



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

# Workforce Investment System & Registered Apprenticeship Program Annual Report

**Submitted On:** January 17, 2025

**Submitted To:** The Honorable Philip B. Scott, Governor  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs  
House Committee on Appropriations  
House Committee on Commerce & Economic Development

**Submitted By:** Michael Harrington, Commissioner  
Vermont Department of Labor

# VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

## **Purpose** *[Why we exist and what we striving to achieve]*

The Department of Labor exists to improve the lives of working Vermonters. Together, we serve the people and businesses of our great State so all of us can live well, be safe, and experience meaningful employment.

## **Principles** *[What it will take for us to achieve our purpose]*

- ❖ Working with an OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE mindset
- ❖ Providing COMPASSIONATE SERVICE to everyone
- ❖ Acting with PROFESSIONALISM and INTEGRITY in all that we do
- ❖ Ensuring EQUITY, ACCESS, and BELONGING for our staff and our customers

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*As required by 10 V.S.A. § 540 & 21 V.S.A. § 1113(e)(2), this report is intended to present a “systematic evaluation of the accomplishments of the State workforce investment system and the performance of participating agencies and institutions” and a status report on the Vermont Registered Apprenticeship program.*

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## WORKFORCE EXPANSION EFFORTS

### WORKFORCE EXPANSION PILOT

Section 5 of Act 183 of 2022 created a “regional workforce expansion” pilot program and allocated four classified, limited-service positions to the Department. This program, developed at the end of the pandemic, was designed to address workforce shortages using two synchronous approaches: encouraging and supporting employers to change their hiring and employment policies to be more flexible and responsive to job seekers with barriers and eliminating artificial barriers by adopting skills-based hiring practices, and working within communities to develop and implement job seeker engagement strategies. The goal is to increase the labor force participation rate by developing strategies that attract and serve diverse populations who, for various reasons, have been disengaged from the workforce. This pilot program was paused while the Special Oversight Committee on Workforce Expansion and Development’s work was conducted. During the previous biennium, the General Assembly reauthorized and extended the program in Act 146 of 2024. The program manager will start in January 2025 and lead the Department’s pilot community selection process and the hiring and onboarding of the specialists embedded in the selected communities.

### SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES

For the past year, the Workforce Development Division has highlighted and promoted the “[Good Jobs Principles](#).” The Good Jobs Principles, created and promoted by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Commerce, are a set of guidelines designed to promote high-quality employment practices and ensure that jobs provide fair, sustainable, and beneficial conditions for workers. The principles are intended to help shape labor markets that are not only productive but also equitable, supportive, and resilient, benefiting both workers and the broader economy.

The Good Jobs Principles are a framework to highlight what workers are looking for in employment, which would, in turn, help employers have a competitive edge in a tight labor market. The principles include:

- *Fair Wages and Compensation*: Ensuring that workers are paid fairly for their work, with wages that provide economic security and reflect the value of their labor.
- *Job Security and Stability*: Encouraging practices that protect workers from job insecurity, such as offering long-term contracts or stable employment conditions.
- *Health and Safety*: Promoting safe working conditions that prioritize the health and well-being of employees, both physically and mentally.
- *Career Development and Training*: Supporting employees' growth by offering opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and education.
- *Work-Life Balance*: Encouraging practices that allow workers to balance their professional and personal lives, such as flexible working hours and paid leave.
- *Respect and Inclusion*: Ensuring that the workplace is inclusive and non-discriminatory, with respect for all workers regardless of their background, identity, or status.

- *Worker Voice and Participation*: Fostering an environment where employees can participate in decision-making, provide feedback, and express their concerns, ensuring that their voices are heard.

Workforce Development Division staff have incorporated talking points related to the principles in meetings with employers, presentations to business and industry groups, and in presentations to workforce development stakeholders.

To improve our reach, over the summer, we launched a bi-monthly newsletter entitled “Employer Edge” that is distributed to 41,438 unique e-mail addresses, with an open rate of 55.5%. In it, we promote the principles by highlighting Vermont employers that have changed business practices or that have existing business practices that align with one or more of the principles. Our goal is to help employers understand what workers are looking for and to encourage business transformation as a recruitment strategy.

The Department also updated our Weekly Jobs Newsletter to highlight attractive features (e.g., “bonus,” “remote,” or “relocation assistance”) or other requirements for five jobs in each workforce development service region. We now highlight one professional position and four skilled labor positions in each region.

## **REACHING & SERVING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

As Vermont continues to experience low unemployment rates, part of our strategy is to more effectively serve and engage vulnerable populations — such as individuals with disabilities, Veterans, individuals with low incomes, and those facing other barriers to employment — is essential for building a workforce system that is inclusive, diverse, and adaptable to the needs of all job seekers. Reaching these populations ensures that every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, has an opportunity to contribute to the workforce and benefit from economic mobility.

In PY2023, Vermont focused on bringing service to individuals instead of requiring them to come to a Job Center. We did this by using selective outreach strategies and collaborating with community organizations, schools, and advocacy groups, especially in rural areas. The workforce development system partners ensured resources were accessible to people with disabilities and those with language access needs and provided support services like childcare, transportation, mentorship, and financial literacy to reduce barriers. Case management was a key component, offering personalized support to help individuals from vulnerable populations transition into the workforce; by including these groups, labor shortages can be addressed, strengthening the workforce development system.

In PY2023, Vermont implemented enhanced strategies to improve Individual Career Advancement Network (ICAN) co-enrollment with WIOA, prioritizing expanded access and streamlined participant processes. A key update was the integration of Job Search Training into Invest EAP’s employment plans for most ICAN enrollees, providing a clear pathway for the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) to connect priority populations with WIOA services and promote stronger alignment and participation.

Additionally, VDOL introduced a new electronic partner referral form to strengthen communication with partner agencies referring individuals for services. This innovative tool significantly increased the volume of referrals from community partners, especially refugee resettlement agencies, while enabling effective tracking and ensuring timely service delivery. Together, these enhancements fostered greater collaboration, expanded access, and delivered impactful support to Vermont's most vulnerable populations.

In PY2023, VDOL strengthened its presence in correctional facilities to deliver basic career services and individualized support to build trusting relationships with incarcerated individuals. This growing partnership between the Department of Corrections and Workforce Development reflected our commitment to supporting successful reentry. Building on efforts from the previous year, VDOL staff expanded their physical and virtual engagement within correctional facilities, fostering trust and establishing meaningful connections with individuals before release. This proactive approach allowed staff to develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) tailored to each person's unique circumstances, creating a realistic and actionable path forward. By establishing these connections early, VDOL enhanced the likelihood of continued engagement post-release, providing a foundation for successful reentry and workforce integration.

## **SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS AND NEW AMERICANS**

Section 9 of Act 80 of 2019 directed VDOL to take specific actions to coordinate and support the employment of New Americans in Vermont's workforce. In partnership with the Ethiopian Community Development Center (ECDC) and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC), the Department's WIOA-funded staff assisted in providing pre-vocational training, occupational skills training, and support services to help immigrants and new Americans find and maintain suitable employment.

Through the federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), labor exchange and wrap-around support services, and state-funded programs (e.g., training funds), the Southeast region served over 80 clients. The breadth of these services ranges from labor market information services and occupational skills training to direct support services. These support services include covering costs for work clothing, work tools, driver's education, and related expenses (e.g., driver's permit and driver's license fees), as well as support for car insurance, registration, and vehicle inspection to ensure the clients had reliable transportation in a rural part of the State.

The level of support services surrounding automotive/repair and driver's education with these clients stretched slightly out of the scope of our purpose when working with participants who did not have a long-term occupational goal. While WIOA funds can support these services while a participant is in training, it became clear over time that some of these participants were not ready or not interested in training. We intend to maintain some support for drivers' education and related expenses for those with a training or employment goal. There is a potential gap in funding for individuals who may not have a training or employment goal but need personal transportation and the independence a vehicle can

provide in a rural area. The partners were made aware of these limitations and the Department supported efforts in one area to apply for Federal funds that would provide the necessary financial support. The Department encouraged the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) to include driver's education funding requests in one Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC6) grant, and the Department offered a letter of support for the RRPC's application. The RRPC announced the \$1.25M grant award in September 2024.

## **EX-OFFENDER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT**

VDOL Regional Managers actively engaged with Department of Corrections Workforce Development Coordinators in their correctional facilities to begin transitional services for those released within six months. In the Southeast region, VDOL staff provided workshops on labor market information, resume writing, and interview skills. Staff screened individuals for eligibility for Federal and state-funded programs and began to plan – whether it was a plan for training and education or a plan for landing a job after they re-enter their community. Making these connections while people are still incarcerated eases the transition once they are released.



## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) houses four primary divisions, serving distinct purposes, but all work to enforce laws governing the protection and advancement of Vermont's workers and related activities that support both workers and employers. The Department's worker protections encompass safety measures, income security, compliance with fair labor practice requirements, and adherence to laws concerning youth and migrant and seasonal farm workers. Additionally, the Department provides economic and labor market information to employers, career pursuers, incumbent workers, job seekers, lawmakers, researchers, and planners. This data can assist all entities in making strategic and data-informed decisions.

The Workforce Development (WD) Division offers Vermont job seekers, career advancers, and businesses a wide range of services such as education and training planning, job coaching and application submittal support, recruitment consultations, a no-cost job board with nationwide reach, as well as candidate screening and referrals. The WD division has approximately 80 positions distributed strategically across the state. WD positions are funded with both federal and state dollars. WD staff charge their time to the funding sources based on the activities allowed by those sources. Our Central Office team consists of subject matter experts supporting both state and federal funding. This team is responsible for educating and training regional management and field staff on properly using State and Federal program funding.

Workforce Development maintains eleven offices throughout the state that offer walk-in services and by-appointment, in-person, and virtual customer service hours. WD office staff strive to create a "one-stop" service experience for Vermonters by understanding the range of services available in each community and by being able to make referrals to State government programs such as HireAbility and Economic Services. WD has always worked to meet Vermonters where they are, and over the last four years, we have shifted to having a physical presence with community partners. WD staff organize regular in-person "Labor of Location" hours at libraries, food shelves, HUD housing sites, economic services offices, farmers markets, disaster relief centers, and special events such as baseball games.

Workforce Development's primary customers remain Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants and participants in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. Although WD has strived to highlight the reemployment aspect of this division, Vermonters continue to see and refer to our regional WD offices as "unemployment offices" and are inclined to come into the regional office as their local in-person access point for the Department's UI program. Leaders of both the WD and the UI programs meet regularly to continue to improve the level of service claimants receive when they come into an office.

### **ONLINE & VIRTUAL SERVICES**

Vermont JobLink (VJL) is VDOL's no-cost online career, employment, and training resource center. VJL allows job seekers and career advancers 24/7 access to search and view job postings and training opportunities from in-person and virtual providers at no cost while also affording employers unlimited

access to post jobs. Users can view current economic and labor market information, access employment preparation tools (e.g., resume writing assistance), and explore nearly 7,500 open positions. All job postings are vetted to ensure recruitment is from valid employers, reducing the risk of employment-related fraud. VDOL and America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA), the VJL support vendor, continue to protect job seekers' personal information by masking social security numbers (all but the last four digits).

