



REPORT



Targeted Expertise Recruitment Task Force Report to New Chapter

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation &
Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies
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Targeted Expertise Recruitment

In the spring of 2017 the BDCC Board of Trustees requested that the Executive Director initiate a Task Force on talent recruitment, one of the greatest challenges facing regional employers. The ability to hire and retain employees, especially those with specialized skills and experience, is critical to the success of the region's businesses and organizations. But demographic and labor trends in the Windham region, Vermont and the nation are making it harder and harder to fill key positions.

Of particular concern to the BDCC at that time was how to support a rapidly expanding local employer. New Chapter, locally founded and recently acquired by Procter & Gamble, has established itself as a national brand providing high quality vitamins and nutritional supplements. New Chapter CEO, Anupam Martins, agreed to partner with BDCC to explore ways in which this organization could help his growing company thrive in Brattleboro. In doing so they would test concepts that would form a basis for programmatic support to benefit multiple employers in the region. Thus was formed the Targeted Expertise Recruitment (TER) Task Force, with a focus on New Chapter to pilot a TER Program.

In early 2017 New Chapter was gearing up to fill as many as 20 key positions. The challenges of recruiting at this scale in such a rural area, especially positions at high levels, was placing new demands on the Human Resources team and managers, including the CEO. New Chapter's recruitment challenges are shared by other large employers in the region, including hospitals struggling to attract and retain doctors and specialist providers. New Chapter is further hampered by being situated far from other similar companies, which means some of the key talent they need is located near Florida and New Jersey.

The Task Force convened a group business and civic leaders, legislators, workforce and recruitment specialists to meet on a regular basis. The meetings and related staff research produced a tremendous amount of information. These discussions, research and findings form the basis for a Targeted Expertise Recruitment program through which BDCC aims to provide direct programmatic support to New Chapter and other employers.

The Task Force meetings highlighted the extent to which recruitment is a shared challenge, and some ways in which collaborative response might be especially powerful. The meetings also provided an opportunity to demonstrate the ways in which a small community and small state can provide different advantages even to relatively small employers. The Task Force provided opportunities to build connections between the New Chapter team and potential partners in the public and private sector, demonstrating some advantage in Vermont's small scale and the value of the relationships that can be established and leveraged quickly in such an environment.

Implementing the TER Program will demonstrate one of BDCC's major advantages as a rural regional economic development agency: it can be nimble, responsive, and pragmatic. It also highlights the value of the SeVEDS organization's vision and planning which through the 2014 CEDS strategic planning process placed increasingly urgent workforce needs at the center of the BDCC & SeVEDS regional economic development strategies. The proposal for a TER Program is based on a best-practice working elsewhere – a public-private partnership leading a strategic initiative to increase the workforce. It puts BDCC's own strategic spin on those approaches to create something designed to improve this region's visibility as a place of opportunity, and also to differentiate our employers' recruitment efforts from others through personalized support throughout the recruiting process.

TASK FORCE OVERVIEW

The Targeted Expertise Task Force set out to accomplish two broad purposes. First, to support New Chapter, a valued local company that is growing aggressively. Second, to help BDCC develop recruitment solutions, to be piloted with New Chapter. The goal was to outline a Targeted Employee Recruitment (TER) Program that could assist *every* regional employer in finding the talent they need to thrive here.

For the Task Force BDCC assembled and convened a group that represented public and private sector organizations with an interest in attracting and retaining talent to the region. The Task Force met five times at the New Chapter Brattleboro offices, from March through September 2017. It included local CEOs, local and state officials and legislators, recruitment and workforce specialists, and BDCC's workforce team (see inset for complete Task Force list).

The Task Force meetings were organized around four major concepts, with each meeting covering one area in depth including presentations by members of the group and invited experts:

Pull: Maximizing the employer's ability to attract to the job, firm, region, state

Push: How to find and grab the attention of the right people to connect with them

Onboarding: Ensuring successful transition into job and community for recruit and household

Conditions: External factors creating barriers to recruitment and attraction

TER TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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Vermont Representative Valerie Stuart
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Regional Commission

Part two of this report provides detail on the four subject areas that helped form the basis for TER Program recommendations. That program will provide critical support to the region's employers around one of the greatest challenges we face – the need to **attract and retain** a skilled workforce in the face of population loss and aging, low unemployment, and other countervailing factors including a high cost of living.

TER will be a new tool to implement the goals and objectives of the Windham S.M.A.R.T. CEDS. Attracting new people and a specialized talent pool to the region fits squarely with the BDCC & SeVEDS efforts to reverse population loss and lower the age of the region's workforce, to raise wages and household income, as well as to increase the skills of our workforce. Targeted Expertise Recruitment is the next piece in building a comprehensive approach to retaining, training, and attracting the workforce and talent Windham employers need. A TER Program will fill a gap in the Workforce Center of Excellence which encompasses nearly every other aspect of workforce and talent supply.

BACKGROUND ON THE TALENT SUPPLY PROBLEM

In 2014 when the region's economic plan, the Windham CEDS, was published there was already a growing sense of concern about demographic trends, particularly insofar as it was already leading to a shortage of workforce. TER-related research confirmed that the problem of talent supply is widely shared and worsening. Local conditions, as evidenced both in data (such as 3-4% unemployment) and conversations with employers, echo what a SeVEDS hiring needs survey had revealed a few years ago. That study, which reached nearly 40 regional employers, pointed to unmet workforce needs. Employer projections based on anticipated turnover and retirements revealed that the need for workforce might become a crisis as the population and current workforce aged.

The region's demographic trends have continued in the wrong direction, with fewer kids graduating from high school and college and low levels of new people migrating into the region from other parts of the country or world. There is little reason to assume that external factors will provide relief any time soon. The state of Vermont recently issued a report about Vermont's workforce and talent supply problem. The Vermont Futures Project cited in 2016 a need for 10,000 new people each year to meet the state's hiring needs. Demographic projections for the region and state illustrate that, absent intervention, we can expect these problems to continue because flat and aging population, low birthrates and in-migration, undermine our labor supply. Neighboring states are facing some of the same challenges, particularly New Hampshire, not only mirroring but furthering the workforce challenge since the Windham region relies on a broad regional workforce base that includes with New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

The TER Program will constitute a committed effort to combat these trends by bringing more people to the region. The need for more workers at every level, especially skilled workers and those with specialized knowledge, is the subject of a growing body of national research and studies done by regions both similar to our own, as well as metro areas across the country. With talent supply in occupations like IT and healthcare a challenge in even the most dynamic metropolitan markets, our regional employers face fierce national competition for people that possess special skills.

