



Lake Champlain Chamber



Who is the Lake Champlain Chamber?

The Lake Champlain Chamber is a non-profit organization based in Northwest Vermont that is in the business of seeking and supporting economic opportunity for all Vermonters

We believe that a good job—in the private, public, or non-profit sector—is the best path to economic well-being and resiliency.

As a business membership organization, we serve our business community with benefits and solutions. We also foster connections between employers and employees, among big companies and small, between our member-employers and their representatives in Montpelier.





Lake
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Economic Opportunity Agenda

Advocating	Advocating for economic opportunity
Celebrating	Celebrating business ownership and entrepreneurship
Promoting	Promoting a robust, diversified visitor economy
Cultivating	Cultivating community leadership
Nurturing	Nurturing emerging talent



Leadership Champlain

Leadership Champlain is our professional development and community engagement program, with a mission to foster growth and leadership in professionals who will serve our community now and in the future.

Alex Buntin

Talent & Leadership Manager

alex@vermont.org

802.863.3489 x201



Talent BTV

Talent BTV is our suite of initiatives that educate, connect, and inspire our current and future workforce. We develop local talent to provide our community members with the resources they need to succeed while ensuring our local businesses have a highly talented workforce.

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Burlington Young Professionals

As a leading voice for our community's young professionals, Burlington Young Professionals collaborates with local businesses that share its commitment to attracting and retaining young professional talent and empowers young professionals with business relationships, education and community awareness necessary to become an active community leader.

Amelia Cayer

Burlington Young Professionals Manager

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LaunchVT

LaunchVT celebrates and accelerates start-up businesses through education, coaching and access to capital. We do this work statewide, working with a variety of partners and start-ups.

Lauren Bass

Director of Entrepreneurship

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(https://www.autopylot.io)



(https://www.authorpods.com)

ApprentiScope



(https://www.varis.es/)

(https://packetizedenergy.com/)

(https://www.burlingtonmarkspacesystems.com/)

EZ-Probate



(http://www.thinkmd.org/)



LOCALVORE

(https://www.filabot.com/)

FLOURISH FARM, VT

Hello Burlington

Hello Burlington actively promotes a robust visitor economy. That means telling the world about our special place, its people, its hospitality, its history, its art and culture, its outdoor recreation. We encourage both business and leisure travel with economic development and relocation in mind.

Jeff Lawson

Vice President of Tourism & Marketing, Hello Burlington

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Advocacy

At the local, state, and federal level, we connect businesses to the information they need to inform public policy. In a couple of weeks, we'll host our first legislative breakfast of the year where attendees can connect with those that represent us in Montpelier.

Austin Davis

Director of Government Affairs

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Catherine Z. Davis
LCC President



Patrick O'Neil
Vice President of
Finance & Operations



Hannah King
Director of Business
Development



Nicole Belanus
Operations Manager

And there is so
much more...

Importantly, we work with all businesses so that they can move forward. Whether it's a timely information resource or tracking down an answer, we encourage anyone to reach out to us when they have a question or need.

For more information, lccvermont.org



Chamber Legislative Priorities



Three Major Impediments to the Vermont Economy

LCC's team monitors and engages when necessary on a broad number of items at the local, state, and federal-level. Broadly, we are interested in anything that changes how our members conduct their daily business or legislation that changes the economic climate.

For the purposes of this conversation, we'd like to draw your attention to the three largest impediments to our members

- A lack of People
- A lack of Housing
- A lack of Childcare
- Uncertainty around “Benefits Cliffs”

A Lack of People

As the Governor highlighted in his inaugural address, we have an employment gap of ~23,000 people in the state.

- In 2019 that gap was already pronounced at about 3,300
- We expected that to grow to about 10,000 over the coming decade, however, the pandemic accelerated this

What can be done (not an exhaustive list):

- Recruitment work – we need people telling Vermont’s story outside the state
 - Building more housing (next slide)
 - Providing incentives
- Bring older workers back into the workforce
- Clear pathways to personal advancement

A Lack of Housing

Every issue leads eventually back to housing...

What can be done? We like to think through the Five Ls of development;

- Labor
 - Assist in the training and recruitment of those in the building trades
- Land
 - Exempt areas of enhanced designation from Act 250
- Lending
 - Programs such as our existing first-time home buyer program
 - Current interest rates have made homebuilding and buying more expensive
 - Missing middle program
- Laws
 - Ease municipal regulation to make it easier to build
- Lumber (more broadly just materials)
 - In past sessions a sales tax exemption on building materials has been discussed

Childcare Availability, Affordability, and Dependability

Our members tell us that they struggle with

- Availability – it is hard for employees to navigate the childcare landscape and difficult to navigate what if any resources are available to assist.

They then need to contend with...

- Affordability – if or when an employee finds childcare, it is very expensive, more so for middle income Vermonters above ~350% of FPL.

If they can find childcare and can afford it then they struggle with...

- Dependability – many employers report that childcare is increasingly less dependable and that many employees complain that they need to continue paying for services they do not receive.

What can be done?

- Assistance navigating available childcare and subsequently existing tools to pay for it could be easier for employers and employees
- Assistance to contain the cost of such services

Benefits Cliffs

In a recent survey done of our member employers about 40% said they had an "employee avoiding raises, promotions, or extra hours for fear of losing state assistance or other public benefits."

That represents a sizeable number of people who "parked at a cliff," afraid of what is next and that if they work to improve their current position, they might find themselves worse off.

While this may not sound like a major impediment to the economy, consider if 40% of VT businesses had at least one person who could or would be working full-time that instead is working part-time due to this real or perceived threat.

In the Senate we are starting a conversation around a "Dynamic Basic Needs Calculator"

- Broadly this conversation gets to "affordability" too

There is so much more...

In past session we've tracked over 150+ bills in almost every committee.

If you're thinking employers, think of us.

Engagement

- **Weekly Advocacy Updates**

- many legislators appreciate receiving them for a glimpse at what we're following, our perspective, and a way to monitor what other Committees in the House or Senate are doing.

- **Legislative Breakfast**

- Monday, February 6th at Hula
- Monday, March 13th at The Flynn

Thank you

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President

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