VDOL is currently working with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) to procure a replacement for the VJL system. Our last report stated that ADS had secured a contract to customize and integrate a preferred management information system. However, that contract was canceled. In 2024, ADS and VDOL were pursuing a recovery effort related to that contract, working directly with the preferred management information system rather than an integrator. This effort was abandoned due to vendor staffing, cost constraints, and organizational capacity to deliver a functional product on a shortened timeline.

As of the writing of this report, we continue to operate in VJL and make improvements. We also plan to begin another procurement process, allowing new potential vendors and technology to be considered.

## STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD VISION & GOALS

In June 2023, the SWDB embraced a strategic plan outlining a vision and goals for the workforce system. The vision and goals are a compass for State agencies and departments, directing their strategies concerning the public workforce development system and aligning with the objectives outlined in the WIOA State Plan.

### VISION

Vermont's employment demands will be met through a statewide, coordinated, and integrated system of workforce education, training, and development where all Vermonters can connect to robust career pathways, advance along career ladders, and new Vermonters can quickly secure employment with a Vermont employer.

### ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

Core partners in the public workforce system strive to achieve these high-level goals, giving prioritization, emphasis, and special planning considerations for:

- individuals who live in rural communities,
- individuals who are experiencing homelessness,
- individuals who are living below the Federal poverty line,
- individuals who are at transitional points in their working lives (e.g. immigrants/asylees, post-high school graduation, post-college graduation, laid-off, parents re-entering the workforce),
- all business and industry, including small business.

Goal 1: Ensure that people in Vermont have easy access to education, training, and services that support the attainment of their career and financial goals.

Goal 2: Ensure that everyone – including women, Veterans, minorities, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups – can contribute and thrive in high-demand careers that will directly impact Vermont's success over the next decade in housing, broadband access, climate resiliency, transportation infrastructure, childcare, education, and healthcare.

Goal 3: Increase assistance to Vermonters to encourage high school completion, earn additional qualifications like industry-recognized certificates, participate in registered apprenticeships, or pursue post-secondary degree programs.

Goal 4: Integrate continuous improvement practices into the operations of the workforce development system, its core partners and education and training providers, so the system can effectively serve as many individuals and businesses as possible.

Goal 5: Meet the needs of Vermont’s employers by proactively engaging education institutions, youth, young adults, and college students at key transition points to increase their awareness of the many career entry and advancement opportunities around the state.

Goal 6: Ensure employers have the tools they need to navigate labor shortages by linking them to on-the-job training programs, technical assistance, and information on best practices in job design, hiring, compensation, and emerging expectations that workers have of their workplace.

Goal 7: Adapt the public workforce system’s access points to ensure hyper-local and virtual components are available to meet the needs of job seekers of every generation and background.

Goal 8: Align data collections across the workforce system so that data can be more effectively and efficiently used to inform decisions, identify gaps in service delivery, uncover gaps in training and credentialing, and foster equity and accessibility within the public workforce system and among the core partner programs.

Act 146 (2024) redesigned the State Workforce Board, reducing its size from over 50 members down to 27. At the same time, it required that a brand-new board be appointed. Heading into 2025, the new Board must redefine its purpose and priorities. As of the writing of this report, Jay Bellows, CEO at KORE Power, has been appointed chair of the new board, and the rest of the board members are expected to be appointed in the coming days.

## **STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM**

As the leader of workforce education and training system in the State, the Commissioner of Labor is responsible for coordinating workforce development initiatives within the State government. These tasks are carried out with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) as outlined in 10 V.S.A. § 540. This section of the statute has been the subject of study over the last 12 months by the Special Oversight Committee on Workforce Expansion and Development and a bill proposing modifications and clarifications for the Commissioner of Labor’s role along with the Executive Director of Workforce Strategy and Development, a role created by the General Assembly in Act 146 of 2024.

The SWDB assists the Governor in executing the duties required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and assists the Commissioner of Labor in carrying out the abovementioned responsibilities. The SWDB is required by WIOA. It sets the direction of the State’s use of Federal funds under these four titles:

- Title I: Administered by VDOL, this Title authorizes programs and activities that support job training and related services in three different categories: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. It also establishes a one-stop delivery system, or a unified system offering comprehensive workforce services, that improves the quality and range of education and workforce development services. The SWDB is responsible for overseeing and operating the one-stop system.

- Title II: Administered by the Agency of Education, this Title sub-grants funds to eligible entities who administer the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs. The funds help eligible adults become literate in English, develop other basic skills necessary for employment and post-secondary education, and become full partners in their children's education. It serves people with barriers to employment, such as immigrants, low-income individuals, and English language learners.
- Title III: Administered by VDOL, this Title authorizes programs and activities that allow the Department to connect job seekers with employers who are seeking workers, including through our no-cost, vetted job board at [www.vermontjoblink.com](http://www.vermontjoblink.com).
- Title IV: Administered by HireAbility and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired at the Agency of Human Services, this Title administers and authorizes funding for vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

# VDOL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

## FEDERAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

### WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS

The Federal funds directed at youth, adults, and dislocated workers are the primary resources supporting the diverse needs of eligible job seekers and career advancers. While serving as the main source of support for American Job Center case manager salaries and benefits in the Department's regional offices, these funds also ensure that job seekers with the greatest barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment receive the support they need. The funds also support employers.

### WIOA TITLE I - YOUTH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **WIOA Title I Youth Program** is a transformative initiative to empower the next generation of workers by providing critical resources and support to help them achieve educational, career, and personal success. The program aims to support youth and young adults aged 14-24, particularly those facing significant barriers to employment, ensuring they have access to opportunities that prepare them for the workforce of tomorrow. Vermont's annual allocation for youth programs is approximately \$2,318,970.

#### Key Features – WIOA Youth Program

- **Focus on Out-of-School Youth:** At least 75% of program funding is directed toward “out-of-school” youth aged 16-24, addressing challenges such as high school dropout, homelessness, or involvement in the justice system.
- **Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services:** The program provides supportive services, ranging from career counseling, tutoring, leadership development, mentoring, and access to work-based learning opportunities.
- **Work Experience Opportunities:** A minimum of 20% of program funds are allocated for paid and unpaid work experiences of up to eight weeks.
- **Personalized Pathways:** Each participant receives a tailored plan that aligns their skills and interests with career goals, incorporating training, education, and supportive services.
- **Sector Partnerships:** The program collaborates with employers, educators, and community organizations to create pathways to high-demand industries.

#### WIOA Youth Testimonial

*"I'd like to say that VDOL has been very helpful, and I am glad for the year that VDOL has been working with me! They put a lot of effort and time into your success! They also help you when you don't have the time for certain things—they put in the extra effort and time for you! When you have your mind set on something, VDOL does not disappoint and will put you on the right track, no matter the circumstances!"*

## WIOA TITLE I - WIOA ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The **WIOA Title I Adult Program** is a lifeline for low-income individuals and those facing barriers to employment, delivering targeted support to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency. The program empowers participants to build in-demand skills and secure meaningful employment through job training, career counseling, and access to supportive resources. By bridging skills gaps and fostering upward mobility, the adult program transforms individual lives and enhances the inclusiveness and competitiveness of the workforce.

The **WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program** is a crucial resource for individuals who have lost their jobs due to layoffs, business closures, or economic shifts. Designed to help workers regain stability and re-enter the workforce, the program provides comprehensive services, including career counseling, skills assessments, and training tailored to high-demand occupations. The program addresses the immediate and long-term needs of dislocated workers by offering supportive services like transportation and childcare and immediate Rapid Response assistance during mass layoffs. Focused on aligning participants' skills with labor market demands, the program fosters resilience, reduces unemployment, and drives economic recovery by preparing a skilled, adaptable workforce for evolving industry needs.

### Key Features WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

- **Priority for Individuals with Barriers to Employment:** The program emphasizes services for low-income individuals, those with limited education or skills, and other populations facing barriers to workforce participation.
- **Comprehensive Career Services:** Participants have access to a range of services, including career planning, job search assistance, resume writing, and labor market information.
- **Access to Training:** Training services focus on equipping individuals with skills for high-demand occupations. Options include classroom-based training, on-the-job training (OJT), and apprenticeships.
- **Supportive Services:** The program provides assistance such as transportation, childcare, and financial literacy to help participants overcome obstacles to success.
- **Industry-Driven Approach:** By partnering with employers, the program ensures training and career pathways align with labor market demands, creating a skilled talent pipeline.

### WIOA Adult Program Testimonial: Overcoming Addiction and Rebuilding a Life

*"If you would have asked me a couple of years ago how I saw myself in the future, I would have said dead or in prison. Because eventually, that is where most drug addicts like me wind up. It's a harsh reality most people in my situation don't want to admit. That all changed when I entered the VFOR program, which helps people like me who struggle with addiction. Not using is not enough. They helped me reset my life. Making plans and setting goals for a more productive life is one way in which they do that. It was recommended to me to set up an appointment with Vermont Department of Labor. I met with the Vermont Dept. of Labor and HireAbility of Vermont. It was life-changing! I had no real training or trade experience. My jobs up to this point were mostly dead-end jobs with no real future. But with the help I got from VDOL, HireAbility and*

*ICAN, I was able to get my CDL and look forward to having an actual career, not just a job. They enrolled me in a scholarship program which not only paid for my schooling but helped me with clothing and transportation costs as well as financial help to pay for housing while I attended school. These are all things I could not have afforded on my own. They helped me not only with finances, but with their guidance, encouragement, and emotional support. By the time an addict finally reaches out for help, they are usually at the end of their rope. Their life's in a dark pit. The Department of Labor together with HireAbility made a way out of that pit for me! I am forever grateful for their help. I graduated in Nov 2022 with my CDL. Within a few weeks I was employed for seasonal work driving a tri-axel truck for an excavating company. Before the season ended, I landed a job driving for a long-haul waste removal company. I now take home more money in a week than I used to in a month! I am happy with my career choice and have a great future to look forward to thanks to their help! It is wonderful to know that opportunity is out there, even for people in situations like me!"*

## WIOA TITLE I PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

WIOA performance targets for each state are determined through a combination of historical data, economic factors, and Federal guidelines. States negotiate specific targets with the U.S. Department of Labor, reflecting the unique circumstances of each state's labor market and workforce needs.

In the Youth Program, Vermont achieved or surpassed the negotiated goals for all five performance measures—a testament to the dedication and effectiveness of our case managers. Their guidance and support are pivotal in helping youth meet these expectations.

WIOA Youth Performance Measures	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual
Participants Served	175	-----	163
Employment (2nd Quarter after Exit)	74.7%	63.5%	73.1%
Employment (4th Quarter after Exit)	71.2%	60%	67.2%
The midpoint of participant wages earned (2nd Quarter after Exit)	\$6,155	\$3,811	\$3,850
Credential Attainment Rate	44.2%	45.5%	56.8%
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	61.9%	42%	51%

Figure 1: PY2023 Title I Youth Program Performance Outcomes

Adult enrollments significantly increased in PY2023, partly driven by an influx of New Americans in several regions. Case managers delivered personalized support services, work experiences, and on-the-job training (OJT).

The adult program fell short of meeting the credential measures, primarily because some enrolled participants secured employment independently and did not complete their training. Additionally, mental health challenges prevented others from continuing their training.



