

Organization: Lamoille Region Chamber of Commerce
Location: Town & Country Resort, 876 Mountain Rd. Stowe, VT
Date: December 5, 2017
Time: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Presentation Takeaways

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Futures Project presented data to the Lamoille Region 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, Lamoille County attendees fell into two general categories: Quality of Life, and Community.

Specific notes: Born and raised here and enjoy the quality of life; VT is a beautiful place; Love the outdoors; Quality of life! Outdoor recreation and culture; Beautiful outdoor scenery, activities, and lifestyle!; It's the most beautiful place to live, work, and grow!; Green, snow, mountains, family, smart people; The mountains; Skiing, beauty, community focused state, close(r) to my family; Space; Safe, less people, nice people, caring, community; Caring communities; Legacy, values, environment, safe; Quality of life; Sometimes I wonder but as long as I can ski I stay, after that it's a tax free state; Family has lived in VT for nine generations – so my interest is always high; No earthquakes, no forest fires, not extremely cold, maybe tailend hurricanes, no tornadoes, four seasons, rural

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:

- Attract larger corporations to move to Vermont.
- We need a program to assist returning Vermonters to come back to Vermont – provide networking opportunities and other assistance to make an easy transition into Vermont's workforce.
- Create a more concerted outreach effort to attract outdoor/recreation enthusiasts
 - Approach those tourists already here to encourage them to stay/
- More thoughtful approach to mentor opportunities for our youth – provide resources to Vermont students to understand the career choices within the state.
 - Support those youth already here while expanding our reach to others.

- Improve perception/branding on job opportunities and Vermont's cost of living.
- Work on collaboration and holistic approaches to the issues we face, rather than use a siloed approach.
- Further expand the program that Vermont state colleges are utilizing by offering in-state-tuition prices to out-of-state students.
- Create a tuition repayment program (akin to the healthcare industry) for manufacturing and engineering positions.
- Improve housing stock and affordability – we are currently facing a 10,000-unit shortage.
- Improve availability and affordability of child care providers.
- Leverage the positions that Sen. Leahy, Sen. Sanders, and Congressman Welch have to spread the message to a broader audience of the assets of living in Vermont.
- Showcase workforce development in the State House this coming session to get the message of the availability and concerns regarding jobs in particular industries.
- Leverage what we already have here and use the Chamber as a facilitator to better match people and positions.
- Concierge/assistance in health care industries to provide relocation assistance and other services to help acclimate individuals into Vermont quicker and more successfully.