion of adult work-based learning experiences, such as registered apprenticeships, by providing related instruction, as appropriate; and

(5) maximize use of federal and State funds by aligning with the State's goals, priorities, and strategies outlined in Vermont's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified plan.

(b) Evaluation of technical and occupational training. The State Workforce Development Board shall review how technical and occupational training is delivered to adults throughout the State and consider how adult CTE programs, delivered through the regional CTE centers, contribute to this system. The Board shall make recommendations on:

(1) staffing levels and structures that best support a strong adult technical education system;

(2) optimal hours of operation and facility availability for adult programs; and

(3) any other issues it finds relevant to enhancing support for adult technical education.

(c) Reporting. On or before January 15, 2019, the Board shall report its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education.

(d) Partnering with employers. Nothing in this section shall prevent an adult CTE program or regional CTE center from partnering directly with employers to design and deliver programs meeting specific needs of employers or provide additional courses that meet a State or community need.

(e) Definition. As used in this section, "Career Pathways" shall have the same meaning as in Sec. 5 of this act.

* * * Workforce Training * * *

Sec. 9. STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) promote the creation of registered apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, paid internships, occupational trainings, and other work-based and on-the-job learning opportunities that lead to industry-recognized certificates and credentials;

(2) consider ways to meet employers' immediate and long-term employment needs in a variety of ways that can include:

(A) expanding the number and diversity of employer-sponsored registered apprenticeships;

(B) promoting the development of and access to preapprenticeship programs in high schools and career and technical education centers;

(C) engaging Vermont's colleges and universities in delivering the related instructional components of registered apprenticeship programs;

(D) expanding the number of internships and returnships available in current and new sectors;

(E) developing partnerships and alignment between training programs offered in correctional facilities and those offered in business or community settings; and

(F) developing registered apprenticeship programs that guarantee offers of continued employment or consideration for future employment upon completion of the program;

(3) create a process for identifying, monitoring, and evaluating occupational trainings and industry-recognized credentials, which may include a mechanism for endorsing programs that offer credentials or certificates in order to facilitate targeted investments in programs that meet industry needs, ensuring that:

(A) business and industry are participants and are engaged early in the process;

(B) the credential review process involves relevant stakeholders;

(C) credentials are differentiated based on rigor and industry demand; and

(D) systems are designed to be responsive to the changing needs of industry;

(4) create and periodically review publicly available documents that list:

(A) current industry-recognized, State-recognized, and federally recognized credentials;

(B) the requirements to obtain these credentials;

(C) training programs that lead to these credentials; and

(D) the cost of training and educational programs required to obtain the credential; and

(5) work with the Office of Professional Regulation:

(A) to increase recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states; and

(B) to support professional paths that involve more than one industry-recognized, State-recognized, or federally recognized credential and rules adopted by the Office.

Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 543 is amended to read:

§ 543. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; GRANT PROGRAMS

* * *

(f) Awards. The Commissioner of Labor, in consultation with the Chair of the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop award criteria and may grant awards to the following:

* * *

(2) Vermont Strong Internship Program. Funding for eligible internship programs and activities under the Vermont Strong Internship Program established in section 544 of this title.

(3) Vermont Returnship Program. Funding for eligible returnship programs and activities under the Vermont Returnship Program established in section 545 of this title.

(4) Apprenticeship Program. The Vermont Apprenticeship Program established under 21 V.S.A. chapter 13. Awards under this subdivision may be used to fund the cost of apprenticeship-related instruction provided by the Department of Labor.

(5) Career Focus and Planning programs. In collaboration with the Agency of Education, funding for one or more programs that institute career training and planning for young Vermonters, beginning in middle school.

(g) Career Pathways. Programs that are funded under this section resulting in a credit, certificate, or credential shall demonstrate alignment with a Career Pathway.

(h) Expanding offerings. A regional career and technical education center that develops an adult technical education program of study using funding under this section shall:

(1) make the program materials available to other regional career and technical education centers and adult technical education programs;

(2) to the extent possible, align the program with subsequent programs offered through the Vermont State College System, the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, or an accredited independent college located in Vermont; and

(3) respond to current or projected occupational demands.

* * * Growing the Workforce and Increasing Workforce Participation * * *

Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 544 is amended to read:

§ 544. VERMONT STRONG INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

(a)(1) The Department of Labor, in consultation with the Agency of Education, shall develop, and the Department shall implement, a statewide Vermont Strong Internship Program for students who are in high school or in college and for those who are recent graduates of 24 months or less.

(2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to public and private entities for internship programs that match Vermont employers with students from public and private secondary schools, regional technical centers, the Community High School of Vermont, colleges, and recent graduates of 24 months or less.

