



Weatherization at Scale Coalition

EAN Network Action Team

House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee Testimony

May 2, 2025

Cara Robecheck, Energy Action Network

Richard Faesy, EFG (Weatherization at Scale Coalition co-chair)

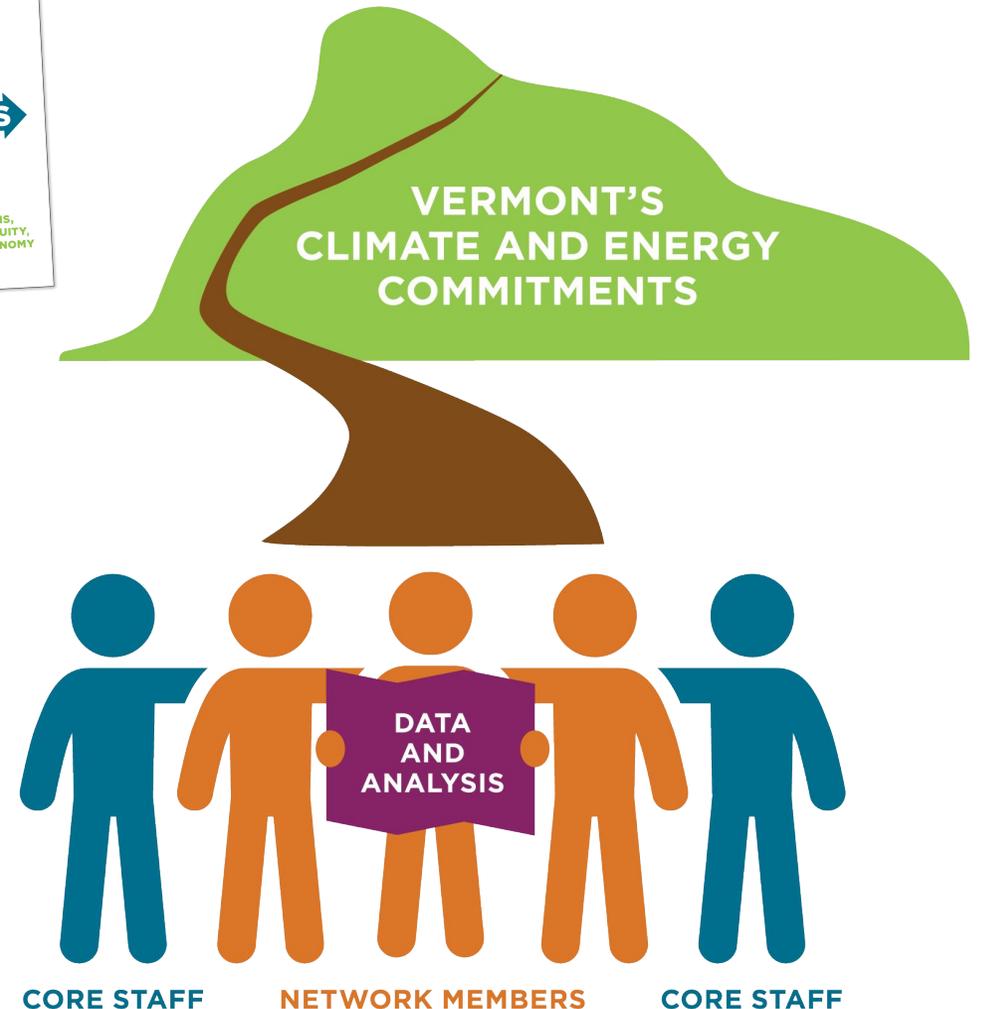
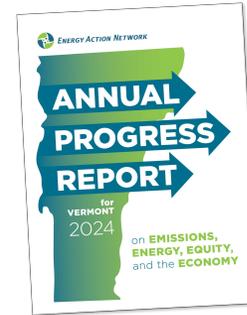
Will Schwartz, Efficiency Vermont (Climate Workforce Coalition co-chair)



EAN is two things

EAN Organization

The organization's mission is to ensure that Vermont's energy and climate decisions are evidence-based, grounded in high-quality data and analysis, and collaboratively developed for effective and durable progress.

