

## Section 1: Project Description and Overview

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### A. Executive Summary

Vermont is well-positioned to meet the objectives of the Good Jobs Challenge. An award will allow our collaborative partnership to expand upon an existing, functioning program. Funding will support enhancements to an existing workforce development system established by the non-profit Vermont Business Roundtable (VBR) using the Talent Pipeline Model (TPM™) developed by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Our collaboration will build upon the existing use of the TPM™ model in three priority industries: healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and construction, by: 1) adding digital technology, agriculture, and forestry as additional industry sectors, 2) including the Vermont Department of Labor as a partner to introduce unemployed and underemployed individuals as potential new participants in the TPM™ training, and 3) add Vermont's twelve Regional Development Corporations as partners that will help bring new businesses and individuals into the program. This funding will also allow improve availability to the disadvantaged by providing enhanced "wrap-around services" to address the problems of childcare, transportation, and healthcare that inhibit workforce participation.

Vermonters are experiencing an inflated cost of living and higher education, and low per-capita income, making it difficult to access training to earn a livable wage. In November 2021, Vermont's workforce stood at 295,800, a 6.2% decline of workers from pre-pandemic levels with a comparable unemployment rate of 2.6%.<sup>1</sup> This equates to 19,600 fewer workers, with decreases in the priority industries of Healthcare (-6.1%) and Manufacturing (-6.6%).

### B. System Lead Entity

The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) will act as the system lead in the regional workforce system, employing interagency and public-private partnerships, and integrating the resources of the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and regional workforce partners, which are the Regional Development Corporations (RDCs). Project Management will be provided by ACCD and VDOL with regional administration performed by the RDCs, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and Vermont Talent Pipeline Management (VTPM).

ACCD will convene partners and agents, create programs, draft agreements and proposal requests as well as administer and monitor the scope of work and Good Jobs Challenge grant requirements, reimbursement, and regulations. In the first two years of the grant award cycle, the cost of these ACCD employee wages and benefits will be Non-Federal match provided by the State of Vermont.

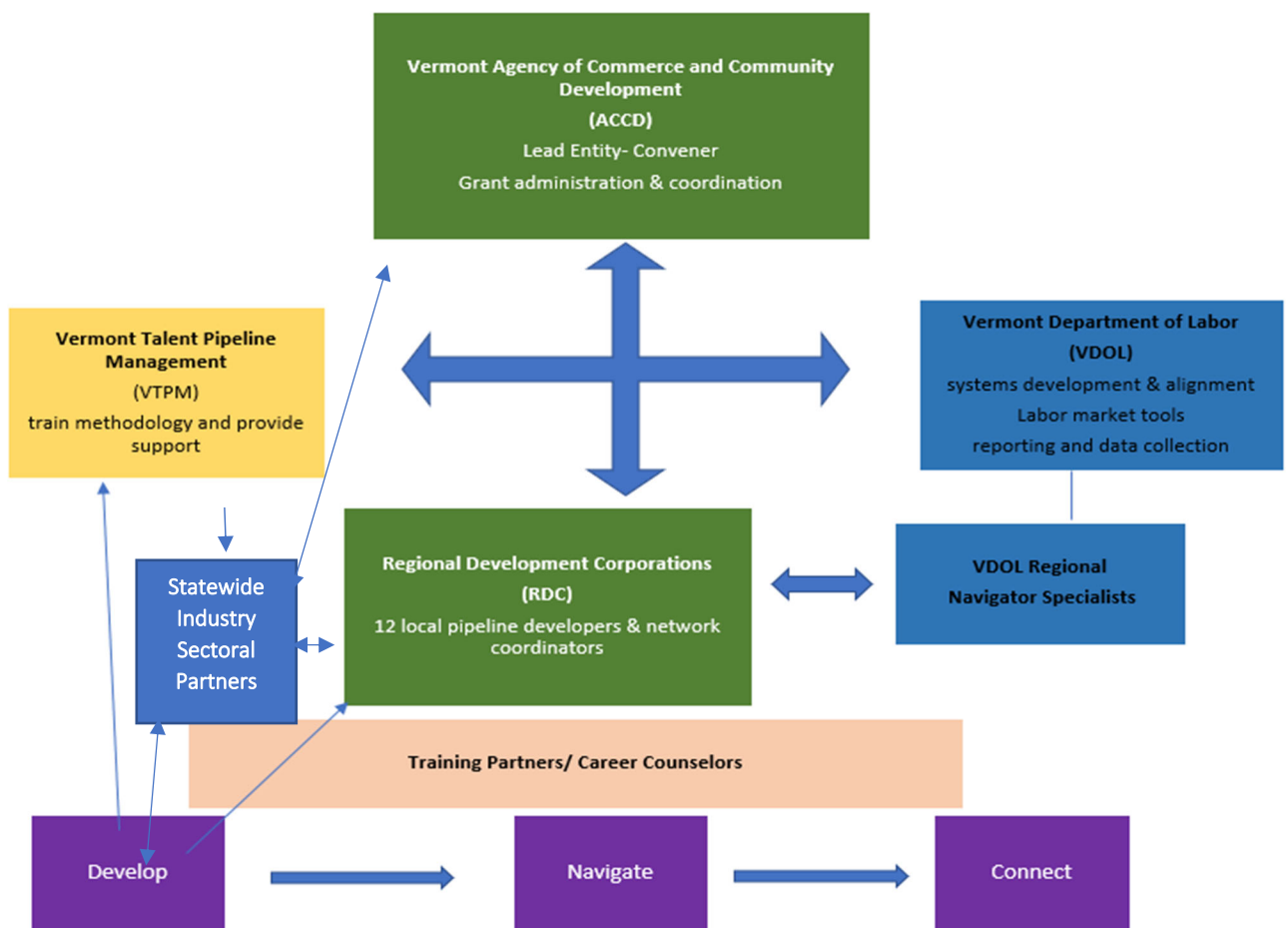
This grant will formalize and integrate sector strategies into a state-wide system that will provide a framework for more local tailoring of plans, improved implementation, and increase in the

