

Organization: Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce
Location: Central Vermont Chamber Conference Room, 33 Steward Rd., Barre
Date: December 5, 2017
Time: 7:30 – 9:00 am

Presentation Takeaways

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Futures Project presented data to the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce on the workforce challenges experienced by Vermont employers and showed the attendees that about 11,000 more people are needed in the workforce.

Why Vermont?:

Attendees were asked “Why Vermont?” as they entered the room and were instructed to write their answers on post-it notes. When answering this question, Washington County attendees fell into two general categories: Natural Beauty and Family/Community.

Specific notes: Landscapes, compassionate, caring people; Because everyone is accessible and it has four beautiful seasons (and one yucky season – stick season!); Beauty, mountains, recreation; It's a beautiful state; Four season beauty; Small-scale, global reach; Born here; Family, democratic, involved community; Ties to the land; State of mind: culture, outdoors, family friendly; Family; Close knit communities; Community, connecting on a personal level; Family, forest, fishing, friends, happy hunting and home; Near nature, space to breathe, to be active; Family ties, safe, dislike city, established business;

Focus Areas

Attendees were prompted to identify populations that Vermont could recruit from for more workers to close the workforce gap. Attendees made the following recommendations:

- Capture more college graduates to stay within the state for college, as well as to move to Vermont to attend college – both retention and outreach effort.
- Improve the access to alternative jobs, certifications and two-year degrees.
- Vermont provides different education choices – shop, technical education, auto body, etc. and we need to tell this message to families to encourage them to relocate here.
 - Improve and showcase the availability of education programs which focus on alternative industries.
- Allow access to technical education at an earlier age.
- Tax policy incentives to get people into the state and provide 10 years of tax breaks to get established in Vermont.
- Housing incentive - pay first month's rent and security deposit if they relocate here.

- Encourage employers to provide company oriented transportation services/shuttling to work.
- Improve access and affordability of child care.
- Increase the number and availability of spots in the Individual Development Account program.

Retention:

- Capitalize on the resources that we have here already.
 - Utilize those workers who are underemployed.
- Further adult education programs.
- Training education programs with employers in the particular field – on-the-job-training to encourage better training and attract out-of-staters.
- Need to better align the available jobs with what people want to do for work.