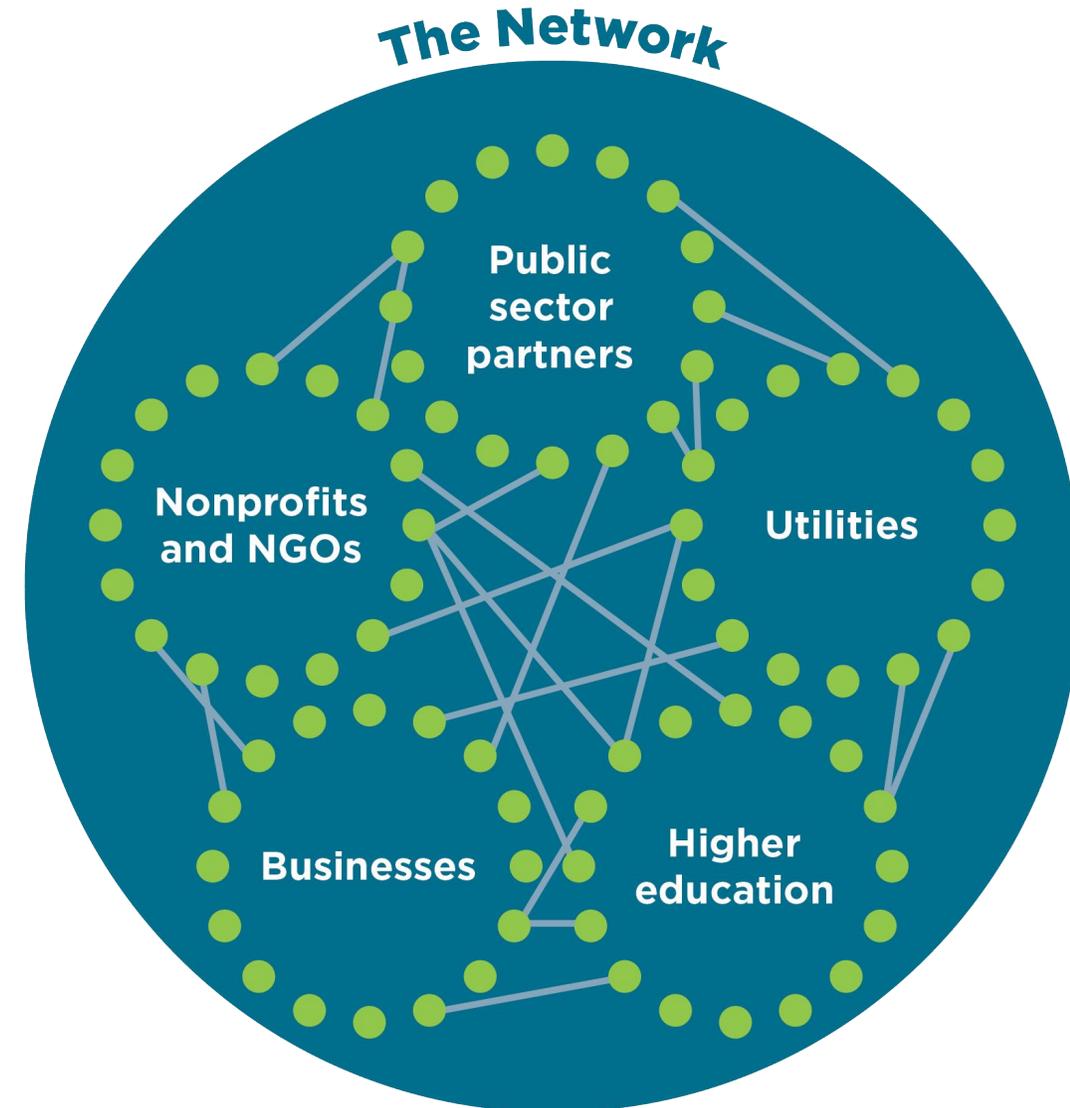




EAN is two things

EAN Network

The Network's mission is to achieve Vermont's climate and energy commitments in ways that create a more just, thriving, and sustainable future.





Context - EAN Network Action Teams



Weatherization at Scale – 2020-present



Climate Workforce – 2021-present



Tenant Weatherization Protection – 2023-present



Thermal Energy Networks – 2022-present



Clean Heat Working Group – 2020-present



Transportation Cap & Invest – 2022



Switch & Save – 2021-present



Future of Rural Transit – 2020-present



Replace Your Ride – 2020-2021



Clean Transportation Equity – 2021-2022





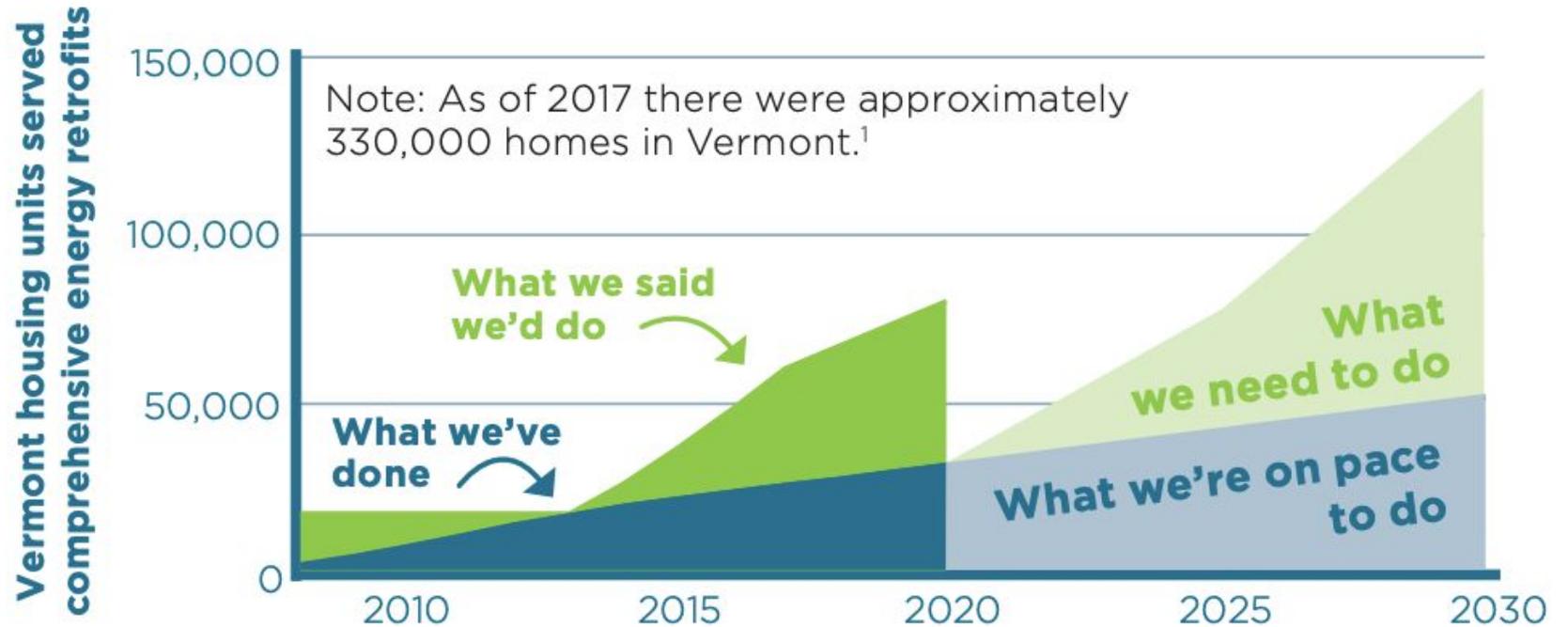
Wx coalition mobilized for ambitious goal

