



State Workforce Development Board

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023

PHILIP B. SCOTT
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 26, 2023

Fellow Vermonters:

Since my first day in the office, I've been clear that one of our greatest challenges as a state is our aging demographic, which has contributed to a shrinking workforce. In fact, when I first came to office, we'd been seeing an average of six fewer workers in our workforce every single day.

Reversing these workforce and demographic trends has been a priority for me since day one. And in our first three years in office, we were beginning to make progress. Then we were faced with a once-in-a-century pandemic that created ripple effects far beyond public health, exacerbating our workforce shortage.

Today, while we continue to see low unemployment, we have thousands of open jobs with businesses struggling to find the workers they need.

My Administration, with the help of our partners on the State Workforce Development Board and in communities across the state, have been tackling this issue with focus and urgency, including investing billions in the infrastructure and tools that will strengthen our communities in a way which helps us keep and attract more workers – areas like housing, broadband, childcare, economic development, and infrastructure. And I'll continue to do all I can to make Vermont more affordable for working Vermonters.

I know we also need to be innovative with our federal workforce funds to help train and support those in need of services, while adding new workers to our labor force and bringing more families into our communities. The State Workforce Development Board has an important role to play in providing coordination, guidance, and employer-driven solutions across the workforce system to solve this crisis.

While this work is not easy, with all of us pulling in the same direction, I'm certain there is nothing Vermonters can't achieve. This plan outlines the important role each board member will play to help us work towards creating the best workforce expansion system – from cradle-to-career – in the nation.

I look forward to continuing our work together to make Vermont an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip B. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Vermonters,

When the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) reconvened following the COVID-19 pandemic, our demographic challenges were still in front of us. With our economy recovering and our unemployment rate back to pre-pandemic levels, the workforce shortage had become far worse than before. The tens of thousands of open jobs caused businesses and communities to struggle to meet demand and mitigate uncertainty. It became clear that to meet our workforce challenges, the SWDB needed to shift its focus into system improvement and service delivery while leveraging the vast expertise of board members to recommend creative strategies that will enable us to solve Vermont's workforce crisis.

Productively wielding the knowledge of such a large board can be a challenge. As a collaborative board, we agreed the only way to move the needle would be to determine our priorities, define success, and clearly outline milestones to keep the system's work on track. Developing the SWDB's strategic plan over the past year has been a testament to the capability of this board when members are moving in the same direction. It's been our pleasure meeting with board members, business owners, legislators, program providers, and stakeholders to ensure this document reflects the agreed upon goals and vision of Vermont. Each section has been crafted through the work of three meetings of the full board, dozens of committee meetings and working groups, hundreds of emails, and nearly 2,000 hours of work from the SWDB's Executive Director and Deputy Director.

With the passage of this strategic plan, our work is just beginning. The proposals outlined below provide a roadmap for the SWDB's efforts over the next three to five years. None of these ideas are the silver bullet that will solve our pressing workforce needs, but with cooperation and leadership from the SWDB, Vermonters can make meaningful progress towards our shared workforce goals. We believe that these core areas of focus will enable the SWDB to move to new heights for years to come.

We look forward to beginning this work and continuing to find new ways to serve you.

Sincerely,



Adam Grinold
Chair



Victoria Biondolillo
Executive Director

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STRATEGIC PLAN ACRONYMS

<p>ACCD Agency of Commerce and Community Development</p> <p>AOE Agency of Education</p> <p>CPC Career Pathways Committee</p> <p>DED Department of Economic Development</p> <p>KPI Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>LFP Labor Force Participation Rate</p> <p>RDC Regional Development Corporation</p>	<p>SWDB State Workforce Development Board</p> <p>TCC Training and Credentialing Committee</p> <p>UREG Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Groups</p> <p>VDOL Vermont Department of Labor</p> <p>VDTM Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing</p> <p>VMEC Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center</p> <p>WIOA Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act</p>
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Our Challenge

Vermont is facing a workforce shortage that has been building for decades. Every day, we lose on average six workers out of our workforce and three children out of our schools, all while our population continues to age. Since our peak labor force size in the mid-2000s, every single county in Vermont has seen a decline in the workforce population. Specifically, eight counties with a decline of over 15% and six over 10%. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these trends. Now, Vermont faces consistently low unemployment while continuing to see over 20,000 open jobs monthly. As a state, we're seeing the impacts from inflation, shortened hours, and revenue loss because some companies are unable to meet demands. In critical sectors like health care, childcare, education, public safety, and more, the labor shortage has stretched capacity and caused anxiety among communities that once knew these services to be plentiful. Universally, Vermonters alike recognize our labor shortage as a crisis.

It is important to note that the Vermont workforce system was crafted during times of high unemployment and recessionary conditions. While there are many promising efforts to address our new circumstances, there is a need for better coordination between partners and a clearly developed workforce system. Silos between agencies, departments, program partners, businesses, and employees hinder our ability to be nimble and move strategically to address our workforce challenges as one state.

The SWDB serves as a natural fit to guide and inform statewide policies affecting the coordination, delivery, quality, and availability of workforce development services for jobseekers and employers due to its charge. However, given its large size, the SWDB has struggled to maintain a clear focus and move all partners in the same direction. Our challenge as a state is to better utilize the SWDB and all its partners to help provide clear solutions to meet Vermont's workforce challenges both short and long term.

Vermont's Strengths

Vermont has many strengths that make addressing our workforce challenges possible. Most importantly, it's a great place to live, work, and raise a family with a strong sense of community. Among state and local leaders, it is agreed by all that workforce development must be a top priority to move the state forward. This agreement is a testament to why there are already many exceptional workforce development training programs across the state; thriving regional technical

centers and schools; well-developed career pathways; and dedicated organizations focused on helping relocate newcomers to Vermont. Fortunately, we do not have to reinvent the wheel. Rather, we need to empower, enhance, supplement, and better coordinate existing resources to achieve our goals.

Opportunities

With all the good work happening in Vermont, a unified vision for all partners can propel the state towards its goals. With a clear focus on the data and strengthening the fundamentals of our system, our work can be more impactful. In Vermont, we already have a great story to tell and product to sell. This state is an attractive place to live for all individuals looking for innovative companies, vibrant outdoor recreation, strong communities, and emerging downtowns. If we can reduce barriers for those living and working here and connect existing Vermonters with jobs, many more individuals will join and remain in our workforce. Execution in these areas is a challenge, but we have an existing, regularly convening workforce board with motivated individuals ready to take on the challenge. We do not have to start from scratch.



...Since February 2020, we have lost 24,000 people from our workforce. That 24,000 is larger than the population of every city and town in Vermont other than Burlington. It is bigger than some counties. It's greater than the populations of Williamstown, Johnson, Highgate, Hartland, Pownal, Underhill, and Hyde Park combined..... If we don't work to solve this problem now, it will be there down the road in the future, and it will be much bigger and more complex.... But if we make it our top priority this session, we can take full advantage of the opportunity before us to reverse these trends and secure the brighter future we all want to build.

*Governor Phil Scott,
FY'23 Budget Address*

Call to Action

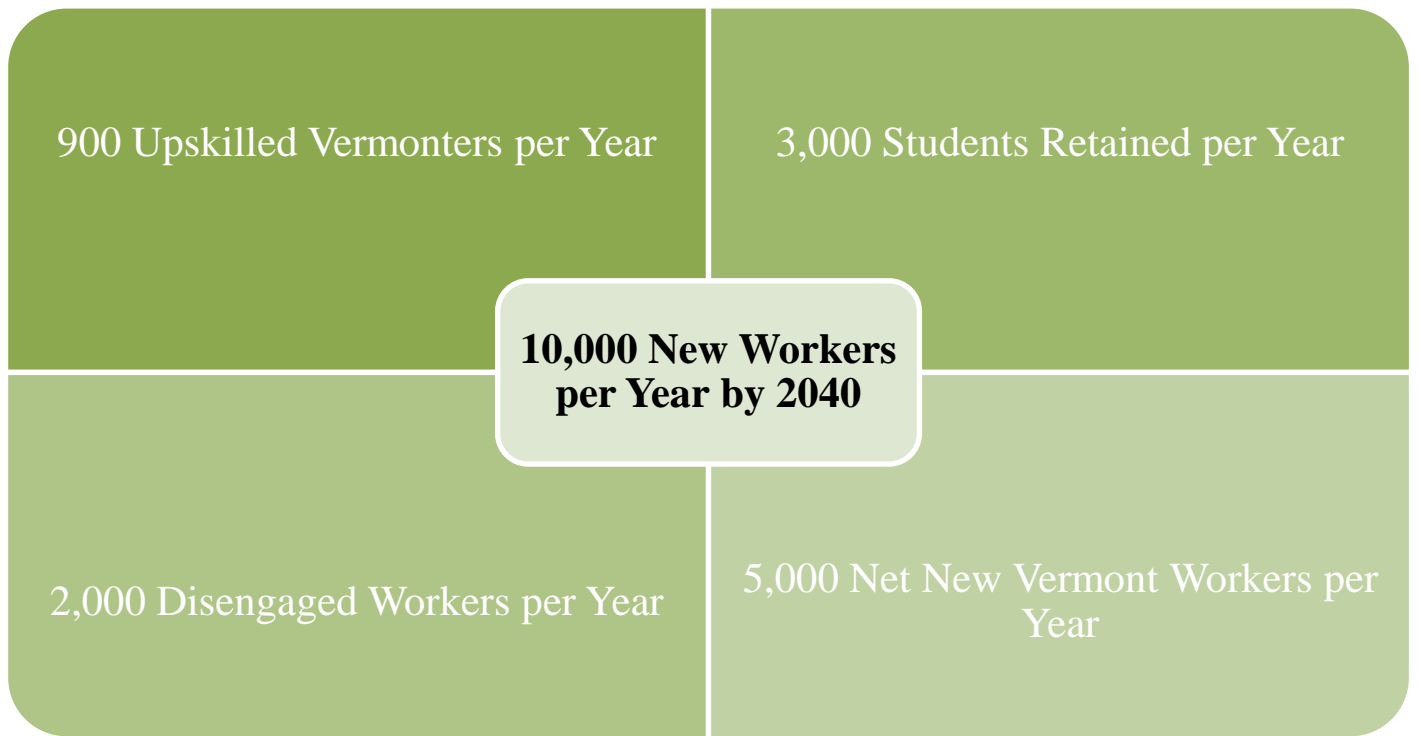
As we continue to see our labor force participation rate decline and our unemployment rate remain low, it is crucial that we act now. As the workforce is currently a top priority of the Governor, community partners, employers, and legislators throughout the state, it is time to make constructive change in Vermont’s workforce system to benefit all who live and work here.