WIOA Adult Performance Measures	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual
Participants Served	302	-----	409
Employment (2nd Quarter after Exit)	77.4%	69.5%	74.2%
Employment (4th Quarter after Exit)	68.6%	60.5%	72.2%
The midpoint of participant wages earned (2nd Quarter after Exit)	\$8,343	\$5,665	\$8,880
Credential Attainment Rate	67.9%	69%	67.6%
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	67.3%	56.5%	71.4%

Figure 2: PY2023 Title I Adult Program Performance Outcomes

Dislocated Worker (DLW) enrollments remained low in PY2023 despite numerous layoffs across Vermont. Many displaced workers quickly found new opportunities as local companies stepped in to hire. To ensure that services were fully leveraged, the VDOL staff worked closely with the RESEA team to assure referrals and strengthen future connections between the programs. In PY2024, we intend to continue this collaboration to maximize the support available to those affected by layoffs and enhance their transition to new employment opportunities.

WIOA DLW Performance Measures	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual
Participants Served	31	-----	28
Employment (2nd Quarter after exit)	100%	74.5%	80%
Employment (4th Quarter after exit)	87.1%	68.5%	76.9%
The midpoint of participant wages earned (2nd Quarter after exit)	\$9,568	\$9,270	\$12,158
Credential Attainment Rate	79.2%	80.5%	70 %
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	71.4%	62%	87%

Figure 3: PY2023 Title I Dislocated Worker Program Performance Outcomes

## WIOA TITLE I - RAPID RESPONSE

VDOL Rapid Response Services promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, and responding to layoffs and dislocations and preventing or minimizing their impacts on Vermont workers, businesses, and communities. Layoff aversion strategies deliver solutions to address the needs of companies in transition. These services are provided across the business cycle (expansion and contraction) and are developed with other workforce development partners and educational providers.

VDOL mobilizes Rapid Response teams, and a response strategy is developed upon receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Letter from the employer providing the

mandatory notice of layoff or closure. The Rapid Response team will respond similarly to other layoffs and closures that do not warrant a WARN Letter.

VDOL Rapid Response teams are available statewide to conduct informational sessions for the adversely affected workers facing layoffs. The public services and benefits include unemployment benefit application assistance, job search assistance, and training opportunities. Information on health insurance options, community services, and local agencies that provide help, advocacy, and support for dislocated workers and their families is also shared.

In PY 2023, VDOL provided Rapid Response services to nine significant layoff events, representing just under 500 impacted workers. Rapid Response information sessions were offered, and targeted job fairs were held. Other Vermont businesses reached out extensively, expressing interest in hiring these workers. In most cases, these individuals were presented with excellent re-employment opportunities within their local communities.

In addition to the major Rapid Response sessions VDOL provided, many “smaller” (less than 10 employees) businesses were affected by closures. Some require modifications to the traditional Rapid Response, such as emphasizing the UI or health insurance procedures more.

In January, after many small businesses in and around Chittenden County closed, VDOL organized and hosted the first-ever county-wide job event that focused on those who recently experienced job loss. While 50 employers were present to offer job opportunities, we also included representatives offering statewide resources such as the Department for Children & Families, HireAbility, Age Well, Unemployment Insurance, Vermont Health Connect, Invest EAP, and Vermont Adult Learning.

VDOL provides monthly, small-scale job fairs for employees affected by layoffs or business closures. As a result of our commitment, it also extends to collaborating closely with our unemployment insurance division and economic development partners to offer comprehensive resources whenever necessary.

## **ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST (ETPL)**

The **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)** is a foundation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It is designed to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their career paths while ensuring the highest standards of training and education are met. The ETPL serves as a curated list of state-approved training providers and programs eligible to receive WIOA funds, fostering accountability and alignment with workforce needs.

The ETPL advances WIOA’s mission by creating a pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet employer demands, equipping job seekers with competitive credentials, and fostering economic growth through targeted workforce investments.

## **Key Features of the ETPL:**

- **High-Quality Training Programs:** The ETPL includes institutions and programs that meet rigorous performance criteria, ensuring participants receive industry-relevant skills for in-demand occupations.
- **Informed Consumer Choice:** Job seekers can use the ETPL to explore training opportunities, compare program outcomes, and choose the options that best align with their career goals.
- **Alignment with Labor Market Needs:** The ETPL prioritizes training programs that address current and emerging industry demands, strengthening regional economies.
- **Performance Accountability:** Training providers on the ETPL must demonstrate success in employment outcomes, credential attainment, and participant wage increases.
- **Equity and Access:** The ETPL ensures diverse populations, including those with barriers to employment, can access training that supports upward mobility and long-term success.

During this program year, and in accordance with policy approved by the U. S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, VDOL removed 33 training providers and 110 programs from the ETPL due to the training providers not meeting reporting requirements. While this is concerning because it significantly impacts our customers, not following the approved policy would have jeopardized Vermont's allocation of WIOA funds. This reduction has narrowed the range of training options available, limiting opportunities for Federal funds to support the training goals of vulnerable Vermonters. For many customers, especially those in rural areas or those seeking specialized training, fewer choices mean added challenges in finding accessible, high-quality programs. This reduction may also create longer wait times for enrollment in remaining programs and increase competition for limited slots, further complicating the path to employment for job seekers. Ensuring program accountability is critical, but these challenges highlight the need for balanced solutions that uphold quality standards while supporting a robust and diverse array of training opportunities for all customers. VDOL has shared these concerns with our Congressional delegation in the hopes that any re-authorized version of WIOA would make the Eligible Training Provider component of WIOA less burdensome to smaller states and smaller training providers.

## **WIOA TITLE III - EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **WIOA TITLE III EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The **WIOA Title III Employment Services Program**, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, provides universal access to basic labor exchange services that connect job seekers with employers. This program plays a foundational role in the workforce development system and supports the salary and benefits of American Job Center staff across the state. This funding allows staff to offer a wide range of services to ensure that individuals can find meaningful employment and businesses can access the talent they need to succeed. Title III aligns closely with other WIOA programs to create a seamless, comprehensive approach to workforce development.

## Key Features

### Universal Access:

- Provides employment and training services to all individuals, regardless of income or employment status, ensuring broad accessibility to labor exchange resources.
- Offers self-service options through online platforms and personalized assistance through American Job Centers.

### Core Employment Services:

- Career counseling, job search assistance, resume writing, and interview preparation.
- Access to job listings, labor market information, and virtual or in-person hiring events.

### Employer Engagement:

- Assists employers with posting job openings, screening candidates, and finding qualified talent.
- Provides insights into labor market trends to help businesses make informed hiring decisions.

### Integration with WIOA Programs:

- Seamlessly connects participants to WIOA Title I services for training and additional support, creating pathways for skills development and long-term career success.

### Focus on Labor Market Alignment:

- Promotes workforce mobility by matching job seekers with opportunities that align with their skills and local economic needs.

The WIOA Title III Employment Services Program strengthens the workforce system by acting as a bridge between job seekers and employers. It reduces the time someone may be unemployed or underemployed by facilitating quicker re-employment and aligning individuals' skills with industry demands. By fostering coordinated efforts between employers, educators, and community organizations, the program supports regional economic growth, enhances labor market efficiency, and ensures equitable access to workforce opportunities.

In delivering accessible, high-quality labor exchange services, the Employment Services Program contributes to a robust and adaptable workforce system that meets the needs of both workers and businesses.

WP Performance Measure	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual
Participants Served	2,519	-----	2,242
Employment (2nd Quarter after Exit)	61.8%	60.5%	69.4%
Employment (4th Quarter after Exit)	59.7%	60.5%	61.3%
The midpoint of participant wages earned (2nd Quarter after Exit)	\$8,250	\$6,600	\$9,064

Figure 4: PY2023 Title III Labor Exchange Program Performance Outcomes

## **Testimonial: Sean's Journey to Employment Through Community Support and Training**

*Sean, a disabled Veteran and father of six, was referred to the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) by the Unemployment Division after being laid off from his job as a laborer. Living in a rural area without a valid driver's license due to multiple infractions across several states posed a significant barrier to his employment prospects.*

*To address this challenge, Sean worked closely with his VDOL Employment and Training Consultant, who coordinated a collaborative effort with multiple partner organizations, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, Community Restorative Justice Center, Veteran support organizations, and the Vermont Judiciary and County Court. Through their collective support, Sean successfully had his driver's license reinstated.*

*While participating in the WIOA program, Sean pursued three occupational skills trainings: Small Engine Repair, Introduction to Automotive, and Broadband Network Construction. He also gained hands-on experience through a work placement with a local auto mechanic's shop. Today, Sean has overcome his barriers and is thriving in unsubsidized employment with a local HVAC and plumbing company, exemplifying the transformative power of dedication, training, and community partnership.*

## **EMPLOYER SERVICES**

The performance indicators presented below outline the PY23 outcomes assessing the effectiveness of the State's WIOA programs in serving employers. Collaborating closely with the WIOA Core Partners at AOE, HireAbility, and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, our focus encompasses two specific measures:

- **Retention with the same employer in the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit:** This metric gauges the percentage of participants exiting service and remaining employed with the same employer in the second and fourth quarters post-exit.
- **Repeat business customer rate:** This metric signifies the percentage of businesses that have received services and have subsequently utilized core program services more than once.

Upon reviewing the data in the chart below, we have seen a drop in "retention with the same employer" and a decline in the "repeat business customer" measure. To ensure accuracy, we will investigate this decline to verify proper tracking and data entry across staff statewide. Given staff turnover, it's anticipated that this decline may be associated with new personnel. However, we expect a rebound in this measure in the upcoming year.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Performance Measure	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual
<b>Employers Served</b>	3,778	-----	3,973
<b>Retention with the same employer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters after the exit rate</b>	70.3%	Baseline	69.3%
<b>Employer Penetration Rate</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Repeat Business Customer Rate</b>	46.3%	Baseline	41.9%

Figure 5: PY2023 Effectiveness in Serving Employers' Performance Outcomes

In June 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor issued new guidance on employer performance metrics. Beginning in PY2024 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025), only one metric will be required: states must report the retention rate with the same employer in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit. All other previously reported metrics will be discontinued. This single measure will remain at baseline to allow for the continued collection of historical data.

## FEDERAL FOREIGN LABOR CERTIFICATION

VDOL plays a crucial role in helping the agriculture sector import temporary help by administering and supporting the Federal Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) program. This program ensures a reasonable balance between Vermont employers' workforce needs and the protection of both citizens and authorized foreign guest workers. Operating at both Federal and State levels, VDOL collaborates with the Federal Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) to assess the availability of qualified U.S. workers for jobs sought by Vermont employers for temporary foreign guest workers.

VDOL utilized approximately \$176,804 in Federal grant funds during FY2023 to operate this aspect of the workforce development system. This funding supported the placement of employer job orders, inspection of housing for agricultural workers, referral of qualified U.S. workers, and administration of prevailing wage and practice surveys for both the H-2A (Agricultural) and H-2B (non-agricultural) seasonal employment programs.

VDOL successfully cleared and processed 118 job orders for the H-2A program, demonstrating a proactive approach to meeting Vermont's agricultural workforce needs. The Department's Labor Market Information Division conducted 10 prevailing wage surveys to ensure fair compensation practices and uphold workers' rights. Finally, VDOL processed 212 job orders for the H-2B program, further solidifying its role in facilitating workforce solutions for Vermont employers.

VDOL has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (Ag), which engages the Ag Farm Inspector team and has established relationships with farm owners as a part of their regular inspection schedules. This approach enhances efficiency for both departments. The exemplary model established with Ag has gained national recognition, with other states expressing interest in emulating the cooperative model. Our partnership with Ag completed over 75 housing

inspections, ensuring compliance with housing standards and emphasizing Vermont's commitment to worker welfare.