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<sup>1</sup> Vermont Labor Market Information <http://www.vtlmi.info/index.cfm>

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number of participating individuals. It will leverage VDOL’s current work recruiting underserved individuals to participate in training that allows them to enter the existing industry collaboratives in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and construction; and add new sector collaboratives in digital and information technologies, agriculture, and forestry. VDOL and VTPM will integrate and instill system improvements to expand outreach, enrollment, training support, and support services that will help to increase the scale of the opportunities available to individuals seeking employment. Labor assessments in healthcare and advanced manufacturing have already helped target investments in training within these sectors. For example, Vermont’s legislature provided fully funded training through the Vermont State College system for participants in roles that were impacted by the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup>Training for Vermonters Impacted by COVID-19  
[https://vtworkers.vsc.edu/?utm\\_source=FPF&utm\\_medium=digital&utm\\_campaign=freetraining](https://vtworkers.vsc.edu/?utm_source=FPF&utm_medium=digital&utm_campaign=freetraining)

## Section 2

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### A. Employer Leadership and Commitments

The TPM™ model creates industry collaboratives that bring groups of employers in a particular industry together to identify the skills that need to be trained to meet the needs of that sector. These skills are then trained by participating educational institutions. As a result, individuals that participate in the program graduate with the skills required to be successful with the employers in a sector seeking workforce. This award will develop more of these employer-trainer partnerships and connect career navigation systems with exploration, preparation, support services, and on-boarding for new jobs. It will also support the improved navigation of opportunities and services to assist the labor force into good jobs including preparation requirements, access to industry training programs, and direct hiring connections for underserved, unemployed, and underemployed workers through VDOL and regional workforce navigation coordination and by providing assistance with wrap-around services.

Employer leadership and commitments are in place within each current industry collaborative. In addition, ACCD supports employers with training grants to help fund incumbent worker training for businesses through the Vermont Training Program and VDOL supports jobseekers and employers with federal and state funded programs. Through these programs, employers can post jobs, receive recruitment and referral assistance, and develop internships and apprenticeships. The benefits to jobseekers include receiving basic and individualized employment services, access to training funds, and support services such as personal job coaching. VDOL also has a business services team that supports business demand and is hiring a new Registered Apprenticeship Program Director to help improve the program and maintain a focus on underserved populations who want to learn and earn at the same time

Participation in industry collaboratives is open to any sector business willing to commit time and resources to the collective impact model using TPM™ strategies. All workforce partners have served as industry champions for these collaboratives, engaging peer businesses in a facilitated dialogue around shared talent development. Each sector collaborative is comprised of an industry champion, peer employers, industry associations, educators, and representation from local workforce partners – state agencies, regional chambers of commerce and economic development corporations. Employers have forecasted over 8,500 critical job vacancies between 2021 and 2023, at participating businesses in the healthcare and manufacturing industries, which offer educational career ladders with average pay rates for both nursing, production, and engineering professions.

