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H.919

Introduced by Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

Date:

Subject: Commerce and trade; workforce development

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide a framework for a public engagement process and succeeding steps to modernize and strengthen the State's workforce development system.

An act relating to workforce development

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

~~Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT~~

~~(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:~~

~~(1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic vitality of Vermont. However, our State currently faces several key labor market challenges:~~

~~(A) Employers throughout our State are facing an extremely serious and ongoing skills gap due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple sectors, today and into the future.~~

~~(B) Vermont has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current job~~

1 vacancies.

2 (C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and require training to
3 update their skills and find job opportunities that match their interests.

4 (D) Many Vermonters who are unemployed or underemployed face
5 significant barriers to employment and require more support to overcome these
6 barriers.

7 (E) Vermont youth currently access postsecondary learning at the
8 lowest rates in New England and with significant inequities of access that are
9 correlated with family income and background. A strategic focus on
10 addressing equity in postsecondary learning opportunities, in alignment with
11 workforce needs, will ensure Vermont maximizes the potential of every
12 Vermonter to participate in the labor market.

13 (F) Parents, youths, and families are facing a future in which the next
14 generation of workers may not have the same opportunities to prosper as the
15 previous generation.

16 (G) Vermont has a series of fragmented workforce development
17 programs, but not a unified workforce development system. The recently
18 reconstituted State Workforce Development Board is central to creating such a
19 system.

20 (2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont's
21 building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is

1 ~~a diverse public-private partnership among employers, government, and~~
2 education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the
3 skills businesses need.

4 (b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

5 (1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont's workforce development and
6 training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the Commissioner
7 of Labor in collaboration with key administration partners, the education and
8 training communities, and other stakeholders from business and government.

9 (2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will result in a
10 more coherent, efficient, and effective workforce development system within
11 which:

12 (A) all Vermonters who want to work and all employers who want
13 workers can connect, through education and training, with what they need to
14 thrive; and

15 (B) stakeholders and programs, both inside and outside State
16 government, are optimally connected and aligned.

17 Sec. 2. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
18 PROCESS; DUTIES

19 (a)(1) The State Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with the
20 Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community
21 Development, of Education, of Human Services, of Agriculture, Food and

1 ~~Markets, of Natural Resources, and of Transportation shall conduct a public~~
2 engagement process consistent with 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.100 and 679.130 and
3 10 V.S.A. § 541a to establish a vision and shared goals for meeting Vermont's
4 21st-century workforce education, training, recruitment, and retention needs.

5 (2) The public engagement process shall be designed to inform
6 workforce-related aspects of other State strategic plans and reports, including
7 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan, the State Economic
8 Development Marketing Plan, and the Statewide Comprehensive Economic
9 Development Strategy.

10 (3) In evaluating the current workforce service delivery system, the
11 Board shall use a data-driven process and solicit the perspectives of job
12 seekers, incumbent workers, employers, industry representatives, program
13 administrators, and workforce service delivery providers.

14 (4)(A) The Board shall adopt a vision and describe the State's collective
15 goals on or before February 1, 2020.

16 (B) The vision, goals, and any findings or recommendations shall be
17 posted online.

18 (C) The Board shall provide advance notice to the Chair and Vice
19 Chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and
20 the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General
21 Affairs if the recommendations may require legislative action during the 2020

1 legislative session.

2 (5) The vision and goals shall serve as the basis for an action plan to
3 revitalize Vermont's workforce development system.

4 (b) The Board may create a social network map of workforce service
5 delivery providers, employers, workforce program administrators, and industry
6 representatives to:

7 (1) develop baseline data in conformance with the Workforce
8 Innovation and Opportunity Act about how individuals, including new
9 Americans, and organizations, both within and outside State government, are
10 involved with workforce development and training around the State;

11 (2) analyze the relative level of connectivity of people and programs
12 managed inside and outside State government; and

13 (3) identify opportunities to strengthen connectivity to achieve greater
14 program alignment toward and realize the Board's vision for the State's
15 workforce development and training system.

16 (c) The Board shall identify the resources that are necessary to maintain the
17 network map over time and track changes in levels of connectivity and
18 alignment across the stakeholder community.

19 (d) The Board may, in compliance with employment and confidentiality
20 regulations and after reviewing currently available data and resources, collect
21 information from.

1 (1) “front line” service delivery providers to understand how the current
2 system is and is not serving the needs of job seekers and employers;

3 (2) employers and employees to understand the effectiveness of
4 existing workforce programs; and

5 (3) past and present participants of training programs to understand
6 whether the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of
7 interest or training.

8 (e) The Board may initiate activities to improve stakeholders’
9 understanding concerning:

10 (1) the workforce development system;

11 (2) the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (Act);

12 (3) the role of the Board; and

13 (4) how the Act governs workforce development funding and policies
14 implemented by the State.

15 (f) The Board, in cooperation with the Department of Labor and Agencies
16 of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, of Human
17 Services, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, of Natural Resources, and of
18 Transportation shall review methods of engaging employers and evaluate the
19 tools available to employers to facilitate their access to and retention of
20 workers. The Board may recommend strategies for improvement to address:

21 (1) how employer-outreach positions in each of the State-funded field

1 ~~offices might be shared;~~

2 ~~(2) what type of coordination is needed between the State-level~~
3 ~~employer-outreach staff and local workforce organizations, including staff of~~
4 ~~the regional development corporations and regional planning commissions, to~~
5 ~~better serve employers;~~

6 ~~(3) whether establishing a One-Stop American Job Center in each~~
7 ~~region to provide comprehensive customer-driven services for employers and~~
8 ~~job seekers could better serve businesses, improve responsiveness to the needs~~
9 ~~of emerging sectors, and increase access to qualified, available workers~~
10 ~~through direct outreach and recruitment;~~

11 ~~(4) scaling or expanding pilot projects that link experts who have career~~
12 ~~and industry knowledge directly with middle schools or high schools, or both,~~
13 ~~to foster career readiness and exploration; and~~

14 ~~(5) ways to share data and information collected from employers among~~
15 ~~parties who implement workforce development programs.~~

(4) scaling or expanding pilot projects that link experts who have career
and industry knowledge directly with middle schools or high schools, or both,
to foster career readiness and exploration;

(5) ways to share data and information collected from employers among
parties who implement workforce development programs; and

~~*(6) what knowledge and education employers may require better to*~~

~~respond to their employees as workers and as members of a family;~~

1 (g) The Board shall review how functions performed by local workforce
2 investment boards, career technical education regional advisory boards,
3 regional planning commissions, regional development corporations, and other
4 regional economic development and workforce-related boards could be more
5 equitably executed from region to region and recommend structures that would
6 foster better regional collaboration, alignment, and employer participation.