2020



Goal:
Weatherize
120,000 homes
by the end of
the decade –
with a focus on
low and
moderate
income
Vermonters

Weatherization: actual & projected





Weatherization at Scale Coalition

Co-chairs: Richard Faesy (EFG), Neale Lunderville (VGS), Cara Robecheck (EAN)

- ❖ Community Action Agencies
- ❖ Efficiency Vermont
- ❖ Energy Action Network
- ❖ Energy Futures Group
- ❖ VHFA
- ❖ Burlington Electric Department
- ❖ Regulatory Assistance Project
- ❖ Vermont Passive House
- ❖ VNRC
- ❖ VGS (Vermont Gas)
- ❖ VT Department of Public Service
- ❖ VT Agency of Natural Resources
- ❖ VT Office of Economic Opportunity
- ❖ VT Legislators
- ❖ Interested citizens...
- ❖ ...and many others.



Climate Workforce Coalition

Co-chairs: Will Schwartz (Efficiency Vermont), Dylan Giambatista (VGS), Gabrielle Stebbins (Center for Sustainable Energy), Cara Robecheck (EAN)

- ❖ Efficiency Vermont
- ❖ Energy Action Network
- ❖ Center for Sustainable Energy
- ❖ Advance Vermont
- ❖ Vermont Adult Education
- ❖ University of Vermont PACE
- ❖ Serve Learn Earn
- ❖ ReSource
- ❖ VT Energy Education Program (VEEP)
- ❖ VGS (Vermont Gas)
- ❖ VT Department of Labor
- ❖ VT Department of Public Service
- ❖ VT Office of Economic Opportunity
- ❖ VT Legislators
- ❖ Interested citizens...
- ❖ ...and many others.



Weatherization at Scale

Ambitious goal to weatherize 120,000 Vermont homes by 2030

- **Why weatherization?** Wx delivers energy savings, cuts monthly energy bills, reduces GHG emissions, and makes technology to reduce fossil fuels (e.g., heat pumps) more effective. Also improves equity for LMI households and health outcomes.
- **Is it working?** Yes! The demand for weatherization has never been stronger. Over the past four years, VT has boosted incentive funding for Wx and those funds have been mobilized on the ground.
- **Is it enough?** Not yet. Wx needs long-term, stable, and growing funding. Base funding is insufficient to meet climate reqs. More focus on Rental weatherization is needed. Additional long-term sources are required to increase the scale and pace.