Employer leadership from each of the established collaboratives is critical to compiling job data that informs educational collaboration within statewide systems including policy makers, government agencies, legislators, job seekers, industry associations, and others. Employer leadership is required to identify future job needs, forecast and define skill requirements, identify preferred credentials, develop hiring incentives, and improve the skill-building process. The responsibility of developing career awareness and exploration is shared by employers and education partners through the creation of events, shadows, internships, apprenticeships, and co-ops.

## B. Other Stakeholders and Partnerships

Vermont has a track record of successful educational and business partnerships. For example, in 2021, the system helped employ more than 150 people in each of the construction and manufacturing industries. Additionally, the healthcare industry expanded access to critical registered nurse training by initiating a legislative rule change to utilize practicing nurses as clinical educators, fund the RN educational pathway using sustainable employer loan repayments, and develop paid apprenticeships in entry level healthcare positions preparing for RN licensure.

ACCD partners with VDOL, Regional Development Corporations, other state agencies, VTPM, chambers of commerce, industry associations, education resources, career navigators, and others providing wraparound support.

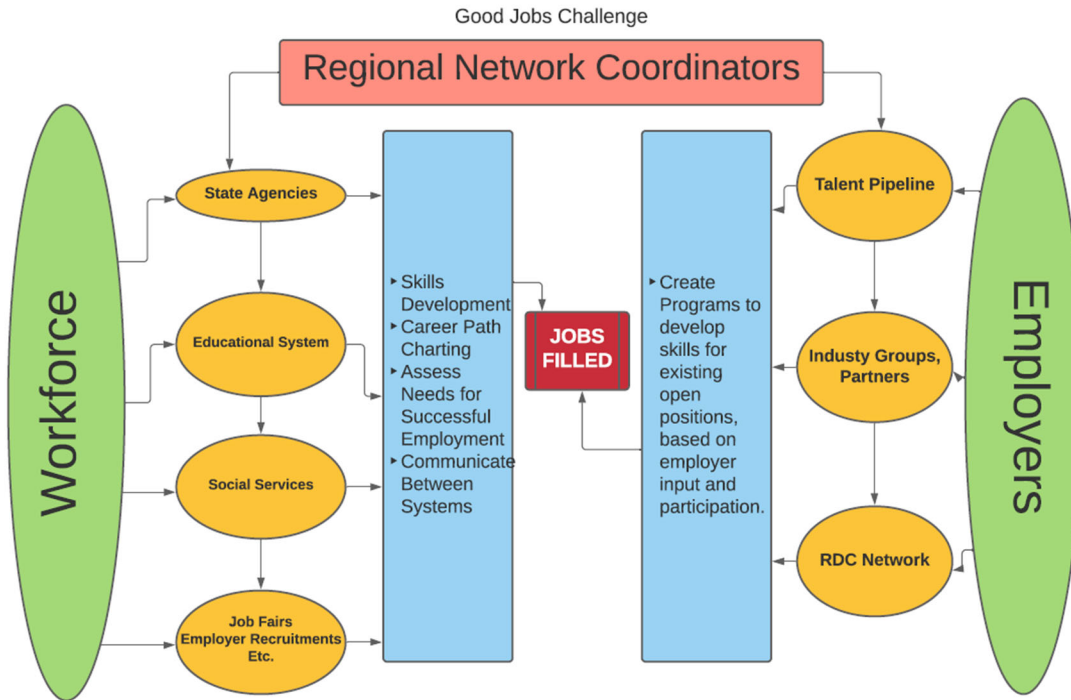
### 1. Project Management

ACCD will collaborate with VDOL and the RDCs to proactively manage the project, and will coordinate the TPM™ system with VTPM, which is an existing partnership between ACCD and the Vermont Business RoundTable Research and Education Foundation. ACCD will also coordinate the marketing of in-demand well-paying jobs and how to get them and communicate on-ramps for outreach for the labor force, underserved populations, and the career navigators making hiring placements.

### 2. Workforce Planning and Job Creation

VDOL encompasses divisions of workforce development and labor market information and supports business job creation, employment and recruitment, and coordinates workforce education and training. VDOL provides labor market information and analysis to enable effective workforce planning and decision making and is the lead agency for apprenticeships, which will serve a key function in the system. VDOL will support the system aggregation of hiring data and provide leadership coordination for regional navigation of other state agencies and departments within human services: Departments of Corrections, Economic Opportunity, Children and Families, and Vocational Rehab.