To do this, we need to focus on attracting new workers, engaging disengaged populations, training and upskilling our existing workforce, and creating a nimble, accountable system that meets regional needs and brings employer driven solutions to the forefront. Each of our five priority areas that have been identified seeks to address at least one of these solutions. Charged as the convenor and coordinator of Vermont’s workforce system, these issue areas have been crafted to name specific action items that the SWDB can and will be held accountable for. The issue areas include fulfilling the intent of the WIOA; better aligning the workforce system which enables us to engage more workers and provide system accountability;

increasing and enhancing workforce supports, which bolsters the existing workforce and can be attractive to new workers; coordinating workforce education and training to upskill, retain, and advance Vermonters; and increasing the size and quality of Vermont’s workforce through attraction and engagement of workers. Additionally, the SWDB has created multiple committees that serve as employer-led focus groups to further our efforts in specific sectors and determine gateways to success.

While the following pages do *not* provide a solution to fix the workforce system, they do clearly outline the role of the SWDB in providing recommendations on how we as a state can utilize resources to meet this important moment. Acknowledging that the goals laid out below will be challenging, if all individuals and entities involved work together, the SWDB will be able to successfully play its part in improving the workforce system, therefore growing the economy, making Vermont more affordable, and protecting the most vulnerable.

How Workforce Growth Can Look



¹ 5,735 graduated 2021 graduating class. Estimation of 30% of the .52% who do not pursue post-secondary education; estimate graduating student population of 10,000 with a retention rate of 30%; Auditor reports estimated 5,500 Title I-III qualifying individuals 2018

Our Vision

Vermont's employment demands will be met through a statewide, coordinated, and integrated system of workforce education, training, and development where Vermonters can connect to robust career pathways, advance along career ladders, and new Vermonters can quickly secure employment with a Vermont employer. (Vermont's Modified 2022 WIOA Combined State Plan, pg. 25)

Our Mission

To develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive statewide workforce education and training system. (Board Bylaws)

Our Approach

The SWDB was established by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law No. 113-128, and Vermont Statute, 10 V.S.A. chapter 22A. The Board is charged with advising the Governor and the Commissioner of Labor on the development and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive workforce education and training system. As a majority business member board, it is charged with conducting an ongoing, statewide public engagement process to gather feedback and information about the workforce education and training needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers.

In addition to business members, the SWDB is comprised of government agency leaders, state legislators, educators, RDC representatives, and more.

The SWDB consists of several committees. The committees are sector-based (i.e. manufacturing, health care, etc.) and strategy based (i.e. training and credentialing, career pathways, etc.). Membership is comprised of board members, additional business owners, stakeholders, and community partners. These groups meet regularly to discuss sector demands, needs and best practices, and solutions in their sector or strategy area. Committees provide boots on the ground knowledge and recommendations to the full SWDB.

This strategic plan is a culmination of thoughts, ideas, and suggestions from SWDB members and staff, Governor's office staff, committee members, employers and employees, stakeholders, and community partners. It is important to note that this plan is *not* meant to serve as the solution to Vermont's workforce system. Rather, this document is intended to serve as both a guide for board members regarding the SWDB's purpose while also used as an accountability tool for all people and entities who engage with the workforce system to ensure all parties named in the following pages are working to the best of their abilities to improve Vermont's workforce system.

Our Priorities

Adding 10,000 new workers per year by 2040 is no small feat and the SWDB alone will not be able to solve this problem. As a state, the labor pools we can use as levers include disengaged populations, out of state workers, New Americans, students both in high school and in college, and existing workers with new skills to match today's demand. Each of our strategic priorities were crafted to focus on furthering our efforts to expand one or more of these labor pools. Fulfilling its charge as a convener, connector, and conductor, the SWDB has categorized its work into five priority areas which includes: maximizing WIOA funding, improving system alignment, enhancing workforce supports, coordinating workforce education and training, and increasing workforce size and quality. Each priority area is further explained below.

Maximize Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Funding

The WIOA creates the SWDB and dictates its charge. Vermont receives millions of dollars in federal funding to re-employ our workers and assist disengaged populations. Maximizing WIOA dollars is the central role of the SWDB and will allow us to leverage state dollars more effectively to increase our workforce overall. To that end, the SWDB will focus its efforts on ensuring high quality customer service, increasing program reach, and monitoring program outcomes.

Improve Workforce System Alignment

While we work to increase the size of our workforce, our efforts are only effective if we have a strong system that is nimble and responsive to all Vermonters. Aligning the great work happening around the state into one clear direction will enable lawmakers and administrators to address system gaps more effectively. While not directly contributing to new workers, an aligned system will allow the state to adapt quickly and meet the needs of current times effectively and efficiently.

Enhance Workforce Supports

While training and connecting workers with employers is the core objective of workforce development, there are many factors that directly impact our ability to meet these goals including affordability, transportation, internet access, housing, and more. The SWDB is prioritizing the enhancement of workforce supports to allow sector-based committees and board members to evaluate policies based on their net impact on our workforce and support the broad-based efforts made by the Administration to advance in these areas. Recognizing that our work does not happen in a vacuum, this priority area empowers the SWDB to look at workforce holistically.

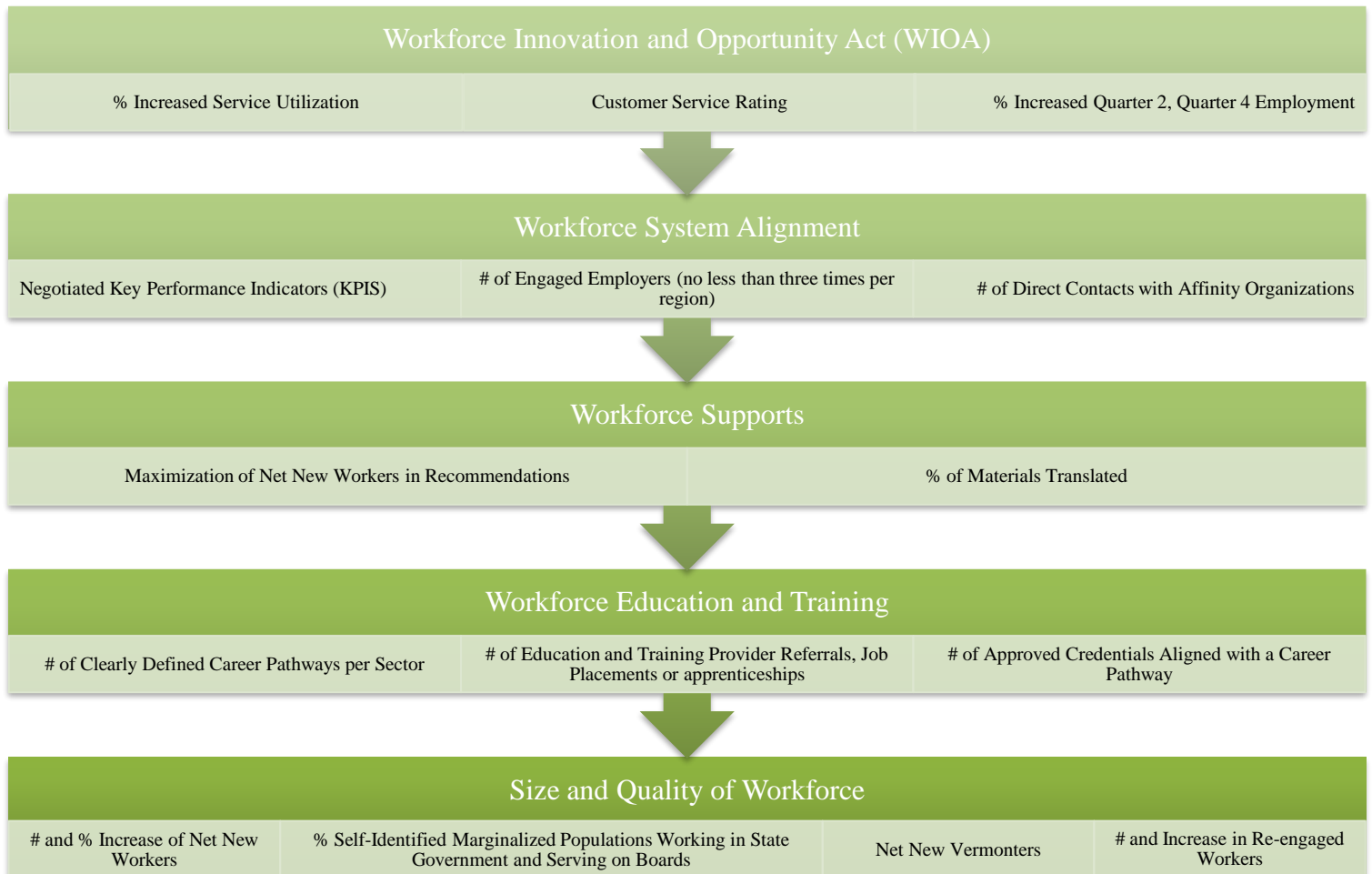
Coordinate Workforce Education and Training

As specified in our state and federal charge, one of the SWDB's core functions is coordination of workforce services. Coordinated service delivery will enable more adult workers to upskill and advance in their careers and keep more students in Vermont. To increase coordination and provide training that is informed by the needs of Vermont employers, the SWDB will focus on the connection between career demand, training providers, and employers. These strengthened touchpoints enable education leaders to create targeted programming based on demand and allow employers to recruit directly from the source.

Increase Size and Quality of Workforce

Vermont does not have the population to sustain its workforce now or into the future. To grow our economy and put Vermont on a sustainable economic path, we must increase the size of our workforce. The SWDB will focus its efforts on increasing the workforce size by developing strategies to assist disengaged workers and attract new workers to Vermont.