This means we have a two-fold challenge that first requires finding ways to make the job opportunities advertised from here stand out. Second, we have to differentiate based on things like the region's allure – quality of life – to find people who will want to take a job here. In that challenge lies opportunity to reach people for whom the opportunity + the location = a perfect fit.

As part of the TER research staff engaged with hiring leads or CEOs from several firms and learned about their ongoing struggles. They focused on unfilled positions, retention challenges, and the instances where a poor fit was hard to address because both employer and employee had limited local options. Many employers use remote workers, some happily, others finding it causes issues from supervision to office culture. The use of temps and per diems, especially in healthcare, has become too costly to be sustainable.

The scale of the impacts we found was a reminder that hard work is ahead. Change will require a serious, multi-year commitment to implement, refine, test, and improve a TER Program that can positively impact our diverse employers and sectors. The trends are daunting and require finding ways to assist employers in securing the people they need, who have the right skills, and who want to live and work in this region. But New Chapter's success in filling 12 of 20 positions over the course of the 2017 Task Force meeting period illustrates that this goal can be achieved.

BUILDING ON A SHARED COMMITMENT TO WORKFORCE

BDCC has committed to helping solve the region's workforce challenges. This will require a multi-pronged approach that solves for many skill levels, and in multiple timeframes. In fact, TER research seeking models of success on which to base this organization's planning affirmed the need for a systems approach such as that which gave rise to the Workforce Center of Excellence. There is no single action or simple tool that will create change. But there is much to be done, and this region is at an advantage for having begun this work in earnest some years ago.

Several programs of the BDCC Workforce Center of Excellence (WFCoE) focus on the future workforce. This includes "Fast Tracks" for high schoolers which brings students into workplaces to see the range of options in the region. Last year a new "Sophomore Summit" brought every high school sophomore to a day-long event featuring dozens of employers, as well as local professionals, to directly expose tomorrow's workforce to the range of career pathways available here.

Two other programs support recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce focusing on college students and young adults. The Paid internships program is conducted in partnership with the local Six College Collaborative. This program is increasingly promoted and known outside the region, and this year attracted more out-of-region interns than ever before. This is helping Windham leverage the broader region's very high number of educational institutions to attract entry-level professionals.

The Southern Vermont Young Professionals (SoVermont YP), known for its lively social and networking events, was established by BDCC & SeVEDS as a way to improve retention and attraction. They accelerate connections that can be hard to form in a rural area, and which are indispensable if one is to thrive here. The YPs are helping build a critical mass of young people, creating the buzz that will keep attracting more. SoVermont YP sponsors monthly social events and networking, and provides a critical touchpoint that helps attract and retain people to the region. There are examples all over the country of YP groups at the heart of recruitment efforts, which affirms the importance of this network, and of economic development organizations and private sector employers coming together to support them. New Chapter has been a strong supporter and sponsor of SoVermont YPs. They understand the connection between the health of the region and the health of their company.

The WFCoE also works with the region's existing workers collaborating with other workforce providers on events and training. This includes career fairs, as well as training and certification programs. BDCC & SeVEDS WFCoE is one of only three regions in Vermont that was asked to part of the first rollout of the state's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) initiative. Through TPM the WFCoE is working with employers to map skill and training needs for

Signs of Success

- From record breaking YP March Gala attendance, to the huge turnout at Mondo Mediaworks' VBSR fundraiser this summer, and a packed house at the BDCC & SeVEDS Annual Meeting in October, young professionals are showing up and asking for more.
- Demographic news is not all bad. In the region and statewide there has been a visible in the right direction is with growth in our 25-34 population.
- Economic vitality is visible in the startup world, with rising participation in programs at INSTIG8, Windham Grows and Hannah Grimes from entrepreneurs and "wantrapreneurs", to record high #s of new businesses in Windham County registered with the Secretary of State last year.

two regional sectors to shape programs that can respond to urgent workforce needs. BDCC's deployment of TPM has already been held up as a national model for rural workforce development.

The TER Program will build on the successes of the WFCoE, but it will also take BDCC & SeVEDS in new directions. TER will be the first WFCoE program focused primarily on experienced workers, targeting audiences primarily out of the region. It will leverage the kinds of personal connections YPs foster, but it will do so in a structured fashion, at specific points throughout the recruitment process. Marketing will help increase audiences recruiters reach, and leverage this region's appeal to support those recruiting efforts. Structured support for recruits to help with relocation and partner careers will create a competitive advantage for employers to attract the talent they need.

TER: FROM TASK FORCE TO PROGRAM

The focus of the Task Force, Pilot and Research was on what BDCC can do to directly assist New Chapter and employers, from the point of posting a vacancy, to reaching a target audience, and throughout the process of active recruitment and on-boarding. The TER Task Force focused on "Targeted Expertise" due to the special importance of certain positions within an organization. Recruitment challenges in these cases are uniquely damaging to an organization's ability to function.

The conversation about talent supply can be overwhelming. A great deal of research looks at what Millennials and tomorrow's workforce want. Data is important and has informed TER program design, outreach and marketing campaigns. In fact, part of the program will be ensuring this regional employers have greater access to tools and strategies to help them compete. National research is essential for us to help employers implement best-practices and stay current. Employers need to adapt benefits and workplace culture. Family and pet friendly, values-driven, flexible workplaces are desirable and we have many of those. Another part of TER is helping employers get better at telling that story, at showing potential recruits that their desire for values-based work, or to be part of an innovative and growing firm, can be met here.

Regional recruitment efforts that seem to be working are mindful of some key developments in today's workforce. One is that most recruits are not actively looking, which means that reaching the people employers want is harder than ever unless they use the right tools. Additionally, two career households are the norm, which means many recruiting actions include ramifications for a partner. Anecdotes from local employers confirm what the national research tells us, which means a TER Program can help by turning a partner's concerns from a recruitment liability to an asset.

Targeted Expertise Recruitment will be the first BDCC Workforce Center of Excellence program to focus directly on bringing new, specialized workers into the region to fill existing positions. TER is the next logical step in building a multi-level, long term, systems approach to creating workforce solutions. Implementation will enable launch of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing and Recruitment campaign, a cornerstone of BDCC and SeVEDS efforts to bring more people to the region. Delayed since 2015 for lack of funding, the pause has actually allowed us to refine our understanding, improve strategies, and develop a recruitment-led implementation plan.

Staff engaged with consultants specializing in recruitment and workforce, and with providers of data tools, particularly EMSI and LinkedIn. Through this research we identified a suite of tools to deploy. We also met with members of the Task Force separately, with other business leaders and HR

professionals. We attended webinars and presentations by peers and consultants. This process shaped recommendations and a current assessment of conditions and options available. It was an opportunity for BDCC staff to become familiar with resources available in terms of research, ideas and emerging solutions, and to define a set of resources and techniques relevant to near and long-term implementation. The design of a TER program, but also the questions left on the table, reflect our current understanding based this work and on BDCC and SeVEDS research and strategic planning.