7 (h) Following the public engagement process outlined in subsection (a) of
8 this section, the Board may make recommendations to align relevant funding
9 sources to promote:

10 (1) employer-driven workforce education and training opportunities;

11 (2) results-based outcomes;

12 (3) innovative and effective initiatives, pilots, or demonstration
13 programs that can be scaled to the rest of the State;

14 ~~(4) access to federal resources that enable more innovative programs~~
15 ~~and initiatives in Vermont; and~~

16 (5) equitable access to employment and training opportunities for
17 ~~women and underrepresented populations in Vermont.~~

~~(4) access to federal resources that enable more innovative programs~~
~~and initiatives in Vermont;~~

~~(5) equitable access to employment and training opportunities for~~

~~women and underrepresented populations in Vermont; and~~

~~(6) best practices aligned with a two-generation approach to eliminating poverty, as identified by the Vermont Work Group on Whole Family Approach to Jobs.~~

1 (i) The Department of Labor, with assistance from the Board, shall
2 facilitate the sharing of information among workforce development and
3 training-delivery organizations so they may stay current with initiatives and
4 plans related to building an effective workforce development system.

5 Sec. 3. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; CAREER PATHWAYS;

6 CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

7 (a) As used in this section, "Career Pathways" means a combination of
8 rigorous and high-quality educational, training, and other experiences and
9 services, beginning not later than seventh grade, with multiple entry and exit
10 points that:

11 (1) at the secondary level, integrate the academic and technical skills
12 required for postsecondary success;

13 (2) are developed in partnership with business and industry and align
14 with the skill needs of industries in the local, regional, and State economies;

15 (3) prepare an individual to transition seamlessly from secondary to
16 postsecondary experiences and be successful in any of a full range of

17 secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered

1 apprenticeships:

2 (4) include career counseling and work-based learning experiences to
3 support an individual in achieving the individual's educational and career
4 goals;

5 (5) include, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in
6 the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific
7 occupation or occupational cluster;

8 (6) organize educational, training, and other experiences and services to
9 meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the
10 educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

11 (7) enable an individual to gain a secondary-school diploma or its
12 recognized equivalent and allow college credit and industry certifications to be
13 earned in high school; and

14 (8) prepare an individual to enter or to advance within a specific
15 occupation or occupational cluster.

16 (b) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the State Workforce
17 Development Board, shall promote policies that support introduction of Career
18 Technical Education (CTE) opportunities of study to middle school students,
19 along with career-readiness and career-awareness activities.

20 (c) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall promote
21 collaboration among middle schools and regional CTE centers that may

1 result in:

2 (1) development and delivery of introductory CTE courses or lessons to
3 introduce middle school students to Career Pathways and CTE programs, as
4 appropriate;

5 (2) increasing student exposure to local career opportunities through
6 activities such as business tours, guest lectures, career fairs, and career-
7 awareness days; and

8 (3) increasing student exposure to CTE programs through activities such
9 as tours of regional CTE centers, virtual field trips, and CTE guest visits.

10 (d) The Agency of Education shall approve up to four pilot projects in a
11 variety of CTE settings that model a unified funding structure or a unified
12 governance structure, or both, designed to streamline the delivery of
13 educational experiences to both high school students and CTE students,
14 consistent with the following:

15 (1) a pilot project shall extend not longer than two years;

16 (2) the Agency shall establish guidelines, proposal submission
17 requirements, and a review process to approve pilot projects; and

18 (3) the Agency shall report on the outcomes of the pilot projects to the
19 House and Senate Committees on Education and the House Committee on
20 Commerce and Economic Development on or before January 15, 2020.

21 (e) Based on the results of the pilot projects, the Agency shall report to the

1 ~~of this section, the Agency of Education shall recommend flexible and student-~~
2 ~~centered policies that:~~

3 ~~(1) support equitable access and opportunity to participate in CTE pre-~~
4 ~~tech foundation and exploratory programs for students in grades 9 and 10,~~
5 ~~including building such activities into students' personalized learning plans~~
6 ~~when appropriate, so that students are exposed to a wide variety of career~~
7 ~~choices in their areas of interest; and~~

8 ~~(2) ensure that students in grade 10 have access to courses in CTE~~
9 ~~programs, including building such access into their personalized learning plans~~
10 ~~as appropriate.~~

~~(e) Based on the results of the pilot projects approved under subsection~~
~~(d) of this section, the Agency of Education shall recommend flexible and~~
~~student-centered policies that support equitable access and opportunity to~~
~~participate in CTE pre-tech foundation and exploratory programs for students~~
~~in grades 9 and 10, including building such activities into students'~~
~~personalized learning plans when appropriate, so that students are exposed to~~
~~a wide variety of career choices in their areas of interest.~~

11 ~~(f) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Board, shall ensure~~
12 ~~that CTE centers provide rigorous programs of study to students that are~~
13 ~~aligned with an approved Career Pathway and in combination with a registered~~
14 ~~apprenticeship when appropriate.~~

1 (g) The Agency of Education, in partnership with the Department of Labor,
2 and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, shall implement
3 a process for reviewing Career Pathways that considers:

4 (1) the program's relevance to the needs of State and regional
5 employers;

6 (2) the participation of regional advisory boards or other boards with
7 employers;

8 (3) pathways to postsecondary education and training; and

9 (4) students' ability to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment credits,
10 postsecondary credentials or degrees, and employment.

11 (h) The Agency of Education shall report on its Career Pathways review
12 process, findings, and recommendations to the Board on a regular basis.

13 (i) The Board may identify opportunities to leverage Workforce Innovation
14 and Opportunity Act funds, Carl D. Perkins Act postsecondary funds, Next
15 Generation funds, Vermont Training Program funds, and other relevant
16 funding to develop community-based Career Pathways that respond to local
17 occupational demands.

18 (j) The Agency of Education shall ensure that every high school student
19 has the opportunity to experience meaningful work-based learning when
20 supported by the personalized learning plan, and that high schools work with
21 regional CTE centers to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs of study

1 ~~already provided by the centers.~~

2 ~~(k) The General Assembly shall create a permanent, classified position~~
3 ~~within the Agency of Education to perform the functions currently performed~~
4 ~~by the limited-service Career Pathways Coordinator position.~~

5 (l) The Agency of Education and the Department of Labor shall support
6 coordination and alignment of Career Pathways programs of study delivered
7 by the regional CTE centers and the State's postsecondary institutions so that
8 education and training opportunities that are available to secondary and adult
9 students lead to a degree or stackable credential of value.

10 (m) The Department of Labor shall be responsible for the oversight and
11 coordination of adult career technical education in the State. The Agency of
12 Education shall provide technical and programmatic assistance, as necessary,
13 to the Department to ensure alignment between secondary and postsecondary
14 institutions, programs, policies and funding.

15 Sec. 4. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD;

16 STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING
17 PROGRAMS

18 (a) The State Workforce Development Board shall take steps to encourage,
19 promote, and support the creation of registered apprenticeship programs,
20 preapprenticeship programs, paid internships, occupational trainings, and other
21 work-based and on-the-job learning opportunities that lead to

1 ~~recognized certificates and credentials. The Board shall consider ways to meet~~
2 ~~employers' immediate and long-term employment needs in a variety of ways~~
3 ~~that can include:~~

4 ~~(1) expanding the number and diversity of employer-sponsored~~
5 ~~registered apprenticeships;~~

6 ~~(2) promoting the development of and access to preapprenticeship~~
7 ~~programs in high schools and career and technical education centers;~~

8 ~~(3) engaging Vermont's colleges and universities in delivering the~~
9 ~~related instructional components of registered apprenticeship programs;~~

10 ~~(4) expanding the number of internships and returnships available in~~
11 ~~current and new sectors;~~

12 ~~(5) developing partnerships and alignment between training programs~~
13 ~~offered in correctional facilities and those offered in business or community~~
14 ~~settings; and~~

15 ~~(6) registered apprenticeship programs that guarantee offers of~~
16 ~~continued employment or consideration for future employment upon~~
17 ~~completion of the program.~~

18 ~~(b) The Board shall create a process for identifying, monitoring, and~~
19 ~~evaluating occupational trainings and industry-recognized credentials. The~~
20 ~~Board may consider establishing a process for endorsing programs that offer~~
21 ~~credentials or certificates, to facilitate targeted investments in programs that~~

1 meet industry needs

2 (c) The Board shall create and periodically review publicly available
3 documents that list:

4 (1) current industry-recognized, State-recognized, and federally
5 recognized credentials;

6 (2) the requirements to obtain these credentials;

7 (3) training programs that lead to these credentials; and

8 (4) the cost of training and educational programs required to obtain the
9 credential.

