

Organization: Vermont Futures Project

Location: Burlington, VT

Date: May 25, 2017

Time: 9:00 to 4:00 pm

Vermont Futures Project May 25th EXPO Luncheon Meeting Summary

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Futures Project presented data on the workforce challenges experienced by Vermont employers and showed the attendees that about 11,000 more people are needed in the workforce. The attendees engaged in the exercise of providing solutions to narrow this workforce supply gap.

Why Vermont?:

Attendees were asked "Why Vermont?" and were instructed to write their answers on post-it notes. When answering this question, fell into two general categories: Quality of Life and Family/Friends.

Focus Areas

Attendees were prompted to identify solutions for Vermont to recruit more workers to close the workforce gap. Attendees made the following recommendations:

1) *Policies/Action*

- ✚ More affordable housing (this can include rehabbing old mill buildings and other buildings into work/live spaces; creating more condos and townhouses in town for walkable downtowns and mixed commercial/residential opportunities, opening up college campus housing in the summer for interns).
- ✚ Greater Public-Private Partnerships.
- ✚ Greater access to, and more affordable, child-care options.
- ✚ Incentivize businesses, students, and individuals to come to work/school here.
- ✚ Rebranding of Vermont to show we are business friendly and have a variety of jobs and activities to suit all sorts of people.
- ✚ Communicate with younger professionals and younger individuals to get them involved in and participating in the conversation and coming up with solutions.
- ✚ Keeping our students in the state, keeping college graduates in the state by showing them that they can have a good career and raise a family here.
- ✚ Provide greater communication networks and infrastructure to enable companies and remote workers to come to Vermont.
- ✚ Increase employer presence in elementary, high school, and colleges to inform students about the great job opportunities in Vermont – whether that means conducting job fairs

at the schools, providing more internships, or inviting schools on field trips to see what different employers in the state do.

- ✚ Support and improve infrastructure, education, workforce development, and transportation services throughout the state.
- ✚ Pay wages equal to those seen around New England.
- ✚ Target mid-level positions with training and development opportunities that will open up the pipeline for entry level workers to advance and more to be hired, and encourage additional tech industries to Vermont.

2. Attendees were asked “what does success look like?” and responded as follows:

- ✚ Explore, expand and execute Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).
- ✚ Improve Act 250/zoning to support affordable housing and building of infrastructure.
- ✚ Create/find ready, trained, educated, willing and able employees
- ✚ Encourage livable wages, a diverse pool of employees, and incentives that keep individuals and businesses here in Vermont and encourage outsiders to Vermont.