



**FY '27 Budget**  
**House Appropriations Committee**

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The Vermont Chamber of Commerce represents businesses of all sizes across every region and sector of Vermont's economy. We understand what it takes to help businesses grow and thrive, building vibrant communities. Businesses trust us to center stewardship in our mission of advancing the Vermont economy. We recognize that this Committee faces difficult choices in developing a budget that meets Vermont's responsibility to support its most vulnerable residents while operating within a constrained fiscal environment. Those commitments are essential and reflect Vermont's values. At the same time, Vermont businesses continue to face significant workforce shortages, housing constraints, and economic headwinds that challenge growth and competitiveness. In that context, we respectfully ask the Committee to include modest, strategic investments in programs with a proven track record of supporting entrepreneurship, expanding housing availability, and strengthening Vermont's workforce pipeline. These investments are critical to Vermont's long term economic vitality and represent an investment in the future strength and stability of communities across the state.

**Advance Vermont - \$600,000 Base Funding**

Advance Vermont plays a critical role in connecting Vermonters to career pathways and helping employers build a stronger workforce pipeline. Ongoing state funding through a \$600,000 base appropriation would enable Advance Vermont to fill critical gaps in Vermont's workforce development system while helping the State meet the statutory obligations established in Act 65 of 2025. This continued investment ensures career seekers have access to the information they need to make informed education and career decisions and supports the goal that every Vermont student graduates with a clear plan for what comes next.

**Vermont Professionals of Color Network - \$200,000**

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network plays an important role in attracting and retaining diverse talent within Vermont's workforce. Through professional networking, mentorship, and career support programs, the organization helps build inclusive professional communities that encourage individuals to establish long-term careers in Vermont. Continued funding for this workforce development and retention organization is vital for strengthening communities, business development, and contributing to long-term economic growth.

**Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) - \$4 Million Base Funding**

Housing availability remains one of the most significant barriers to workforce growth in Vermont. The Vermont Housing Improvement Program has proven to be a highly effective tool for quickly bringing existing housing units back online in exchange for housing affordability and local workforce occupancy. By helping property owners rehabilitate vacant or underutilized housing, VHIP delivers immediate housing solutions while maximizing the use of existing infrastructure.

**Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR) - \$800,000**

The Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program supports critical repairs and improvements to manufactured homes, helping preserve one of Vermont's most important sources of naturally occurring affordable housing. By investing in the safety, habitability, and longevity of these homes, the program helps stabilize communities and retain housing options for working Vermonters. This continued funding will ensure the important work of this program will continue to help Vermont meet the moment of this housing crisis.

**Vermont Small Business Development Center - \$689,000**

The Vermont Small Business Development Center provides essential technical assistance and advising to entrepreneurs and small businesses across the state. From business planning to financial management and growth strategies, the SBDC supports the success and resilience of Vermont's small business community, which remains a cornerstone of the state's economy. Federal funding for the SBDC requires 1:1 match component of non-federal funds and without this funding the organization will not be able to draw down the full federal match.

Investments in these programs represent strategic, targeted approaches to addressing Vermont's most pressing economic challenges while maximizing the impact of limited resources. By supporting workforce development initiatives, expanding housing availability, and strengthening small business and economic development programs, the Legislature can help ensure that Vermont remains a place where businesses can grow and communities can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration of these funding requests and for your continued commitment to ensure Vermont's investments support long-term economic strength and opportunity.