How Workforce Growth Can Look



Area	Strategy	Select Milestones
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	1.1 Develop, Implement, and Modify WIOA State Plan	The SWDB Policy Committee will review yearly WIOA reporting and provide guidance on corrective measures by January 2025 to increase service utilization by no less than 20%.
	1.2 Select One-Stop Operator and Monitor System Improvement	By July 2023, the One-Stop Operator will be selected.
	1.3 Create and Apply State Performance Accountability Measures	By March 2026, the Policy Committee will produce a report on metrics to be evaluated by the full SWDB. The SWDB will provide recommendations for areas of improvement with a corrective action plan and potential consequences with agreed upon deadlines.
Workforce System Alignment	2.1 Create and Implement a Warm Handoff System	By January 2024, the SWDB staff and One-Stop Operator will have distributed the updated common intake form, with established KPIs to track effectiveness, to all applicable service locations (both physical and virtual) and provide training to staff on form updates.
	2.2 Foster and Maintain Regional Business Partnerships	By January 2024, board members will review summary county visit employer reports compiled by the SWDB staff and provide actionable feedback.
	2.3 Expand Workforce Services to Marginalized Groups	By December 2024, the SWDB staff will host at least four events related to promoting workforce services to marginalized groups.
Workforce Supports	3.1 Solicit and Apply Workforce Board Policy Input	By FY2026 budgeting deadline, the Policy Committee will recommend workforce policy to the Governor’s office that clearly outlines each policies contribution to net new workers per year.
	3.2 Implement Language Accessibility Plan for Workforce Related Materials	The SWDB will produce translated materials to partners and program providers.
Workforce Education and Training	4.1 Map Career Pathways (Career Pathways Committee)	By January 2024, the Career Pathways Committee will begin its annual career pathways approval process.
	4.2 Host Education and Training Provider Round Tables	By December 2024, the SWDB will host no less than two convenings of education, training, and workforce support providers.
	4.3 Define Eligibility and Approve Credentials of Value (Training and Credentialing Committee)	By June 2024, the Training and Credentialing Committee will officially begin involvement reviewing eligible training providers and credentials of value.
Size and Quality of Workforce	5.1 Facilitate Collaboration and Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies	By December 2025, the SWDB’S Relocation and Recruitment Committee meets twice with community partners to identify system holes to attract more than 5,000 new workers per year by 2040.
	5.2 Increase Marginalized Populations’ Participation in the Workforce	By December 2025, the SWDB and Racial Equity Task Force host a joint convening.
	5.3 Develop Statewide New American Support Network (Pending Legislative Approval)	By November 2025, the SWDB will launch the New American Relocation Network to attract and retain refugees and immigrants who come to Vermont.
	5.4 Increase Labor Force Participation Rate	By August 2023, the Policy Committee will provide strategies to add at least 2,000 disengaged workers back into our workforce per year.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

In keeping with WIOA, the SWDB will remain in compliance regarding federal requirements.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Develop, Implement, and Modify WIOA State Plan
- 1.2 Select One-Stop Operator and Monitor System Improvement
- 1.3 Create and Apply State Performance Accountability Measures

1.1 Develop, Implement, and Modify WIOA State Plan

The Situation

The SWDB reviews and approves of the Vermont Combined State Plan put forth by the WIOA funded state agencies. While the State Plan is thorough, there are no accountability measures in place.

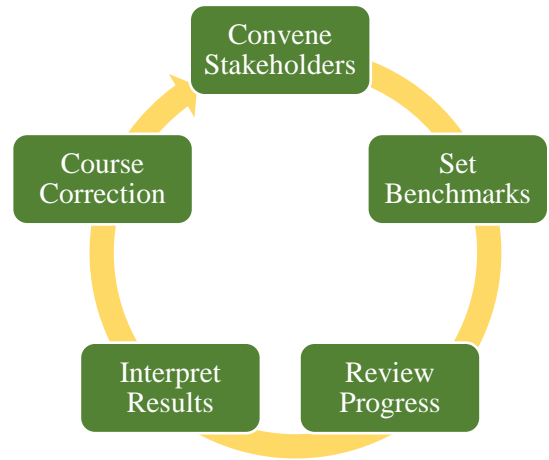
Currently, the SWDB is unable to evaluate the effectiveness of most WIOA programs with regularity. For the SWDB to fulfill its federal and state charge to oversee the implementation of these federal workforce funds, greater transparency of program effectiveness is necessary.

The Solution

As Vermont continues to invest in the workforce system, it is crucial that the efficiency of the federal workforce dollars is tracked. To do so, core partners of the One-Stop System will report metrics outlined in the Vermont Combined State Plan on a quarterly basis. The SWDB will act as a check on these programs, the One-Stop Operator, and general progress towards a more efficient One-Stop System. Each year, the SWDB will review progress, give feedback to agencies, and assist in planning corrective measures, if necessary.

Long Term Action

The SWDB staff, along with applicable agencies, will review, execute, and improve statewide policies and programs outlined in the Vermont Combined State Plan.



Milestones:

- By September 2023, the SWDB staff will review the Vermont Combined State Plan and prepare a list of top line reporting measures as directed by the Governor.
- By January 2024, the SWDB staff will convene relevant agencies to agree upon reporting metrics and will collect baseline data.
- By December 2024, the SWDB will release quarterly updates on the WIOA One-Stop System’s performance.
- By January 2025, the SWDB Policy Committee will review yearly WIOA reporting and provide guidance on corrective measures.
- By April 2025, the SWDB will review a WIOA report put forth by the Policy Committee outlining WIOA progress and next steps.

Lead Partner	One-Stop Operator
Milestones & Measures	The SWDB Policy Committee will review yearly WIOA reporting and provide guidance on corrective measures by January 2025 to increase service utilization by no less than 20%.
Board Role	Quarterly and yearly assessment of WIOA Performance.

1.2 Select One-Stop Operator and Monitor System Improvement

The Situation

The SWDB’s contract with the One-Stop Operator expired in 2020. Because of this, the SWDB is out of federal compliance. Our previous One-Stop Operator was the VDOL. They also served as a program provider within the One-Stop System. The VDOL’s selection was done out of necessity to efficiently stand up the System after the passage of WIOA. For a long time, the shortcomings of Vermont’s One-Stop System have been recognized by all those who participate. This includes lack of efficient usage of physical and virtual space, statewide coordination, and continuous outcome assessments. We have the opportunity to build a stronger One-Stop System that enables program partners to maximize service outcomes.



The Solution

By July 2023, the SWDB will select a new One-Stop Operator. This vendor will serve as a neutral convenor that is required by contract to provide success metrics for program providers and implement consistent coordination for the SWDB to evaluate yearly. These metrics include:

1. timeliness of support process.
2. number of participants served.
3. number of referrals.
4. usage of physical and virtual spaces.
5. program costs and inefficiencies.
6. Q2 and Q4 program outcomes, eventually reviewed every quarter.

Long Term Action

The SWDB staff, along with board members, will review the performance of the One-Stop Operator vendor with potential to renew their contract based on success metrics.

Milestones:

- By July 2023, the SWDB will select a new One-Stop Operator.
- By August 2023, the vendor will begin hosting quarterly program partner meetings.
- By January 2024, the vendor will begin producing reports on program outcomes, coordination of the system, and overall improvement areas.
- By April 2024, the SWDB will evaluate the current One-Stop Operator for renewal or begin the process of selecting a new vendor by two-thirds majority vote.
- Every year after, the SWDB will evaluate the effectiveness of the One-Stop Operator and propose corrective action.

Lead Partner	SWDB Operating Committee
Milestones & Measures	By July 2023, the One-Stop Operator will be selected.
Board Role	Yearly review of One-Stop Operator benchmarks and progress.

1.3 Create and Apply State Performance Accountability Measures

The Situation

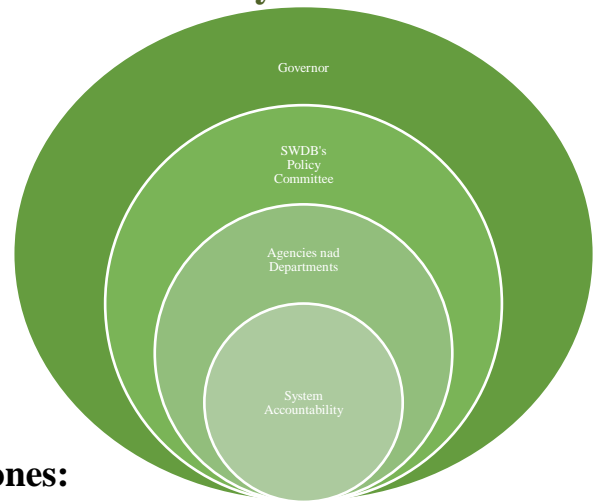
Currently, millions of federal dollars are allocated to Vermont and distributed across agencies and community partners to operate our workforce system. In statute, the SWDB is tasked with the coordination and improvement of these services. While quality work is executed every day, there is no formal system for evaluating program effectiveness, efficiency, or outcomes. Thus, there is little to no accountability in the workforce system. This leaves no room for making corrective changes to provide better service for Vermonters.

The Solution

As we seek to add thousands of net new workers into our workforce system each year and maximize the impact of WIOA, our goal is to serve as many individuals as possible. To create a transparent and accountable system that best serves as many Vermonters as possible, the SWDB will develop accountability measures and evaluate the progress and efficiency of the system yearly. This will be done through an annual report, in collaboration with the Policy Committee, by collecting and analyzing data on a standard set of metrics from the VDOL, AOE, HireAbility, ACCD, and other applicable agencies regarding WIOA, non-WIOA workforce programs, and One-Stop System providers. This will be evaluated by the SWDB, which could result in an entity corrective action plan that specifically outlines both actionable steps and potential consequences by agreed upon deadlines.

Long Term Action

Once Vermont’s workforce system has reached continuous efficiency improvement, the SWDB will submit recommendations to relevant congressional committees to update WIOA inadequacies.



Milestones:

- By August 2023, the SWDB Policy Committee will begin to meet regularly to identify state performance accountability measures and benchmarks for success.
- By December 2023, the SWDB Policy Committee will present on state performance accountability measures for the full SWDB to approve.
- By February 2024, the SWDB Policy Committee and SWDB staff will notify both relevant agencies and departments that receive workforce funding and WIOA partners of the newly approved accountability measures.
- By January 2025, the SWDB Policy Committee will produce a report on baseline metrics to be submitted to the full SWDB for evaluation.
- By March 2025, the SWDB Policy Committee will provide relevant agencies and departments that receive workforce funding and WIOA partners updated accountability measures and recommendations for areas of improvement.
- By January 2026, the SWDB Policy Committee will produce a report on metrics to be submitted to the full SWDB for evaluation.
- By March 2026, the SWDB Policy Committee will provide recommendations for areas of improvement with a corrective action plan and potential consequences with agreed upon deadlines.

Lead Partner	SWDB Policy Committee
Milestones & Measures	By March 2026, the Policy Committee will produce a report on metrics to be evaluated by the full SWDB. The SWDB will provide recommendations for areas of improvement with a corrective action plan and potential consequences with agreed upon deadlines.
Board Role	Annual review of SWDB Policy Committee’s accountability report with corrective action suggestions.

Workforce System Alignment

Improve Vermont's workforce development system by increasing coordination, integration and tracking of support services to meet the needs of all Vermonters throughout their lifespan.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Create and Implement a Warm Handoff System
- 2.2 Foster and Maintain Regional Business Partnerships
- 2.3 Expand Workforce Services to Marginalized Groups

Workforce System Alignment

STRATEGIES

2.1 Create and Implement a Warm Handoff System

The Situation

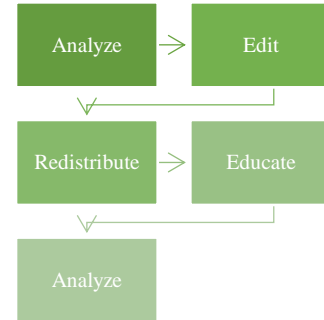
Vermont’s workforce system consists of many stakeholders. This includes state agencies and departments, WIOA funded partner programs, K-12 and higher education entities, non-profit organizations like RDCs, and private community partners. While these entities produce quality support services in their specific issue area, many are siloed. There is currently no single designated person or entity that effectively oversees and coordinates the entire system well, including the SWDB. This disfunction leads to a fractured workforce system where both employers and employees receive disjointed services, are completely unaware of specific supports, or are not using resources efficiently. Additionally, this leaves providers overextended or underutilized. Vermont’s current workforce system is not coordinated enough to utilize the system to the best of its ability.