ACCD will work in agreement with the RDCs as they establish and perform regional workforce development duties. In conjunction with ACCD and the Vermont Agency of Education, VDOL will assist in the creation and enhancement of regional workforce navigation centers while providing resources towards recruitment as well as reporting of data regarding trainees/employees moving through the training and hiring process.



### 3. Sectoral Partnership Managers

The addition of regional sector partnership managers will assist with sector growth. These sector partnership managers will be determined by ACCD and trained by VTPM. Each sector will engage statewide with local communities to organize and grow employer sector collaboratives. They will facilitate the TPM™ framework among employer collaborative members to: identify critical jobs and skill requirements, use research tools, and develop training partnerships for career preparation and professional development. They will collect hiring data for reporting and aggregate hiring data from each of the regional workforce partners. This backbone organization will specialize in the industry, develop partnerships with industry associations, education providers, and career navigators. Also once established, there will be potential to expand the sectoral oversight to include agricultural and hospitality/tourism industries.

### 4. Educators and Training Providers

Providers of high-quality industry recognized credentials include industry associations, non-profit training providers, Career and Technical Education Centers, Vermont State Colleges, higher education, and others. High quality credentials recognized by employers are commonly nationally transferable, accredited by a third party, and can be applied to an educational pathway via certification, college credit, or credit for prior learning. Resource constraints for key training programs will be addressed by the grant.

### 5. Underserved, Unemployed, and Underemployed Audiences

The target audience for the grant includes underserved populations, and those not currently participating in the workforce, employed to their potential, or without career advancement opportunity. Post-high school education has become a key determinate of economic opportunity

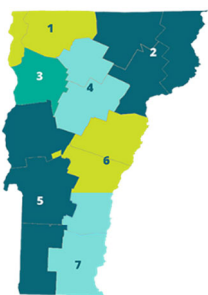
and social mobility. The credential attainment level<sup>3</sup> for Vermont’s working age population is approximately 53%. This translates to nearly 150,000 workers without a credential or degree, providing ample prospects for targeted career training and skill advancement. State agencies and non-profits provide outreach from Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department of Children and Families, Department of Economic Opportunity, Department of Corrections, Vermont Agency of Education, and Others.

#### 6. Regional Career Navigators and Recruiters of the Underserved

This grant will fill a gap for professional development and expansion of career navigators for regional student-employer connections. Career navigators will be led by resources of Vermont Department of Labor, the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) and will add navigation services of regional workforce entities to place people in local jobs and report on hiring objectives. Navigators will connect program participants of the Community College of Vermont, Vermont State University, Career and Technical Education Centers, and those who provide services to K-12, (i.e., guidance counselors, cooperative and work-based learning coordinators, and parents) with employers and hiring opportunities. Career counseling and navigation will help communicate opportunities for work and training of industry recognized skills. Regional navigators will promote employer-led activities to build career awareness, exploration, preparation and on-boarding for critical industry roles and other identified [high-wage in-demand regional careers](#) with low barrier on-ramps.

VSAC’s [Educational Opportunity Center](#) (VEOC) helps adults access resources for non-traditional education, training, grants, and scholarships. Available financial resources for non-degree grants and credentials of value will utilize federal, state, public, and [private financial resources](#) – many of which are currently [funded by state legislature](#). VEOC is a federal TRIO program that helps qualified, nontraditional adult learners who do not already have a 4-year degree to access college and career training services. Most students are from low-income backgrounds, are the first in their families to go to college, and/or have financial barriers to pursuing career goals beyond high school. VEOC helps adults make informed career and education decisions and navigate postsecondary admission and financial aid to help secure competitive and decent wage-earning jobs. VEOC counselors support geographically dispersed locations across Vermont communities.

#### Career Navigation Regions



- [Northeast Kingdom resources](#) (PDF)
- [Northwest Vermont resources](#) (PDF)
- [Central-Upper Valley resources](#) (PDF)
- [Rutland-Bennington resources](#) (PDF)
- [Southeast Vermont resources](#) (PDF)

<sup>3</sup> AdvanceVT <https://advancevermont.org/data-dashboard/#/race>

### 7. Wraparound Support Resources

To maximize the effectiveness of an economically diverse workforce, case manager programs from the VDOL and/or programs like it, such as the United Way Working Bridges program, TANF ReachUp, Vocational Rehab, Vermont Works for Women, Resource Vermont, and the Re-Entry Program will help participants, students, and employees achieve stability through supportive wraparound service practices. Programs such as Working Bridges are designed to improve job and training retention, productivity, and advancement by supporting employees and students with community resources. With regional offices statewide, coordination and support services will be expanded to cover both education and shared sector on-boarding resource coordination. Introduction to resource coordination will demonstrate value in employee assistance for sector collaborative continuation.