The TER Program, in essence, is about making sure the right people get the right messages from our employers, then quickly building a personal connection, from first contact through settling in to a new community. The recommendations for a TER Program, contained in a separate Powerpoint presentation, reflect work with New Chapter as well as nearly a dozen conversations with and presentations by consultants and experts. But it is grounded in two major concepts:

1. **Marketing that sets our region apart** = “Differentiators” like progressive culture, food and arts, proximity to Boston / NY, outdoor recreation, and the tri-state economy with a range of living and career options.
2. **A Personal touch, from storytelling to “Concierge” onboarding.** Differentiate recruitment efforts from other rural regions through connections that add value, based on proven programs and New Chapter Pilot.

The Task Force meetings generated a tremendous amount of locally relevant information based on the knowledge of the group, and invited speakers. During the 6 months while the Task Force was convened, BDCC staff also conducted parallel research to understand the challenge among a broader range of employers, and to investigate a range of tools and responses being developed by peer organizations. **Many of the best models are done through employer partnerships.** This approach is the basis for the TER Program proposal.

ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

Talent supply is a problem across the country. To win, BDCC and our region’s employers need to identify what can reasonably and sustainably be done to gain a competitive edge, and then get out there and do it. This is a daunting challenge, not least because in addition to the already demanding work of recruitment and attraction, this work will require changing our own perceptions and attitudes about this region to establish that long term employer engagement. The TER Program is premised upon two major assertions:

***We want and need more people to work and live here in Windham County, and
This region offers great career opportunities, in addition to a great lifestyle.***

The Task Force was inspired by a desire to ensure New Chapter’s ability to grow in place by securing the talent it needs to succeed. But New Chapter’s willingness to partner, and the leadership’s incredible generosity and openness, created a rare opportunity to convene frank, high level discussions among critical stakeholders where we could also test out solutions. It spurred many additional conversations, through which we learned about more Windham employers who spend a lot of time and money on recruitment and marketing, seeking new hiring solutions, not always

successfully. We established through this process that BDCC can help employers through a variety of actions which have evolved to become TER Program Recommendations.

The recommendations for a TER Program leverage intelligence gathered, and play upon the BDCC organizational strengths: relationships, creativity, action, and collaboration. This last one is very important. When it comes to attracting talent, creating a sense of opportunity here will require that messaging come out of multiple organizations. No one employer, or non-profit, can do that alone. Ultimately, the goals BDCC's goals for helping New Chapter are the same goals the TER Program will espouse in assisting any employer:

- **Increase return on investment** from employer efforts to attract workforce through marketing, collaborative efforts, and recruitment best practices.
- **Implement recruitment and retention best practices** to improve each step, from interview and orientation to on-boarding and white-glove assistance for employees and households.
- **Continue to build partnerships** among employers, and with regional and state organizations that will help employers meet new recruitment challenges in the future.

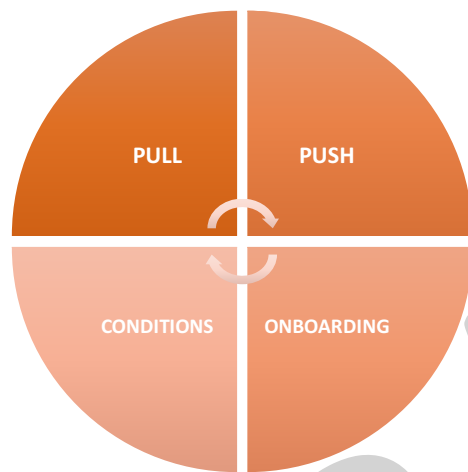
While the task can seem daunting, our research also reminded us that most rural regions are not as organized as we are. We don't need to attract everyone who would prefer to be in New York or Boston, just a small number of people who would prefer to be here. Being proactive, strategic and organized puts us ahead of the pack. It will take work to reach people who have the right skills and who want the Vermont lifestyle, but very few places with a comparable lifestyle are doing that effectively. The most important lesson from the Targeted Expertise Recruitment Task Force is that there are ways in which BDCC can meaningfully improve recruitment, and in doing so help employers and the region's economy to thrive.

"You don't have to run faster than the bear to get away. You just have to run faster than the guy next to you."

-Jim Butcher

TASK FORCE MEETINGS: SUMMARIES & FINDINGS

Task Force meetings were organized around four major topics: Pull, Push, Onboarding and Conditions. This structure was designed to create focus for discussions, and to test a conceptual framework for a TER Program. Each meeting centered on one of four areas as a way to structure discussion, bringing in presentations from Task Force members and other experts. This section of the report delves into each of the meeting's presentations and discussions. It also brings in discussions and findings related to the four topic areas based on related conversations and research conducted in parallel throughout the time of the Task Force being convened and the months since.



Pull: Maximizing the employer's ability to attract to the job, firm, region, state

Push: How to find and grab the attention of the right people to connect with them

Onboarding: Ensuring successful transition into job and community for recruit and household

Conditions: External factors creating barriers to recruitment and attraction

Fit and Diversity

Throughout the structured four-part meetings, there were some important recurring themes that wove through the discourse. Two stand out as central to solving for talent recruitment: fit and diversity. These concepts are central to every recruitment action, and merit some review before delving into meeting details.

"Fit" means finding people with the right skills *who want to live here*. Fit is a cornerstone of successful recruitment, and retention. Marketing and recruitment can leverage connections with recreational visitors, people who ski or vacation in Vermont. The "Drop of Vermont" concept focuses on people who have some familial, or a personal connection, perhaps attended college in the region or have strong affinity for a feature notable to the region like winter sports.

In addition to this notion of fit, BDCC's research and New Chapter's recent experiences underscore the many other lifestyle or values affinities that can form the basis for a connection. Examples from recent successes include gardening and equestrian sports, but also job seekers looking for a company with values that echo their own such as sustainability, health, community and well-being. In designing recruitment solutions we have looked for ways to communicate possible lifestyle affinities through marketing, find people with those connections through data-driven tools, and accelerate personal engagement to leverage those linkages early in recruitment.

Guest Speakers, Presentations & Participants:

Bill Ackerman, Green Mountain Marketing and Advertising on targeting recruitment campaigns to audiences online to find “fit”, and the Rutland regional marketing and workforce recruitment campaigns.

Josh Hanford, ACCD Department of Housing and Community Development on housing on the state’s approach to Housing for All and how housing relates to workforce needs.

Vicky Senni, LetsGrowKids on childcare availability and quality in Windham County and Vermont and efforts to expand early childhood education and care statewide.