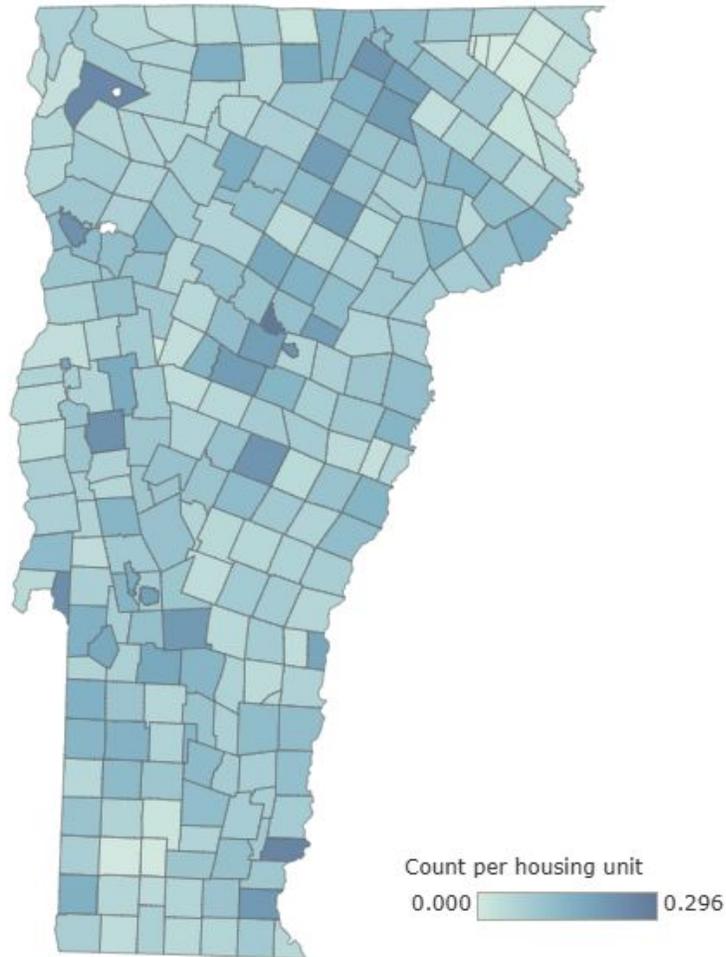




Weatherization - Geographic regions

Weatherization by town as of 2023

Click on a town to filter



Weatherization by county as of 2023

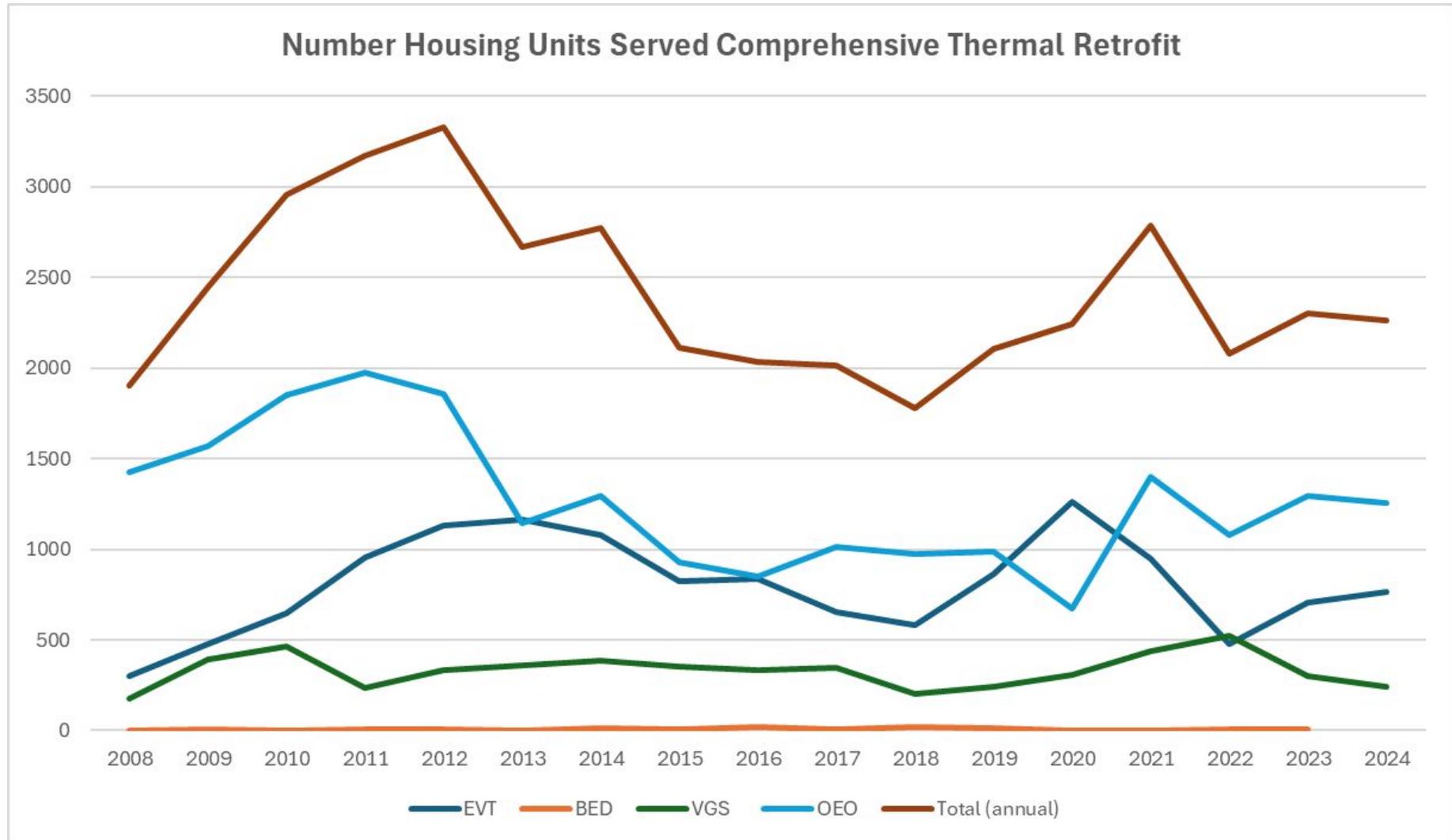
Click on a county to filter



From EAN Energy Dashboard
<https://eanvt.org/vermont-energy-dashboard/>



Vermont Weatherization Activity 2008-2024





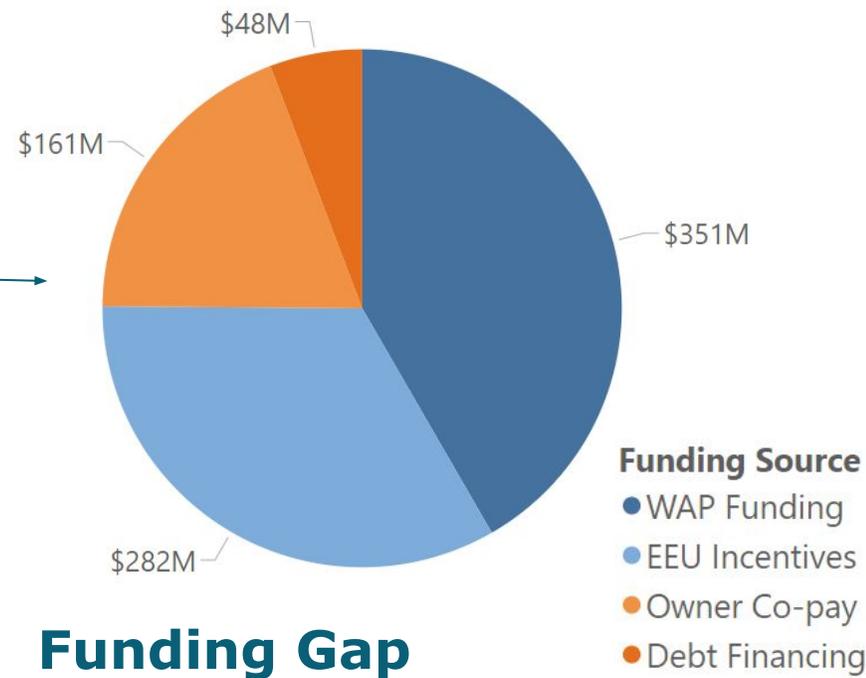
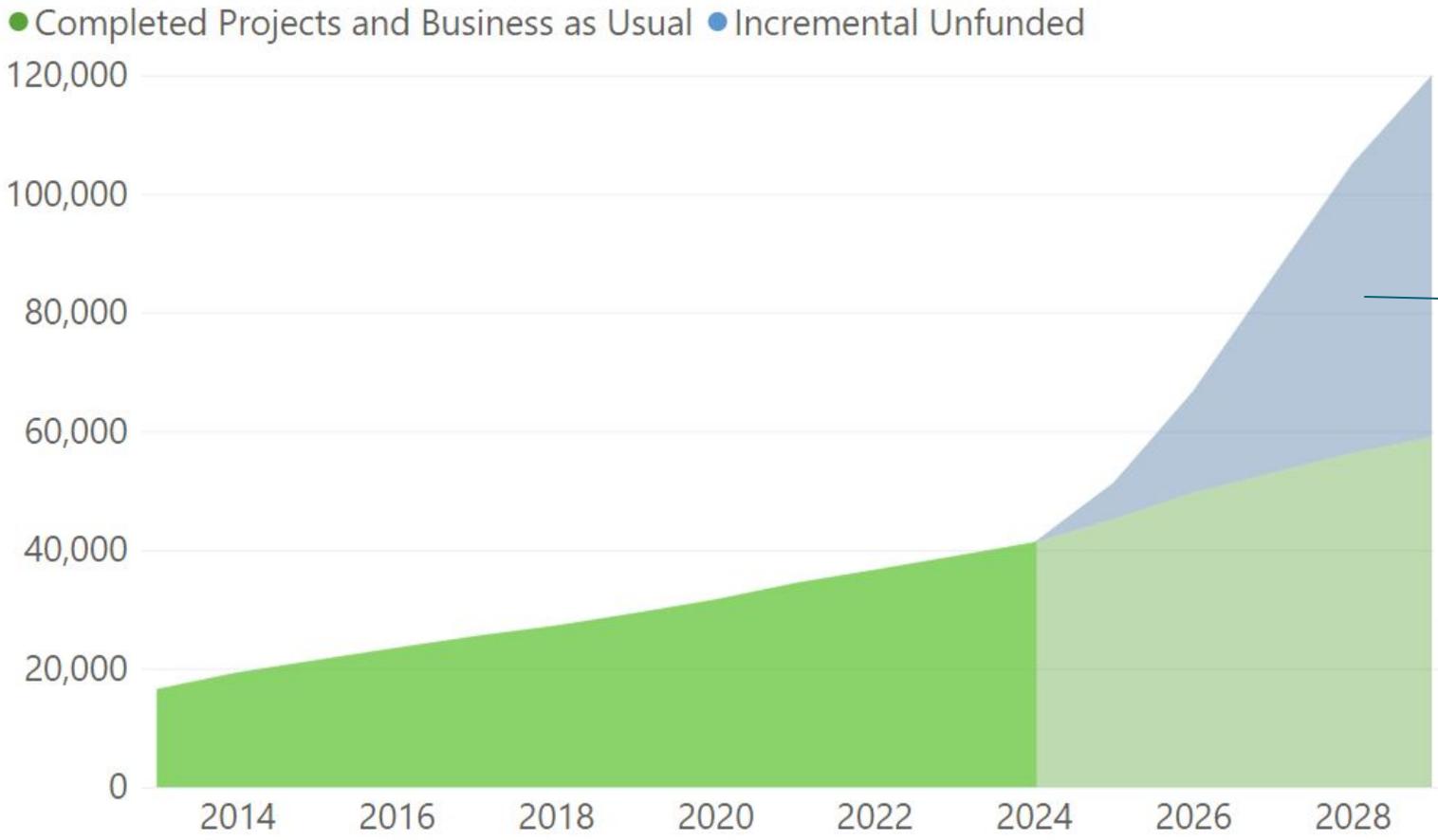
Weatherization Savings