10 (d) The Board shall work with the Office of Professional Regulation to
11 increase recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states, in
12 addition to supporting professional paths that involve more than one industry-
13 recognized, State-recognized, or federally recognized credential and rules
14 adopted by the Office;

15 Sec. 5. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; GROWING THE
16 SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

17 (a) The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and
18 Community Development, of Education, and of Human Services, in
19 partnership with the State Workforce Development Board, shall take steps to:

20 (1) increase Vermonters' labor force participation by creating
21 multitiered engagement, training, and support activities that help working-age

1 ~~Vermonters who are able to participate or to participate to a greater degree in~~
2 ~~the workforce; and~~

3 ~~(2) recruit and relocate new workers and employers to Vermont; and~~

4 ~~(3) assist businesses in locating and retaining qualified workers.~~

5 ~~(b) To meet these objectives, the Department of Labor and the Agencies of~~
6 ~~Commerce and Community Development, of Education, and of Human~~
7 ~~Services shall:~~

8 ~~(1) engage regional and statewide stakeholders, including regional CTE~~
9 ~~centers, regional development corporations, and regional planning~~
10 ~~commissions, to identify needs and strategies, and define success;~~

11 ~~(2) identify targets and methods of recruitment, relocation, retraining,~~
12 ~~and retention;~~

13 ~~(3) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs to~~
14 ~~support more workers from within and outside Vermont entering and staying in~~
15 ~~the Vermont workforce; and~~

16 ~~(4) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and~~
17 ~~economic impact.~~

(3) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs
to support more workers from within and outside Vermont entering and staying
in the Vermont workforce;

~~*(4) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and*~~

~~economic impact; and~~

~~(5) develop policies and identify tools that support a two-generation approach to successful employment, addressing the needs of children in the lives of working adults.~~

1 ~~(c) The Board may examine incentives to encourage targeted populations~~
2 ~~to participate in the labor force, including unemployment insurance waivers,~~
3 ~~income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security, housing and~~
4 ~~transportation vouchers, tuition and training reimbursements, and waivers for~~
5 ~~training. The Board shall notify the House Committee on Commerce and~~
6 ~~Economic Development of any findings or recommendations, as appropriate.~~

~~(c) The Board may identify incentives to enable and encourage targeted populations to participate in the labor force, including unemployment insurance waivers, income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security, housing and transportation vouchers, greater access to mental health and addiction treatment, and tuition and training reimbursements. The Board shall notify the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services of any findings or recommendations, as appropriate.~~

7 Sec. 6. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

8 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

9 (1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is an
10 ~~employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end~~

1 ~~customers of the education and workforce systems. VTPM seeks to improve~~
2 the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employers' needs with
3 education and workforce development and training programs.

4 (2) VTPM is a statewide public and private partnership among the
5 Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Brattleboro
6 Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce Investment
7 Board, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont
8 Business Roundtable. It is informed by resource partners including the
9 Agency of Education, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, State
10 Workforce Development Board, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and
11 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

12 (3) Partners will coordinate the network of training providers to deliver
13 industry-recognized, State-recognized, and federally recognized credentials,
14 job training, and workforce education in targeted job areas, sectors, and
15 industries that connect to the skills employers are looking for when filling
16 available positions.

17 (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

18 (1) to acknowledge VTPM as an important, statewide, employer-led
19 model in its start-up phase with pilots in key industries;

20 (2) to support the development, scale-up, funding, and roll-out of

21 ~~VTPM across all economic sectors, businesses of various size, and regions of~~

1 ~~the State by training regional partners in local communities statewide; and~~

2 (3) to encourage the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, State
3 Workforce Development Board, and VTTPM to collaborate in identifying and
4 developing additional credentialing programs within applicable industries.

5 Sec. 7. RESULTS-BASED MONITORING

6 (a) The Department of Labor, with the assistance of the Government
7 Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall
8 develop a framework to evaluate workforce education, training, and support
9 programs and services. The framework shall be applied to the State's
10 workforce system inventory and shall distinguish programs and services based
11 on method of delivery, customer, program administrator, goal, or other
12 appropriate category. The framework shall

13 (1) create population-level indicators based on desired outcomes for the
14 workforce development delivery system;

15 (2) along with social network mapping work that the Board may pursue,
16 support program and service alignment of State-grant-funded projects with the
17 State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan;

18 (3) align with the Board's vision;

19 (4) note performance measures that already exist in the workforce
20 system and identify where State-specific measures would help monitor

21 ~~progress in achieving the State's goals, and~~

1 ~~(5) identify gaps in service delivery and areas of duplication in services.~~

2 (b) The State Workforce Development Board shall consider whether the
3 information and data currently collected and reported throughout the
4 workforce development system are useful and shall identify what information
5 and data are not available or not readily accessible. The Board shall make its
6 findings available and recommend a process to improve the collection and
7 reporting of data.

8 (c) The State Workforce Development Board may create a process and a
9 timeline to collect program-level data for the purposes of updating the State's
10 workforce system inventory.

11 (d) The State Workforce Development Board may develop tools for
12 program and service delivery providers that support continuous improvement
13 using data-driven decision making, common information-sharing systems, and
14 a customer-focused service delivery system.

15 Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. chapter 22A is amended to read:

16 CHAPTER 22A. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

17 § 540. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADER

18 The Commissioner of Labor shall be the leader of workforce education and
19 training in the State, and shall have the authority and responsibility for the
20 coordination of workforce education and training within State government,
21 ~~including the following duties.~~

1 ~~(1) Perform the following duties in consultation with the State~~

2 Workforce Development Board:

3 * * *

4 ~~(G) design and implement criteria and performance measures for~~
5 ~~workforce education and training activities; and~~

6 ~~(H) establish goals for the integrated workforce education and~~
7 ~~training system; and~~

8 ~~(I) with the assistance of the Secretaries of Commerce and~~
9 ~~Community Development, of Human Services, of Education, of Agriculture,~~
10 ~~Food and Markets, and of Transportation and of the Commissioner of Public~~
11 ~~Safety, develop and implement a coordinated system to recruit, relocate, and~~
12 ~~train workers to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont's businesses are met.~~

13 * * *

14 ~~(8) Coordinate intentional outreach and connections between students~~
15 ~~graduating from Vermont's colleges and universities and employment~~
16 ~~opportunities in Vermont.~~

17 * * *

18 § 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

19 (a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.