## **MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKERS PROGRAM**

Once workers arrive in Vermont, our Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) staff conduct on-site visits to see the workers to ensure they are living and working in safe environments and offer employment or other community-based services. In a handful of cases, these inspections uncovered some deficiencies investigated by Vermont Occupational Safety (VOSHA) or Federal Wage and Hour.

VDOL has been dedicated to fully staffing the federally-mandated MSFW program. The MSFW program involves two key roles: the State Monitor Advocate and the Agricultural Outreach Worker. In the past two years, VDOL has filled these roles. In staffing the program, we sought out bi-lingual individuals fluent in English and Spanish, as most of the migrant seasonal workers speak Spanish. The incumbents are being trained on the job requirements and are actively developing relationships with other organizations that support migrant farmworkers.

The role of the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is to administer a monitoring system that ensures MSFWs have equitable access to career services, skill development, and workforce protections offered by American Job Centers so that they may improve their living and working conditions.

Key responsibilities include:

- Conducting outreach to MSFWs in their working and living environments;
- Monitoring services provided to MSFWs at American Job Centers;
- Facilitating the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, which helps resolve labor-related complaints; and
- Promoting the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. workers, which connects job seekers to employers who need workers.

Additionally, VDOL added a part-time seasonal Agricultural Outreach Worker in 2024. The primary focus of this position is to visit H-2A seasonal agricultural workers while they are in Vermont to offer them employment and training services, ensure that their living and working conditions are safe, and direct them to other community services they may need, like education and healthcare.

Both staff have established strong relationships with their peers in other New England states and organizations providing services to Vermont agricultural workers, including UVM Extension Service, Migrant Justice, Farm First, and PathStone. These partnerships were particularly important when responding to farms impacted by flooding for the second year in a row. The main objective of their outreach was to minimize the losses of the workers as much as possible and to let them know that VDOL has various ways to offer help. Any workers here on H-2A visas received support and advice regarding the laws that must be followed even in such adverse situations. Under 20 CFR 655.1034(o), farms must provide protections to H-2A workers if they are forced to end the contract early due to unforeseen circumstances.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Finally, as part of Federal Employment Service (ES) regulations, VDOL is required to establish and maintain a uniform system for accepting, investigating, resolving, and referring complaints. In 2024, this system was updated to comply with language access requirements, and staff in the Job Centers were trained to receive and properly route ES complaints for internal review and distribution to the appropriate enforcement body.

## FEDERAL TRADE ADJUSTMENT ACT (TAA)

The Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Program is a federal entitlement program that assists workers who, due to foreign trade, lose their jobs or are threatened with job loss. Established by the Trade Act of 1974, the TAA Program has been amended 11 times over the past 50 years. VDOL administers the TAA program in Vermont to ensure that any workers who lost a job or might lose a job due to overseas trade can receive additional employment and training services to support their re-employment.

Due to inaction by Congress, the TAA Program entered phase-out termination on July 1, 2022, meaning that the Department may no longer certify petitions for Trade Adjustment Assistance to make additional groups of workers eligible to apply for benefits or training. Although the program is currently in this state of termination, and no new petitions have been filed after June 30, 2022, VDOL TAA staff have been required to conduct outreach to workers certified under petitions filed before June 30, 2022. This outreach has failed to yield additional program participants, and VDOL staff have refocused on serving participants actively engaged in a TAA training plan before June 30, 2022.

TAA Target Measures	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Target	FY 2023 Actual
% provided Case Management services	100%	75%	100%
Training Completion Rate	50%	75%	80%
Credential Attainment Rate	50%	n/a	100%
Employment Rate in the second quarter after exit	n/a	n/a	100%
Employment Rate in the fourth quarter after exit	100%	n/a	100%

Figure 6: PY2023 Trade Assistance Performance Outcomes

## FEDERAL VETERANS SERVICES OUTREACH

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program provides individualized career and training-related services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment and assists employers in meeting their employment needs with job-seeking Veterans.

The JVSG staff had an authorized budget of \$500,363 for operational costs and the employment of 4.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs) but experienced a shortage with only 3-4 FTEs for the year as two individuals retired. We have been approved to combine the roles of Disabled Veteran Outreach



Program Specialist (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) into a Consolidated Position (CP) to better serve our rural Veteran community in the next fiscal year.

Recognizing the challenges Veterans encounter in their job search, we offer comprehensive support, including resume writing, mock interview training, and translating military expertise into civilian terms. Our primary objective is to bridge talented, skilled, and dedicated Veterans with employers offering meaningful and sustainable careers.

The DVOP specialist and CP extend services to Veterans facing various barriers, ranging from a criminal record to economic or educational disadvantages. Simultaneously, the LVER and CP engage in outreach to employers, collaborating with hiring executives to expand employment opportunities for Veterans. Our approach integrates the roles of LVER and DVOP into the CP. These professionals guide Veterans through the complete employment process, from recruitment and preparation to ensuring their success in securing rewarding positions.

Our JVSG staff continues to recruit Veterans in Vermont, and our scope has expanded to include Fort Drum, NY. We promote the SkillBridge program ([DOD SkillBridge Program - Program Overview](#)) and pair that with Hilton Honors ([Hilton Honors™ Military Program](#)), [Onward Ops](#), and work opportunities in Vermont and nationally with [USNLX Virtual Jobs](#). We have conducted over two dozen virtual and in-person job fairs this year. We visit all four Veteran housing communities in the State. The JVSG staff embeds themselves in the Veteran community by serving on committees and boards, volunteering with Veteran-based organizations, and joining the local/State VFW and American Legion. This allows us to find Veterans in need of employment services.

The JVSG staff has a few tools to create impactful and positive outcomes. The Hilton Honors Program offers up to three nights of free lodging at any Hilton property on an “as-needed lifetime” basis. The participating Veteran or spouse seeking employment in the State or any of the 31 participating states nationwide can use this benefit. A military Veteran or serving military member can use this for any job search activities.

“Skillbridge” is a Department of Defense (DOD) program that authorizes transitioning service members an opportunity to intern at a company of their choosing for up to 180 days. The employer incurs no cost as the service member gets all pay and allowances (medical included) from the military/DOD. During the last year, a service member retired from the Vermont Active Guard and Reserve, entered the SkillBridge program, garnered an internship, and parlayed the internship into a full-time position.

This year was our first opportunity to work with Onward Ops, a nonprofit organization that uses our staff as a connector to provide Veterans with services in Vermont. This can be a POC within the Vermont College system, Veteran Ventures with Vermont Adaptive, places to live with “Think Vermont,” or any issue a Veteran may have to make the transition to Vermont. Our first Veteran family retired from the military in Colorado and decided to live in Stowe, Vt. We provided all the services and POC to make the transition easier.

The JVSG staff takes pride in connecting with Veterans in the environments where they feel most comfortable and at ease — places where Veterans gather, relax, and engage in activities they enjoy. These locations include specific Veteran-oriented events like football and hockey games, parades, deployment, redeployment ceremonies, Veteran Townhall meetings, Josh’s House, NEK Veterans Summit, or Vermont Adaptive for Veterans. We establish personal connections beyond surface-level interactions by actively participating in these events and engaging in activities such as skiing, mountain biking, climbing, hiking, frisbee golf, kayaking, bowling, or attending Veteran retreats. Through these engagements, we gain deeper insights into Veterans' employment challenges.

Recognizing that Veterans may require more than just employment assistance, we collaborate closely with our community partners to offer support in various aspects, such as housing, food, transportation, and additional help. Cultivating and nurturing these partnerships is crucial to our ability to serve our Veteran community comprehensively. We have fostered relationships with numerous community partners across the state who are instrumental in aiding Veterans in almost any capacity needed.

While our primary mission is to assist Veterans in finding employment, our impact extends beyond job placement. The scope of our influence often proves to be life-changing for the Veterans we serve.

JVSG Performance Measure	PY2022 Actual (6/30/23)	PY 2023 Target	PY 2023 Actual (6/30/24)
<b>Number of Individuals Served</b>	95	n/a	95
<b>Intensive Services Rate</b>	96.7%	90%	94.2%
<b>Employment Rate – 2Q After Exit</b>	61.3%	53%	60.2%
<b>Employment Rate – 4Q After Exit</b>	51.7%	49%	51.5%
<b>The midpoint of participant wages earned (2nd Quarter after Exit)</b>	\$8,962	\$7,252	\$8,505

Figure 7: PY2023 JVSG Outcomes

## FEDERAL WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers as an incentive to hire individuals from specific populations that have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The program aims to reduce unemployment and promote workforce inclusion by offering tax credits to businesses that hire people from designated groups. Employers can earn a federal tax credit of between \$2,400 and \$9,600 per employee, depending on the new employee's background and the number of hours worked in the first year.

Administered jointly by the Internal Revenue Service and the U. S. Department of Labor’s Employment & Training Administration, the Federal WOTC is designed to incentivize the recruitment and employment of:

- Certain SNAP (3Squares VT) recipients
- Certain TANF (Reach-Up) participants
- Veterans

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with felony convictions
- Long-term unemployment recipients
- SSI beneficiaries

When employers apply for credit, they submit the required paperwork to VDOL, and staff manually verify the individual employee's various demographic and eligibility requirements, which may come from the Agency of Human Services, other government programs, or the military. Once verification is completed, VDOL staff generate the certification document that employers file to claim the tax credit when they submit their corporate tax returns.

In 2024, the WOTC program's primary focus was IT modernization to improve operational efficiency. We selected Computer Systems Design Company, LLC (CSDC), operating out of Boulder, CO, under a sole-source contract. We are in the initial stages of implementing CSDC's online portal, which will make the program more effective and efficient for employers and VDOL staff. The goal is to complete the new online WOTC Portal implementation to be ready for employer use by the end of Q2 2025.

Over the past 12 months, we experienced a significant decrease in our ability to process WOTC applications due to resource constraints driven by staff retirement, lack of access to necessary eligibility verification data, and delays in contracting for the new online portal. Implementing the new online portal will alleviate the resource constraints as it will eliminate a significant amount of data entry required by VDOL staff. Once the portal is in place, we will focus on establishing new data-sharing agreements with AHS and other partner agencies so the VDOL staff can complete the eligibility verification requirements necessary to certify or deny applications. This new portal also sets the foundation for future automation capabilities as our partners complete their own modernization efforts.

VDOL received \$79,131 last year to pay for the WOTC portal contract, process applications, verify worker eligibility, certify, or deny applications, and generate authorization certificates.

## **WORKFORCE EDUCATION & TRAINING FUNDS**

### **VERMONT TRAINING FUNDS**

The Department's Training Fund was pivotal in supporting up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities for Vermont workers. This encompassed various activities such as technical and academic instruction, on-the-job training, internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, returnships, and other workforce development activities aimed at expanding the labor force.

One critical component funded through the Training Fund was the Vermont Training Grants (VTG), designed to provide financial support to private, public, and non-profit entities, including school districts. These grants were allocated for both existing and new training programs with the overarching goal of enhancing the skills of Vermont workers. A pre-requisite for funding under VTG was that the training programs must lead to an industry-recognized credential, post-secondary degree, certificate, or endorsement.

