



Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)

VOBA's Top 2025 Policy Priorities

The Vermont Legislature can help VOBA reach our 2025 legislative goals by:



Investing in VOBA's Climate Outdoor Business Program

to provide targeted technical assistance for business adaptations that ensure innovation and stability in the face of change through sustainable product development, operations, and service delivery.

Investing in VOBA's Climate Outdoor Workforce Program

to provide professional development, training and marketing tools for technical and climate jobs that facilitate a transition to energy efficiency, circular and stewardship systems, and a diverse workforce.

VOBA's priorities guided by VOREC's 2025-2030 Move Forward Together Vermont:

EQUITY | **INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**
CAREER PATHWAYS | **CLIMATE RESILIENCE**



Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance FY26 Legislative Asks

Invest **\$250,000 in the VOBA Climate and Circularity Outdoor Business Program** which provides ***sustainability and innovation technical assistance*** for business planning and adaptations leading to stability in the face of climate change, the shift to a circular economy, and increased responsiveness to consumer behavior and outdoor visitation trends.

Invest **\$250,000 in the VOBA Climate and Trades Outdoor Workforce Program** which provides ***employer-led, professional development training*** in sustainability and technical occupations tailored for career advancement of current Vermont employees and for attracting new and diverse employees to the VT sector.





Invest in Climate Resilient & Innovative Business Development

- Recovery funding for climate-affected businesses for physical and economic injury losses;
- Adaptation financing and technical assistance to support new business operations, products and services in energy efficiency, circular systems, and stewardship;
- Entrepreneur and innovation investment in research and development, data and technology, and trade expansion;
- Aligned PFAS phase out implementation for outdoor apparel, accessories, and ski wax;
- Marketing initiatives that promote outdoor businesses and destinations and attract new and diverse participation.





Invest in Climate Resilient & Innovative Business Development

VOBA's FY24-FY25 Outdoor Entrepreneur Technical Assistance

- Administered by the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance and grant funding by the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC).
- Delivered ***technical assistance to 40 start up and early stage outdoor gear, apparel and accessory manufacturers*** located in VT outdoor communities.
- Organized a ***service provider network of 20 business advisors, trade and marketing consultants, financial planners*** with outdoor expertise.

Outcomes

- Achieved business goals in business and financial strategy and planning, brand positioning, sales and marketing, product development, operations, and services.
- Expanded diverse business ownership by BIPOC and women-owned enterprises.
- Advanced sustainability and circularity goals, resulting in ROI and social impact.



Invest in Climate Resilient & Innovative Business Development

FY24-FY25 Financial Planning and Pitch Development

- Organized 3 ***business development workshops*** with service providers supporting 35 businesses in strategy, financing, and pitch development.
- Provided 1:1 ***pitch development*** services to 5 entrepreneurs competing in VOBA's Outdoor Pitchfest for cash prizes and in kind services.
- Organized cohort of 8 companies to access 6 hours of 1:1 ***financial assistance*** and assisted many flood-affected companies in navigating financial resources.

FY24-FY25 Market Access and Trade Shows

- Organized collaborations involving 20 businesses to exhibit at three regional trade shows expanding ***market access*** to 40,000 consumers.
- Hosted 2 Vermont Gear Makers Festivals for 40 vendors and 4,000 consumers.
- Provided 2 ***marketing trainings and storytelling messaging and assets*** to better position businesses, products, people, and place.



Invest in Climate Resilient & Innovative Business Development

FY26 VOBA Business Development for Climate and Circularity

FY26 funding would allow VOBA to expand technical assistance targeting ***sustainability and innovation goals*** specifically in areas such as:

1. Business planning, financing, climate adaptations, marketing on people/place.
2. Shifting to the circular economy of repairing, resale and reusing products.
3. Responding to new consumer behavior and outdoor visitation trends.

Outcomes:

- Strengthen ***80 Vermont small- to mid-sized companies*** by providing 1:1 and group technical assistance.
- Establish and brand commercial clusters adjacent to recreation opportunities.
- Provide expertise/mentorship from a service provider and business network.
- Make investments in circularity, adaptations and innovations bringing high ROI.



Invest in Equitable Technical and Climate Workforce Development

- Professional development and training programs that target outdoor careers with emphasis on technical, climate, circularity, and stewardship occupations as well as facilitate entry and advancement for under-represented communities;
- Marketing tools that promote outdoor career pathways and jobs, recruit young and new professionals, and provide career advancement in areas of technology, sustainability, circularity, and stewardship.





Invest in Equitable Technical and Climate Workforce Development

FY24-FY25 VOBA Professional Development for Technical Trades

- Administered by the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance and designed by collaborations of Vermont businesses organized by region.
- Grant funding by Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) and Economic Development Authority - Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation through Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing.
- Resulted in VOBA and industry Certificates of Completion.

In 2024:

- VOBA organized a collaboration of 13 bicycle retailers, ski shops and trail builder businesses, trained 30 bicycle mechanics, trail builders, and snow sports technicians as instructed by 18 technical experts.

In 2025:

- VOBA anticipates a collaboration of 20 bicycle retailers, ski shops and trail builder businesses, training 64 professionals as instructed by 25 technical experts.



Invest in Equitable Technical and Climate Workforce Development

FY24-FY25 Vermont Bicycle Mechanic Trainings for Retail Service

- Five 5-module, 10-hour trainings providing overview of bicycle mechanic fundamentals and two advanced level trainings rooted in a national industry curriculum and modified for Vermont-specific bike service.
- Learning covering assembly, repair, maintenance, wheel building, and suspension combining instruction from experienced Vermont bicycle shop mechanics with hands-on practice.

FY24-FY25 Vermont Trail Skills for Professional Trail Workers

- Five 2-day trainings providing overview of trail construction and maintenance and two advanced level trainings rooted in a national industry curriculum and modified for Vermont-specific trail work.
- Learning focused on water hydrology, sustainable natural surface trails, chainsaw safety, and rock work combining instruction from experienced Vermont trail builders with hands-on practice.



Invest in Equitable Technical and Climate Workforce Development

FY24-FY25 Vermont Snow Sport Technician Trainings

- Two 4-session, 8-hour trainings providing overview of alpine ski and snowboard tuning for retail and rental service combining combining instruction from experienced Vermont snow sports technicians and hands-on learning.
- Covering overview and skills building involving terminology, theory, safety, and general practices utilized for both machinery and hand-tuning.

FY25 Outdoor Careers Pathways Guide

- Online career portal with information for job seekers and employers, including job openings, trainings, and education and career resources.
- 10 spotlights on professionals in mechanics, manufacturing, and instruction.



Invest in Equitable Technical and Climate Workforce Development

FY26 VOBA Professional Development for Technical and Climate Jobs

FY26 funding would allow VOBA to expand training that targets skills needed for high demand, highly skilled, and high paying jobs in Vermont. Specifically:

1. **Technical service** occupations such as ski technicians, bicycle mechanics, and guided instruction; and,
2. **Climate, sustainability, circularity and stewardship** occupations in gear and apparel manufacturing, trail construction, and outdoor facilities.

Outcomes

- **Serve 50 VT employers and train 100 professionals.**
- Apply consistent and best practice knowledge and skills to employment.
- Grow VT skilled workforce positioned for hiring cycles, better wages & compensation.
- Market career pathways and establish career navigation partnerships.
- Successfully transition the growing outdoor economy to skilled service and climate/sustainability operations and attract a young, upskilled, diverse workforce.