Resource coordinators will meet with participants in person (or through video appointments). Coordinators are trained to assist participants in resolving non-academic barriers or issues that cause personal stress and prevent success in training/classes or work participation. Initial outreach to participants will include presentations about available resource services during classes or other appropriate meetings. These resources may include:

- One-on-one meetings to help resolve issues/barriers to successful training by accessing community resources
- Development of pre- and post-survey of needs and outcomes
- Report of number of participants served, time/hours involved in solving the issue(s), types of issues addressed, and demographic data
- Postings of pre-planning activities for upcoming needs, like summer childcare
- Program coordination for classes such as English language, financial literacy, and tax preparation services
- Financial coaching

### Section 3: Regional Description

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The region for this investment is the entirety of Vermont and bordering counties of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York, who share the workforce and labor market. This proposal is to expand the impact within the current healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and construction industries for identified critical jobs and to add a new industry/occupational collaborative for information and digital technologies, agriculture, and forestry.

As indicated by regional Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), in both [Northern Vermont](#) and [East Central Vermont](#), Vermonters are currently experiencing an inflated cost of living, low per-capita income, and above average cost of higher education, making it difficult to access training to earn a livable wage. The CEDs highlight the need to upgrade skills and provide access to good jobs. The CEDs indicate both regional and state goals to promote economic and workforce development.

As a mostly rural region, the opportunities for economic and demographic growth rely on access and skills using digital technologies with transferable skills to serve small businesses. Therefore,

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ACCD and VDOL will identify and organize new industry/occupational collaboratives of priority, by adding new employer collaboratives to serve information and digital technologies. Technology collaboratives will support software, data management, data security, web-based media, e-commerce, network support, broadband installation, and other cross-industry technology related occupations.

Upcoming critical jobs opportunities identified by Vermont employer collaboratives include the following:

- Healthcare: nursing assistants, mental health technicians, medical assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, clinical nurse educators, and nurse practitioners
- Advanced manufacturing: production assemblers, machine operators, computerized machinists, equipment maintenance technicians, welders/solderers, production engineers, and design engineers
- Construction: craft/trade professionals, crew leaders, project engineers, estimators, project managers, and site superintendents
- Information and digital technologies (new): may include coding, software development, data management, cyber security, web design, e-commerce, network support, broadband installation, and other technology skills needed by cross-industry occupations
- Additional industries may be prioritized for inclusion, including energy and climate, accounting, agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and hospitality

#### Section 4: Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System

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The primary impact of developing a workforce training system is the resulting collective model that defines job needs and implements employment solutions. Employers inform skill development needs with education partners and hire skilled individuals from the training programs for high-wage, high demand industry careers. Priority industries are identified by Vermont Labor Market Information, in coordination with Vermont’s state agencies and legislative supports.

##### A. Components of a Project



##### 1. System Development

ACCD, VDOL, the RDCs, and VTPM’s current framework of strategies and research tools will be enhanced with improvements in sector partnership, management, and business relationships; training partnerships, industry association support, career navigation and financial resources,



wraparound support; and communication of opportunities for high-demand careers with opportunity for advancement.

*a. Organize Backbone Organizations*

Sectoral Partnership Managers will oversee the existing business industries and new sectors, coordinating business demand activities and partnering with aligned education programs, and outreach and recruitment resources of the Regional Workforce Navigators and VDOL.

*b. Employer Support/ Collaborative Engagement*

VTPM has actively engaged over 180 employers in the collective impact model of Talent Pipeline Management. VTPM has launched three industry collaboratives of Healthcare (2018), Construction (2017) and Advanced Manufacturing (2018), each producing job forecasts and communication of competencies and credential requirements to prepare for them. Strengthening and broadening the collaborative structure via business engagement is a top priority.

*c. Organize Industry Collaboratives*

Three industry collaboratives exist today. This grant would expand those and add digital and information technologies. Potential for other industries: energy/climate, agriculture, and others.

*d. Recruitment Planning*

Career counseling and navigation will help communicate opportunities for work and training for industry recognized skills and credentials to the target audience. Navigation will incorporate expansion and professional development of VDOL and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation Education Opportunity Center (VEOC) staff in coordinated partnership with the regional workforce partners.