VDOL allocated \$161,412.50 from the Training Fund to bolster VTG initiatives. These funds assisted with coordinating with HireAbility to support training for American Sign Language interpreters and were used to pilot a "CTE connected" approach by partially funding a high school's equipment needs.

Several specific training funding opportunities were identified, including:

- \$47,412.50 allocated to Vancro, Inc. to support and train up to three American Sign Language interpreters.
- \$114,000 allocated to Otter Valley Union High School to purchase welding equipment to establish a modern career exploration program for grades 7 – 10, resulting in a "CTE connected pathway."

### **ADULT CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION GRANTS**

In FY 2025, the Department allocated \$357,000 to support the statewide network of Adult Career Technical Education (ACTE) programs. In this allocation, 17 regional centers each received \$20,000, and an additional \$17,000 continued to be assigned to support the overall coordination, outreach, and programmatic development of the ACTE programs across each regional CTE center. The \$20,000 grants to the ACTE programs are used for various purposes based on the needs and priorities of each ACTE program. Funded grants this fiscal year supported a range of activities, including partial salaries and benefits for adult program directors or support staff, stipends for instructors, and supplies for select courses. The funds granted to ACTE programs are in addition to salary assistance and other funds issued by the Agency of Education, funds raised locally, and any income generated by the program.

To maximize the impact of these grants, regional career and technical education centers undertaking adult technical education programs are committed to certain principles. These include making program materials accessible to other regional centers and adult technical education programs and aligning

programs with other accredited post-secondary offerings from educational institutions like the Vermont State College System, the University of Vermont, and State Agricultural College.

While Vermonters continue to experience affordability issues, they also continue to see an evolution of their post-secondary education options. Locally available, relevant, and low-cost training offered through regional adult CTE programs continues to grow in importance to taxpayers and to the workforce education and training system. The issue of public funding of the adult basic education and adult CTE systems was studied in 2023, and the [results were released by the Agency of Education on January 24, 2024](#).

## **WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING**

Per 10 V.S.A. § 547, VDOL initiated a comprehensive program that integrated the internship and returnship programs while incorporating support for registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships. The program did not receive funding for the 2024 Fiscal Year.

When funded, the program aimed to direct resources at transitioning secondary students, including those from CTE programs and post-secondary students, as well as Vermonters needing subsidized support to aid in career transitions or to gain valuable insights from paid work-based experiences. The primary goal was to support individuals through a paid on-the-job experience lasting no more than 12 weeks. Simultaneously, the program aimed to assist employers in developing and implementing meaningful work-based learning and training opportunities.

# FEDERAL/STATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

## OVERVIEW

Vermont is a State Apprenticeship Agency (“SAA State”), and the Vermont Department of Labor is the administrative and regulatory entity that provides technical assistance to employers and other interested parties. VDOL also approves program standards, registers and monitors programs, maintains records that include apprenticeship agreements, and issues certificates of completion of registered apprenticeship programs.

Since the implementation of Act 55 of 2023, significant progress has been made toward modernizing and expanding the registered apprenticeship system in Vermont. The statute introduced fresh avenues for preparation programs and established a framework for recognizing prior experiences. Additionally, the law integrated protective measures to enhance diversity within apprentice populations.

## STAFFING

Our Apprenticeship Team is under the Workforce Development Division at VDOL and is comprised of three full-time employees: a Senior Program Administrator (State Director) and two Program Support Specialists. The team is supported by the Director and an Assistant Director of Workforce Development, regional office staff, and the division’s Communication and Outreach Coordinator. This increased capacity has greatly enhanced the ability to continue to manage, monitor, and expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) in VT.

## ADVISORY BOARD

The State Apprenticeship Advisory Board (“the Board”), comprised of statutory and appointed individuals, met for the first time in August and then a second time in November. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found here: <https://labor.vermont.gov/apprenticeship-advisory-board>. The Board was established to advise the Department, sponsors, employers, and related instruction providers and to promote the development and strengthening of apprenticeship programs.

## MEMBERSHIP

Commissioner of Labor (Chair)	Michael Harrington
Director of Apprenticeship (Secretary)	Sarah Knight
Secretary of Education, or designee	Designee: Andrew Prowten, Assistant Director of Education Quality
State WD Board (initial term- 1 year)	TBD

	(Term expires)	
Jeff Wimette IBEW Local 300	2/28/25	Union Organization Member
Gregory Gove UA Local 693	2/28/25	Union Organization Member
Pam Benoit Benoit's Electric	2/28/25	Employer Member
Jerry Baake University of Vermont Health Network	2/28/25	Employer Member
Derek Williams River Valley Technical Center	2/28/26	Career Training Member
Rhoni Basden Vermont Works for Women	2/28/26	Underserved Community Member
Gerald Schartner Department of Corrections	2/28/26	Underserved Community Member

## APPRENTICESHIP AT A GLANCE

A listing of programs by county is available in [Attachment B](#).

Data and statistics provided are for the most recently completed Federal fiscal year: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024.

## PROGRAMS AND APPRENTICES BY THE NUMBERS

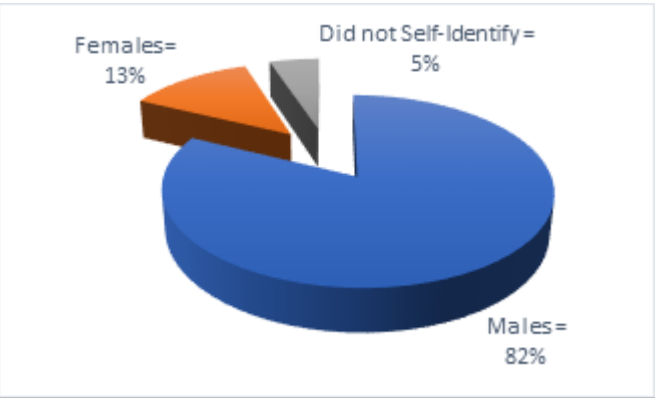
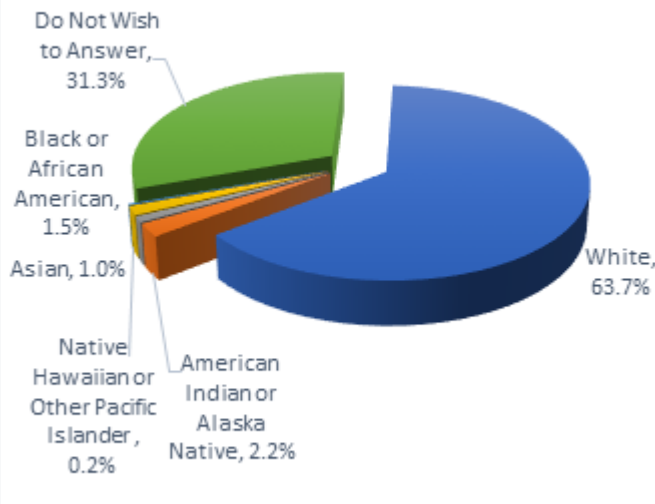
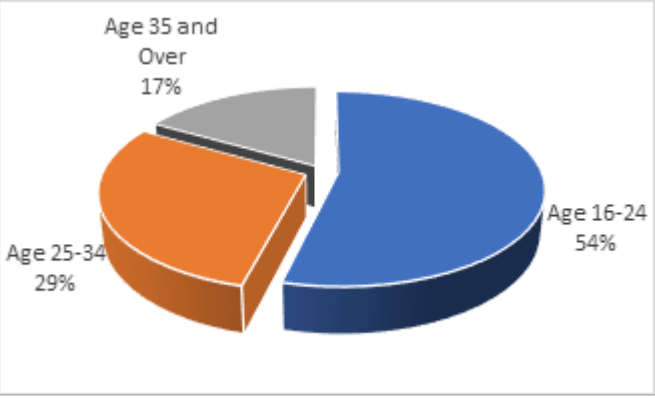
Active Apprentice Training Programs:	125
Programs with 1-4 Active Apprentices:	77
Programs with 5+ Active Apprentices:	48
Active Occupations:	31
New Apprentices Registered this Year:	826
Active Apprentices:	1,624

## GENERAL PROGRAM STATISTICS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The table below presents high-level demographic and educational background summaries and analysis for any apprentice registered between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024. Note: disclosure of demographic and background data is voluntary, which may result in under-reporting.

Data presented results from data entered by employers into the electronic registration system, RAPIDS.