20 § 3111, the Governor shall establish a the State Workforce Development Board

21 to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce

1 ~~Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of~~

2 Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

3 (b) Additional duties; planning; process.

4 (1) ~~In order to~~ To inform its decision-making decision making and to
5 provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board
6 shall:

7 ~~(1)(A)~~ (A) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the
8 State that brings together employers and potential employees, including
9 students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training,
10 to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and
11 training needs; and

12 ~~(2)(B)~~ (B) maintain familiarity and promote alignment with the federal,
13 State, and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
14 and other economic development planning processes, and coordinate
15 workforce and education activities in the State, including the development and
16 implementation of the State plan required under the Workforce Innovation and
17 Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic development planning processes
18 occurring in the State, as appropriate.

19 (2) To ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce
20 development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the
21 State's workforce and economic goals, the Board shall regularly.

1 (A) Review and approve State-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect
2 a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving
3 employment outcomes, meeting employers' and workers' needs, and
4 leveraging available State and federal funding. Career Pathways:

5 (i) shall encompass educational and training experiences from
6 middle school to the postsecondary years and may focus on particular target
7 populations or industry sectors; and

8 (ii) shall include or culminate in degrees, certificates, and other
9 relevant credentials approved by the Board.

10 (B) Publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways, including on
11 websites managed by the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and
12 Department of Economic Development.

13 (3)(A) The Board shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and
14 industry-recognized credentials and certificates, excluding high school
15 diplomas and postsecondary academic degrees, that are aligned with the Career
16 Pathways.

17 (B) The Board shall design a review process that ensures:

18 (i) business and industry are participants and are engaged early in
19 the process;

20 (ii) the credential-review process involves relevant stakeholders;

21 (iii) credentials are differentiated based on rigor and industry

1 demand; and

2 (iv) systems are designed to be responsive to the changing needs
3 of industry.

4 (C) The Board shall ensure that a review and oversight process is in
5 place on or before July 1, 2019.

6 * * *

7 § 543. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; GRANT
8 PROGRAMS

9 (a) Creation. There is created the Workforce Education and Training Fund
10 in the Department of Labor to be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A.
11 chapter 7, subchapter 5.

12 (b) Purposes. The Department shall use the Fund for the following
13 purposes:

14 (1) training for Vermont workers, including those who are unemployed,
15 underemployed, or in transition from one job or career to another;

16 (2) internships to provide students with work-based learning
17 opportunities with Vermont employers;

18 (3) apprenticeship, preapprenticeship, and industry-recognized
19 credential training; and

20 (4) assistance to small businesses for recruiting, including building
21 connections with secondary and postsecondary institutions and others to locate,

1 ~~hire, and retain workers from among Vermont's students and graduates; and~~

2 (5) other workforce development initiatives related to current and future
3 job opportunities in Vermont as determined by the Commissioner of Labor.

4 * * *

5 (f) Awards. The Commissioner of Labor, in consultation with the Chair of
6 the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop award criteria and may
7 grant awards to the following:

8 * * *

9 (2) Vermont Strong Internship Program. Funding for eligible internship
10 programs and activities under the Vermont Strong Internship Program
11 established in section 544 of this title.

12 (3) Vermont Strong Returnship Program. Funding for eligible
13 returnship programs and activities under the Vermont Strong Returnship
14 Program established in section 545 of this title.

15 (4) Apprenticeship Program. The Vermont Apprenticeship Program
16 established under 21 V.S.A. chapter 13. Awards under this subdivision may be
17 used to fund the cost of apprenticeship-related instruction provided by the
18 Department of Labor.

19 (4)(5) Career Focus and Planning programs. In collaboration with the
20 Agency of Education, funding for one or more programs that institute career
21 training and planning for young Vermonters, beginning in middle school.

1 ~~(g) Career Pathways. Programs that are funded under this section resulting~~
2 ~~in a credit, certificate, or credential shall demonstrate alignment with a Career~~
3 ~~Pathway.~~

4 ~~(h) Expanding offerings. A regional career and technical education center~~
5 ~~that develops an adult technical education program of study using funding~~
6 ~~under this section shall:~~

7 ~~(1) make the program materials available to other regional career and~~
8 ~~technical education centers and adult technical education programs;~~

9 ~~(2) to the extent possible, align the program with subsequent programs~~
10 ~~offered through the Vermont State College System, the University of Vermont~~
11 ~~and State Agricultural College, or an accredited independent college located in~~
12 ~~Vermont; and~~

13 ~~(3) respond to current or projected occupational demands.~~

14 * * *

15 § 545. VERMONT STRONG RETURNSHIP PROGRAM

16 (a) As used in this section, “returnship” means an on-the-job learning
17 experience working with an employer where an individual may, but does not
18 necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any
19 combination of these.

20 (b)(1) The Department of Labor shall develop and implement the statewide
21 Vermont Strong Returnship Program (Program) for individuals who are

1 returning to the workforce after an extended absence or are seeking a limited
2 duration on-the-job work experience in a different occupation or occupational
3 setting.

4 (2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to
5 public and private entities for returnship programs and opportunities that
6 match experienced workers with Vermont employers.

7 (3) Funding awarded through the Program may be used to build and
8 administer coordinated and cohesive programs and to provide participants with
9 a stipend during the returnship, based on need. Funds may be made available
10 only to programs or projects that:

11 (A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

12 (B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace
13 experiences;

14 (C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of hard
15 and soft professional skills and other factors that indicate a likelihood of
16 success in the workplace;

17 (D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-
18 based learning opportunities with Vermont employers; or

19 (E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and
20 relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and
21 attractive for individuals to continue to work and live in Vermont.

- 1 (c) The Department of Labor shall:
- 2 (1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to
3 the Program;
- 4 (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures
5 that demonstrate program results for returnship programs funded through the
6 Program;
- 7 (3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the
8 Program to expand returnship opportunities within State government and with
9 entities awarded State contracts, and
- 10 (4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance
11 returnship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

12 Sec. 9. RESERVATION OF FUNDS; APPROPRIATIONS

- 13 (a) In fiscal year 2019, the Department of Labor shall reserve the amount
14 of \$40,000.00 from the Workforce Development Council Fund and the amount
15 of \$40,000.00 of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds
16 reserved by the Governor for statewide workforce investment activities,
17 subject to permissible use, to assist the State Workforce Development Board in
18 performing the duties specified in this act.
- 19 (b) In fiscal year 2019, the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the
20 General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont Strong
21 returnship Program created in 16 V.S.A. § 545.

1 ~~(c) In fiscal year 2019, the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from~~
2 the General Fund to the Department of Labor to implement the Vermont
3 College Graduate Placement and Small Business Recruitment Initiative to
4 provide small businesses with support and resources to more effectively recruit
5 new employees from among graduates of Vermont's colleges and universities.

6 Sec. 10. REPORTING

7 (a) On or before January 15, 2019, the State Workforce Development
8 Board shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic
9 Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing
10 and General Affairs concerning the implementation of this act.