Weatherization Provider	2023 Average % Fuel Use Reduction	2023 Average % Fuel Use Reduction (Statewide)
Efficiency Vermont	10%	25%
Burlington Electric Department	23%	
Vermont Gas (VGS)	21%	
Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)	31%	
WAP Agencies	29%	
3E Thermal	45%	



Wx at Scale: approx gap analysis

Base funding alone leaves gap of ~61,000 homes for 2030 goal



Funding Gap

EEU Incentives: \$351 M
WAP Funding: \$282 M
Total: \$633 M

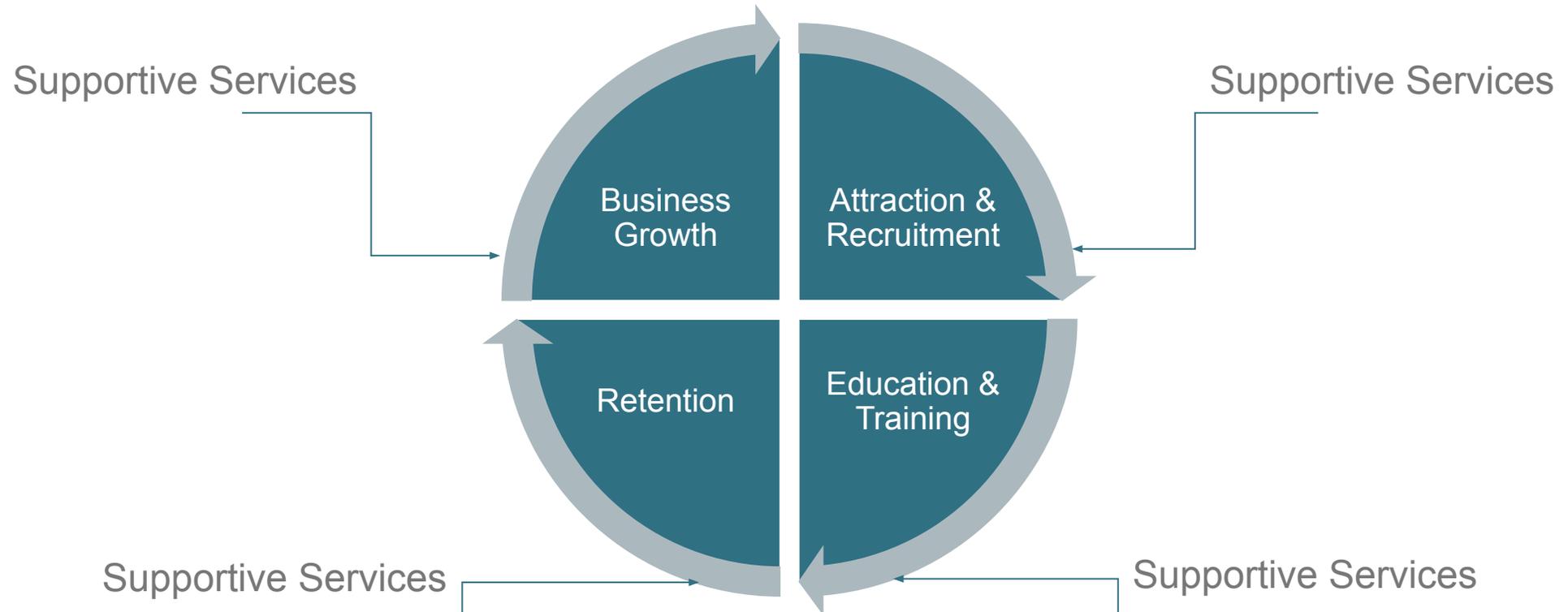
Weatherization Workforce Development in Vermont