(3) Funding awarded through the Vermont Strong Internship Program may be used to build and administer an internship program and to provide participants with a stipend during the internship, based on need. Funds may be made only to programs or projects that:

(A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

- (B) expose students to the workplace or create real workplace expectations and consequences;
- (C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of skills, attitude, behavior, and sense of responsibility required for success in that workplace;
- (D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-based learning opportunities with Vermont employers;
- (E) include mechanisms that promote employer involvement with secondary and postsecondary students and curriculum and the delivery of education at the participating schools; or
- (F) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and attractive for graduates to continue to work and live in Vermont.

(4) As used in this section, “internship” means a learning experience working with an employer where the intern may, but does not necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any combination of these.

(b) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Agencies of Agriculture, Food and Markets and of Education, State-funded postsecondary educational institutions, the State Workforce Development Board, and other State agencies and departments that have workforce education and training and training monies, shall:

- (1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to the Vermont Strong Internship Program;
- (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures that demonstrate program results for internship programs funded through the Vermont Strong Internship Program;
- (3) develop or enhance a website that will connect students and graduates with internship opportunities with Vermont employers;
- (4) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the Internship Program to expand internship opportunities with State government and with entities awarded State contracts; and
- (5) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance internship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 545 is added to read:

§ 545. VERMONT RETURNSHIP PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section, “returnship” means an on-the-job learning experience working with an employer where an individual may, but does not necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any combination of these for an individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or are seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different occupation or occupational setting.

(b)(1) The Department of Labor shall develop and implement the statewide Vermont Returnship Program.

(2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to public and private entities for returnship programs and opportunities that match experienced workers with Vermont employers.

(3) Funding awarded through the Program may be used to build and administer coordinated and cohesive programs and to provide participants with a stipend during the returnship, based on need. Funds may be made available only to programs or projects that:

(A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

(B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace experiences;

(C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of hard and soft professional skills and other factors that indicate a likelihood of success in the workplace;

(D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-based learning opportunities with Vermont employers; or

(E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and attractive for individuals to continue to work and live in Vermont.

(c) The Department of Labor shall:

(1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to the Program;

(2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures that demonstrate program results for returnship programs funded through the Program;

(3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the Program to expand returnship opportunities within State government and with entities awarded State contracts; and

(4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance returnship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

Sec. 13. VERMONT RETURNSHIP PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

The amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2018 to the Department of Labor, to be carried forward for fiscal year 2019 and used for the Vermont Returnship Program created in 10 V.S.A. § 545.

Sec. 14. GROWING THE SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

(a) Increasing participation. The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, and of Human Services, in partnership with the State Workforce Development Board, shall:

(1) increase Vermonters' labor force participation by creating multitiered engagement, training, and support activities that help working-age Vermonters who are able to participate or to participate to a greater degree in the workforce;

- (2) recruit and relocate new workers and employers to Vermont; and
- (3) assist businesses in locating and retaining qualified workers.

(b) Methods. The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, and of Human Services shall:

- (1) engage regional and statewide stakeholders, including regional CTE centers, regional development corporations, and regional planning commissions, to identify needs and strategies, and define success;
- (2) identify targets and methods of recruitment, relocation, retraining, and retention;
- (3) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs to support more workers from within and outside Vermont entering and staying in the Vermont workforce;
- (4) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and economic impact; and
- (5) develop policies and identify tools that support a two-generation approach to successful employment, addressing the needs of children in the lives of working adults.

(c) Board authority; identifying potential incentives. The State Workforce Development Board may identify incentives to enable and encourage targeted populations to participate in the labor force, including unemployment insurance waivers, income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security, housing and transportation vouchers, greater access to mental health and addiction treatment, and tuition and training reimbursements. The Board shall notify the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services of any findings or recommendations, as appropriate.

Sec. 15. 10 V.S.A. § 540 is amended to read:

§ 540. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADER

The Commissioner of Labor shall be the leader of workforce education and training in the State, and shall have the authority and responsibility for the coordination of workforce education and training within State government, including the following duties:

- (1) Perform the following duties in consultation with the State Workforce Development Board:

* * *

- (G) design and implement criteria and performance measures for workforce education and training activities; and

- (H) establish goals for the integrated workforce education and training system; and

- (I) with the assistance of the Secretaries of Commerce and Community Development, of Human Services, of Education, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and of Transportation and of the Commissioner of Public Safety, develop and implement a coordinated system

to recruit, relocate, and train workers to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont's businesses are met.

* * *

(8) Coordinate intentional outreach and connections between students graduating from Vermont's colleges and universities and employment opportunities in Vermont.

