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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 approved under subsection (d),~~

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 industry-

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)~~ 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)~~ 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 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 10 V.S.A. § 545.~~

1        (a) 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.