Will Schwartz – Workforce Development Manager, Efficiency Vermont



What is Workforce Development?

Helping people and employers gain the skills, knowledge, and support they need to get good jobs, advance in their careers, and grow their businesses.



Why is Workforce Development Needed to Weatherize Vermont?

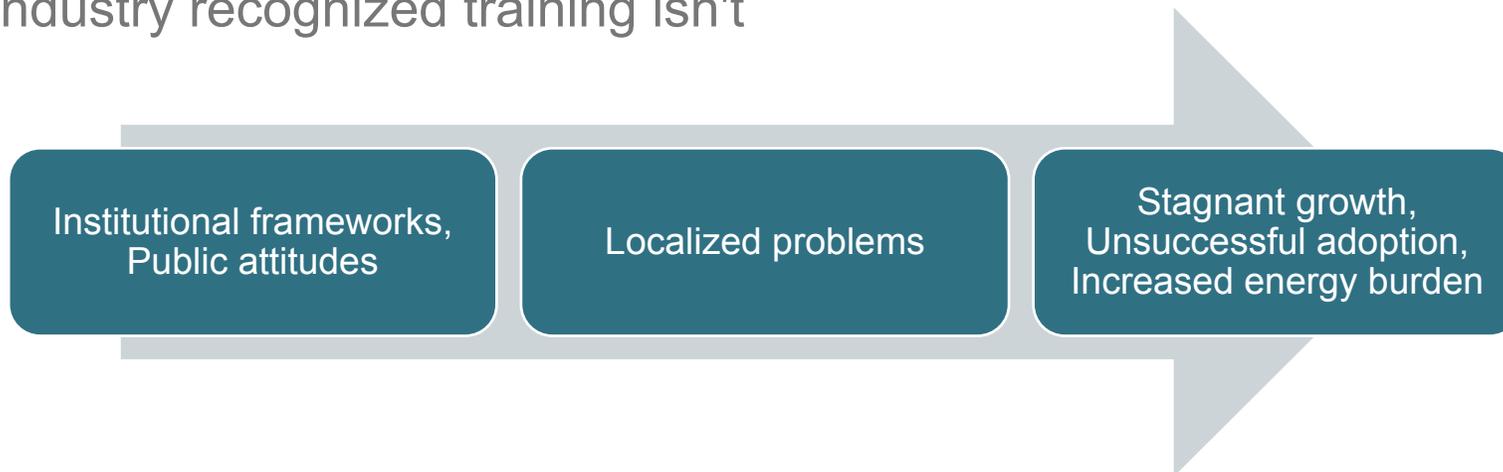
- There is no silver bullet for the workforce shortage, and this foundational gap leads to pass-on effects for other programs.
- In the past, Vermont has not had sufficient resources to support residents, especially LMI residents.
- Now, Vermont has time-limited funding to deploy – but we will not be successful if there are not enough workers to complete the projects.
- Investing in innovative workforce strategies and programs to attract, train, and retain a skilled workforce in Vermont, is imperative to the future success of weatherization efforts.

Workforce Level Setting

- Broader, systemic challenges impacting workforce development in Vermont
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Stagnant population growth
 - Lack of affordable and geographically equitable childcare
 - Lack of public transportation
 - Inadequate healthcare access
 - Aging skilled-trades workforce
 - Uneven economic opportunities across regions

Workforce Level Setting

- Trades stigmas deter interest in these careers
- Without licensing or certification requirements, standards, code enforcement, or other checks and balances measures, training is a low priority.
- Strong DIY attitudes and an atmosphere of unchecked on-the-job learning can lead to institutionalized poor practices, and belief that industry recognized training isn't needed.
- Low training numbers
- Increased difficulties with attraction and retention
- Slower adoption of new technologies and practices
- Increased energy burden on residents
- Wide-scale distrust of new technologies and practices
- Stifled business growth



Education and Training Ecosystem in VT

K-12

- Traditional Schooling
- 17 CTE Centers
- SkillsUSA
- Northlands Job Corps
- Career Days
- Trade Shows
- Apprenticeships
- Job Shadowing
- Vermont Youth Employment Programs

Post Secondary Education

- Vermont State University
- Community College of Vermont
- University of Vermont
- Champlain College
- Middlebury College
- Saint Michael's College
- Norwich University
- Sterling College
- Landmark College