Vermont is home to 17 Career and Technical Education Centers run by the Vermont Agency of Education, serving youth and adults with credentials, employability skills, dual enrollment credit and early college in preparation for work-ready careers or college. A community college system, 14 college and university locations and dozens of non-profit training providers, make regional workforce training accessible to workers throughout the region. Additionally, many educational programs with national credentials can be delivered on-line and in hybrid formats to meet schedules for individuals with barriers.

*e. Plan for Wrap Around Support*

Through VDOL's regional career navigators and case manager system as well as statewide organizations like United Way's Working Bridges and TANF ReachUp, these programs help students and employees achieve stability through supportive wraparound service practices. Using these innovative programs that are designed to improve job retention, productivity, and advancement by supporting employees and students with community resources. Using the workplace as a platform for social services and support, Resource coordinators will help students and working Vermonters reach stability and thrive, while reducing turnover.

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1. Program Design

a. Forecast Job Needs

VDOL uses Labor Market Information and various research tools to collect job data from sector collaboratives. VTPM collects information from employers to add to the data sets.

Communicate Competencies/ Credential Requirements

ACCD partners with VDOL, RDCs, VTPM, and educators to align programs and credentials employers' value and recognize, delivering competencies that are assessed and validated by a third party. Adult programming will create a more immediate impact as it will prepare people who are work eligible. Short-term credential training and apprenticeships will be utilized where applicable to support individuals in a work and learn model. Apprenticeships fill front-line entry-level roles, and upskill employees while they work, creating an effective model for career entry and advancement, with pay, benefits and wrap around supports.

Training providers will provide short-term credentials for entrance into a high-growth career path. Industry Recognized Credential (IRC) training providers are part of Career and Technical Education Centers, Vermont State Colleges, higher education, non-profits, industry associations and other places that work with underserved populations.

b. Assess program alignment with job needs

We anticipate targeted training delivery from Career and Technical Education Centers and Vermont State Colleges and others through programs designed for workforce and professional education, offered in cohorts either at business sites, regionally, on-line or in a hybrid format to meet identified skill requirements of industry. Improvements in access to and quality of programming will incorporate employer-led career exploration and preparation, while providing educational efficiencies for dual enrollment, early college, work-based learning, cooperative education, and articulated credit for prior learning. Attached you will find letters of support from Vermont CTEs, Community College of Vermont, Vermont Technical College and University of Vermont.

c. Training Provider Commitments

ACCD, VDOL and VTPM partners have already designed and aligned training programs, with plans to expand educational capacity and scale. Examples of a few programs designed with employer input are Community College of Vermont's Certified Production Technician program and apprenticeship, which delivers credentials for production technician development; and the Practical Nursing Certificate and apprenticeship, which provides both course and clinical experiences to Licensed Nurse Assistants working in healthcare settings. Further, many Vermont hospitals now are providing practicing clinical educators to assist faculty in training, resulting from our collective work.

2. Program Implementation

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- a. *Secure Employer Commitments* Employer commitments to participate and hire have been secured in each of four industries. Additional commitments will come from sectoral workforce partners.
- b. *Recruit Opportunity Populations* Opportunity populations will include all 251 towns in rural regions through 12 One-stop job sites, with outreach by regional workforce partners to local and state agencies and non-profits serving people with barriers to employment.
- c. *Deliver Skills Training* Education partners in 17 Career and Technical Education Centers, 11 Community College locations and 9 Vermont Technical College sites and others will supply the first line of educational support for industry recognized credentials. Non-profits and higher education will support specialized skills required outside the core of CTEs and Vermont State Colleges.
- d. *Provide Wraparound Support* VDOL and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation's Education Opportunity Centers will provide statewide coordination for wrap around support for education and transition to employment.
- e. *Place Participants in Good Jobs* Vermont Department of Labor, with regional workforce partners, will help connect people to employment and training opportunities to prepare for employment in jobs identified and track the successful hiring of participants with employers.

### C. EDA's recovery and resilience investment priority

This program would meet EDA's recovery and resilience investment priority of creating and retaining high-quality jobs. We do this using public and private educational financial resources and wraparound resources to supplement the existing systems and improve equity. Equity and access for underserved populations will be accomplished through career navigation services; educators and employers with wraparound support; Sector Partnership Managers who connect individuals to employment in well-paying high-demand roles. This workforce strategy can be replicated for jobs in new priority industries, like the proposed STEM-related technology sector.

### D. Job Determination and Availability

Job forecasts, availability and wages are illustrated in the demand for critical jobs figures below.