11 (b) On or before January 15, 2019, the Department of Labor, in
12 collaboration with the Agency of Education and the State Workforce
13 Development Board, shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and
14 Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic
15 Development, Housing and General Affairs concerning

16 (1) how to encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships;

17 (2) how to encourage more labor force participation in
18 apprenticeships; and

19 (3) of the myriad federal and private apprenticeship opportunities
20 available, what additional opportunities in what industry sectors should be
21 offered or enhanced in Vermont.

1 ~~Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

2 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.~~

** * * Stakeholder Alignment, Coordination, and Engagement * * **

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds:

(1) A skilled and productive workforce is critical for the economic vitality of Vermont. However, as with all states throughout New England, Vermont currently faces several key labor market challenges:

(A) Employers throughout our State are facing an extremely serious and ongoing skills gap due to the lack of qualified workers to fill a wide range of jobs across multiple sectors, today and into the future.

(B) Vermont has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and there are not enough workers at all skill levels to fill current job vacancies.

(C) Many Vermonters are underemployed and require training to update their skills and find job opportunities that match their interests.

(D) Many Vermonters who are unemployed or underemployed face significant barriers to employment and require more support to overcome these barriers.

(E) Vermont youth currently access postsecondary learning at the lowest rates in New England and with significant inequities of access that are

correlated with family income and background. A strategic focus on addressing equity in postsecondary learning opportunities, in alignment with workforce needs, will ensure Vermont maximizes the potential of every Vermonter to participate in the labor market.

(F) Parents, youths, and families are facing a future in which the next generation of workers may not have the same opportunities to prosper as the previous generation.

(G) Vermont has a series of fragmented workforce development programs, but not a unified workforce development system. The recently reconstituted State Workforce Development Board is central to creating such a system.

(2) A major part of the solution to these challenges lies in Vermont's building an effective and efficient State workforce development system that is a diverse public-private partnership among employers, government, and education and training providers designed to ensure that individuals have the skills businesses need.

(b) Intent. In adopting this act, it is the intent of the General Assembly:

(1) to commit to a redesign of Vermont's workforce development and training system through a concerted three-year effort led by the Commissioner of Labor in collaboration with key administration partners, the education and training communities, and other stakeholders from business and government.

(2) to create a framework for this three-year process that will result in a more coherent, efficient, and effective workforce development system within which:

(A) all Vermonters who want to work and all employers who want workers can connect, through education and training, with what they need to thrive; and

(B) stakeholders and programs, both inside and outside State government, are optimally connected and aligned.

Sec. 2. STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT, COORDINATION, AND

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS; VISION; GOALS

(a) Stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement. The State Workforce Development Board, in cooperation with the Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, of Human Services, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, of Natural Resources, and of Transportation shall:

(1) conduct a stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process, consistent with 20 C.F.R. §§ 679.100 and 679.130 and 10 V.S.A. § 541a, to ensure and promote better coordination and agreement around the State's vision and shared goals for meeting Vermont's 21st-century workforce education, training, recruitment, and retention needs;

(2) design the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement

process to inform workforce-related aspects of other State strategic plans and reports, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan, the State Economic Development Marketing Plan, and the Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; and

(3) in the course of the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process, solicit the perspectives of job seekers, incumbent workers, employers, industry representatives, program administrators, and workforce service delivery providers.

(b) Action plan. In adopting an action plan, the State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) on or before February 1, 2020, describe the State's collective vision and goals for workforce development, which shall serve as the basis for an action plan to revitalize Vermont's workforce development system;

(2) post online the vision, goals, and any findings or recommendations; and

(3) provide advance notice to the Chair and Vice Chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs if the recommendations may require legislative action during the 2020 legislative session.

(c) Regional delivery systems. The State Workforce Development Board

shall review how functions performed by local workforce investment boards, career technical education regional advisory boards, regional planning commissions, regional development corporations, and other regional economic development and workforce-related boards could be more equitably executed from region to region and recommend structures that would foster better regional collaboration, alignment, and employer participation.

(d) Information sharing. The Department of Labor, with assistance from the State Workforce Development Board, shall facilitate the sharing of information among workforce development and training-delivery organizations during and following the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process so they may stay current with initiatives and plans related to building an effective workforce development system.

(e) Board authority; permissive activities. The State Workforce Development Board may:

(1) create a workforce development social network map of workforce service delivery providers, employers, workforce program administrators, and industry representatives to:

(A) develop baseline data in conformance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act about how individuals, including new Americans, and organizations, both within and outside State government, are involved with workforce development and training around the State;

(B) analyze the relative level of connectivity of people and programs managed inside and outside State government; and

(C) identify opportunities to strengthen connectivity to achieve greater program alignment toward, and realize the Board's vision for, the State's workforce development and training system;

(2) identify the resources necessary to maintain the workforce development social network map over time and track changes in levels of connectivity and alignment across the stakeholder community;

(3) in compliance with employment and confidentiality regulations, and after reviewing currently available data and resources, collect information from:

(A) "front line" service delivery providers to understand how the current system is and is not serving the needs of job seekers and employers;

(B) employers and employees to understand the effectiveness of existing workforce programs; and

(C) past and present participants of training programs to understand whether the program met their expectations and led to a job in their field of interest or training;

(4) initiate activities to improve stakeholders' understanding concerning:

(A) the workforce development system;

(B) the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (Act);

(C) the role of the Board; and

(D) how the Act governs workforce development funding and policies implemented by the State;

(5) recommend strategies to improve:

(A) how employer-outreach positions in each of the State-funded field offices might be shared;

(B) what type of coordination is needed between the State-level employer-outreach staff and local workforce organizations, including staff of the regional development corporations and regional planning commissions, to better serve employers;

(C) whether establishing a One-Stop American Job Center in each region to provide comprehensive customer-driven services for employers and job seekers could better serve businesses, improve responsiveness to the needs of emerging sectors, and increase access to qualified, available workers through direct outreach and recruitment;

(D) scaling or expanding pilot projects that link experts who have career and industry knowledge directly with middle schools or high schools, or both, to foster career readiness and exploration;

(E) ways to share data and information collected from employers among parties who implement workforce development programs; and

(F) what knowledge and education employers may require better to respond to their employees as workers and as members of a family; and

(6) following the stakeholder alignment, coordination, and engagement process outlined in subsection (a) of this section, make recommendations to align relevant funding sources to promote:

(A) employer-driven workforce education and training opportunities;

(B) results-based outcomes;

(C) innovative and effective initiatives, pilots, or demonstration programs that can be scaled to the rest of the State;

(D) access to federal resources that enable more innovative programs and initiatives in Vermont;

(E) equitable access to employment and training opportunities for women and underrepresented populations in Vermont; and

(F) best practices aligned with a two-generation approach to eliminating poverty, as identified by the Vermont Work Group on Whole Family Approach to Jobs.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 541a is amended to read:

§ 541a. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(a) Board established; duties. Pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 3111, the Governor shall establish a the State Workforce Development Board to assist the Governor in the execution of his or her duties under the Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and to assist the Commissioner of Labor as specified in section 540 of this title.

(b) Additional duties; planning; process.

(1) In order to To inform its decision-making decision making and to provide effective assistance under subsection (a) of this section, the Board shall:

(1)(A) conduct an ongoing public engagement process throughout the State that brings together employers and potential employees, including students, the unemployed, and incumbent employees seeking further training, to provide feedback and information concerning their workforce education and training needs; and

(2)(B) maintain familiarity and promote alignment with the federal, State, and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Strategies and other economic development planning processes; and coordinate workforce and education activities in the State, including the development and implementation of the State plan required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, with economic development planning processes occurring in the State, as appropriate.