Sec. 16. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

(a)(1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is a statewide public and private partnership among the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce Investment Board, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont Business Roundtable that is also informed by resource partners, including the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, State Workforce Development Board, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

(2) The Project is an employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end customers of the education and workforce systems. The Project seeks to improve the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employers' needs with education and workforce development and training programs.

(b) The Agency of Education, Department of Labor, State Workforce Development Board, and Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project may collaborate to support the development, scale-up, funding, and roll out of Career Pathways across appropriate sectors, businesses of various size, and regions of the State.

* * * Accountability; Data Collection and Monitoring; Reporting * * *

Sec. 17. RESULTS-BASED MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

(a)(1) The Department of Labor, with the assistance of the Government Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop a framework to evaluate workforce education, training, and support programs and services.

(2) The Department shall apply the framework to the State's workforce system inventory and shall distinguish programs and services based on method of delivery, customer, program administrator, goal, or other appropriate category.

(3) The framework shall:

(A) establish population-level indicators based on desired outcomes for the workforce development delivery system;

(B) along with workforce development social network mapping work that the Board may pursue, support program and service alignment of State-grant-funded projects with the State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan;

(C) align with the Board's vision;

(D) note performance measures that already exist in the workforce system and identify where State-specific measures would help monitor progress in achieving the State's goals; and

(E) identify gaps in service delivery and areas of duplication in services.

(b) The State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) consider whether the information and data currently collected and reported throughout the workforce development system are useful;

(2) identify what information and data are not available or not readily accessible;

(3) make its findings publicly available; and

(4) recommend a process to improve the collection and reporting of data.

(c) The State Workforce Development Board may:

(1) create a process and a timeline to collect program-level data for the purposes of updating the State's workforce system inventory and use a data-driven process to evaluate the current workforce service delivery system;

(2) develop tools for program and service delivery providers that support continuous improvement using data-driven decision making, common information-sharing systems, and a customer-focused service delivery system; and

(3) review methods of engaging employers and evaluate data-related and other tools available to employers to facilitate their access to and retention of workers.

Sec. 18. REPORTING

(a) On or before January 15, 2019, the State Workforce Development Board shall submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education a report that specifically addresses the implementation of each section of this act.

(b) On or before January 15, 2019, the Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Agency of Education and the State Workforce Development Board, shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education concerning:

(1) how to encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships;

(2) how to encourage more labor force participation in apprenticeships; and

(3) of the myriad federal and private apprenticeship opportunities available, what additional opportunities in what industry sectors should be offered or enhanced in Vermont.

* * * WIOA Youth Funds * * *

Sec. 19. PROCESS FOR AWARDING WIOA YOUTH FUNDS

(a) On or before December 1, 2018, the Department of Labor shall review the current delivery of youth workforce investment activities funded by WIOA Youth Funds and consider whether more youth might be better served through awards or grants to youth service providers, consistent with section 123 of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

(b)(1) If the Department decides not to provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities, the State Workforce Development Board shall award grants or contracts for specific elements or activities on a competitive basis, consistent with 20 C.F.R. § 681.400.

(2) The providers of youth services shall meet criteria established in the State Plan and be able to meet performance accountability measures for the federally established primary indicators of performance for youth programs.

* * * Workforce Development in Particular Sectors; Television and Film Production * * *

Sec. 20. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; FILM AND TELEVISION TRADES

(a) The Vermont Department of Labor, in partnership with the Vermont Film Institute, Vermont Technical College, and local institutes of higher education shall explore and pursue opportunities to access current federal ApprenticeshipUSA funds to develop and offer registered apprenticeships in the film and television production trades industry, including electrical work, lighting, set building, and art direction.

(b) Related instruction that is developed and administered as part of a registered apprenticeship program shall also provide the registered apprentice with college credit that is recognized by an accredited post-secondary institution in Vermont.

(c) The Department of Labor, in partnership with the Agency of Education, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the regional CTE centers shall:

(1) promote other work-based learning experiences, including internships, job shadowing, returnships, and on-the-job training, in the film and television production trades industry;

(2) build connections with and among industry professionals; and

(3) conduct outreach to middle school, high school, and postsecondary students.

* * * Workforce Development in Particular Sectors; Green Energy and Technology * * *

Sec. 21. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; GREEN ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Labor, in partnership with the Agency of Education, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Natural Resources, and interested stakeholders, shall:

(1) develop Career Pathways, beginning in middle school, that lead to employment in the green energy sector;

(2) work with employers in the green energy sector to explore opportunities to create registered apprenticeships;

(3) identify certifications and credentials that support workforce expansion in the green energy sector; and

(4) collaborate, to the extent possible, to create, fund, and offer instruction that leads to industry recognized credentials in the green energy sector.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

Date Governor signed bill: May 28, 2018