

Organization: Stowe Area Association

Location: Green Mountain Inn - 18 Main St., Stowe, VT.

Date: January 8, 2018

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Presentation Takeaways

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Futures Project presented data to the Stowe Area Association 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, the Stowe Area Association attendees responses focused heavily on the Quality of Life/Outdoor offerings, and on Community.

Specific notes:

- Way of Life
- Moved out of Boston and to VT because of its “local first” ethic and its affordability.
- The People and the Outdoors
- Community
- Lifestyle
- Recreation
- The outdoor lifestyle; state’s natural beauty
- Quality of Life; Active/Outdoor lifestyle
- Quality of Life; Education; Outdoor recreation; Natural resources; Change of lifestyle
- Community support – Go Small Towns!

Focus Areas

Attendees were prompted to identify populations or potential solutions that Vermont could engage to help to close the workforce gap. Attendees made the following recommendations:

- Conduct focus groups with workers – primarily 25-34 year olds)
- Improve the Act 250 permitting; particularly as it relates to project size (9 units = No Act 250 permit needed; 10+ units = Act 250 process required). Builders can’t easily take advantage of efficiencies when building in scale.
- Expand public/mass transit via
 - More Park & Ride locations
 - Possible coordination of a large-van, shuttle service; coordinated between multiple local employers
 - Re-utilize school bus fleet when not being used for school kid pick-up/drop-off
 - Allow area workers to board school buses; utilize schools as transportation hubs

- Identify one or two small communities that will focus on “last mile” broadband access in effort to attract remote workers.
- Develop training programs that are distinctly tied to specific industries. Similarly expand apprenticeship opportunities accordingly.
- Train hospitality staff on local job market needs – have them serve as Job Ambassadors.
- Develop a pathway of multi-stage job exploration interactions that mirrors our visitors’ patterns (first visit, repeat/annual visitor; multi-season visitor; buying real estate)
- Identify systematic job search pathway(s) for visitors or new arrivals.
- Address Early Education needs to attract young families.
 - Is there a way to certify or utilize 60+ age group to provide early education / child care options?
- Implement “New Residents Welcoming Committee” network to engage new-comers; potentially help trailing spouses find work and/or help family acclimate in an effort to increase community integration; thus decrease chances they return to prior city/locale.
- Expand MakerSpace offerings; integrate inventors into school system offerings.
- Expand upon 211’s “Catalog of Services” to help small business owners help their employees with unique requests – to help retain solid employees.