The Solution

To remediate dysfunction, the SWDB staff, in coordination with the One-Stop Operator, will oversee the One-Stop System. Specifically, the SWDB staff will work with the One-Stop Operator and program partners to assess, develop, and distribute an updated common intake form encompassing all stakeholders, including One-Stop partners and applicable community partners, to ensure a warm handoff system acknowledging all workforce services. Not only will program partners be involved in the development of this updated form, but there will be a designated rollout period to ensure One-Stop program staff understand how to properly utilize the updated form. This will improve system efficiency and quality of services for both employers and employees.

Long Term Action

The SWDB staff, along with the One-Stop Operator, will continuously monitor KPIs regarding the updated common intake form and make improvements when needed so no workforce support entity is excluded, duplicated, or underutilized in Vermont.



Milestones

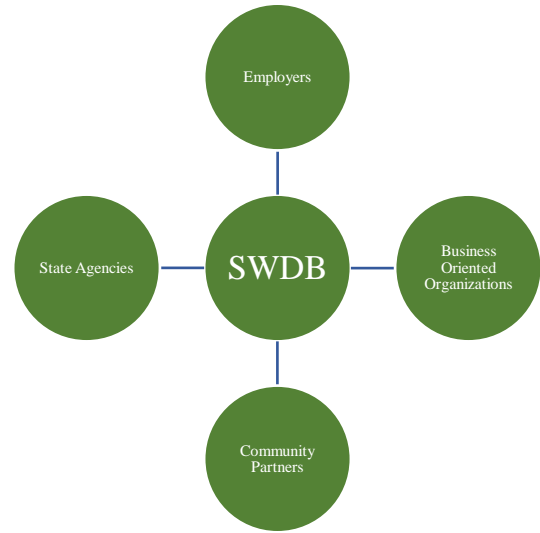
- By July 2023, the SWDB staff will select a new One-Stop Operator.
- By August 2023, the One-Stop Operator will convene partners, stakeholders, and community members to develop a common in-take form among providers.
- By September 2023, the SWDB staff, One-Stop Operator and system partners, stakeholders will review and critique the common intake form submitted to be used within the One-Stop System.
- By October 2023, the SWDB members will provide feedback on the updated form and vote to approve.
- By January 2024, the SWDB staff and One-Stop Operator will have distributed the updated common intake form to all applicable service locations (both physical and virtual) and provide training to staff on form updates.
- By April 2024, the SWDB staff and members will agree upon KPIs to measure performance of system programs after designated periods of time with the updated form (i.e., 6 months, 1 year, etc.).
- By August 2024, the One-Stop Operator will collect metrics regarding the knowledge of service providers on the intake form and share with full SWDB.
- By January 2025, and every year after, the SWDB staff and members will monitor/evaluate KPIs of programs that reflect intake form effectiveness. They will then make quarterly updates to the common intake form, if needed.

Lead Partner	One-Stop Operator
Milestones & Measures	By January 2024, the SWDB staff and One-Stop Operator will have distributed the updated common intake form, with established KPIs to track effectiveness, to all applicable service locations (both physical and virtual) and provide training to staff on form updates.
Board Role	Yearly assessment of common intake form, as needed.

2.2 Foster and Maintain Regional Business Partnerships

The Situation

The SWDB is charged with coordinating the workforce system to meet the needs of both employers and employees. Although SWDB membership consists of 51% business members, the SWDB staff met with an additional 50+ business owners across the state in 2022. While feedback was utilized at the Administration level, the SWDB staff and members lack the ability to receive and apply information. It is necessary to create a system where feedback regarding the needs of employers is collected and processed in a manner which can inform the SWDB’s sector-based committees and SWDB membership decisions.



The Solution

The SWDB staff will continue to meet monthly with employers regionally. These meetings will expand to RDCs and other community partners (i.e., Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, etc.) This feedback could range from specific needs or challenges of business owners to the experience a specific employer has interacting with Vermont’s workforce system in search of services (i.e., state agencies, One-Stop programs, etc.). In tandem to this data collection, a communication system will be created with relative state agencies and One-stop partners to collect employer feedback while not duplicating efforts. The SWDB staff will relay information from employers to board members at quarterly meetings to inform them on potential policy priorities. The SWDB staff will relay any customer service-related information to the One-Stop Operator to identify potential areas of service improvement.

Long Term Action

The SWDB staff, along with applicable state agencies and RDCs will host regional workforce summits for employers to meet directly with government officials and community partners to discuss workforce challenges.

Milestones

- By June 2023, the SWDB staff will release a county visit schedule, open for SWDB member feedback.
- By August 2023, the SWDB staff will establish a formal communication system with state agencies and One-Stop partners via the One-Stop Operator to reduce duplicate efforts regarding employer engagement.
- By Quarter 4 meeting of 2023, the SWDB staff will produce summary reports of county visits for SWDB members and applicable One-Stop partners to review.
- No later than one month after every quarterly meeting following 2023, SWDB staff will produce a summary report with action steps, assigned to relevant committees or One-Stop Operator to promote continuous system improvement.

Lead Partner	The SWDB Staff
Milestones & Measures	By January 2024, board members will review summary county visit employer reports compiled by the SWDB staff and provide actionable feedback.
Board Role	Quarterly review and discussion of employer feedback with suggested action.

2.3 Expand Workforce Services to Marginalized Groups

The Situation

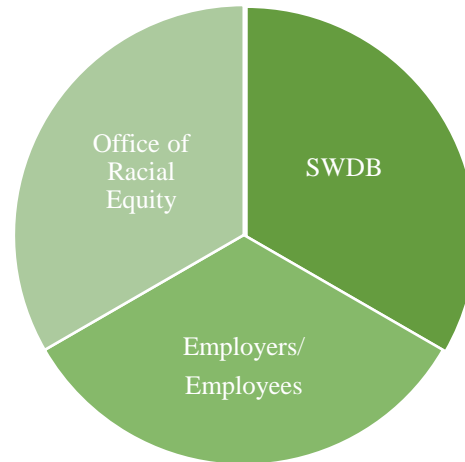
According to the 2020 [Report of the Vermont Racial Equity Task Force](#), compared to other states, Vermont has the second highest median age and the second lowest level of diversity. Looking more granularly, the median age for White Vermonters in 2015 was 45 years, while the median age for Indigenous Vermonters was 47 years and the median age of remaining Vermonters of color was in the 20s. Given our aging demographics, Vermont has both an older and less diverse workforce population that is not sustainable. As we look to grow Vermont’s workforce, creating systems that support various marginalized populations will be critical to our success.

The Solution

To strengthen our workforce, the SWDB staff and members must find meaningful ways to engage with our most marginalized populations. An increase in engagement, intentional promotion of opportunities for work, and access to wrap around supports will promote a sense of belonging and an interest to join and/or remain in Vermont’s workforce. This meaningful engagement can include indigenous peoples, people of color, justice involved individuals, disabled individuals, mature workers, women, LGBTQIA+, young men, or any other specific populations of the current moment. Engagement will include leveraging community partnerships to host events and distributing relevant information and resources to affinity groups.

Long Term Action

The SWDB staff, in coordination with the Office of Racial Equity, will maintain an update-to-date calendar of events and support services for marginalized groups, including at least four events hosted by the two entities per year.



Milestones:

- By December 2023, the Office of Racial Equity, the ACCD BIPOC business support vendor, and other contracted entities in the equity space across the state will present at a quarterly SWDB meeting to discuss top priorities related to workforce and equity.
- By March 2024, SWDB members will identify specific marginalized populations that need additional support, outreach, and program participation based on the data. These decisions will be informed by data provided VDOL and through board discussion.
- By August 2024, the SWDB staff and the Office of Racial Equity will produce technical materials on ways to support marginalized individuals in the workplace.
- By December 2024, the SWDB staff and the Office of Racial Equity will present to ACCD, SWDB business members, the Vermont Chamber, etc. on the developed technical materials listed above.
- By December 2024, the SWDB staff will host at least four events per year to engage with marginalized populations and provide workforce supports (i.e., Labor on Location).
- After each of the four events hosted per year, the SWDB staff and members will evaluate the effectiveness of each event and implement improvements.

Lead Partner	SWDB – Full Board
Milestones & Measures	By December 2024, the SWDB staff will host at least four events related to promoting workforce services to marginalized groups.
Board Role	Event development, promotion, and support.

Workforce Supports

Improve awareness and utilization of current workforce resources while also addressing external workforce barriers like affordability of housing, childcare, internet access, and more which additionally must be considered to better enhance workforce growth.

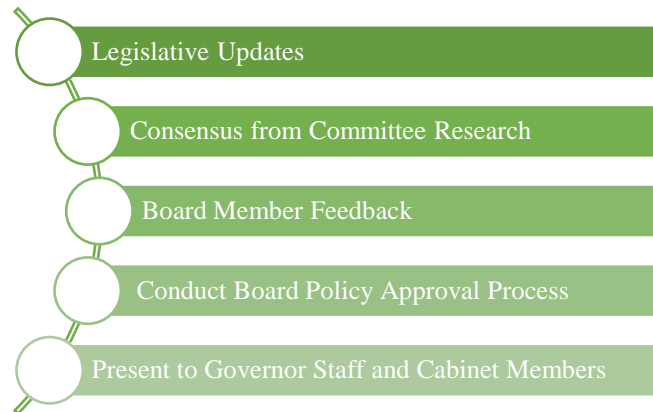
Strategies:

- 3.1 Solicit and Apply Workforce Board Policy Input
- 3.2 Implement Language Accessibility Plan for Workforce Related Materials

3.1 Solicit and Apply Workforce Board Policy Input

The Situation

The SWDB is charged with advising the Governor and Commissioner of Labor on the development and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive workforce education and training system. The SWDB’s membership is composed of employers, community partners and agency officials. Although the group is an excellent source of workforce related information due to the various perspectives for input, there is no formal process to utilize this information to suggest reform.



The Solution

The SWDB staff will implement a progressive plan to engrain board member feedback into the policy development process. This will include continuous updates from the SWDB staff on legislative ongoingings, reviewal of sector-based committee research and input, SWDB member discussion and consensus, conversations with Governor office staff and cabinet members, and ultimately the reviewal and approval of policy recommendations.