<p>Gender</p>	<p>Top 5 Occupations by Gender:</p> <p><u>Female Identifying:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Electrician</li> <li>2. Phlebotomist</li> <li>3. Pre-K – 8 Teacher</li> <li>4. Plumber</li> <li>5. State Trooper</li> </ol> <p><u>Male Identifying:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Electrician</li> <li>2. Plumber</li> <li>3. Line Maintainer</li> <li>4. State Trooper</li> <li>5. HVAC Technician</li> </ol>	 <p>A 3D pie chart showing the gender distribution of apprentices. The largest slice is blue, representing Males at 82%. A smaller orange slice represents Females at 13%. A grey slice represents those who did not self-identify at 5%.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Males</td> <td>82%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Females</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Did not Self-Identify</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Males	82%	Females	13%	Did not Self-Identify	5%						
Gender	Percentage															
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Females	13%															
Did not Self-Identify	5%															
<p>Race</p>	<p>According to U. S. Census population estimates, Vermont's population is 92.3% White, 1.2% Black or African American, 1.7% Asian, .02% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.21% American Indian/Alaskan Native.</p> <p>The apprenticeship programs is slight more diverse, with 63.7% of apprentices reporting their race as White, 1.5% as Black, 1% as Asian, .2% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 2.2% as American Indian/Alaskan Native.</p> <p><i>*31.3% of apprentices didn't self-identify.</i></p>	 <p>A 3D pie chart showing the racial distribution of apprentices. The largest slice is blue, representing White at 63.7%. A green slice represents those who do not wish to answer at 31.3%. Other slices include Black or African American (1.5%), Asian (1.0%), American Indian or Alaska Native (2.2%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.2%).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Race</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>63.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do Not Wish to Answer</td> <td>31.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black or African American</td> <td>1.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td> <td>2.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td> <td>0.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Race	Percentage	White	63.7%	Do Not Wish to Answer	31.3%	Black or African American	1.5%	Asian	1.0%	American Indian or Alaska Native	2.2%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
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<p>Age</p>	<p>Average Age of a Vermont Apprentice: 26</p> <p><b>Average Age by Gender:</b>  Female-identifying: 29.9  Male-identifying: 25.9</p> <p><b>By Race:</b>  American Indian/Alaska Native: 22.5  Asian: 26.3  African American: 27.1  Multiple Races: 29  Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 19.3  White: 25.8  *Did not answer: 27.5</p>	 <p>A 3D pie chart showing the age distribution of apprentices. The largest slice is blue, representing Age 16-24 at 54%. An orange slice represents Age 25-34 at 29%. A grey slice represents Age 35 and Over at 17%.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age 16-24</td> <td>54%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 25-34</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 35 and Over</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	Percentage	Age 16-24	54%	Age 25-34	29%	Age 35 and Over	17%						
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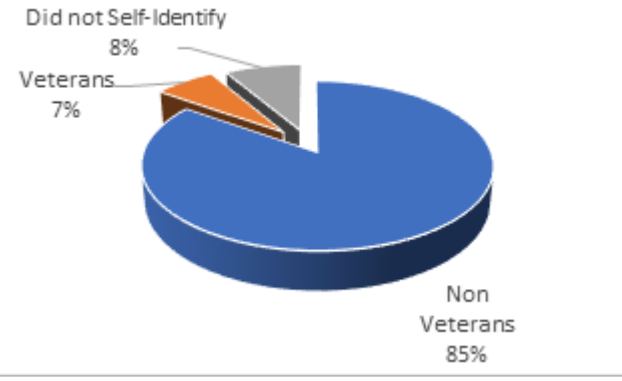
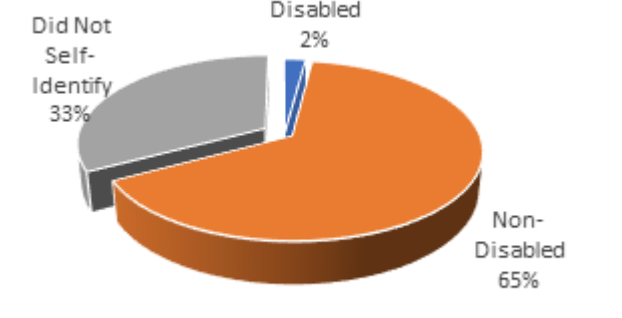
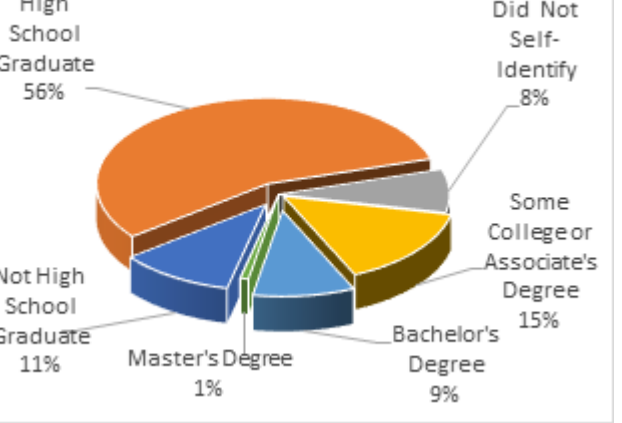
<p>Veterans</p>	<p>Veterans can use their GI Bill Benefits to support their pursuit of a Registered Apprenticeship.</p> <p>Veteran's top three apprenticeship occupations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Electrician*</li> <li>2. Plumber*</li> <li>3. State Trooper</li> </ol> <p>* Licensing rules give special consideration to Veterans with experience in certain military occupations.</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Demographic: Veterans</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Non Veterans</td> <td>85%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Did not Self-Identify</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Veterans</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Non Veterans	85%	Did not Self-Identify	8%	Veterans	7%						
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<p>Disability Status</p>	<p>As with all other demographic questions, the response on the registration form is voluntary. Most apprentices may be hesitant to self-disclose that they have a disability for fear of losing the opportunity to be an apprentice.</p> <p>Much work is needed in this area, particularly regarding helping employers understand the available supports.</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Demographic: Disability Status</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Non-Disabled</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Did Not Self-Identify</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Non-Disabled	65%	Did Not Self-Identify	33%	Disabled	2%						
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<p>Educational Background</p>	<p>Apprentices who reported “no secondary completion” are either still enrolled in high school or did not complete secondary school.</p> <p>Of these apprentices: 26% were between the ages of 16 and 19.</p> <p>73% of apprentices were between the ages of 20 &amp; 65.</p> <p>These apprentices were learning to be Electricians and Plumbers.</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Demographic: Educational Background</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>High School Graduate</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not High School Graduate</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Master's Degree</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bachelor's Degree</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Some College or Associate's Degree</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Did Not Self-Identify</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	High School Graduate	56%	Not High School Graduate	11%	Master's Degree	1%	Bachelor's Degree	9%	Some College or Associate's Degree	15%	Did Not Self-Identify	8%
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<p>CTE Connection</p>	<p>48 newly registered apprentices in 2024 reported they had been a CTE student. Apprentices reported they were from 13 of the 17 regional CTE centers – including Burlington Technical Center, Center for Technology, Essex, Central Vermont Career Center, Cold Hollow Career Center, Green Mountain Technology &amp; Career Center, Hartford Area Career &amp; Technology Center, North Country Career Center, Northwest Career &amp; Technical Center, Patricia Hannaford Career Center, River Valley Technical Center, St. Johnsbury Academy, Stafford Technical Center, and Windham Regional Career Center.</p> <p>The CTE connection yielded apprentices in training to be primarily Electricians (n=26) and Plumbers (n=11), but they are also pursuing careers as HVAC Mechanic/Installers, Machinists, Line Maintainers, and Sheet Metal Workers.</p>															
<p>New Americans</p>	<p>We are working to integrate this data collection into our registration system and expect to be able to report on it next year.</p>															

Table 1: Demographic Summaries of Registered Apprenticeship Programs

## CURRENT OCCUPATIONS WITH ACTIVE REGISTERED APPRENTICES IN VERMONT

OCCUPATION	ACTIVE APPRENTICE COUNT
Accounting Technician	1
Assembler, Metal Building	1
CNC Operator - Milling and Turning	13
CNC Operator and Programmer	32
Commercial Craft Professional	18
Construction Craft Laborer	21
Electrician	715
Electrician, Maintenance	10
Environmental Control System Installer	18
Heating & Air Cond. Mechanic & Installer	10
Industrial Manufacturing Technician	24
Line Maintainer	71
Machinist	17
Maintenance Mechanic	5
Manufacturing Production Technician	32
Mechatronics Technician	3
Nurse Assistant Certified	3
Phlebotomist	25
Plumber	439
Police Officer	17
Pre-K – 12 Teacher	28
Sheet Metal Worker	25
State Trooper	49
Tool And Die Maker	9
Tramway Maintenance Technician	19
Waste Treatment Operator	5
Water Systems Operation Specialist	10

*Table 2: List of Active Occupations and Number of Apprentices*

## ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING APPRENTICESHIPS

Vermont boasts a rich heritage of registered apprenticeships, though predominantly emphasized in trades like plumbing and electrical. VDOL has several employers with programs registered directly with the apprenticeship program; however, most smaller employers have been registered to the Vermont State University's (VTSU) Center for Workforce & Professional Education (Randolph Campus) sponsored program. VTSU has provided instruction related to electrical and plumbing programs for decades. To make signing up for classes and registering as apprentices as easy as possible, VTSU manages the process for employers with 1 to 4 apprentices so they can focus on their business. VTSU

plays a pivotal role in organizing apprenticeship instructors, most of whom have a background as current or former contractors. Alongside this, students benefit from academic assistance, career guidance, and a range of student services offered by the University. It's important to note that while VTSU isn't the sole provider of related coursework for these programs, numerous employers opt for the University's program for their apprentice training needs.

Currently, 804 people are registered as apprentice electricians- up 30.5 percent from 2023, and 478 people are registered as apprentice plumbers – up 30.6 percent from 2023.

VDOL provides an annual administrative support grant to VTSU-Randolph to support the administration of this program and the coordination and delivery of the related coursework. The current General Fund grant to VTSU covers July 1, 2024 until June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$206,388.

The electrical and plumbing apprenticeship programs are the largest in the state.

## **YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP**

Vermont statute provides a structured framework and definition for Youth Apprenticeship as an essential on-ramp for registered apprenticeship. Youth Apprenticeship will also support a seamless transition to high-quality, in-demand jobs in Vermont. This framework requires close collaboration with partners at the Agency of Education, and the Career Technical Education Centers around the state.

As a new initiative implemented this year, VDOL, in partnership with VTSU's Center for Workforce & Professional Education, reached out to all the CTE Centers in the state in the summer of 2024 to survey interest in embedding the first year of the related coursework for Electrical and Plumbing apprenticeship programs into their related daytime CTE programs. This is a dual-enrollment model which will allow students to complete the first of the four-years of the apprenticeship coursework while also working towards their CTE program completion and high school graduation. Two schools are piloting this program in both Electrical and Plumbing for the 2024-2025 school year: St. Johnsbury Academy and Stafford Technical Center. There are approximately sixty students participating, at no cost to the students or the schools.

## **FUNDING**

As the State's Apprenticeship Agency, VDOL heavily relies on an annual allocation of \$847,000 from the General Fund. This funding is crucial to sustain staffing needs and to facilitate the administration and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs across Vermont.

In addition to the General Fund dollars invested in the system, the Department applies for Federal funds made available through the Office of Apprenticeship and the Employment and Training Administration at the U. S. Department of Labor. The VDOL applied for and was awarded \$304,977 in State Apprenticeship Expansion Funds (SAEF) in 2023. These funds represent the first time in history the Office of Apprenticeship has provided a base allocation to States to support registered apprenticeship

programs. Working closely with the Agency of Education, these funds are being used to support the development of registered apprenticeship programs for para-educators and educators in Vermont. In July 2024, the VDOL was awarded a second year of funding from the SAEF program. These funds are being used to support apprenticeship programs in the trades, in anticipation of hiring needs in the construction industry to support housing development.

FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT	USE/PURPOSE	PROGRAM
SOV General Funds	\$847,000	Salaries, program administration, grant to VTSU for Electrical and Plumbing admin.	
SAEF #1 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025)	\$304,977	Grants to Vt Agency of Education and VT Rural Education Collaborative	Emerging Pathways Coordinator Pilot K-12 Teach Apprenticeship Program
SAEF #2 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)	\$392,462	Salaries, focus on construction industry	Will be granting \$250,000 in support of expansion of existing programs
TOTAL	\$1,544,439		

Table 3: Table of Grant Funds Supporting the Registered Apprenticeship Program

In this reporting year, we issued the following grants from the funds allocated or awarded to the Department for the registered apprenticeship program:

AMOUNT	GRANTEE	PURPOSE	IMPACT
\$ 206,388  (General Fund)  July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025	Center for Workforce & Professional Education @ VTSU	To support staff positions in the Continuing Education and Workforce Development section in implementing, managing, and promoting Registered Apprenticeship programs for <b>Electricians and Plumbers</b> .	VTSU was able to onboard approximately 33 new employers and register 147 new Plumber Apprentices and 213 new Electrician Apprentices.
\$ 225,000  (State Apprenticeship Expansion Special Grant)  Ends: June 30, 2025	Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC)	To act as an intermediary working with VT <b>Manufacturers</b> to assist with exploring, building, and expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Vermont.	VMEC has facilitated conversations with over 15 different manufacturing businesses leading to one new program registration, and six currently in the works.
\$159,468  (Federal Funds – State Apprenticeship Expansion Funds (SAEF1))	Vermont Rural Education Collaborative (VREC)	To act as an intermediary working with School Districts in the NEK to assist with exploring, building, and expanding <b>Teacher</b> Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Vermont.	VREC worked with multiple school districts, the AOE, VTNEA, and VDOL to build and register seven PK-12 Teacher Apprenticeship Programs. There are 28

			current registered apprentices in the program.
\$105,000  (Federal Funds – State Apprenticeship Expansion Funds (SAEF1))	Agency of Education (AOE)	To support an Emerging Pathways Coordinator to assist with exploring, building, and expanding <b>Teacher</b> Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Vermont as an alternative route to licensure.	This position was filled in October of 2024 and is working closely with VDOL, AOE, the Standards Board for Professional Educators, and taking over the projects started by VREC.
\$536,140  (State Apprenticeship Expansion Special Grant)  (Grant performance period ended 6/30/24)	Vermont Community Broadband Board	To support the purchase of curriculum and instructional supplies, tools, etc., for a <b>Broadband Cable Installer</b> Registered Apprenticeship Program	Purchase curriculum, equipment, supplies, and tools used in classroom instruction.