Adult Learners

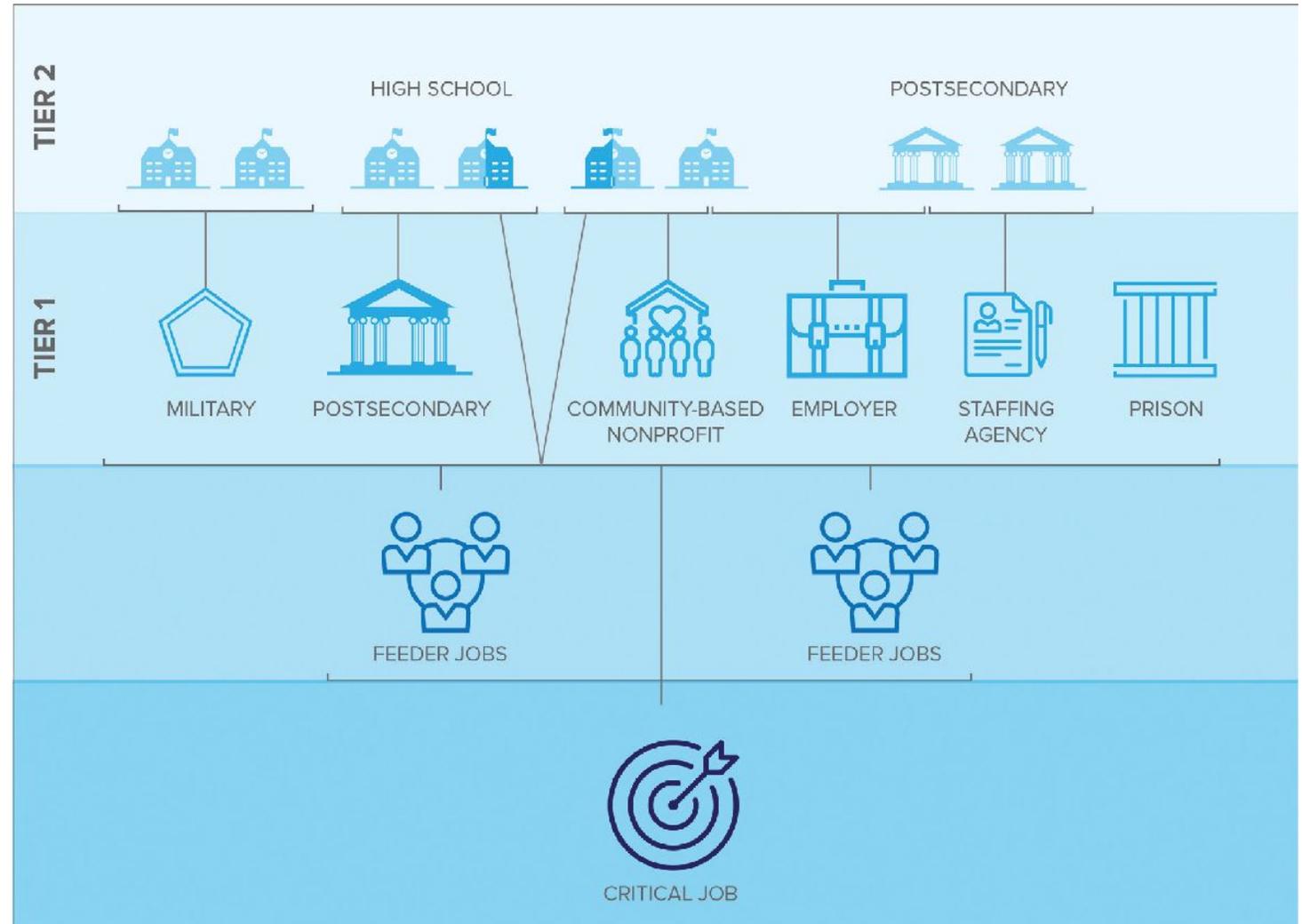
- 17 Adult CTE Centers
- ReSOURCE
- Vermont Adult Learning
- Professional Certifications
- Mentorship
- Manufacturer Trainings
- Serve Learn Earn

Barrier Breakers

- Vermont Works for Women
- VT-DOL WFD Support programs
- Veteran Services
- Association of Africans Living in Vermont
- Wrap-around support programs

Education and Training Roles

- Tier 3 Providers: Elementary and Middle schools, focus on early learning and awareness.
- Tier 2 Providers: Feed talent to Tier 1 providers, forming a value chain with education and training services, and adding incremental value at each stage
- Tier 1 Providers: Supply qualified workers directly to employers



What We've Heard so Far

Contractor, Education & Training, and Regional Development Corporation (RDC) Sentiments

Contractor Workforce Challenges

Hiring: We are frustrated with untrained workers representing skill sets and knowledge to access higher wages. To be more specific the lack of trade regulation and licensure at the state level undermines those of us producing to a high standard and embarrasses the industry. Simply deciding to become a builder is a dangerously low entry bar especially in a state that does not enforce residential building inspection.

Hiring: We have had an opening in our office for over 3 months. The applicants we here from are unqualified, want far too much, are out of the country looking for Green Card assistance or have moral values inconsistent with our small family business. Just to name a few. We would hire an additional installer/tech, however they are impossible to find!

Retention/Business Growth: My problem is that when I hire a solid worker, I end up encouraging them to get their own certifications. This helps them set up their own businesses and improve their lives.

Hiring: High expectations on compensation without the experience or ambition.

Training: Competing interests such as maintaining production for onsite projects. 8 hours doesn't seem like much but can be difficult to work into the routine when trainings are not local or easily accessible. Certifications often require testing sites that are not local.