In today's workforce environment, businesses acknowledge talent as the leading business asset - and related challenge. With over 8400 vacancies forecasted by employers in the high priority industries of Healthcare/Nurse and Manufacturing/Engineer pathways between 2021 and 2023, the need for critical jobs continues to grow. The following charts illustrate the demand for each existing industry collaborative.

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**HEALTHCARE**

HEALTHCARE Industry Collaborative (Total 72)	Critical Jobs	Recognized Credentials	VTPM Employer Forecast 2021 (N = 43)	Completers of Preferred Programs 2021	Hourly wage May 2020
	Licensed Nurse Asst	LNA	763	472	\$ 16.08
	Mental Health Tech	ProAct/MOAB	438		\$ 19.50
	Medical Asst	CCMA	249	21	\$ 17.88
	Lic. Practical Nurse	LPN	268	234	\$ 24.64
	Registered Nurse	RN, ADN, BSN	1305	357	\$ 38.47
	Clinical Nurse Educ.	BSN, MSN, DNP	44		\$ 23-42.00
	Nurse Practitioner	MSN, DNP	58	370	\$ 55.05
<b>Totals</b>			<b>3125</b>	<b>1454</b>	

**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING**

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING Industry Collaborative (Total 90)	Critical Jobs	Recognized Credential	VTPM Employer Forecast 2021 (N = 45)	Completers of Preferred Programs 2021	Hourly wage May 2020
	Production Assembler/Operator	Cert Production Technician	639	441	\$ 19.32
	Industrial Maintenance Tech	Cert Production Technician	113	183	\$ 30.48
	CNC Machinist	NIMS Machining	142	150	\$ 28.97
	Team Leader	Lean Mfg	50		\$ 29.71
	Production/Design Engineer	BS Engineering	119	7	\$ 45-51.00
	Welders/Solderers	AWS, J Standard	69		\$ 21.45
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1132</b>	<b>781</b>	

**CONSTRUCTION GENERAL CONTRACTORS**

Construction Industry Collaborative (30 total)	Critical Jobs	Recognized Credentials	VTPM Forecast 2019 (N = 12)	Completing Preferred Programs 2021	Hourly Wage May 2020
	Crew Leader	NCCER Crew Leadership	39	14	32.06
	Estimator	AS/BS Const Mgmt	113		35.91
	Project Engineer	AS/BS Constr Mgmt		9	38.09
	Project Manager	Construction Leadership	76	15	40.92
	Site Superintendent	Construction Leadership			43.75
<b>Totals</b>			<b>336</b>	<b>184</b>	

E. Achievability of partnerships

ACCD will facilitate a workforce system to identify employers willing to hire through the TPM framework and system design, while employing VDOL resources in Labor Market Information,

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apprenticeship development, career services, training funds for underserved populations, job postings and counselors in regional support offices. The Regional Development Corporations will serve as the regional workforce network coordinator. The RDCs have successfully worked with ACCD and VDOL on economic and workforce initiatives for many years and work closely with the Department of Economic Development and VDOL to reach regional goals and further projects. ACCD and partners are committed to working with VTPM's as a training entity and of the TPM™ framework. ACCD works with and for the statewide business community and business leaders that are currently engaged in collaborative workforce planning. With the additions of regional navigators, VSAC career and financial navigation resources; and VDOL/private agency wrap around support, we expect participant access to training and jobs to improve on current independent systems.

Further, ACCD and partners will work with VDOL and industries to increase the use of apprenticeships. Apprenticeships ensure employment, with wages and benefits for entry level roles and planned career advancement and wage increases. Apprenticeships also promote sustainable funding through either recycled employer loan repayment and/or social impact bonds, reducing the cost and risk for both employer and employee. Partner organizations like Social Finance, may help fund the startup for the new Digital Technology Sector, which prioritizes workers for installation of broadband.

Partners will promote regional employment exposure for outreach to participants, marketing of available jobs with events, job shadowing, clear training requirements, low barrier on-ramps, employment incentives, and upskilling opportunities. Wrap around support will further the successful onboarding of participants with barriers to reach educational and financial stability.

#### F. Target demographics

The targeted demographic includes the approximately 150,000 people in the Vermont workforce without a credential or degree, underserved populations, and approximately 19,000 non-participants, there are many organizations who will help support outreach to underserved populations. In addition to VDOL and VSAC outreach, we will utilize partners in Agencies of Human Services, including Corrections, Vocational Rehabilitation, Creative Workforce Solutions, Regional Economic Opportunity Centers, and other non-profits supporting refugees and new Americans.