Overcoming the limited racial and ethnic diversity within Southeastern Vermont requires additional effort to find the kinds of connections that will appeal to candidates. This challenge will have to be taken on both within companies and organizations, and at the community level. BDCC has been a leader in bringing “I am a Vermonter” to this region, a statewide campaign to increase diversity and welcome for diverse employees in the workplace. The Town of Brattleboro has made its own commitment to address the underlying causes of lack of diversity in its own staffing. Only by working at every level, from schools and towns, through workplaces, will it be possible to overcome what is to some extent a vicious cycle where a lack of diversity may be making positions here less appealing to job candidates, in comparison to communities or organizations that more fully reflect the composition of the United States today.

In the near term, there are actions we can take to welcome every new hire more fully into the workplace and community. Through the BDCC & SeVEDS Southern Vermont Young Professionals and the active involvement of the region’s colleges we are able to facilitate linkages for new hires with a community that more closely resembles the nation’s makeup. In the near term, recruiters can highlight the broader region which offers towns and schools, including Brattleboro’s schools, with greater racial and ethnic diversity. It is also important that people understand the progressive culture which is typical of much of this region, and which distinguishes it from many other rural places.

However, given national trends this will not suffice. Our regional workforce shortage will worsen if we fail to entice and welcome a more diverse workforce into companies and communities. If we are to reach our CEDS goals and objectives and reverse population decline, expand our workforce, increase the number of younger workers, and also the skills and wages of the region’s workforce, we will only do this by attracting and retaining more people. Whether they come from other parts of the United States, or of the world, when this region succeeds in bringing talented people here, they will be drawing from populations that have the potential to shape the future demographics of Vermont in much the same way that historic waves of immigration and in-migration did in the past. This is a historic inflection point, where Vermont can grow to support the companies that want to grow here, and with that will come a new wave of Vermonters who will redefine what that means.

Task Force Meetings Overview

The format of this overview reflects the framing of each of Task Force meetings, as described to participants in the following manner:

GOAL: Walk out of each Task Force meeting with...

Actions New Chapter can walk forward

- Projects with identified partners to further develop and implement
- Implementation-ready ideas

Next steps for BDCC & SeVEDS, refine tools and identify solutions

Transferrable concepts that will form the basis of the TER program

- Tools, programs, support from BDCC & SeVEDS
- New collaborations across employers, sectors and scales (regional)
- More partners (realtors and recruiters, statewide orgs and programs etc.)

Problem identification - problems without partners, big gaps and opportunities

In each of the four sections below the overview of each of the four meetings is organized as follows:

- (1) The Challenge – what are the problems that each session was designed to take on.
- (2) Concepts and content – summaries of the presentations and discussions.
- (3) Findings – key takeaways, recommendations for New Chapter and for a TER Program.

Meeting # 1: PULL

The Challenges

This first meeting was premised upon previous findings that highlighted the connection between marketing and workforce recruitment, and the need to bring more people to the region. To be successful at recruiting will require creating increased awareness of opportunities, and a positive perception of Southern Vermont as a place to work and build a career. Marketing can help employers convey what is appealing about the region, enhancing recruitment efforts. Effective messaging will appeal to potential job-seekers who are a good “fit” in terms of lifestyle and amenities found here. The challenge will be to create a regional brand that is associated both with quality of life and with career opportunity, in order to appeal both to recruits considering a relocation, but also to their partners and families who may have to be sold on a relocation.

Meeting Content

The meeting presentations illustrated various points on the marketing “funnel”. With a job-seeker this may begin at the employer level with a job posting, or the employer’s marketing and recruitment of the job and workplace culture. Presentations on regional and state marketing and recruitment campaigns illustrated the value of linking and leveraging that with regional place-based marketing. Vermont’s statewide marketing and recruitment campaign is the top of the funnel where mutually reinforcing messages can draw audiences in at various points to build that message of lifestyle + opportunity.

SUMMARY OF PULL PRESENTATIONS



View of the Connecticut River from our Vermont office

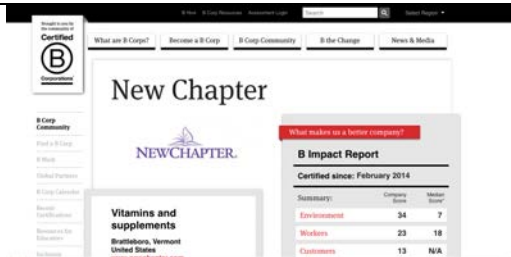
GreenRiver Software

Founder and CEO Michael Knapp presented how his job postings draw people into a company web site where career pages and job descriptions reflect both the regional culture and the company's values-driven work, to appeal to skilled people attracted to the lifestyle.
(left, view from Green River office as featured on company jobs page)



Mondo Mediaworks

Mondo, a Brattleboro firm, is currently developing a regional marketing and recruitment campaign for Rutland County. They use video to personalize the message and link work + play, with outdoor recreation as part of daily life for local residents.
(left, screen shot from Workforce Center of Excellence video showing Mondo team)



New Chapter

As a B-Corp and leader in corporate sustainability, NC's company culture should be a big draw for the millennial workforce. Bringing forward messaging and integrating with career pages may better ensure potential hires understand this part of the "benefits" package.
(left, New Chapter's B-Corp page which documents the depth of the company's commitment to sustainability)



SoVermont Sustainable Marketing & Recruitment

A regional marketing and recruitment program was developed by BDCC & SeVEDS with a plan to leverage small investments to create a big impact. Public and Private sector participants will deploy shared logos and branding, and create a touchpoint to connect everyone with the state's marketing efforts.
(left, mockup from the SoVT SMRP Campaign set to launch)



ThinkVermont

Commissioner Goldstein presented an update on the Agency of Commerce and Community Development marketing and recruitment campaign, which uses storytelling to promote Vermont as a great place to work and do business. The site features stories from each region, including a Southern Vermont portal that will be leveraged further with a regional campaign.
(left, pages from ThinkVermont web site –content is constantly refreshed)

Findings

Job Descriptions and Career Pages: Presenters stressed the importance of making visible the company culture, the local lifestyle, and how these fit together. Green River's CEO stressed the potential for New Chapter to emulate the success he has had, and to distinguish itself from other employers, by reflecting career and lifestyle values alignment in web sites and career pages. His approach is marketing-led recruitment that makes that connection obvious even before people reach a job description. Green River has learned to differentiate itself from others and appeal to employees who want to bike to work, bring a dog, and do meaningful work for good organizations. New Chapter has similar assets to leverage by bringing them to the forefront. New Chapter's values are embodied in its sustainability commitments and B-Corp status. Visitors to the Brattleboro offices experience a health-oriented, friendly and informal company culture. Those familiar with the products have come to trust in the integrity, sustainability and efficacy. These are all part of the brand recruitment can deploy.