Long Term Action

The SWDB’s members will review workforce related policy annually to determine if any updates are needed. Additionally, based on yearly budget recommendations by the Governor, the SWDB will come to a collective agreement on the Administration’s policy initiatives that they will champion throughout each legislative session.

Milestones

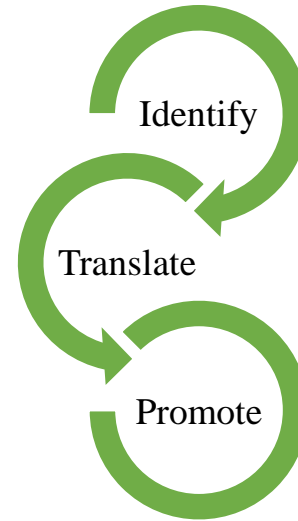
- By January 2023, the SWDB staff will provide legislative updates bi-weekly via email and host office hours through the session.
- By August 2023, the SWDB will begin annual policy focused meetings, held by the SWDB Policy Committee. The Committee will determine priorities through:
 - needs assessment.
 - current programing.
 - gaps in service delivery.
 - Governor’s strategic priorities.
- By September 2023, the SWDB Policy Committee will have identified workforce related priority areas to present to the Governor’s office.
- By February 2024, the SWDB will vote on which policy areas from the Governor’s budget will be top priorities for members to champion.
- By June of 2024, the SWDB staff and SWDB Operating Committee will establish and approve the process for official SWDB policy proposals within bylaws.
- By the Governor’s FY2026 budgeting deadline, the SWDB, via the SWDB Policy Committee, will propose policy recommendations related to workforce to the Governor’s office staff and cabinet members for consideration.

Lead Partner	SWDB Policy Committee
Milestones & Measures	By FY2026 budgeting deadline, the Policy Committee will recommend workforce policy to the Governor’s office that clearly outlines each policies contribution to net new workers per year.
Board Role	Annual review of information and provide feedback on policy recommendations.

3.2 Implement Language Accessibility Plan for Workforce Related Materials

The Situation

In Governor Scott’s FY2024 Budget Address, he discussed his commitment of over \$4 million to help refugees, immigrants and New Americans settle into Vermont communities. As a predominantly White, English-speaking state, our state government’s support services are tailored for English speakers. This leaves already marginalized populations feeling unwelcome, thus making it unlikely that they will be able to engage in Vermont’s workforce but more importantly, have a positive experience settling into and remaining in their new Vermont communities.



The Solution

To make relocation easier and help refugees, immigrants, and New Americans feel more welcome in Vermont communities, the SWDB, the Office of Racial Equity, and a contracted vendor will work to translate key workforce support services documents. Not only is this the right thing to do, but also necessary to fulfill federal requirements for language access. This action will include anything from a document explaining SNAP benefits to a resource provided at one of our One-Stop Operator locations regarding employment. Translating these documents, therefore helping to make workforce development resources more readily available, will be one more critical step towards welcoming newcomers and fostering a more inclusive environment in Vermont.

Long Term Action

Based on yearly recommendations from the Office of Racial Equity regarding Vermont’s most common languages, the SWDB will monitor and maintain the most useful workforce development related documents and ensure they are accessible in all common languages.

Milestones

- (Tentative) By the end of the 2023 legislative session, the Office of Racial Equity will receive \$2.3M in funding to translate key documents.
- By January 2024, the SWDB will develop employer and employee toolkits to be updated quarterly and eventually translated. Toolkits will be developed by working groups to be selected by September 2023.
- Within a year upon passage, the Office of Racial Equity will select a vendor to execute these translation services.
- By no later than one month upon the signing of the vendor contract, the SWDB will identify which documents are considered most important to translate and by when.
- Once the identified documents are translated, the SWDB will work to distribute and promote the documents.
- Every year after, the SWDB will meet yearly to edit or update the key translated documents.

Lead Partner(s)	SWDB staff and Office of Racial Equity
Milestones & Measures	The SWDB will produce translated materials to partners and program providers.
Board Role	Annual review of agreed upon documents to be translated and/or updated.

Workforce Education and Training

Identify Vermont's high-demand careers and develop career pathways to be seamlessly executed by training and education providers while engaging Vermonters at any stage of their career path, leading to greater financial independence and personal fulfillment.

Strategies:

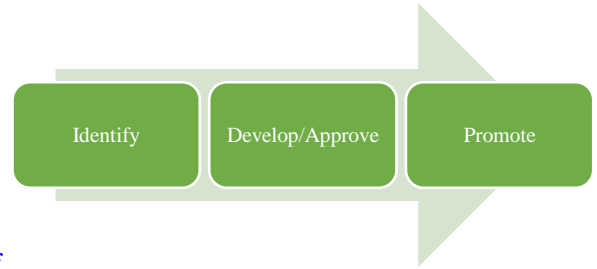
- 4.1 Map Career Pathways (Career Pathways Committee)
- 4.2 Host Education and Training Provider Round Tables
- 4.3 Define Eligibility and Approve Credentials of Value (Training and Credentialing Committee)

Workforce Education and Training

STRATEGIES

4.1 Map Career Pathways

(Career Pathways Committee - CPC)



The Situation

Vermont schools offer students access to a quality education and ample training opportunities. However, per year, [roughly 50% of our students don't continue to post-secondary education](#). According to *Advance Vermont*, all of Vermont's high growth, high wage jobs require some form of post-secondary education and training. Additionally, there is a portion of our population, age 16 and older, that is disengaged from the workforce or seeks to engage, change, or advance along their career and needs guidance related to essential services and opportunities. Providing clear, transparent, and accessible career pathways for Vermonters is essential in growing our workforce and giving individuals opportunity for career growth. Due to the wide variety of funding sources, program providers, and entities involved in training and developing our workforce, the coordination of these efforts has proven difficult. Defined by [Act 189 of 2018](#), career pathways are a “combination of rigorous and high-quality educational, training, and other experiences and services, beginning not later than seventh grade” which help align program offerings with skills needed in key Vermont industries as defined in the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#). While Vermont's career pathways system structure is outlined, it needs to be further developed.

The Solution

According to [10 V.S.A. § 541a](#), the SWDB's CPC is charged with the reviewal and approval process of 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. Additionally, the CPC must publicize state-endorsed career pathways in coordination with the VDOL, AOE, and other applicable entities. In updating our approval process and developing an effective Career Pathways marketing campaign, more individuals, both young and mature, can access the education and training needed to enter and remain in Vermont's workforce.

Long Term Action

The CPC will work in coordination with AOE and the Training and Credentialing Committee, as needed, to approve of relevant career pathways which best align with state goals. The Committee will actively promote and market approved career pathways, so they are accessible to all individuals interested in working in Vermont no later than 7th grade.

Milestones

- By August 2023, the CPC will revisit and review the process by which the AOE has previously developed existing career pathways. This will include working sessions to modify the updated approval process.
- By December 2023, the full SWDB will approve of the updated career pathways approval process.
- By January 2024, the CPC will begin to meet on a quarterly basis to review in-demand careers presented by the McClure Foundation, the AOE and the VDOL to develop career pathways.
- By June 2024, the CPC will develop a strategic marketing campaign to best promote relevant career pathways.
- By September 2024, the CPC will work with the full SWDB, relevant agencies and stakeholders to implement the marketing campaign.
- By September 2025, the CPC will collect and review metrics from the AOE and relevant stakeholders regarding program enrollment within applicable pathways.
- By January 2026, the CPC will introduce and implement changes to the marketing campaign, as needed.

Lead Partner	Career Pathways Committee
Milestones & Measures	By January 2024, the CPC will begin its annual career pathways approval process.
Committee Role	The CPC will identify and develop career pathways to then be approved by the full SWDB.

4.2 Host Education and Training Provider Round Tables

The Situation

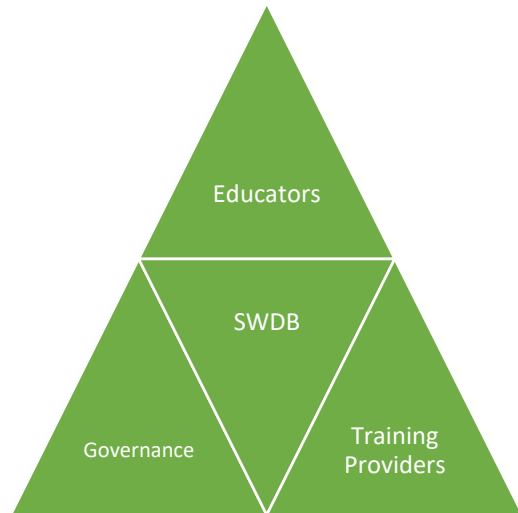
Education and training are crucial to developing the workforce of today and the future. Due to the many different funding sources and governance structures of each piece of the education and training continuum, it is difficult to coordinate and track the development and growth of an individual from cradle-to-career and beyond. There are many training programs, education providers, events, and work-based learning opportunities in Vermont, but they often exist in a vacuum, not consistently in coordination with the other partners in the workforce system.

The Solution

Given the many partners in the workforce system and their nexus to workforce development, the SWDB will serve as a neutral convening entity for providers through meetings. At these convenings educators, coordinators, and governance staff will discuss system improvement coordination, data sharing and tracking, and strategies to remove system silos. This will improve the handoff system between providers within the system and enable Vermont students and workers to utilize and grow along career pathways more effectively.

Long Term Action

Like our One-Stop System, the SWDB will work towards developing a streamlined, warm handoff system among educators, training providers, K-12, higher education, and other partners where longitudinal data is used to evaluate and improve student outcomes along the cradle-to-career continuum.



Milestones

- By January 2024, the SWDB staff in consultation with the AOE, Vermont State Colleges, and SWDB board members will determine individuals and organizations to be invited to convenings.
- By December 2024, the SWDB will host no less than two meetings per year of education, training, and workforce support providers.
- At least twice per year, the SWDB staff will provide an update to the full SWDB on the discussion and events at the convenings and solicit feedback for further consideration. This includes potential suggestions or corrective action to applicable committees (i.e. youth, career pathways, training and credentialing, etc.)
- By March 2025, the SWDB will begin the exploration and review of a longitudinal tracking system.
- By December 2025, the SWDB will determine appropriate recommendations to the AOE on the development of a coordinated data tracking and warm handoff referral system.

Lead Partner	SWDB Staff
Milestones & Measures	By December 2024, the SWDB will host no less than two convenings of education, training, and workforce support providers.
Board Role	Review and discussion of quarterly meetings among partners.