Table 4: Table of Sub-awarded Grants

VDOL continues coordinating and partnering with education providers and industry organizations who serve as intermediaries, supporting employers in developing programs as we expand registered apprenticeship programs. These partners include Vermont State University, the Community College of Vermont, the Agency of Education, HireAbility, Vermont Adult Education providers and CTE Centers, Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center, Vermont Rural Education Collaborative, Vermont Community Broadband, Associated Builders & Contractors of NH/VT, ReSOURCE, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

## FIRST TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM IN THE STATE

Funding from the Federal State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grant allowed the investment of federal resources to help address the teacher shortage in Vermont. The pandemic and resulting recovery phase had exacerbated pre-existing and ongoing educator workforce shortages in the state’s public school system (PK-12, including CTE). Vermont faced a high need for qualified para-educators, provisional and emergency licenses, and alternative preparation programs for educators.

In cases where an unlicensed educator was hired by a supervisory union (SU) or school district (SD), the hiring superintendent could apply for a provisional or emergency license for the educator. A provisional license could be issued to a licensed teacher working outside their endorsement area or to an unlicensed educator with at least a bachelor’s degree in the content area or who had successfully passed the Praxis II content area requirements. An emergency license was issued in extreme cases where there were no other qualified candidates and the educator had a bachelor’s degree outside of the content area. The Agency of Education reported that, as of April 2023, more than 1,300 teachers were employed in the state on provisional or emergency licenses.

The State Apprenticeship Expansion Fund grant was used to develop, pilot, and scale teacher apprenticeship pathways and build sustainable, statewide capacity to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) for teachers as Vermont worked to grow and diversify the educator workforce. By providing funding to the Vermont Rural Education Collaborative (VREC) to act as an industry expert/intermediary and to the Agency of Education, these funds were used to:

1. Establish a new, dedicated position within the AOE division overseeing educator licensing. The Emerging Pathways Coordinator focused on developing and supporting the creation of pre-apprenticeship pathways and RAPs for educators.
2. Collaborate with other AOE and VDOL colleagues whose work aligned with or informed the development of the RAP, such as those overseeing Career Pathways, Career Technical Education (CTE), Flexible Pathways, Educator Preparation Program approvals, and Licensing.
3. Engage in outreach, provide technical assistance, and communicate with SU/SDs, regional CTE centers and districts, state-approved Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and membership organizations like the Vermont National Education Association (VT-NEA), Superintendents Association (VSA), School Boards Association (VSBA), and others to establish RAPs across the state.
4. Support campaigns to cultivate interest in Educator Apprenticeship Programs and pathways to paraeducator and educator licensing. The Emerging Pathways Coordinator's position in Licensing helped prevent duplication of efforts while ensuring RAPs met state accreditation and licensure requirements and facilitated licensure reciprocity with other states.

To become a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship for Teaching program, Vermont understood it needed to establish and demonstrate the efficacy of a state Grow Your Own (GYO) program. The Vermont Agency of Education and the Department of Labor sought an organization that could design and pilot a GYO program in an area of high need. "High need" was defined as regions with a high number of job vacancies, educators on provisional licenses, and demographic factors, including student poverty and geographic and economic obstacles affecting an SU/SD's ability to staff schools. The AOE identified that SU/SDs in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom (NEK) met those criteria (North Country SU, St. Johnsbury SD, Kingdom East SD, Orleans Central SU, Essex North SU, Caledonia Central SU, and Orange East SU).

The Vermont Rural Education Collaborative (VREC) was chosen to partner in designing and implementing this pilot, as they were already connected to the Northeast Kingdom and deeply understood the local context. In addition, VREC, composed of superintendents and key staff from SU/SDs in the Northeast Kingdom, had previously supported workforce development in the region, coordinating professional learning for coursework across the area.

As of summer 2024, the results of this initiative included the program design and registration of seven Pre-K through 12 Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Programs. The first cohort consisted of 28 apprentices from the following school districts:

- St. Johnsbury School District (1)
- Kingdom East Unified Union School District (2)

- North Country Supervisory Union (9)
- Essex North Supervisory Union (1)
- Orleans Central Supervisory Union (8)
- Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (6)
- Orange East Supervisory Union (1)

The program, a one-year hybrid model based on competency attainment, enrolled participants with bachelor's degrees in a field other than education and were working under a provisional or emergency license. They worked closely with mentors throughout the school year, completing on-the-job training following a state-approved Work Process Schedule (competencies). They also participated in online coursework and portfolio development led by an instructor from the Vermont National Education Association.

Moving forward, the Emerging Pathways Coordinator continued to lead the expansion of the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program statewide. Additionally, the team explored expanding the program to include a pre-bachelor's degree option, allowing individuals to complete a degree program and prepare for teacher licensure while working full-time as Apprentice Teachers in Vermont schools.

## **EXPANSION OF MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE STATE**

Through a COVID-era grant to the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC), VDOL has engaged an industry expert and intermediary to work with Vermont manufacturing companies to explain the benefits of registered apprenticeship, help the businesses assess their hiring and training needs, introduce options for potentially related training, and help design and bring programs to registration. In addition, the Department worked with Weidmann Electrical Technologies to develop a new Registered Apprenticeship program this year.

VMEC is currently working with the following manufacturing companies to explore resurrecting a previously registered program, registering a program, or adding additional occupations to their existing programs. This work is ongoing and resulted in the following new employer connections in 2024:

- *Advanced Machine and Tool*
- *Ben & Jerry's*
- *Beta Technologies*
- *Brewers' Association*
- *Dairy Farmers of America (St. Albans)*
- *Darn Tough*
- *Dynapower*
- *Fourbital Factories*
- *GE Aerospace*
- *Global Foundries*
- *Gordon's Window Decor*

- *GS Precision*
- *GW Nolato*
- *Hayward Tyler*
- *Hazelett Strip-Casting*
- *Healthy Designs*
- *Hubbardton Forge*
- *Husky Injection Molding*
- *Isovolta*
- *Johnson Woolen Mills*
- *Kore Power*
- *Mack Molding*
- *Preci Manufacturing*
- *Pre-Tech Precision*
- *Rhino Foods*
- *Trow and Holden*
- *Viatrix/Mylan*
- *Weidmann Technology*

## **BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA – 2024 UPDATE**

As Vermont actively advances registered apprenticeship as a valued training model, we are fortunate to have developed a partnership with the Republic of Austria. On November 14, 2023, Governor Phil Scott signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Austria that outlines a cooperative, bilateral agreement to share expertise around apprenticeship models. This agreement allows VDOL to learn about Austria's dual education and training system, explore ways to adopt promising practices, and generally partner on further expansion of apprenticeship with a focus on the advanced manufacturing and wood products sectors.

Acknowledging the economic and social benefits of a highly skilled workforce, we are excited to continue to expand our partnership with the Austrian experts that will further the growth of apprenticeship in Vermont.





*Figure 8: Austrian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Petra Schneebauer (4th from right) visited the Department's American Job Center in Burlington and met with Commissioner Harrington and Workforce Development Leaders in apprenticeship.*



*Figure 9.1: Vermont's Commissioner of Labor, Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, Director of Workforce Development, and Director of Business Recruitment and International Trade visited Austria in October 2024. In the photo above, the Vermont Delegation, along with members of the Styrian Parliament and the Styrian Economic Chamber met in the Parliamentary Chamber.*

## APPENDIX A: ACRONYM LISTING

FY2024 (FY24) – State Fiscal Year (FY) – July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024  
FY2025 (FY25) – State Fiscal Year (FY) – July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025  
PY2023 (PY23) – Program Year (Federal) - July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024  
RY2024 (RY24) - Report Year (RY) - January 1, 2024 – December 1, 2024

AJC – American Job Center  
AJLA – America's Job Link Alliance  
CRC – Career Resource Center  
DLW – Dislocated Worker  
DVOP – Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (Specialist)  
DWG – Dislocated Worker Grant  
ETP – Eligible Training Provider  
ETPL – Eligible Training Provider List  
FLC – Foreign Labor Certification  
ETA – Employment and Training Administration  
FBP – Federal Bonding Program  
ICAN – Individual Career Advancement Network  
JVSG – Jobs for Veterans State Grant  
JCS – Job Center Specialist (VDOL case manager)  
LE – Labor Exchange  
LMI – Labor Market Information  
LVER – Local Veterans Employment Representative  
MSFW – Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker  
OJT – On-the-Job Training  
OSHA – Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
RR – Rapid Response - (Business closings or layoffs)  
SMA – State Monitor Advocate  
SOCWED – Special Oversight Committee on Workforce Expansion & Development  
SWIS – State Wage Interchange System  
TAA – Trade Adjustment Assistance  
VDOL – Vermont Department of Labor  
VETRep- Veteran Recruiting Employment and Placement (Specialist)  
VJL – Vermont JobLink  
VYEF – VT Youth Employment Fund  
WARN – Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (Act)  
WD – Workforce Development  
WIOA – Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act  
WOTC – Worker Opportunity Tax Credit  
WP – Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange)

## APPENDIX B: ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST (ETPL)

*The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act mandates that State Workforce Development Systems establish standards for program effectiveness. The ETPL plays a role in safeguarding public investments by ensuring accountability and transparency within the workforce development system. State and local workforce boards compile and maintain the list, which includes eligible training providers and their respective programs. This curated roster aids individuals in making informed decisions about their education and training options, aligning with their career goals and the needs of employers in their region.*

*Organizations wishing to be placed on the list must meet specific eligibility criteria, including annual outcomes reporting requirements.*

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is maintained in a searchable database on the Department's Job Board:

<https://www.vermontjoblink.com/training>

## ATTACHMENT A: REGIONAL OFFICE ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

VDOL Workforce Development Division operates eleven job centers and one satellite office throughout the State. The Department has divided the State into regions, each with two or more offices managed by a Regional Manager.

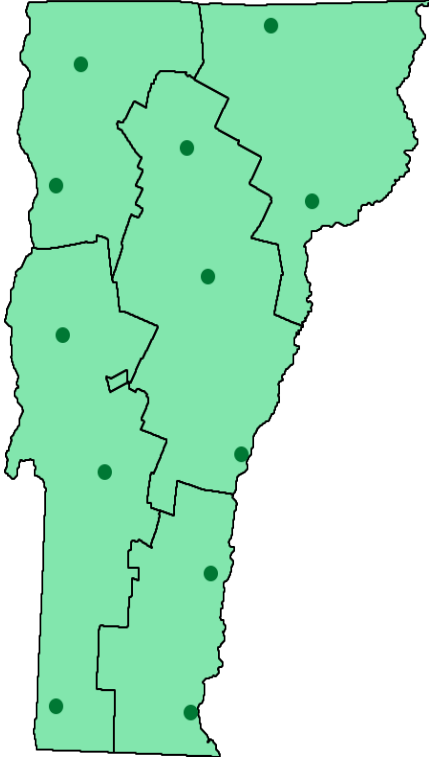


Figure 10: VDOL Regional Map

- Northwest Region – Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle counties with offices in Saint Albans and Burlington.
- Northeast Region – Orleans, Essex, and Caledonia counties with offices in Saint Johnsbury and Newport.
- Central Region – Lamoille, Washington, and Orange counties with an office in Barre and White River Junctions and a satellite office in Morrisville.
- Southeast Region – Windsor and Windham counties with offices in Springfield and Brattleboro
- Southwest Region – Bennington, Rutland, and Addison counties with offices in Bennington, Rutland, and Middlebury.