Regional Marketing: Everyone agrees we can continue to attract people to the region base on its beauty, assets and lifestyle. But that's not enough. Marketing rural beauty and recreation to help recruiting is a strategy used all over the country, as rural communities fight the trends of depopulation and aging workforce. To stand out, regional marketing must be executed with strategy to achieve scale and reach, to create visibility and the right brand, and to differentiate this area from others.

Fortunately, through research and development of the Southern Vermont Marketing and Recruitment Program there has been brand and logo development, but also identification of key differentiators. New Chapter has been supportive of this collaborative marketing effort, including a letter of commitment as part of BDCC's unsuccessful grant proposal (Feb 2017). To solve for Pull at any scale, given small size of our region's employers, and therefore the small scale of their recruiting operations, we will use the strength of our scale and relationships to collaborate and create an advantage. The TER program will launch this campaign and New Chapter will benefit as part of a group of private and public sector partners creating a big marketing presence to promote Southern Vermont.

In the past year the Rutland region raised public and private funding to execute their own regional marketing and recruitment program. The regional partners there, including major employers, the regional development corporation and Chamber, educational and civic partners, have taken on their own population loss and workforce needs with a multi-year commitment to create and promote content designed to attract talent and investment to the region. The \$200,000 "Real Rutland" Campaign features real people, having real fun, and the tagline "Are you Vermont?" emphasizing the down-to-earth flavor of the Rutland region. The impetus for the campaign was employers unable to fill positions, but the broad collaboration illustrates how much more can be accomplished with a large, multi-partner effort.

The state's ThinkVermont web site offers attractive, timely content geared to the kind of audience talent recruiters seek to reach. Its related Ambassadors program leverages stakeholder networks to push that content out to an ever-expanding audience through social media, highlighting great headlines and assets. ThinkVermont and other statewide campaigns like outdoor recreation promotions can feed traffic into our regional and company web sites, and outlets through which more people can get to know Southern Vermont. By strengthening links these campaigns and career pages companies can build their ability to connect opportunity with lifestyle to attract people they need.

One of the immediate advantages of the Task Force was to help raise New Chapter's profile as a fast-growing company. Based on this increased visibility New Chapter was selected to be featured as part of the ThinkVermont campaign: the Commissioner of Economic Development and the state's marketing consultants visited New Chapter over the summer, and are working to develop media content that features New Chapter stories. New Chapter and our regional employers can use multiple platforms to raise visibility, and share content through cross-promotional efforts, generating a regional brand that conveys sense of opportunity and reaching new audiences all the time.

Recruitment, however, cannot just focus on Windham County or Southern Vermont. Recruitment that involves relocation requires marketing the broader region to provide sufficient choice in housing and communities. Personal support and relocation solutions are covered extensively in the On-Boarding section. However, a point to underscore is that the goal of growing Southern Vermont's population and workforce must be balanced with a need to sell the wider region to attract talent. Recruiters must promote the complete range of housing, community, and career options within the three-state economy of which Brattleboro is part.

It is also important as we move forward in collaborative marketing to ensure more people come to "see" this region more fully, to understand that Windham is deeply connected to surrounding counties. In fact, this economic region has a larger workforce than the area around Burlington, VT. Brattleboro is at the intersection of Route 9 and Interstate 91 and within 45 minutes of a dozen colleges, and 1.15 of Hartford airport, and 2 hours to Boston and 3 to New York. Access to labor, educational and training, and larger markets, is part of the sell to the people we need.

Additional Marketing and Recruitment Best Practices:

Other ideas that were discussed as important to "Pull:

- The need to stand out and emphasize **differentiators** – like access, the progressive lifestyle, and high concentration of culture (from Atlas Consulting research for Southern Vermont SMRP).
- We have to tell **stories**. This can be companies telling stories from their workforce, or regional and state promo that features recruitment oriented content (print, stories, videos) to help people to picture themselves here and show rural living in an attractive and personal light.
- Employers need to integrate **best practices** into their systems. Even small upgrades can help companies adapt web pages, career pages, job descriptions to compete for talent more effectively.

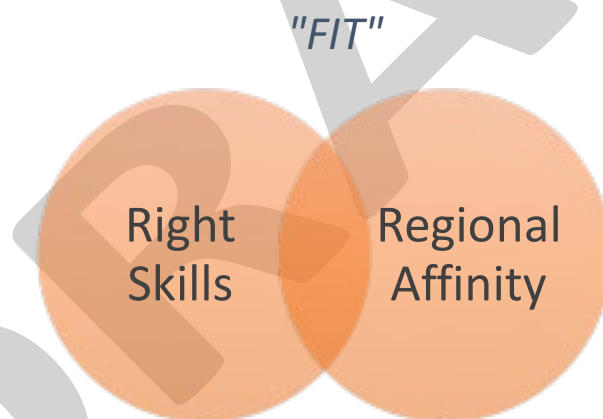
Meeting #2: PUSH

The Challenges

The problem our regional employers face involves a two-part fit. First they must find the people who have the right skills, in a highly competitive talent marketplace. Second, they have to identify people who will be inclined to consider working and living in an environment that, while attractive in many ways, lacks certain features many consider essential. Therefore, the Task Force focused on identifying methods to reach the right people with the right message through recruiting efforts. Given the investment that goes into recruitment, and the critical role many of these highly skilled workers play in a small organization, retention is a consideration central to the recruitment process. Somewhere in the process a sense of mutual fit between employee and employer to be discerned as well.

Meeting Content

People used to follow jobs, now jobs follow people. This sums up a massive shift which has turned economic development on its head, undermining long held assumptions about how employers can or should behave to get the talent they need. If good advertising means getting your brand or product in front of the exact, right people, successful recruitment today must follow the same model. “Push” means getting a job opportunity seen by person who is a “Fit”. It means establishing a direct connection with someone with the right skills, who wants to be here.



Marketing to talent is uniquely challenging. On the one hand, nearly everyone is casually looking for jobs, but few are actively seeking. This places the onus is on employers to reach them. Professional recruiters know this and use tools ranging from data mining and targeted marketing, to traditional social and professional networks. Most companies BDCC serves are too small to have in house, or routinely contract to, a specialist, someone whose job is solely to recruit. Yet they must find ways to emulate strategies larger organizations are using in order to reach audiences and individuals that fit. Therefore, in addition to the Task Force meetings BDCC staff and key volunteers devoted significant time to investigating additional resources including LinkedIn recruiter tools, Google’s new workforce API, and geo-fencing which enables geographic targeting of advertising. These findings have been incorporated into the development of BDCC’s Targeted Expertise Recruitment program.