(2) To ensure that State-funded and federally funded workforce development and training efforts are of the highest quality and aligned with the State's workforce and economic goals, the Board shall regularly:

(A) review and approve State-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving employment outcomes, meeting employers' and workers' needs, and leveraging available State and federal funding; and

(B) publicize the State-endorsed Career Pathways, including on websites managed by the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Economic Development.

(3) The Board shall have the authority to approve State-endorsed and industry-recognized credentials and certificates, excluding high school diplomas and postsecondary academic degrees, that are aligned with the Career Pathways.

* * *

Sec. 4. RESERVATION OF FUNDS; IMPLEMENTATION

In fiscal year 2019, the Department of Labor shall reserve the amount of \$40,000.00 from the Workforce Development Council Fund and the amount of \$40,000.00 of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds reserved by the Governor for statewide workforce investment activities, subject to permissible use, to assist the State Workforce Development Board in performing the duties specified in this act.

* * * CTE and Adult Technical Education; Career Pathways * * *

Sec. 5. CAREER PATHWAYS

(a) Definition. As used in this section, "Career Pathways" means a combination of rigorous and high-quality educational, training, and other experiences and services, beginning not later than seventh grade, that:

(1) at the secondary level, integrates the academic and technical skills required for postsecondary success;

(2) is developed in partnership with business and industry and aligns with the skill needs of industries in the local, regional, and State economies;

(3) prepares an individual to transition seamlessly from secondary to postsecondary or adult technical education experiences and be successful in any of a full range of secondary, postsecondary, or adult technical education options, including registered apprenticeships;

(4) includes career counseling and work-based learning experiences to support an individual in achieving the individual's educational and career goals;

(5) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(6) organizes educational, training, and other experiences and services, with multiple entry and exit points along a training progression, to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

(7) enables an individual to gain a secondary-school diploma or its recognized equivalent and allow postsecondary credit and industry certifications to be earned in high school; and

(8) prepares an individual to enter, or to advance within, a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

(b) Development of Career Pathways. The Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall implement a process for developing Career Pathways that considers:

(1) State and local labor market demands;

(2) the recommendations of regional career technical education advisory boards or other employer-based boards;

(3) alignment with postsecondary education and training opportunities; and

(4) students' ability to gain credentials of value, dual enrollment credits, postsecondary credentials or degrees, and employment.

(c) Reporting. The Agency of Education shall report its progress in developing Career Pathways to the Board on at least an annual basis.

(d) The Board may identify opportunities to leverage Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, Carl D. Perkins Act postsecondary funds, Next Generation funds, Vermont Training Program funds, and other relevant funding to develop community-based Career Pathways that respond to local

occupational demands.

Sec. 6. CAREER READINESS; CTE PILOTS

(a) Collaboration. The Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall promote collaboration among middle schools and regional career technical education (CTE) centers to engage in activities including:

(1) developing and delivering introductory CTE courses or lessons to middle school students that are part of broader career education, exploration, and development programs and that are connected to Career Pathways and CTE programs, as appropriate;

(2) increasing student exposure to local career opportunities through activities such as business tours, guest lectures, career fairs, and career-awareness days; and

(3) increasing student exposure to CTE programs through activities such as tours of regional CTE centers, virtual field trips, and CTE guest visits.

(b) Pilot projects. The Agency of Education shall approve up to four pilot projects in a variety of CTE settings. These pilot projects shall propose novel ways of integrating funding for CTE and general education and new governance structures for regional CTE centers, including unified governance structures between regional CTE centers and high schools, or both. Pilot projects shall require both high school and regional CTE center involvement,

and shall be designed to enhance the delivery of educational experiences to both high school students and CTE students while addressing the current competitive nature of funding CTE programs.

(1) A pilot project shall extend not longer than two years.

(2) The Agency shall establish guidelines, proposal submission requirements, and a review process to approve pilot projects.

(3) On or before January 15, 2020, the Agency shall report on the outcomes of the pilot projects to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

(c) Recommendation on CTE pre-tech programs. On or before January 15, 2020, the Agency of Education, in collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board, shall recommend to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, flexible and student-centered policies that support equitable access and opportunity to participate in CTE pre-tech foundation and exploratory programs for students in grades 9 and 10. This recommendation shall include building such activities into students' personalized learning plans when appropriate, so that students are exposed to a wide variety of career choices in

their areas of interest. In making its recommendation, the Agency shall consider:

(1) the existing practices of regional CTE centers currently offering CTE pre-tech foundation and exploratory programs for students in grades 9 and 10;

(2) the results of the collaborative efforts made between regional CTE centers and middle schools as required under subsection (a) of this section; and

(3) the results of the pilot projects under subsection (b) of this section.

(d) Technical assistance.

(1) The Agency of Education shall provide technical assistance to schools to help them develop career education, exploration, and development, beginning in middle school, and introduce opportunities available through the regional CTE centers.

(2) The Agency of Education shall offer technical assistance so that regional CTE centers provide rigorous programs of study to students that are aligned with approved Career Pathways. Such programs of study may be combined with a registered apprenticeship program when the registered apprenticeship program is included in a student's personalized learning plan.

(3) The Agency of Education shall offer technical assistance to local education agencies to ensure that each high school student has the opportunity

to experience meaningful work-based learning when included in the student's personalized learning plan, and that high schools coordinate effectively with regional CTE centers to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs of student placements and study already provided by the centers.

(e) Definition. As used in this section, "Career Pathways" shall have the same meaning as in Sec. 4 of this act.

Sec. 7. ADULT TRAINING PROGRAMS

(a) Effective use of State investments. The Department of Labor shall ensure that the State's investments in adult training programs are part of a system that is responsive to labor-market demands, provides equitable access to a broad variety of training opportunities, and provides to those jobseekers with barriers to employment the accommodations or services they need to be successful.

(b) Delivery of training programs. Training programs delivered by regional CTE centers, nonprofit and private entities, and institutions of higher education shall be included in the system.

(c) Technical assistance. The Agency of Education shall provide technical and programmatic guidance and assistance, as appropriate, to the Department of Labor to ensure alignment between secondary and postsecondary programs, policies, funding, and institutions.

Sec. 8. ADULT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

(a) Regional career technical education (CTE) centers. Vermont's regional CTE centers shall offer adult CTE programs that:

(1) develop technical courses for adults, aligned with a career pathway when possible, that support the occupational training needs of Vermonters seeking to up-skill, re-skill, and obtain credentials leading to employment;

(2) ensure that new and existing training responds to local or Statewide labor market demands;

(3) coordinate with State and regional partners, including other CTE centers, high schools, postsecondary educational institutions, and private training providers, to ensure quality, consistency, efficiency, and efficacy of State and federally funded training opportunities;

(4) support expansion of adult work-based learning experiences, such as registered apprenticeships, by providing related instruction, as appropriate; and

(5) maximize use of federal and State funds by aligning with the State's goals, priorities, and strategies outlined in Vermont's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified plan.