WD offices are strategically placed throughout Vermont within State office complexes or as stand-alone locations within communities. The strategic placement of the 11 offices allows the Department to ensure all Vermonters have access to workforce development services.

VDOL serves five generations of Vermonters, each with their own unique needs and preferences for how they interact with State government. In addition to the 11 offices, we provide services virtually which allows participants to access resume development and interview skills development workshops, along with other services, from their homes without needing to come to an office. Those same workshops are also available in person. We also bring the Department's workforce services into the community through "labor on location" where we offer information about our services, job fairs and hiring events to community partner locations, or to locations where there is heavy foot traffic.

Below is a brief description of some regional accomplishments in 2024.

## CENTRAL REGION

The Department consistently strives to provide employers and job seekers with opportunities to come together. Job fairs and similar smaller scale hiring events are a practical and consistent method that brings employers and job seekers together. In both spring and fall the Central Region hosts and supports hiring events. Partnerships include HireAbility, VABIR, and Regional Economic Development offices. In 2024, the Central Region was able to connect and support 80 employers and 150 job seekers.

The Workforce Development Division is tasked with supporting underserved and the most at-risk individuals of Vermont. In 2024, the Central Region partnered with YouthBuild, Community Kitchen Academy, and Jenna’s Promise. Relationships with these organizations allowed the Department to serve and support youth in construction, culinary arts, and customer service.

In July and August, the Central Region supported the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) hosted by the State of Vermont after another catastrophic flooding event. WD staff were available in person to field unemployment insurance inquiries and provide information on support service agencies in the region to both affected individuals and affected businesses.

Service Snapshot: Central Region	
Unique Clients Served	641
Unique Veterans Served	21
Labor Exchange Services	1073
WIOA Services	432
Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) services	10
Vermont Training Funds services	11
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services	0
SNAP & TANF (aka ICAN and Reach Up) services	2413
Self Service	1556
RESEA services	588
Registered Apprenticeship services	2
Unique Employers Served	236
Employer Services	494
Job Referrals	14
Job Fairs and Hiring Events Held	13
Rapid Response Events	5

Table 5: Central Region Service Snapshot

<b>Service Snapshot: Northeast Region</b>	
<b>Unique Clients Served</b>	523
<b>Unique Veterans Served</b>	21
<b>Labor Exchange Services</b>	991
<b>WIOA Services</b>	206
<b>Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) services</b>	0
<b>Vermont Training Funds services</b>	10
<b>Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services</b>	0
<b>SNAP &amp; TANF (aka ICAN and Reach Up)</b>	2008
<b>Self Service</b>	827
<b>RESEA services</b>	610
<b>Registered Apprenticeship services</b>	0
<b>Unique Employers Served</b>	162
<b>Employer Services</b>	834
<b>Job Referrals</b>	39
<b>Job Fairs and Hiring Events Held</b>	8
<b>Rapid Response Events</b>	3

*Table 6: Northeast Region Service Snapshot*

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

The Northeast Region collaborated and organized three job fairs in 2024. These events allowed 137 employers and over 1,040 job seekers to connect. This region continued to support the State's worker relocation efforts, responding to 374 relocation inquiries.

The Northeast Region prioritized integrated service delivery partnerships. Recognizing that small rural community partners often share participants; they identified the importance of developing close partnerships and ensuring funds and support are braided for the best experience and long-term success.

In July and August, the Northeast Region supported the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) hosted by the State of Vermont after another catastrophic flooding event. WD staff were available in person to field unemployment insurance inquiries and provide information on support service agencies in the region to both affected individuals and affected businesses. VDOL tabled at the State Flood Recovery Center in Lyndonville one day per week starting in July and ending in mid - August 2024.

NEK/WFD staff met with the Vocational Unit Director at the Northern State Correctional Facility (Newport). VDOL will be partnering with the correctional facility by presenting workshops at their quarterly enrichment events which are part of their Risk Intervention Services. North Country Career Center's Adult CTE program and NEK Broadband partnered to launch a "Broadband Network Construction Technician Training Program". This intensive three-week training program offered embedded credentials required by employers. The class started May 8<sup>th</sup> with seven students. Three of the students were NEK Broadband employees, four of the participants received

support from WIOA. NCCC Adult CTE Program's Broadband Network Construction Training has been tailored to meet the needs of an employer and the community and creates an onramp to an in-demand career path that responds to local labor market needs. Braided funding from VSAC, HireAbility, and VDOL demonstrates the strong partnership between the different workforce programs and funding streams and how critical these partnerships are to the success of growing sectors, such as broadband connectivity.



## NORTHWEST REGION

In response to several business layoffs, the Northwest Region hosted a winter resource and career fair with 40 employers, 10 resource providers, and over 80 attendees. In Q1, the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) in this region posted 70 jobs in VJL. The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist assisted 48 Veterans with referrals for housing, mental health, training, education, and job search guidance.

Staff in this region delivered services to the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) in Burlington, offering workshops on resumes and job interviews, followed by individual appointments to assist unhoused job seekers. Employment and Training Consultants supported VT HITEC and University of Vermont Medical Center's registered apprenticeship Program for Phlebotomists by assisting in the search and interview process for apprentices.

To aid youth transitions to careers, staff attended the UVM and Champlain College career fairs, Milton and Essex High School events, the Vermont Family Network conference, and community events with Spectrum Youth and Family Services.

In the spring, this region partnered with Housing and Urban Development to host an Open House and Job Fair at the Burlington American Job Center. The St. Albans American Job Center co-hosted a Career Fest at Taylor Park that was attended by over 50 employers and over 80 job seekers. Staff in this region also held two job fairs with 20 employers at a Lake Monsters baseball game.

In July, Burlington American Job Center staff and WD leadership hosted Austrian Ambassador Petra Schneebauer during a visit to Vermont. Staff also hosted and toured attendees of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' annual meeting in Burlington.

Service Snapshot: Northwest	
Unique Clients Served	1001
Unique Veterans Served	50
Labor Exchange Services	1501
WIOA Services	426
Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) services	38
Vermont Training Funds services	31
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services	2
SNAP & TANF (aka ICAN and Reach Up)	2386
Self Service	2152
RESEA services	1147
Registered Apprenticeship services	0
Unique Employers Served	236
Employer Services	478
Job Referrals	8
Job Fairs and Hiring Events Held	28
Rapid Response Events	6

Table 7: Northwest Region Service Snapshot

<b>Service Snapshot: Southeast</b>	
<b>Unique Clients Served</b>	636
<b>Unique Veterans Served</b>	24
<b>Labor Exchange Services</b>	874
<b>WIOA Services</b>	606
<b>Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) services</b>	0
<b>Vermont Training Funds services</b>	32
<b>Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services</b>	2
<b>SNAP &amp; TANF (aka ICAN and Reach Up)</b>	899
<b>Self Service</b>	887
<b>RESEA services</b>	564
<b>Registered Apprenticeship services</b>	15
<b>Unique Employers Served</b>	71
<b>Employer Services</b>	145
<b>Job Referrals</b>	8
<b>Job Fairs and Hiring Events Held</b>	6
<b>Rapid Response Events</b>	2

Table 8: Southeast Service Region Snapshot

## SOUTHEAST REGION

This year, staff in the Southeast region continued to work with justice-affected individuals, focusing on those pursuing occupational skills training with supports made available through WIOA. The team remained engaged with other justice-affected individuals to develop new pathways for training and employment. This region’s ongoing partnership with the Department of Corrections at Southern State Correctional Facility helped prepare this population to be work-ready upon their release.

To support young people transitioning to careers, staff in this region partnered with HireAbility, Vermont Adult Learning, and Brattleboro Union High School to host a Youth and Young Adult Apprenticeship Fair in May. This event attracted approximately 800 students and job seekers in the community, including English language learners. More than 15 employers showcased apprenticeship and trade opportunities, providing essential career pathway information for future graduates, job seekers, and career advancers.

Over the summer, staff began hosting VDOL Workforce Development/AJC overview sessions at the School for International Training in Brattleboro. These sessions aimed to assist English Language Learners who faced transportation challenges and provided them with comprehensive information about available services and resources. They continued to offer these sessions regularly to reach and support this population.

Staff also partnered with Housing and Urban Development and the Brattleboro Housing Authority to host an Open House and Job Fair at the local American Job Center. This after-hours event featured employers such as GS Precision, the U.S. Postal Service, and SEVCA, welcoming HUD participants and job seekers from the broader community.

From June through August, staff worked closely with GS Precision to recruit candidates for their registered apprenticeship program. This culminated in the successful launch of the third cohort of their School of Manufacturing Technology, enrolling 16 students who began their registered apprenticeship training.



## SOUTHWEST REGION

The Southwest Region supported a total of five Job Fest series, three in the Spring and two in the Fall. The region also supported multiple hiring events for new businesses, Castleton University PT Job fair in the Spring, and facilitated career and job exploration services with the Rutland Parent Child Center's Gaining Ground program in Rutland. Job Center staff also supported multiple career exploration events which included the Sophomore Summit, Financial Reality Fair in Bennington, Transition Fair, Mock Interview Day, Career Exploration Day at Stafford Technical Center, career and service delivery at Northland Job Corps center in Vergennes. American Job Center staff also provided onsite career and job exploration services for junior and senior students at Mount Anthony Union High School, South West Tech, Stafford Technical Center, Burr & Burton, Rutland High School, Proctor High School, Otter Valley Union High School, Middlebury Union High School, Hannaford Career Center and Vergennes Union High School upon the request of guidance departments.

Staff remained actively engaged with the Stafford Technical Center Regional Advisory Boards, Southwest Tech advisory board, Bennington County Workforce & Education Committee, Rutland Economic Development Corp, Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Project Vision, Rutland Regional Workforce Investment Board, Addison County Workforce Partners, and HireAbility Workforce Partners in Bennington, Rutland and Middlebury.

<b>Service Snapshot: Southwest Region</b>	
<b>Unique Clients Served</b>	1104
<b>Unique Veterans Served</b>	35
<b>Labor Exchange Services</b>	1892
<b>WIOA Services</b>	535
<b>Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) services</b>	7
<b>Vermont Training Funds services</b>	10
<b>Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services</b>	2
<b>SNAP &amp; TANF (aka ICAN and Reach Up)</b>	2494
<b>Self Service</b>	1669
<b>RESEA services</b>	1066
<b>Registered Apprenticeship services</b>	0
<b>Unique Employers Served</b>	252
<b>Employer Services</b>	798
<b>Job Referrals</b>	194
<b>Job Fairs and Hiring Events Held</b>	5
<b>Rapid Response Events</b>	3

Table 9: Southwest Region Service Snapshot

## **ATTACHMENT B: LIST OF APPRENTICESHIP SPONSORS & OCCUPATIONS BY COUNTY**

Any apprenticeship program sponsor registered in Vermont can be found in a searchable database the Office of Apprenticeship makes available to the public. That database is accessible at this link: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder>.

The listing of apprenticeship sponsors as of November 2024, by County, including by occupation, can be found here:

<https://labor.vermont.gov/document/registered-apprenticeship-sponsors>