SUMMARY OF PUSH PRESENTATIONS	
<p>New Chapter: Recruitment Overview</p> <p>In 2017 NC is filling 20 key positions. Human Resources presented an overview of practices and progress, In addition to helping the Task Force understand the kind of roles they need to fill, we learned about some unique challenges for New Chapter. For instance, in Brattleboro they are not part of an industrial cluster which means filling key positions requires reaching into regions where related companies are located, to find a critical mass of people with the right skills. A related risk is that with no similar firms nearby, a poor fit with a new hire can result in someone being stuck at New Chapter, the detriment of all.</p>	<p>With over 40 hires in the past year, several best practices at New Chapter stood out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting jobs on multiple online platforms including “B Work” a B-Corp specific hiring site, but 2/3 of traffic comes via Indeed and their own career pages. • Leveraging the company’s growth as a selling point in recruitment. • Management, including the CEO, tend to be deeply involved not only in the vetting of candidates, but helping to identify ‘fit’ factors such as personal interests, and to solve for possible barriers such as spousal career transfer.
<p>Green Mountain Marketing and Advertising: Reaching the Right Audience</p> <p>Chief Marketing Officer Bill Ackerman outlined a campaign for the Rutland Medical Center which had two distinct features. First, they front-load imagery that blends work with play to ensure an audience will associate lifestyle features with the idea of Rutland as a place of work and opportunity.</p> <p>This campaign was pushed into highly specific markets to be seen by the workforce RMC needs. They used banner ads and social media buys that targeted regions with large numbers of health professionals. With this approach it was possible to put ads about healthcare jobs in Vermont, with a blended message about work + play, in front of thousands of people who are a potential fit in terms of skills, thereby increasing the odds of touching that person who is also a fit in terms of lifestyle or other Vermont affinity.</p>	<p>Push Marketing Best Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reach both passive and active job seekers use job postings pushed out via social media. • Company career pages always need more imagery – context, people, video. • Social media builds a targeted audience. • Boosting posts = low \$ to target geographically. • Digital marketing tools allow millions of impressions but only paying for clicks. • Boost Indeed postings in target markets. • Google ad words can target to zip codes with the right talent you want. • Leverage current employees & local social networks like young professionals to help push out to their networks. • Dual purpose marketing - promote year-round attractors for off-season tourism which are also workforce attractors.
<p>Data Tools to Enhance Search</p> <p>Preliminary findings on data tools revealed ways to facilitate the push to target audiences and individuals, to give small firms the ability to act like big recruiters. Tools like EMSI Workforce Insight (or Burning Glass) help identify groups by occupation or job, and characteristics to predict fit, like alumni of VT colleges. These tools offer the ability to find individuals but may be more useful in identifying markets for geofencing or events. LinkedIn and Google go further, with an ability to find people based on a wide range of parameters, and to reach those individuals directly, but require more skill or cost.</p>	<p>Potential uses for data tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding an individual suited to a specific position who also has a personal fit due to hobbies, educational background, lifestyle affinities. • Locating groups of individuals with the right fit for targeted outreach and advertising pushed into these markets. • Identifying regions where events or marketing may find receptive and appropriate audience. • Driving messaging out to likely targets, pushing traffic in to regional web site and job board, and career pages.

Findings

Given the competition for talent nationwide and the demographic trends we face in Southern Vermont, everyone will have to work harder to find and connect with the people we need to fill jobs. With the emergence of new forms of data mining and analysis, this turns out to be a rapidly evolving area of both resource development, but also of confusion. There are not clear answers for the challenge employers face, and that we face as a region.

There are also few identified best practices or models in terms of how rural areas are handling this. However, success stories seem to highlight being strategic about how to reach the people who are a good fit, and finding ways to maintain and strengthen that connection throughout the recruiting process. This means emulating practices that are working for high-value campaigns, and high-powered recruiters. It will also mean some experimentation. For instance, in conversations with both EMSI and LinkedIn, the proposed use of these powerful tools by a non-profit, on behalf of a collaborative group of employers in a regional area, was a concept both exciting and new to these companies.

A related point is that outbound messaging, and the entire recruitment process, is undermined by underestimating the adjustment it takes to move to a rural area. By excusing the lifestyle as “not for everyone” means choosing to dismiss a segment of the target audience rather than attempting to bridge that gap. Given the talent supply problem, this oversight may unnecessarily further limit already limited talent pools we can draw from. In conversation with recent transplants, including people who had come back to the area due to deep ties, these professionals repeatedly emphasized the need for help to facilitate a transition to rural life. Suggestions included media to convey personal stories, a “guidebook”, and more methods to accelerate forming personal connections.

Pushing out: Marketing that reaches the right audiences

A great example of targeted job outreach based on values and affinity was New Chapter’s practice of using the B-Corp specific job posting platform to reach a values-based audience. The Task Force highlighted a variety of other methods, like finding people with a “Drop of Vermont” through high school and college networks, or tapping into extended social and family networks to reach an audience receptive to the Southern Vermont message. Through a TER Program BDCC will further develop and refile these kinds of partnerships and networks, collaborating with other cross-sector organizations concerned with talent attraction like Vermont Business for Social Responsibility (VBSR) and the region’s colleges to increase visibility of opportunities and reach receptive audiences.

The other half of that challenge is finding the right audience in terms of skills. With workforce analytical tools it is becoming easier to identify areas where there are more people with certain skill sets, and even to find areas where occupations are over-saturated and therefore with a workforce more inclined to consider relocation. A collaborative SoVermont Marketing and Recruitment campaign will be able use these analytical tools and market research to direct advertising that can drive traffic back to companies seeking talent. Geofencing (location based marketing services) and other methods can be used for mass marketing, but also is inexpensive enough for individual employers to use for job postings and career promotions that can reach audiences targeted by region or affinity.

There was a great deal of interest around additional opportunities for **cross-employer collaboration** in recruitment because of the perceived need to improve the region’s appeal and allure, something individual employers do not feel they can do alone. This goes beyond marketing, possibly

with a TER program coordinating recruitment events. These could be in region like a special weekend to welcome larger groups of prospective hires to the region with a focus on hospitality and personal connections. A recruitment marketing push could also involve going out into markets with special events, or presence at key locations, to promote opportunities with multiple employers.

Leveraging Networks

New Chapter and many local employers already activates networks like VBSR and B-Corp. Green River Software also participates in academic conferences and sector-specific online communities which yield valuable hiring connections. They recommended reaching further into scholarly and professional networks they connect to around the country to build a long-term pipeline for talent. This is a role that New Chapter management, more so than the HR group, could be encouraged to embrace more fully in order to support the efforts of the hiring team. A TER program will dedicate more staff to facilitating these kinds of networks and the relaying of job opportunities through various channels, something which BDCC does informally and is increasingly asked to do. But cultivating long-term relationships with professional peers will always be an internal task. Managers may not have the time or the organization's blessing to do this, and not all are inclined to this work.

