



Breakout: Workforce Development and Career Training - December 7, 2021

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Introduction

- **Labor Force Data presented**
- **Workforce crisis exacerbated by COVID**
- **High school enrollment DOWN**
- **Regional workforce approaches - no one person/group can do it alone BUT it can/should be done by all communities**
- **Needs to People Focused**

What are you most excited about in this arena today? Where are there successes and bright spots/opportunities?

- Hyper local, school specific heavy equipment operator class at Otter Valley Union High School - a collaborative effort with local contractors and a motivated school board member created this workforce training program for high school students.
- Program in the NE Kingdom to write a grant to fund a program "Step up to childcare" program to develop childcare workers
- Barre Collaboration around nursing career Initiative Helping to bridge
- [HULA Coworking Space in Burlington](#) - Tech, software engineers. Vibrant creative community and collaboration.
- COVID has seen many new businesses starting in Rutland City. The Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region is creating a Tech and Arts hub collaboration in the 2nd floor of a downtown space.
- Vermont State Colleges offering [2 Free Classes](#) and the "Earn and Learn" Internship Opportunities.
- The labor market is forcing wages up and more opportunities are being offered by companies.
- Vermont employers tend to support their employees compared to other parts of the country with higher wages and benefits, leading to more loyalty amongst employees.
- Refugee Resettlement programs in Brattleboro and Rutland are providing a more diverse workforce while adding to the fabric of the community.
- Positive culture changes due to the upskilling, less tedious jobs/more mobile.
- Lamoille County held a summit with employers and representatives around cross-sector work for childcare, broadband and housing.
- [The Working Community Challenges](#)

What are your concerns/questions about how to move forward?

- Do we have the people to train? Do employees have the opportunity to succeed with current training strategies?
- This labor market is encouraging employers to automate/purchase automation equipment.
- Upskilling mitigates routine jobs that can be automated (The Great Job Changed/Upskilling)

- The benefits cliff (childcare, housing and food support) is impacting parents and mothers. Single mothers are disproportionately affected. How do we keep mothers/parents in the workforce. Employers need open hiring practices and provide benefits that account for these challenges
- Statewide generally means Chittenden county/Washington County. Regional Partnerships are crucial to mitigate this reality.
- Missing exposing students to different career paths in the school.
- Missing opportunities to market the Vermont Training Programs; there is no money in their budget for marketing these programs.
- Need Local Summits to bring the people to the table for collaborative efforts on employment training and connecting.
- Need Recruit and Train for the trades and let people know that [Training Resources exist](#),

What do you and/or communities need to be successful in this arena in the future?

- Guidance Counsellors used to be able to focus on career guidance full time and are now charged with helping the school navigate mental health, social and emotional well being crises that are growing exponentially. Communities (volunteers, employers, other agencies) must collaborate to help support.
- After School Programs could serve as a resource to do employee/employer engagement/exposure and some introductory job training programs
- Need a compilation of all resources for employers and potential employees - I.e., the VT Training programs, a list of incentives for employers to promote hiring people who have difficulty obtaining and holding jobs, etc.
- Is there an effort to bring employees from the informal/under the table into the more formal job market? Anecdotally, there still seems to be a strong over valuation of these types of positions as more lucrative. Need to help people to define what a good job looks like educating folks on the foibles of under the table employment.
- As college costs and return on college looks less appealing, educators are/should be open to the concept that not everyone needs to or should attend conventional 4 year college.. This is an immediate need as many tradespeople are in need of a succession plan. Many are aging out of the profession and there are not enough folks in the pipeline (in state anyway) to backfill. VT Futures and others have been highlighting this for a long time. I think more residents is the likely solution to most of these issues
- Financial Literacy needs to be a part of the educational piece so folks can accurately assess their employment needs (on the books, appropriate wages, retirement needs, etc.)
- Let's Grow Kids has an internal career counselor for staff, since it is an organization that will sunset in a few years. It would be interesting if that kind of resource were available from the state or communities in a meaningful way.
- The [Department of Labor offers career exploration workshops](#) and is a part of our individualized employment plans when helping job seekers find employment or funding for skills development.
- [Central Vermont Adult Basic Education](#) does a lot more than basic ed - They do lots of career change, work preparedness and skills-building associated with jobs training