

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY

New and Relocated Worker Program



- **WHAT:** Additional investment of \$500,000 in the New Worker Relocation Grant program to provide funding for direct grants to cover incurred moving costs to eligible individuals who move to Vermont to work full-time for a Vermont employer.
 1. Renaming the program to the “Vermont Relocated Worker Grant Program,” which will combine the intent of the New Worker and Remote worker programs under one title and codified program in statute;
 2. \$100,000 set-aside to increase the racial and ethnic representation in Vermont’s communities and in the labor force;
 3. Program changes that promote strategies developed by the Diversifying the Educator Workforce program (DEW) and increasing program collaboration between DEW and the New Worker Program to accomplish shared goals;
 4. Technical changes to the program that would eliminate the requirement that grant candidates need to be employed in jobs within the Department of Labor’s occupational list;
 5. Changes in wage rate requirement for eligibility to reflect a wage rate of minimum wage, rather than wage requirements reflected in the program currently.

- **WHY:** Vermont is the second least diverse state and the state with the second highest median age. The New Worker and Remote Worker incentive programs have offered greater opportunity for prospective new residents to move to Vermont and add to the state’s cultural fabric. By intentionally encouraging people of color to apply for these programs, the state can signal its enthusiasm to increase equity and diversity and can provide tangible assistance to remove financial barriers for those seeking to join Vermont’s communities.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development is recommending technical changes to the New and Remote Worker Programs that would expand program eligibility to new occupations and individuals of a wider range of income levels. These changes, combined with lowering the wage eligibility to minimum wage, will help expand program accessibility to more candidates.

- **WHO:** In Vermont, and in the US generally, the Millennial and Gen Z cohorts are the two most racially diverse in the country's history. This means that the next generation of professionals, young families with school age children, home buyers, and community members is increasingly likely to be racially diverse. That transition is happening slowly in Vermont, but we can complement and nurture it through intentional, forward-thinking initiatives that encourage the growth and flourishing of Vermont’s diverse communities.
- **HOW & FUNDING: \$500,000 General Fund investment.**