BDCC developed a Backmapping Questionnaire as part of the Task Force research. This tool, as part of a TER program intake and assessment period, will help gather information from an employer's recent hires to identify and codify effective networks in which existing employees participate. Employee referral is a powerful tool, especially in a company that has been bringing in new people. New hires create opportunities to access more, broader networks. The backmapping process can also identify points in the recruiting process where additional support from a TER Program or employers can increase future success. This is covered more fully in the following sections.

Creating a "community of practice" among regional recruiters through a TER program will help expand those networks as well. In a recent visit to New Chapter, BDCC staff helped make a connection between HR and some specialized statewide economic development initiatives. The hiring team is looking to fill I.T. positions, an occupational sector that is in high demand here and everywhere. But two highly active Vermont tech networks with job boards and a strong social media presence have been building their own talent supply pipeline that New Chapter can leverage; Vermont All You Can Tech and the Vermont Tech Alliance.

A Southern Vermont Job Board

There has long been a desire on the part of some employers for a regional job board. It is part of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing and Recruitment Program, which grew out of a recommendation coming out of the CEDS planning process, and a BDCC & SeVEDS CEDS Project. A TER Program will provide an opportunity, finally, to begin rolling out this campaign.

New Chapter, while successfully using existing platforms, affirmed the value of a special site that would leverage individual marketing and recruitment actions by businesses and organizations, to increase the region's collective visibility and enhance the regional brand. This sentiment was shared by Green River Software. This points to a design that, rather than attempting to duplicate the functionality of existing job sites, would convey key messages about opportunity and lifestyle, and increase visibility of growing companies and sectors. Research into solutions being pursued in other

regions has confirmed the value of having one platform where multiple sectors, employers, and opportunities are displayed attractively to help convey that “sense of opportunity...which is part of the big sell.”

Some attributes of a regional job board will be:

- Links with regional and state marketing platforms
- Links with employer career pages
- A “talent centric” audience focus on people and lifestyle
- Content that conveys options, career pathways, and broader region
- Messaging that focuses both on possibility and opportunity, and culture and lifestyle

A Job Board will be situated within a larger marketing strategy and web design to ensure it adds value in the ways enumerated above. It must perform a role as destination for job seekers but also as a portal to other platforms such as employer career pages or Indeed, and link to lifestyle content specific to Southern Vermont. As part of the Task Force research, BDCC staff along with several key volunteers specializing in tech and marketing, have been meeting regularly to develop concepts relating to the data and web elements that might be present in a fully articulated TER program and regional marketing and recruitment effort. These conversations have helped to define the complementary functions that digital tools can provide, and how they might be deployed to the benefit of multiple entities.

The TER Program proposal, which is found in a separate document created for the BDCC Board of Trustees, outlines an overall design for BDCC to deliver recruitment support. The proposal describes an incremental build towards a fully articulated set of web platforms and connectivity, starting first by identifying the cohort of users who would be willing to invest and participate in collaborative marketing actions. New Chapter’s leadership in this has already been invaluable. Based on recent discussions, several additional local firms have indicated they see value in a job board as outlined above and want take part as well.

Meeting #3: ON-BOARDING

The Challenges

One of the most surprising findings from the Task Force and related research was how often a conversation can begin with recruitment, but land quickly on housing and logistics. This prompted research that focused on actions in recruitment and early on-boarding to better introduce the recruit to the area to find a new home and community. This perspective fits with New Chapter's strategy of treating recruitment holistically. Their understanding that in recruitment one is dealing with a household, not just an individual, reflects best-practices in recruitment nationwide.

Part of understanding New Chapter's onboarding challenges meant understanding that conducting recruitment in a rural area is uniquely difficult. An executive moving to a metro area will have more housing, childcare, healthcare, diversity, spousal employment, schools and amenities to choose from. But the assets are also easier to see than they are in a rural place, more likely to be online, visible, easily knowable. Moreover, small companies cannot typically offer the extensive relocation assistance provided by larger firms. This creates, therefore a problem of needing to design on-boarding to emulate the experience of a metro or full-service relocation in order to be competitive.

Our challenge, within the scope of TER program development, was to identify ways in which improved messaging, information, networking and services could mitigate conditions that unnecessarily create barriers to recruitment, successful onboarding, and retention.

Meeting Content

Onboarding also provides a special opportunity to leverage some of the best features of this region's companies and communities. Creating a personal and personalized process fits with the relationship-based manner in which organizations tend to operate here. However, there are also important advantages in using external onboarding help from a TER Program. It would offer a partner who is also a neutral party, working towards the employer's goal of attracting the target recruit but able to offer relocation support with a degree of privacy and separation from the hiring process. This can be an appealing benefit for potential hires and one that sets the job offer apart from others.

The concept put forward was a complementary process of external on-boarding support to deploy during multiple phases: pre-hire, hire, welcome and early onboarding of an employee. A Formalized and transparent process will enable candidates to see how a transition will be supported. Needs would be identified through an intake process, with support focused on key "Pain Points" like:

- Social Network / Spousal Hire
- Interim Housing Needs
- Selecting a Community & Home

New Chapter identified some examples of the value of these services. One was overcoming a problem of people jumping into the housing market too soon because they can't find good interim housing, and then finding the job is a poor fit. Second, they have seen that a difficult transition can, itself, undermine the success of that employee's fit, even if things eventually settle out: "if you don't get the secret sauce right, right up front, you lose the person down the road."

SUMMARY OF On-BOARDING PRESENTATIONS



Military Sponsors: Highlights from onboarding based on best practices in the Armed Services Sponsor programs were presented.

