

News Release



Vermont Associates

for Training and Development, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Department of Labor awards \$1,000,000 to Vermont Associates for Training & Development, Inc. As one of only ten organizations nationwide to be awarded funding for the highly competitive Aging Worker Initiative

St. Albans – The US Department of Labor recently announced a \$1,000,000 award to Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc., a statewide non-profit that provides training and employment services to Vermonters age 55 and over. The Aging Worker Initiative: Strategies for Regional Talent Development is designed to train workers age 55 and older for jobs in high-growth, high-demand industries, and increase the workforce system's capacity to effectively serve an aging worker population.

Vermont Associates' challenge and strategy statement was developed at the Windham Foundation's Vermont Older Worker Policy Summit: The aging of society and correspondingly of the workforce demand that we develop strategies to re-educate and re-train older workers to enable them to enter, re-enter or remain in the workforce (supply side). Likewise, we need to help employers across all industries understand these shifting demographics and to view them not as a vulnerability but as a competitive advantage, a paradigm shift (demand side).

The project will 1) identify current and develop new employer responses to the aging workforce, focusing on the needs of employers and the opportunities presented by the aging workforce; 2) coordinate existing training resources and create new opportunities for disadvantaged, unemployed, incumbent workers, and retirees to increase their workforce participation; and 3) capacity building activities including concurrence from the Workforce Development Council to develop sustainable mechanisms to coordinate the various federal, state, and private resources available to Vermont businesses and Vermonters 55+. In addition, a minimum of four statewide Mature Worker Resource Centers will be established.

Pat Elmer is the Executive Director of Vermont Associates. "Anyone who is a mature worker, who is looking to retrain or change the work they do, or retirees interested in returning to the workforce, will benefit from the services offered at these Resource Centers," said Elmer. "They will be able to learn what training resources are available in Vermont, what type of financial aid might be available to finance that training, as well as other services that may help them be successful in re-tooling for a new career."

Key partners in the Initiative include the Vermont Department of Labor, Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, Vermont Country Store, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Business Roundtable, AARP, Vermont Information Technology Center and Champlain College, Vermont Association of Adult Technical Education Coordinators, KnowledgeWave Training, The Windham Foundation, and the Vermont Workforce Development Council.

“The older worker is a key state workforce asset and this project is targeting disadvantaged, unemployed, incumbent, and retired individuals age 55+”, said Governor Jim Douglas in support of this project. “The strategic partnerships and older worker specialized employment services of this project, focusing on high-growth, high demand jobs, would be a great benefit to Vermont’s employers and older workers and would complement the goals of my statewide Workforce, Economic Development, and Aging Initiatives.”

This project builds on Vermont Associates’ experience in operating older worker programs in Vermont for the past 26 years, including the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the Dislocated Older Worker Demonstration Project.

The ability for Vermont to develop, attract, and retain a well-educated and skilled workforce is a key factor in economic growth. Older workers are a valuable, though often underutilized, labor pool that can meet the workforce needs of the Vermont economy.

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