4.3 Define Eligibility and Approve Credentials of Value

(Training and Credentialing Committee - TCC)



The Situation

In today’s workforce, there are many routes to a high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career. Pathways include a four-year degree, two-year degree, stackable credentials, on the job training, apprenticeships, and more. No matter which path works best for a particular individual, that person can receive training or obtain a credential of value at any point along their career pathway to advance in their career. With this in mind, per [Act 80 of 2019](#), the State of Vermont set a goal that “not less than 70 percent of working-age Vermonters will hold a credential of value, as defined by the State Workforce Development Board, by the year 2025.”

Understanding the value in both eligible training providers and credentials, along with the State’s goal, what is seen as an “eligible training provider” or “credential of value” must be continuously updated. This will ensure Vermont’s workforce can learn and improve upon the in-demand skills they need to succeed. While the SWDB created the TCC, it has not been active since 2019. Since then, this group has not made recommendations on credentials of value or approved any new eligible training providers.

The Solution

In alignment with the Training and Credentialing Working Group recommendations made in 2019, the TCC will officially define “credential of value.” Additionally, the group will “oversee and build on the WIOA Eligible Training Provider eligibility and approval process and create tools and systems to assist in the recognition, use, and visibility of credentials of value to support employers, workers, education and training providers, and workforce development partners.”

Long Term Action

The TCC will create a transparent and efficient approval process of eligible training providers and credentials of value to maintain a flexible system that responds to demands in Vermont’s workforce and larger economy.

Milestones

- By June 2023, the TCC will set a meeting schedule of no less than quarterly.
- By August 2023, the TCC will review findings of the former Training and Credentialing Working Group and WIOA committee requirements, including the definition of a “credential of value” and discuss potential changes. They will also hear from relevant agencies and stakeholders to better understand the current process.
- By December 2023, the TCC will discuss [Recommendation 6](#) of the May 2019 report and re-establish the evaluation process in collaboration with the VDOL and AOE. This includes any updates to the eligible training provider approval process since 2019.
- By March 2024, the TCC will re-open applications for credentials of value.
- By June 2024, the TCC will continuously review and approve of eligible training providers and credentials of value.
- By December 2024 and every year thereafter, the TCC will publish a list of approved credentials and promote the credentials in accordance with [Recommendation 5](#) from the May 2019 report.
- By January 2025, the TCC will work with the VDOL, other relevant agencies and stakeholders to amplify eligible training providers and credentials of value to the public.
- By January 2025, the TCC will receive and review continuous updates on the percentage of Vermonters who hold a credential of value.

Lead Partner	Training and Credentialing Committee
Milestones & Measures	By June 2024, the TCC will officially begin reviewing eligible training providers and credentials of value.
Committee Role	The TCC will serve as a collaborator with the VDOL, AOE and stakeholders in the approval and promotion process.

Size and Quality of Workforce

Work to better identify, strengthen, and coordinate Vermont's relocation and recruitment system with the guiding objective of net-new workers to grow Vermont's workforce.

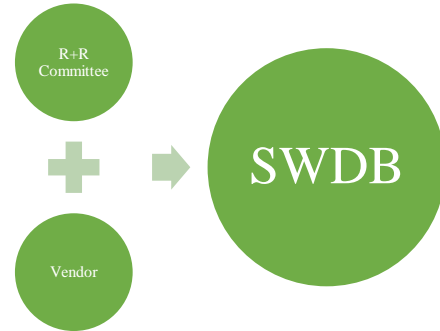
Strategies:

- 5.1 Facilitate Collaboration and Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies
- 5.2 Increase Marginalized Populations' Participation in the Workforce
- 5.3 Develop Statewide New American Support Network (Pending Legislative Approval)
- 5.4 Increase Labor Force Participation Rate

Size and Quality of Workforce

STRATEGIES

5.1 Facilitate Collaboration and Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies



The Situation

Given Vermont’s aging population and shrinking labor force at the county level, the state is at a critical point where demographic trends must be reversed, and the labor force needs to grow. Fortunately, there are many entities within Vermont that provide resources to help with recruitment and retention. This includes state agencies and departments, RDCs, and more. While great work is occurring individually, there is little to no oversight of the entire relocation and recruitment “system.”

The Solution

To utilize resources more efficiently and identify where they are lacking, the SWDB must create a statewide relocation and recruitment system. This will include coordination among state agencies like the ACCD, RDCs, stakeholders, and employers. At least twice per year, the SWDB’s Relocation and Recruitment Committee will convene individuals and entities within Vermont’s relocation and recruitment realm to better understand effective and ineffective strategies to relocating individuals and helping them be successful while in Vermont. This includes identifying holes in the system to ensure that any individual looking to relocate receives quality support services.

Long Term Action

The Relocation and Recruitment Committee, with stakeholder input, will identify best practices and recommend changes to the relocation and recruitment system. The SWDB staff, with the help of the Relocation and Recruitment Committee, will create a visual representation of Vermont’s relocation and recruitment system for employers, employees, and other relevant stakeholders to reference.

Milestones

- By December 2023, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will provide a report on the following items:
 - progress with the New American Relocation Support Program.
 - progress on the coordination of worker relocation efforts and services.
 - a review of work done in the last 5-10 years to establish what has worked and what has not.
 - established benchmarks for success based on that data.
- By March 2024, SWDB members will review recommendations for improvements from the Relocation and Recruitment Committee and vote on a final list of corrective actions.
- By August 2025, SWDB members will vote to approve an MOU between relevant workforce partners, to stand up a relocation and recruitment system, as negotiated by the Relocation and Recruitment Committee.
- By December 2025, and every year thereafter, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will report to SWDB members on the following metrics:
 - net new workers relocated through Vermont programs, including an analysis of program participant demographic factors.
 - workforce to unemployment rate ratio.
 - ROI (cost per net new worker) of relocation programs.
- By March 2025, SWDB members will identify which areas the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will prioritize for the current year.

Lead Partner	Relocation and Recruitment Committee
Milestones & Measures	By December 2025, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will meet twice with community partners to identify system holes to attract more than 5,000 new workers per year by 2040.
Board Role	Annual review of progress in net new worker increases.

Size and Quality of Workforce

STRATEGIES

5.2 Increase Marginalized Populations' Participation in the Workforce

The Situation

In 2023, the Department of Human Resources submitted a [report](#) examining the profile of Executive Branch employees. Within the examined pool, 55.1% of applicants were female and 44.9% were male. Of those who applied, 54% of hires were female and 46% were male. Within the same pool of applicants, 83% were White while 16.3% UREG. Of those who applied, 89.4% of hires were White while only 10.6% were UREG. As the largest employer in the state, diversifying our workforce begins with us and can extend into the community. There is no formal process in place to promote, support, and increase marginalized populations in our state workforce or boards and commissions. Creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce will not only improve the cultural fabric of our state, but also bring more and different voices to the table to enhance productivity and organizational success. We must coordinate an approach that can help make Vermont a more welcoming and inclusive place.

The Solution

The State, employers, and the SWDB must focus on hiring promoting, and appointing marginalized populations to boards and commissions. To do this, and in alignment with the Racial Equity Task Force's 2021 report, we must increase awareness of opportunities, provide support services to individuals looking to participate in the workforce, and develop best practices to increase retention of those who are already employed.

Long Term Action

The SWDB will create a mentorship program for individuals in state government who represent marginalized communities. The SWDB will also work with the Department of Human Resources to ensure all new job postings are competency based instead of credential based, unless absolutely necessary for satisfactory job performance. Additionally, the SWDB will extend strategies for workforce diversification to our community partners and develop a coordinated recruitment strategy to bring more marginalized individuals into the state and support their retention in the workplace and communities.

Milestones

Awareness:

- By August 2024, the SWDB staff will attend and invite all board members, program partners, and HR managers to attend the “radar” meetings put forth by the Office of Racial Equity and extend similar meetings to other organizations such as, the LGBTQIA+ Alliance, Vermont Commission on Women, etc. that support marginalized populations.
- By January 2024, the SWDB staff, in coordination with the Office of Racial Equity, will develop a living list of contacts at Vermont affinity organizations for marginalized communities.
- By March 2024, and no less than quarterly thereafter, the SWDB staff will provide direct outreach to these organizations that provide opportunities for jobs, boards and commissions openings, and resources for individuals looking to obtain human services support.
- The SWDB staff and/or program providers will attend and provide labor on location services in coordination with varying regional affinity organizations no less than three times per year.

Support and Retention:

- By March 2024, the SWDB staff will host, in coordination with the Office of Racial Equity, DEI trainings for HR managers and supervisors, no less than twice per year.
- By December 2024, the SWDB staff will produce a guide that outlines the reporting processes, tools, and resources employees have when facing discrimination, harassment, or other workplace issues to be issued to all new hires at the state level.

Best Practices/Continuous Improvement:

- By December 2025, and every year thereafter, the SWDB will host a joint meeting with the Office of Racial Equity to discuss shared goals and vision for Vermont and evaluate the work done by the SWDB for the year.
- Each year, as the SWDB considers policy recommendations to the Governor's Office, the group is required to complete an Impact Assessment analysis, as established by the Office of Racial Equity for each policy proposed.



Lead Partner(s)	SWDB staff and Office of Racial Equity
Milestones & Measures	By December 2025, the SWDB and Racial Equity Task Force host a joint convening.
Board Role	Support the Office of Racial Equity in ongoing efforts to increase marginalized population participation.

Size and Quality of Workforce

5.3 Develop Statewide New American Support Network (Pending Legislative Approval)

The Situation

As our labor force has been in decline for decades, it’s never been more critical to bring new workers into Vermont. This fact, in combination with our goal to welcome all newcomers, puts us in a unique opportunity to serve refugees, asylum seekers, and New Americans as they make the United States their home. However, navigating the state and federal systems is confusing, time consuming, and often a barrier for these individuals to successfully resettle. Acknowledging these challenges, the SWDB has requested \$200,000.00 in funding to develop the New American Support Network.

The Solution

To attract and support New Americans in Vermont, the SWDB shall coordinate via the Relocation and Recruitment Committee efforts to recruit, employ, and provide wrap around services to New Americans. Not only will this enable them to fully participate in Vermont’s economy, but it will also increase the chance of their successful relocation into new communities.

Activities that may be coordinated or conducted under this section include:

- expanding the enrollment of New Americans in registered apprenticeship and other training programs leading to a credential of value.
- conducting recruitment and job placement activities specific to New Americans.
- supporting the culmination and publication of employer-focused toolkits and resources currently under development by interested stakeholders.
- building a network of career mentors to assist New Americans in advancing in their career paths.
- developing opportunities to expand the professional networks of New Americans.
- other activities that support entry, retention, and advancement of New Americans in Vermont’s workforce.

Long Term Action

The Relocation and Recruitment Committee will continuously oversee, monitor, and improve Vermont’s New American Support Network.