(b) Evaluation of technical and occupational training. The State Workforce Development Board shall review how technical and occupational training is delivered to adults throughout the State and consider how adult CTE programs, delivered through the regional CTE centers, contribute to this

system. The Board shall make recommendations on:

(1) staffing levels and structures that best support a strong adult technical education system;

(2) optimal hours of operation and facility availability for adult programs; and

(3) any other issues it finds relevant to enhancing support for adult technical education.

(c) Reporting. On or before January 15, 2019, the Board shall report its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education.

(d) Partnering with employers. Nothing in this section shall prevent an adult CTE program or regional CTE center from partnering directly with employers to design and deliver programs meeting specific needs of employers or provide additional courses that meet a State or community need.

(e) Definition. As used in this section, "Career Pathways" shall have the same meaning as in Sec. 5 of this act.

** * * Workforce Training * * **

*Sec. 9. STRENGTHENING AND ALIGNING WORKFORCE TRAINING
PROGRAMS*

The State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) promote the creation of registered apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, paid internships, occupational trainings, and other work-based and on-the-job learning opportunities that lead to industry-recognized certificates and credentials;

(2) consider ways to meet employers' immediate and long-term employment needs in a variety of ways that can include:

(A) expanding the number and diversity of employer-sponsored registered apprenticeships;

(B) promoting the development of and access to preapprenticeship programs in high schools and career and technical education centers;

(C) engaging Vermont's colleges and universities in delivering the related instructional components of registered apprenticeship programs;

(D) expanding the number of internships and returnships available in current and new sectors;

(E) developing partnerships and alignment between training programs offered in correctional facilities and those offered in business or community settings; and

(F) developing registered apprenticeship programs that guarantee offers of continued employment or consideration for future employment upon completion of the program;

(3) create a process for identifying, monitoring, and evaluating occupational trainings and industry-recognized credentials, which may include a mechanism for endorsing programs that offer credentials or certificates in order to facilitate targeted investments in programs that meet industry needs, ensuring that:

(A) business and industry are participants and are engaged early in the process;

(B) the credential review process involves relevant stakeholders;

(C) credentials are differentiated based on rigor and industry demand; and

(D) systems are designed to be responsive to the changing needs of industry;

(4) create and periodically review publicly available documents that list:

(A) current industry-recognized, State-recognized, and federally recognized credentials;

(B) the requirements to obtain these credentials;

(C) training programs that lead to these credentials; and

(D) the cost of training and educational programs required to obtain the credential; and

(5) work with the Office of Professional Regulation:

(A) to increase recognition of professional skills and credentialing across states; and

(B) to support professional paths that involve more than one industry-recognized, State-recognized, or federally recognized credential and rules adopted by the Office.

Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 543 is amended to read:

§ 543. *WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; GRANT PROGRAMS*

* * *

(f) Awards. The Commissioner of Labor, in consultation with the Chair of the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop award criteria and may grant awards to the following:

* * *

(2) Vermont ~~Strong~~ Internship Program. Funding for eligible internship programs and activities under the Vermont ~~Strong~~ Internship Program established in section 544 of this title.

(3) Vermont Returnship Program. Funding for eligible returnship programs and activities under the Vermont Returnship Program established in section 545 of this title.

(4) Apprenticeship Program. The Vermont Apprenticeship Program established under 21 V.S.A. chapter 13. Awards under this subdivision may be

used to fund the cost of apprenticeship-related instruction provided by the Department of Labor:

(4)(5) Career Focus and Planning programs. In collaboration with the Agency of Education, funding for one or more programs that institute career training and planning for young Vermonters, beginning in middle school.

(g) Career Pathways. Programs that are funded under this section resulting in a credit, certificate, or credential shall demonstrate alignment with a Career Pathway.

(h) Expanding offerings. A regional career and technical education center that develops an adult technical education program of study using funding under this section shall:

(1) make the program materials available to other regional career and technical education centers and adult technical education programs;

(2) to the extent possible, align the program with subsequent programs offered through the Vermont State College System, the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, or an accredited independent college located in Vermont; and

(3) respond to current or projected occupational demands.

** * * Growing the Workforce and Increasing Workforce Participation * * **

Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 544 is amended to read:

§ 544. VERMONT STRONG INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

(a)(1) The Department of Labor, in consultation with the Agency of Education, shall develop, and the Department shall implement, a statewide Vermont Strong Internship Program for students who are in high school or in college and for those who are recent graduates of 24 months or less.

(2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to public and private entities for internship programs that match Vermont employers with students from public and private secondary schools, regional technical centers, the Community High School of Vermont, colleges, and recent graduates of 24 months or less.

(3) Funding awarded through the Vermont Strong Internship Program may be used to build and administer an internship program and to provide participants with a stipend during the internship, based on need. Funds may be made only to programs or projects that:

(A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

(B) expose students to the workplace or create real workplace expectations and consequences;

(C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of skills, attitude, behavior, and sense of responsibility required for success in that workplace;

(D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-based learning opportunities with Vermont employers;

(E) include mechanisms that promote employer involvement with secondary and postsecondary students and curriculum and the delivery of education at the participating schools; or

(F) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and attractive for graduates to continue to work and live in Vermont.

(4) As used in this section, “internship” means a learning experience working with an employer where the intern may, but does not necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any combination of these.

(b) The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Agencies of Agriculture, Food and Markets and of Education, State-funded postsecondary educational institutions, the State Workforce Development Board, and other State agencies and departments that have workforce education and training and training monies, shall:

(1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to the Vermont Strong Internship Program;

(2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures that demonstrate program results for internship programs funded through the Vermont Strong Internship Program;

(3) develop or enhance a website that will connect students and

graduates with internship opportunities with Vermont employers;

(4) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the Internship Program to expand internship opportunities with State government and with entities awarded State contracts; and

(5) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance internship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 545 is added to read:

§ 545. VERMONT RETURNSHIP PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section, “returnship” means an on-the-job learning experience working with an employer where an individual may, but does not necessarily, receive academic credit, financial remuneration, a stipend, or any combination of these for an individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or are seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different occupation or occupational setting.

(b)(1) The Department of Labor shall develop and implement the statewide Vermont Returnship Program.

(2) The Department of Labor shall coordinate and provide funding to public and private entities for returnship programs and opportunities that match experienced workers with Vermont employers.

(3) Funding awarded through the Program may be used to build and administer coordinated and cohesive programs and to provide participants

with a stipend during the returnship, based on need. Funds may be made available only to programs or projects that:

(A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

(B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace experiences;

(C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of hard and soft professional skills and other factors that indicate a likelihood of success in the workplace;

(D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-based learning opportunities with Vermont employers; or

(E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and attractive for individuals to continue to work and live in Vermont.

(c) The Department of Labor shall:

(1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to the Program;

(2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures that demonstrate program results for returnship programs funded through the Program;

(3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the Program to expand returnship opportunities within State government and with

entities awarded State contracts; and

(4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance returnship programs, opportunities, and activities throughout the State.

Sec. 13. VERMONT RETURNSHIP PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

The amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2018 to the Department of Labor, to be carried forward for fiscal year 2019 and used for the Vermont Returnship Program created in 10 V.S.A. § 545.