#### Vermont Demographics<sup>4</sup>

- 92.7% have a high school diploma or equivalent
- 38% have a four-year degree – 53% have a credential or degree
- 9.4% of the state are people living in poverty
- 65.4% of population works in the civilian labor force
  - 62.8% of females work civilian labor force
  - 1.4% of population black or African American, 0.4% American Indian, 2% two or more races, 2% Hispanic or Latino

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<sup>4</sup> United States Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/VT>

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Outreach Recruitment Resources

- Working Fields
- Alternative Staffing Alliance
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Vermont
- Capstone Community Action (Central Vermont)
- Central Vermont Adult Basic Education
- Green Mountain
- United Way
- Mercy Connections
- Northeast Kingdom Human Services
- Northeast Kingdom Learning Services
- Outright Vermont
- Southeastern Vermont Community Action
- Turning Point of Windham County
- United Way of Addison County
- United Way of Lamoille County
- Vermont Adult Learning
- Vermont Interfaith Action
- United Way of Windham County
- Vermont Works for Women

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Section 5: Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

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A. Estimated Funding Request for proposed partnerships

- *System Development (\$2m) ACCD/VTPM Planning, Coordination of resources and wraparound support, financial management, stakeholder commitments*
- *Program Design (\$4m) ACCD/VDOL/RDCs/VTPM preparation and infrastructure for Sector Partnership Management, Train and mentor Sector Managers; Education program alignment and capacity-building for delivery; Sustainable financing and Fundraising models*
- *Program implementation (appx \$4.5m) VDOL/Regional workforce partner recruitment, VSAC financial resources, Case Manager wraparound support, Training program delivery, Career Navigators for Employment Onboarding*

B. Anticipated Projects

The outreach and recruitment plans for employers will utilize public and private resources from state agencies and business organizations (VBR, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Corporations and Regional Planning Commissions). Each industry will employ a sector partnership manager who will manage employer sector relationships with industry using a shared Customer Relationship Management system.

The outreach and recruitment plans for workers will include resources in Vermont Department of Labor, VSAC Educational Outreach Centers and Regional Development Corporation Sector Partnership Managers. Additional outreach from the Agency of Human Services will support recruitment from the Department of Children and Families, Corrections, Vocational Rehabilitation and [Office of Economic Opportunity](#) with regional offices in all parts of the state.

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Development of training providers capacity for delivery will involve hiring and preparation for delivery of training in areas such as Nursing, which presents an ongoing challenge for instructional and clinical educational delivery, where currently nearly 50% of qualified applicants are denied training due to educational capacity limitations. Building capacity for training in CTEs for building and trades, manufacturing, and information technologies.

Development of training models and curricula will utilize employer input and design to deliver competencies, credential and degree requirements for jobs identified. After defining job needs, employers will hire from programs that align skill development, and recognize those preferred programs by developing hiring incentives for the labor force to engage in purposeful education directly related to jobs in demand.

**C. Anticipated Barriers to worker participation and mitigation strategies**

In November 2021, Vermont’s workforce stood at 295,800, a 6.2% decline from pre-pandemic levels with a comparable unemployment rate of 2.6%.<sup>5</sup> This equates to 19,600 fewer workers, with large decreases in the priority industries of Healthcare (-6.1%) and Manufacturing (-6.6%). Some of the barriers to work that have resulted in these workforce are outlined below:

Risks	Mitigation Strategies
Outreach to opportunity populations	Communication, marketing and training for navigators and outreach professionals to ensure financial and wraparound supports are available for the target audience; provide connection with non-profit and state resources for outreach
Childcare and Housing Needs	Department of Children and Families to identify openings and funds for support; Emergency fund for Working Bridges participants
Addition and Mental Health Support	Agency of Human Services support with counseling and medication assistance
New American Support	Vermont Adult learning for ELL and VSAC Education Outreach Counselors provide career support, financial understanding, and preparation for educational systems
Apprenticeship enrollment	Hiring for the purpose of working and training with planned skill advancement. The most successful apprentices are those who already know something about the employer and job. Hiring in an “apprenticeship – eligible” role give both employer and employee a chance to determine if the role is a good fit, before investing in training.
Employment Transition	Support for resource coordination of Working Bridges will help the participant resourcing during training and in employment transition.
Employment Retention	Continuation of employee resource coordination through Case Manager resource coordinators will support employees with assistance needs to be successfully employed

<sup>5</sup> Vermont Labor Market Information <http://www.vtlmi.info/index.cfm>

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Sustainability for Training Resources	Introduce financial training models like employer recycled loan repayment and social impact bonds for employer collaboratives to fund preferred training programs for individuals.
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