Milestones

- The SWDB staff will post the RFP within one month of relevant legislation passage.
- By September 2023, the vendor will be selected and contracted, through a vote of the Relocation and Recruitment Committee and approved by the Operating Committee.
- By December 2023, the vendor and SWDB staff will provide quarterly updates on ongoing efforts and progress on the agreed upon goals set forth in the RFP to the Relocation and Recruitment Committee.
- By September 2024, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will conduct a one-year review of the progress by the vendor and recommend corrective action if necessary. They will continue with quarterly updates as well.
- By September 2025, the vendor will provide a final report on the New American Support Network created throughout Vermont’s workforce system, including recommendations for future work, legislation, funding, and oversight measures for the next year, five years, and ten years.
- By November 2025, the SWDB will present findings to the Governor’s Office and provide recommendations on moving forward.

Lead Partner(s)	Office of Refugee Resettlement, Relocation and Recruitment Committee
Milestones & Measures	By November 2025, the SWDB will launch the New American Relocation Network to attract and retain refugees and immigrants who come to Vermont.
Board Role	Annual review of workforce data; provide feedback on effective strategies to increase labor force participation.

5.4 Increase Labor Force Participation Rate

The Situation

While we need to recruit new workers from outside of Vermont, a critical piece of our workforce strategy is bringing existing Vermonters back into the labor market. The data highlights a few key disengaged populations including women aged 25-34, men aged 16-24, mature workers and justice involved workers. In addition, census data shows racial disparities in unemployment. While White Vermonters have an unemployment rate of 2.4%, Black and Hispanic Vermonters have unemployment rates of 3.8% and 3.7%, respectively. Additionally, since 2017, males aged 16-24 have declined in labor force participation. Formerly, 69% were engaged in the workforce, and now only 55.4% are.

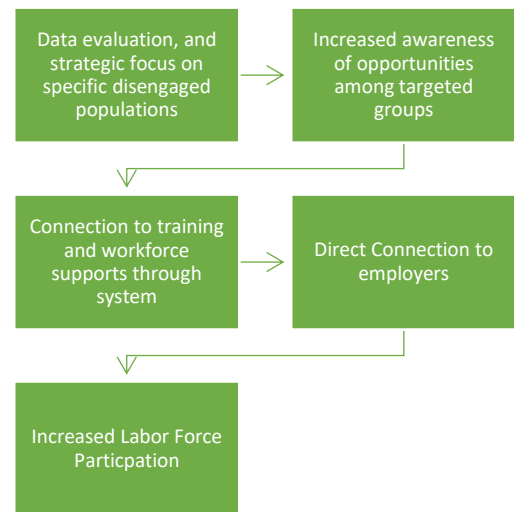
These demographic groups must be acknowledged and given tailored support to assist them in their re-engagement in Vermont’s workforce.

The Solution

Disengaged and under-engaged populations need specific strategies to ensure long-term systemic success. To address this, the SWDB will embark on data collection, needs assessment, and providing recommendations and technical assistance to agency partners to ensure this work. In addition, the SWDB will host events, workshops, and targeted listening sessions in order to better support the needs of specific communities. In doing so, the SWDB will track progress on these efforts by evaluating all programs by their impact on Labor Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate, and number of new participants served. Each year, the SWDB will assess the data to ensure priority groups are established based on need.

Long Term Action

The SWDB members will proactively assess progress on re-engagement of disengaged populations and adjust efforts to uplift Labor Force Participation Rate.



Milestones

- Each August, SWDB members will review a report prepared by the Policy Committee, in consultation with the Bureau of Labor Market Information, in the format of the report in the appendix (see p.38).
- By August 2023, the Policy Committee, will provide strategies to address labor force shortages or high unemployment rates among at least the following populations:
 - Mature Workers
 - Justice Involved
 - UREG Vermonters
 - Men (16-24)
 - Women (24-40)
 - Disabled Individuals
- Every year thereafter, the Policy Committee will provide strategies to assist in the Labor Force Participation of no less than the top five of our most disengaged populations.

Lead Partner	Policy Committee
Milestones & Measures	By August 2023, the Policy Committee will provide strategies to add at least 2,000 disengaged workers back into our workforce per year.
Board Role	Annually review information and provide feedback on legislative package.

Committees

- Agriculture Committee
- Career Pathways Committee (*Workforce Education & Training Section, p.22*)
- Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group
- Hospitality and Retail Committee
- Manufacturing Committee
- Relocation and Recruitment Committee
- Training and Credentialing Committee (*Workforce Education & Training Section, p.24*)
- Youth Committee

SWDB Committees

Agriculture Committee

The Situation

Agriculture, which the Committee recognizes as the cultivation of Vermont land and livestock, is embedded in Vermont’s history and continues to be a critical piece of our economic vitality. The state contributes roughly \$11.3 billion in agricultural related output per year. This includes products like vegetables, maple syrup, poultry, dairy, timber, and more. As of 2022, Vermont has roughly 6,800 farms, and we estimate a vast majority are experiencing a workforce crisis. Additionally, Vermont continues to lose its total cropland, increasing the likelihood of food insecurity for residents. Outside of Vermont employers working directly in the sector, the agriculture industry is supported through entities like UVM Extension (4-H), the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, food co-ops, and other stakeholders. All groups involved acknowledge that while Vermont has the demand and infrastructure to support a growing agriculture sector, we do not have the labor force to advance as a state and fill key roles. Inability to fill key staffing roles, could limit growth opportunities and exerts pressure on existing staff at these businesses. We must provide resources to build a sustainable pipeline to bolster Vermont’s agriculture sector and enable the industry to flourish for generations to come.

The Solution

To relieve the sector’s workforce shortage, the Agriculture Committee seeks to provide solutions to better engage with potential sector employees already located in Vermont. The Committee also seeks to evaluate common barriers to employment. In addition to looking at the current workforce population, the Agriculture Committee must look at Vermont youth and current programming offerings (e.i., UVM 4-H, work-based learning, etc.) to better engage individuals in the agriculture sector at a young age. These combined efforts will ensure that Vermont’s agriculture sector not only has a current vibrant workforce but is built out sustainably.

Long Term Action

The Agriculture Committee will establish and strengthen the sector’s pipeline to better engage with Vermont’s workforce while providing ongoing resources to sector employers.



Milestones

- By December 2023, the Agriculture Committee will develop an inventory of Vermont employers looking to engage with agriculture focused students.
- By January 2024, the Agriculture Committee will develop an employer toolkit, focused on hiring foreign labor.
- By June 2024, the Agriculture Committee will develop an outreach plan to connect Vermont agriculture employers with potential employees (students).
- By September 2024, the Agriculture Committee will execute the outreach plan, connecting Vermont employers with students.
- By December 2024, the Agriculture Committee will develop an informational sheet on how to obtain a CDL and promote the document.
- Starting in January 2025, the Agriculture Committee will host no less than three events for elementary, middle, high school, or college aged students with the purpose of engaging with the agriculture community.
- By September 2025 and every year after, the Agriculture Committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the employer/employee outreach plan and changes will be made as needed.

Lead Partner(s)	Agency of Agriculture, UVM Extension (4-H), Farm Viability, Farm to Plate, Colleges/Universities, Forest Parks & Recreation
Milestones & Measures	By January 2025, the Agriculture Committee hosts multiple events per year to engage students with sector employers.
Committee Role	Sustainably engage with sector’s workforce and develop employer resources.

SWDB Committees

Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group

The Situation

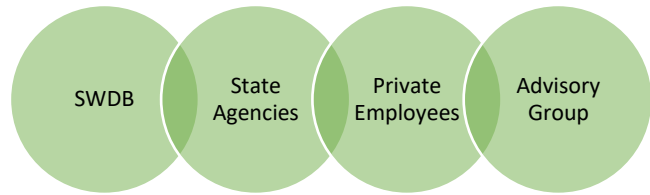
Vermont has faced staffing challenges since before the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes professional needs in many areas of health care, including but not limited to: primary care, long-term care, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and dental workforce. As a result, Vermont institutions are facing greater costs in hiring traveling staff while Vermonters are experiencing longer wait times to receive care. In January of 2020, the Rural Health Services Task Force established by Act 26 of 2019 submitted a report on ways to improve Vermont’s health care system. In 2021, a new strategic plan based off the previous report, was submitted by the Director of Health Care Reform within the Agency of Human Services in consultation with the Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group.

The Solution

The 2021 strategic plan highlights strategies to increase the number of health care workers in Vermont while addressing barriers to entry into the health care workforce. Per the updated strategic plan, the “Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group should serve as an official sub-committee to the State Workforce Development Board. Integrating the Advisory Group in this manner will ensure that the strategic plan implementation is aligned with broader workforce development initiatives.” The SWDB began collaborating with the Advisory Group in March of 2022. The group meets regularly.

Long Term Action

The Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory group will continuously monitor health care related workforce efforts, suggest improvement strategies, and provide legislative recommendations for continued progress towards meeting Vermont’s health care workforce needs.



View the Strategic Plan

Click [here](#) to access the Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan.

Milestones

- By March of 2022, State Workforce Development Board will integrate with the Strategic Plan Advisory Group.
- Annually, the Advisory Group will present to the SWDB’s Policy Committee to assist in identifying areas of priority for policy makers.

Strategic Plan Areas of Focus

- Coordination of Health Care Workforce Development Activities in the State of Vermont
- Data and Monitoring
- Financial Incentives for Health Care Workers Living and Working as Permanent Employees in Vermont
- Education and Training
- Regulation
- Practice
- Recruitment and Retention
- Federal Policy

Lead Partner	Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan Advisory Group
Milestones & Measures	Yearly report out by Advisory Group to SWDB’s Policy Committee.
Board Role	SWDB staff provides administrative support to Advisory Group and integrates efforts into SWDB’s output.

SWDB Committees

Hospitality and Retail Committee

The Situation

The hospitality and retail industries have made up over 12% of Vermont’s GDP. Generating billions in revenue to Vermont, the businesses in these two sectors are central to the economic prosperity of our state now and for generations to come.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the exacerbated workforce shortage in these critical sectors have been felt by businesses and consumers alike. For sustainable economic growth in our state, the stabilization and growth of these sectors’ workforces are critical. Currently, there is no mechanism that brings partners within the hospitality and retail industries together to address the crisis with a unified front.

The Solution

There is currently a disconnect between the labor pools and employers within the hospitality and retail sectors. The two major labor pools feeding into these industries are visa holders and younger individuals either in high school or pursuing a career in hospitality. Being a business led board, the SWDB can serve as a convener to bring stakeholders from hospitality and retail businesses together to find solutions to our most pressing workforce problems. The key components that can help strengthen and grow this specific workforce are clear, accessible, and transparent understanding of hiring foreign labor, while bolstering our domestic workforce through the creation of a strategic marketing campaign to connect Vermont employers with hospitality training entities while engaging younger Vermonters back into the workforce.