Sec. 14. GROWING THE SIZE AND QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE

(a) Increasing participation. The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, and of Human Services, in partnership with the State Workforce Development Board, shall:

(1) increase Vermonters' labor force participation by creating multitiered engagement, training, and support activities that help working-age Vermonters who are able to participate or to participate to a greater degree in the workforce;

(2) recruit and relocate new workers and employers to Vermont; and

(3) assist businesses in locating and retaining qualified workers.

(b) Methods. The Department of Labor and the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development, of Education, and of Human Services shall:

(1) engage regional and statewide stakeholders, including regional CTE centers, regional development corporations, and regional planning

commissions, to identify needs and strategies, and define success;

(2) identify targets and methods of recruitment, relocation, retraining, and retention;

(3) leverage resources available in current State and federal programs to support more workers from within and outside Vermont entering and staying in the Vermont workforce;

(4) create metrics for tracking the success of outreach efforts and economic impact; and

(5) develop policies and identify tools that support a two-generation approach to successful employment, addressing the needs of children in the lives of working adults.

(c) Board authority; identifying potential incentives. The State Workforce Development Board may identify incentives to enable and encourage targeted populations to participate in the labor force, including unemployment insurance waivers, income tax reductions, exemption of State tax on Social Security, housing and transportation vouchers, greater access to mental health and addiction treatment, and tuition and training reimbursements. The Board shall notify the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services of any findings or recommendations, as appropriate.

Sec. 15. 10 V.S.A. § 540 is amended to read:

§ 540. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEADER

The Commissioner of Labor shall be the leader of workforce education and training in the State, and shall have the authority and responsibility for the coordination of workforce education and training within State government, including the following duties:

(1) Perform the following duties in consultation with the State Workforce Development Board:

** * **

(G) design and implement criteria and performance measures for workforce education and training activities; and

(H) establish goals for the integrated workforce education and training system; and

(I) with the assistance of the Secretaries of Commerce and Community Development, of Human Services, of Education, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and of Transportation and of the Commissioner of Public Safety, develop and implement a coordinated system to recruit, relocate, and train workers to ensure the labor force needs of Vermont's businesses are met.

** * **

(8) Coordinate intentional outreach and connections between students graduating from Vermont's colleges and universities and employment opportunities in Vermont.

Sec. 16. VERMONT TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

(a)(1) The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project (VTPM) is a statewide public and private partnership among the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, Franklin/Grand Isle Workforce Investment Board, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont Business Roundtable that is also informed by resource partners, including the Agency of Education, Department of Labor, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, State Workforce Development Board, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

(2) The Project is an employer-oriented strategy that expands the role of employers as end customers of the education and workforce systems. The Project seeks to improve the employability of Vermonters and the alignment of employers' needs with education and workforce development and training programs.

(b) The Agency of Education, Department of Labor, State Workforce Development Board, and Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project may collaborate to support the development, scale-up, funding, and roll out of Career Pathways across appropriate sectors, businesses of various size, and regions of the State.

** * * Accountability; Data Collection and Monitoring; Reporting * * **

Sec. 17. RESULTS-BASED MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

(a)(1) The Department of Labor, with the assistance of the Government Accountability Committee and the State Workforce Development Board, shall develop a framework to evaluate workforce education, training, and support programs and services.

(2) The Department shall apply the framework to the State's workforce system inventory and shall distinguish programs and services based on method of delivery, customer, program administrator, goal, or other appropriate category.

(3) The framework shall:

(A) establish population-level indicators based on desired outcomes for the workforce development delivery system;

(B) along with workforce development social network mapping work that the Board may pursue, support program and service alignment of State-grant-funded projects with the State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan;

(C) align with the Board's vision;

(D) note performance measures that already exist in the workforce system and identify where State-specific measures would help monitor progress in achieving the State's goals; and

(E) identify gaps in service delivery and areas of duplication in

services.

(b) The State Workforce Development Board shall:

(1) consider whether the information and data currently collected and reported throughout the workforce development system are useful;

(2) identify what information and data are not available or not readily accessible;

(3) make its findings publicly available; and

(4) recommend a process to improve the collection and reporting of data.

(c) The State Workforce Development Board may:

(1) create a process and a timeline to collect program-level data for the purposes of updating the State's workforce system inventory and use a data-driven process to evaluate the current workforce service delivery system;

(2) develop tools for program and service delivery providers that support continuous improvement using data-driven decision making, common information-sharing systems, and a customer-focused service delivery system; and

(3) review methods of engaging employers and evaluate data-related and other tools available to employers to facilitate their access to and retention of workers.

Sec. 18. REPORTING

(a) On or before January 15, 2019, the State Workforce Development Board shall submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education a report that specifically addresses the implementation of each section of this act.

(b) On or before January 15, 2019, the Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Agency of Education and the State Workforce Development Board, shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education concerning:

(1) how to encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships;

(2) how to encourage more labor force participation in apprenticeships; and

(3) of the myriad federal and private apprenticeship opportunities available, what additional opportunities in what industry sectors should be offered or enhanced in Vermont.

** * * WIOA Youth Funds * * **

Sec. 19. PROCESS FOR AWARDING WIOA YOUTH FUNDS

(a) On or before December 1, 2018, the Department of Labor shall review the current delivery of youth workforce investment activities funded by WIOA

Youth Funds and consider whether more youth might be better served through awards or grants to youth service providers, consistent with section 123 of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

(b)(1) If the Department decides not to provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities, the State Workforce Development Board shall award grants or contracts for specific elements or activities on a competitive basis, consistent with 20 C.F.R. § 681.400.

(2) The providers of youth services shall meet criteria established in the State Plan and be able to meet performance accountability measures for the federally established primary indicators of performance for youth programs.

* * * Workforce Development in Particular Sectors;

Television and Film Production * * *

Sec. 20. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; FILM AND TELEVISION

TRADES

(a) The Vermont Department of Labor, in partnership with the Vermont Film Institute, Vermont Technical College, and local institutes of higher education shall explore and pursue opportunities to access current federal ApprenticeshipUSA funds to develop and offer registered apprenticeships in the film and television production trades industry, including electrical work, lighting, set building, and art direction.

(b) Related instruction that is developed and administered as part of a

registered apprenticeship program shall also provide the registered apprentice with college credit that is recognized by an accredited post-secondary institution in Vermont.

(c) The Department of Labor, in partnership with the Agency of Education, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the regional CTE centers shall:

(1) promote other work-based learning experiences, including internships, job shadowing, returnships, and on-the-job training, in the film and television production trades industry;

(2) build connections with and among industry professionals; and

(3) conduct outreach to middle school, high school, and postsecondary students.

* * * *Workforce Development in Particular Sectors;*

*Green Energy and Technology * * **

Sec. 21. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; GREEN ENERGY AND

TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Labor, in partnership with the Agency of Education, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Agency of Natural Resources, and interested stakeholders, shall:

(1) develop Career Pathways, beginning in middle school, that lead to employment in the green energy sector;

(2) work with employers in the green energy sector to explore opportunities to create registered apprenticeships;

(3) identify certifications and credentials that support workforce expansion in the green energy sector; and

(4) collaborate, to the extent possible, to create, fund, and offer instruction that leads to industry recognized credentials in the green energy sector.

** * * Effective Date * * **

Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.