Apprenticeship: The assistance we get in signing up apprentices creates a challenge. The apprentices in the past have had issues with filling out forms, etc. In years past, there would be someone who would visit each business and sit down with the employer and potential apprentices to explain the program and assist with enrolling. This was very helpful.

Education and Training Sentiments

Students are less interested in un-licensed trades, such as building sciences, carpentry, and construction management.

We have a lot of trouble finding instructors. High costs of living make it difficult for interested, out-of-state teachers to accepted a job.

Rigorous requirements to become an instructor make it difficult for trades-people who would be interested in teaching. There needs to be a shorter and more navigable pathway for older tradespeople trying to transition from labor-intensive field positions to teaching

Students don't understand how lucrative and fulfilling skilled-trades careers can be. They need more exposure to what success in the trades looks like.

Wages are the most important thing for adult learners. Many of these learners need to know there are career-pathways and high-paying jobs at the end of their education and frankly, a lot of the weatherization positions out there don't offer the pay needed to get by in VT.

There is continued need for CTE support services such as transportation, and other specialized services needed for students sent to CTEs because they don't fit in to "traditional" high-schools.

RDC Sentiments

“Weatherization” is not recognized as a sector. Businesses don’t identify as a “weatherization Contractor”. They are a construction firm or builder that also does weatherization or does it as a part of a renovation.

We have seen other industries and companies have success by combining housing and workforce efforts. Perhaps there is a way to integrate these efforts for construction and building companies as well.

We haven’t seen any slowing of the construction work throughout the year, we expect there to be a continued need for both residential and commercial construction growth.

It is likely that one of the reasons that there are not more firms is because of the lack of trained talent. Perhaps we should reach out to all residential contractors and bring them in with the idea that they can expand their business into this field if they can hire trained workers.

Work Currently Being Done & End Goal

A high-level overview of current efforts to address weatherization workforce development issues.

4-Pillars of Workforce Development

Attraction & Recruitment

- Career Days & Trade Shows
- Facilitating education & employer connections
- CBO outreach
- VT-DOL resources

Training & Education

- Vermont Adult Learning
- ReSOURCE
- Vermont Works for Women
- Vermont Energy Education Program
- Sustainable Energy Outreach Network
- Vermont Innovation Efficiency & Weatherization (VIEW) Center

Retention

- VT RETAIN Program
- VT-DOL support services
- Inclusiveness and accessibility trainings
- Employer driven incentives

Business Growth

- Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund business coaching
- Vermont Small Business Development Center
- Vermont Small Business Law Center
- Financial futures programs
- VT Economic Development Authority

Social Determinants of Work

Childcare

Affordable and accessible;
Extended coverage options

Transportation

Reliable and safe;
Affordable;
Flexibility to address issues

Healthcare

Lower premiums for employer-provided insurance;
PTO/PFML;
Increased access to telehealth

Housing

Access to stable and affordable housing

Community

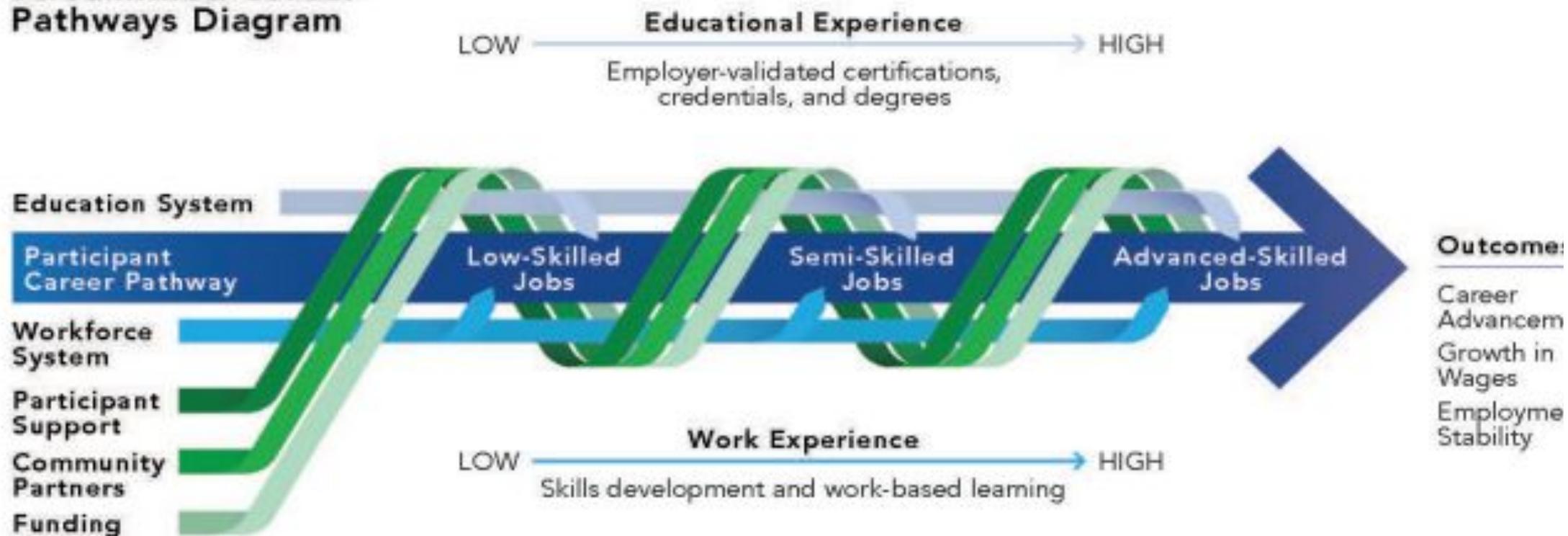
Access to quality food; Mental health services; Safe living environment

Broadband

Reliable internet; Necessary device for education & work; Skills development

Holistic Talent Pipelines

Streamlined Career Pathways Diagram



Questions?

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