Long Term Action

The Hospitality and Retail Committee will develop specific net-new worker goals for their industry and recommend legislative action to the full SWDB to consider to meet said goals.



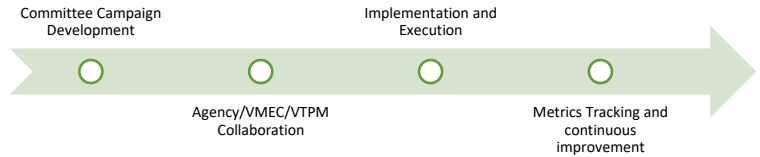
Milestones

- By July of 2023, the SWDB staff will select committee members and host the first meeting of the Hospitality and Retail Committee.
- By January 2024, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will define the three core principles of marketing plan targeted toward individuals in hospitality training and younger Vermonters looking for work.
- By March 2024, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will define a list of no more than five success metrics to track and determine the institutions and demographics to be targeted in the marketing campaign.
- By September 2024, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will meet with the ACCD to develop promotional materials, messaging, and a “sales funnel” for the campaign.
- By December 2024, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will identify top stakeholders for a distribution list and create distribution strategies.
- By January 2025, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will launch the promotional campaign.
- By July 2025, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will review visa provisions from the New American Support Network study findings.
By August 2025, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will disseminate a key employer toolkit created by the New American Support Network contractor to businesses, partners, and industry organizations.

Lead Partner(s)	Hospitality and Retail Committee, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, RDCs
Milestones & Measures	By January 2025, the Hospitality and Retail Committee will implement sector promotional campaign.
Committee Role	Development of promotional campaign and promote resources.

SWDB Committees

Manufacturing Committee



The Situation

Vermont has a long, proud history of makers, craftspeople, and innovators. Today, manufacturing takes place across all corners of the state, and in products and industries as diverse as food, wood, metal, stone, semiconductors, non-metal precision machining, chemical and bioscience, engineering services, beverages, and more. While technological changes and offshoring have impacted our state exports in recent years, manufacturing is seeing a resurgence. The sector currently makes up 9.5% of all Vermont jobs, representing billions of dollars to our state GDP. Every \$1 in manufactured goods generates an estimated \$2.79 worth in additional economic activity (\$3.60 if including the supply chain). Vermont is not unique in its immediate and long term need to fill key manufacturing jobs. Forecasts indicate the growth of the sector is outpacing our available labor force. To support businesses and communities as they grow, it’s crucial we:

- fill jobs.
- increase the capability and adaptability of our workforce.
- build a more diverse and sustainable pipeline of workers from all career stages and backgrounds.
- work with the CPC to assess future demand for manufacturing jobs based on employer projected innovations.

The Solution

To address the manufacturing workforce shortage, the SWDB’s Manufacturing Committee must assist in the work of the VMEC and VTPM to develop effective and accessible flow of competency to Vermont’s jobs and careers in manufacturing. In addition to these efforts, the Manufacturing Committee must look forward and re-brand manufacturing for future generations. This will occur through a strategic marketing campaign which promotes trades’ work to younger and disengaged generations as an exciting and high value career opportunity for individuals from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and experiences. The Manufacturing Committee will evaluate success based on the number of individuals who transition from awareness of the available opportunities to employment at Vermont manufacturing businesses.

Long Term Action

The Manufacturing Committee will establish and continuously improve the manufacturing worker pipeline that begins in elementary school and extends throughout an individual’s lifetime.

Milestones

- The Manufacturing Committee will support the VTPM employer-led regional workgroups via advising, administrative support, and promotion of work (and limited financial support) as the pipeline management process continues.
- By July 2023, the Manufacturing Committee will define the three core principles of their manufacturing rebranding plan and sub-plans for targeted age demographics and regions of the state.
- By September 2023, the Manufacturing Committee will define a list of no more than five success metrics to track the campaign.
- By October 2023, the Manufacturing Committee will host an annual event in coordination with VMEC for Manufacturing Month that highlights innovative work in VT’s manufacturing sector.
- By December 2023, the Manufacturing Committee will meet with the ACCD to develop promotional materials, messaging, and a “sales funnel” for the campaign.
- By March 2024, the Manufacturing Committee will identify top stakeholders for promotional material distribution and top distribution strategies.
- By July 2024, the Manufacturing Committee will launch the promotional campaign.
- By October 2024, the Manufacturing Committee will host no less than three events for various affinity groups (i.e. students, veterans, disengaged, etc.).

Lead Partner(s)	VMEC, VTPM, VDOL, ACCD
Milestones & Measures	By July 2024, the Manufacturing Committee will release promotional campaign.
Committee Role	Development of promotional campaign and assisting VMEC & VTPM.

SWDB Committees

Relocation and Recruitment Committee

The Situation

Vermont faces an aging demographic, with every county experiencing a decline in labor force since the mid-2000s. Looking at Vermont’s labor demand and supply, as of July 2022, there is roughly 1 unemployed person for every 3.3 job openings. Unfortunately, Vermont’s workforce system is built for times of high unemployment and not equipped to transition to address our current need. Even if we were to train and upskill everyone in our existing workforce, we would still not have enough individuals to fill jobs. Vermont needs more people to enter the workforce from out of state to grow its labor force.

The Solution

To sustain good jobs, we must have a strong workforce. To address the demographics crisis and promote widespread prosperity by attracting more people to Vermont, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will focus on a two-fold track of relocating and supporting New Americans, including refugees, asylees, and all other immigrants, and supporting new workers from other states. While there are many regional services and statewide efforts occurring, Vermont needs a unified system. The Relocation and Recruitment Committee will serve as the nexus between private and public efforts to relocate new workers and support partners providing services. The goal is to develop a streamlined approach that effectively translates interest in the Vermont brand into recruitment prospecting and permanent relocation to the state.

Long Term Action

The Relocation and Recruitment Committee will serve as a continuous monitoring body, which will evaluate the effectiveness of Vermont’s recruitment and relocation system and provide real time feedback to decision making entities. As this work continues, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee could look to specifically target in-demand industries for out-of-state recruitment based on the reports of the CPC.



Milestones

- By July 2023, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will clearly define guiding principles that will help all new and current Vermonters in a streamlined relocation and recruitment system.
- (Pending legislation) By September 2023, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will select a vendor to evaluate the infrastructure related to New American recruitment and support systems statewide, approved by the Operating Committee.
- By March 2024, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will produce a regional report to the ACCD and Governor’s Office that outlines Vermont’s current infrastructure for relocation and recruitment based on testimony taken from regional partners and state agencies.
- By December 2024, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will establish recommendations for improvement within the system to the Governor’s staff and relevant agencies.
- By May 2025, the Relocation and Recruitment Committee will enter into a MOU between relevant partners for coordination of relocation and recruitment services and provide recommendations on next steps to the Governor’s staff per the final report of the vendor.

Lead Partner(s)	RDCs, state agencies, Governor’s Office, Legislature
Milestones & Measures	By May 2025, the SWDB will negotiate and enter a MOU regarding relocation and recruitment partners statewide.
Committee Role	Convene, facilitate, and evaluate current Vermont strategies for relocation.

SWDB Committees

Youth Committee

The Situation

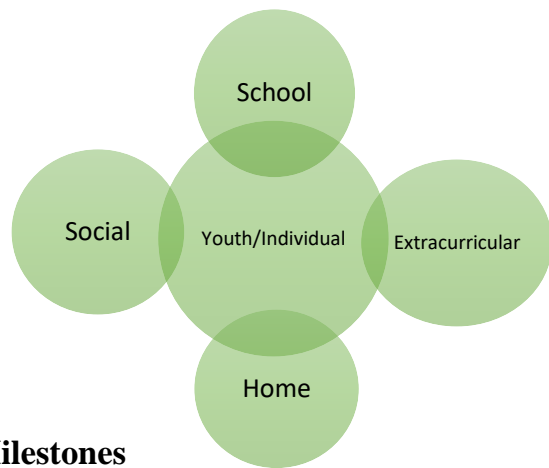
Every day, we lose on average six workers out of our workforce and three students out of our school system. With a population that is continuing to age, it is crucial that we support Vermont’s youth and their exploration of potential career pathways. As we look towards improving outcomes for our youth, there are geographic and socioeconomic disparities that need to be addressed. Due to the isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and an increase in social media usage among youth, the mental health crisis has become more drastic. Additionally, the inequities that come with socioeconomic status have been exacerbated. Vermont children, particularly those that are underprivileged, are falling behind. The combination of our aging workforce and an onset of consequences exacerbated by the pandemic call for significant change.

The Solution

The Youth Committee will follow a parallel track of promoting and increasing access to existing work for youth, while identifying barriers and proposing areas where further investment and coordination is necessary to support youth equitably across the state. Most importantly, the Youth Committee will look to be inclusive of students from all background including those in marginalized groups, disabled, low socio-economic status, and more. This work will happen through inventory and assessment of current state activities, while working with agencies, departments, and community partners to provide more opportunities for career exploration and development for our youngest Vermonters.

Long Term Action

This Youth Committee will not only serve as an up-to-date resource for ongoing youth career and mentorship programming while acknowledging barriers to youth employment but fill identifiable programming and resource gaps by hosting youth engagement events.



Milestones

- By September 2023, the Youth Committee will compile an inventory of state programs related to youth to be updated on a yearly basis and identify programming gaps and identification of key barriers for students across the state.
- By September 2023, the Youth Committee will develop an initial statewide mentorship list with the help of local chambers, RDCs, and school counselors.
- By January 2024, the Youth Committee will begin executing an outreach plan to promote existing youth career events.
- By March 2024, the Youth Committee will review the youth section of the annual report produced by the SWDB and create a recommended improvement plan for relevant agencies.
- By January 2025, the Youth Committee will host or co-host no less than four youth career exploration events targeted at identified gaps in the system.
- For FY2026, as followed by a deadline set from the SWDB, the Youth Committee will propose policy suggestions and strategies that address barriers to youth. For example, transportation, mental health, socioeconomic status, or underrepresented groups.

Lead Partner(s)	AOE, RDCs, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, local community youth organizations, Vermont Principals’ Association
Milestones & Measures	By FY2026 budgeting deadline, the Youth Committee presents policy suggestions to the SWDB to address barriers to youth employment.
Committee Role	A monitoring body of youth programs while serving as a resource on youth related programming.

Appendix

Labor Force Participation Report

Current: SIZE, PERCENTAGE

Vermont Target: SIZE, PERCENTAGE

Available Labor Pool (Month, Year):

Demographics:

BIPOC

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Young men

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Young Women

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Justice Involved

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Mature Workers

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Women (24-55)

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL

Men (24-55)

SIZE/LF PERCENTAGE

AVAILABLE POOL