- Military “Sponsors” program assign clear responsibility for on-boarding
- Intake assessment identifies needs
- Features clear guidelines, assignments and goals
- Encompasses whole family system
- Household needs are treated as essential and complementary to employer internal on-boarding

BDCC draft Intake Form: Hiring manager would use this to initiate support from BDCC to

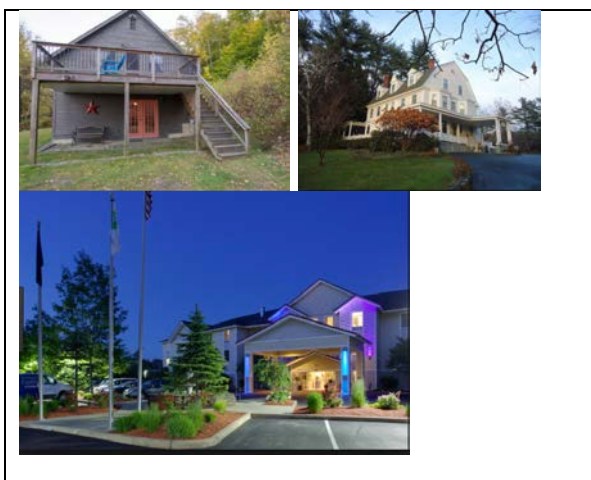
- Activates White Glove Network to form early connections with community and professional peers
- Identifies key partner and family needs to tailor network facilitation around career, housing, special needs
- Identifies interim housing needs
- Facilitates liaison with **Relo Referral Realtor Network**



Relo Referral Network: the TER Program team will include Realtors who work with employers as recruitment partners and who will:

- Be Responsive to unique relocation needs
- Be Knowledgeable, positive, regional marketers
- Understand & communicate community profiles
- Expose people to diverse aspects of lifestyle

The realtors become part of our White Glove Network as versatile problem solvers who provide interim & long-term relocation support, and serve as another general touchpoint & resource for talent.

	<p>Interim Housing Resources: To ensure a great start TER will work with the Realtor Relo Network to identify and expand suitable options for short and medium duration housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Chain motel and hotel options • Inns, B&Bs, Furnished Apartments • Air BnB & VRBO Homestay: • Corporate housing & property management partnerships • Relationships with an extended network of Realtors
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Findings

Recruiting has been a top priority for New Chapter in 2017. To succeed in attracting the talent needed to fill 20 positions, management and HR have taken a broad view of recruitment. It is fortunate that company's leadership are personally experienced with relocation and therefore understand both the challenges, and the importance of solving for a whole host of issues. When the right person comes along, housing or a hesitant spouse can ruin an otherwise happy fit unless special steps are taken.

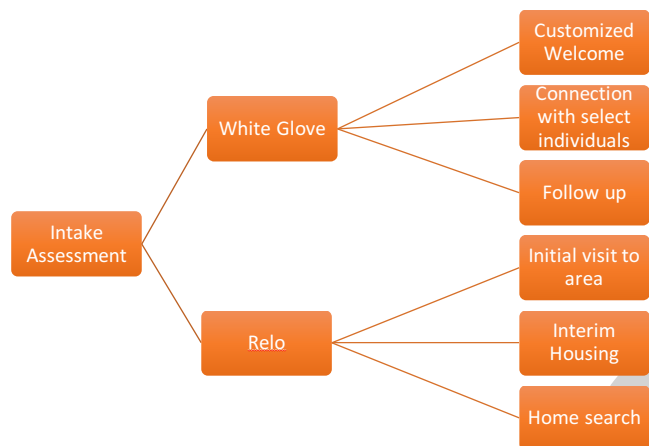
A TER Program will complement the ways in which an employer is introducing a potential hire, and then employee, into the workplace. This includes navigating the quirky housing stock, nearly invisible interim housing options, a quirky job market for spouses, and numerous small and distinct communities whose character is not obvious to outsiders.

It also means understanding the value of solving for some of these practical concerns, not only in terms of finding that person who is a great 'fit' in terms of skill and lifestyle, but also in the onboarding of a household as is often the case with experienced workers. When it comes to cultivating a more diverse workforce, helping solve for these kinds of barriers becomes an opportunity to go the extra distance to welcome people who may not from the outside perceive such a welcome.

Onboarding from office through community: Task Force research and discussion sought concrete ways to create a strong continuum from internal onboarding at New Chapter to community onboarding. The goal was not only to improve outcomes, but also to identify a more sustainable and consistent method that replicates that personal touch but requires less of managers and the HR team. Some of what was presented and reviewed was based on that military model. Implementation at New Chapter or in another company would be facilitated by a clear outline of the internal roles and actions for onboarding, and where the company handoff occurs from that in house to the external social network or white glove support, or realtor network.

This means, effectively, treating recruitment and on-boarding as a continuum that begins with marketing the welcome and support as part of marketing the position, through "welcome onboard", to the point of successful grounding in the position and community.

Keeping it personal, but scalable: In conversation with New Chapter and other employers it became apparent that managers, CEOs and owners are often deeply involved in recruitment. This is typical of small employers with small HR offices, but also a preference for that hands-on approach. Formalizing roles and responsibilities helps scale up and sustain efforts in order to maintain the personal touch. Nonetheless, it was clear that additional social connections and logistical assistance plays an important role in attracting, recruiting and retaining people to a region where it can be hard to find friends, a dry-cleaner, day-care or spousal employment without that personal network.



Focus on key areas – partner hire and housing:

While onboarding and social networks and support were the over-arching themes, based on New Chapter’s experience and our research, there are recurring needs that can be clearly, deliberately addressed and there is value in doing so. Partner career support would benefit from a very specific set of actions to move a resume around or facilitate high-value introductions.

With housing, just as with partner employment, a seemingly peripheral topic can create the impression of difficulty or real

difficulties. Perceived or real challenges can be equally destructive to a recruitment process. Similarly great emphasis was placed on housing as an impediment to recruitment by Task Force members, professionals we interviewed, and HR and managers at other firms. This inspired a collaboration with John Bertucci and Meg Streeter Real Estate, which gave rise to the concept for a Realtor Relo Referral Network. The TER Program will work with that network, a team of Realtors who will become partners in the recruitment process, a resource for employers like New Chapter rely upon.

Shortly after the Task Force meetings had been completed, BDCC identified a program that has been implemented in other parts of the country. Connect Consulting created a highly structured “Concierge” approach that has been tested and refined, with proven results in terms of accelerating partners finding jobs, improving ROI on recruiting (people accepting offers), and retention. They have created a program that is so transparent and clear that this high-value partner support as part of the recruitment support package has become a major selling point.

Early conversations with this firm are promising. Their model is based on a multi-employer partnership. They are able to illustrate the dollar savings that a successful recruitment and retention program produces, and have provided some estimates based on high-level positions currently available in Windham County at this time. They use an industry-standard assumption that each time a position must be filled it requires between 100% and 150% of the position’s salary *in addition to the salary paid*. With that data they are helping us to quantify the costs of the talent supply problem for our employers, and the potential savings that an effective TER Program can deliver.

Meeting #4: CONDITIONS

The Challenges

As mentioned already, a recruitment conversation often moves quickly to external factors that add impediments. These can be as broad as “everyone wants to be in a city now” or “we don’t have a mall”, to very specific factors such as the lack of related firms and therefore talent pool within an industrial sector, and the related challenges that creates for connecting with or attracting talent. The Task Force took one meeting to probe in detail some of major external factors to better define and understand how they impact recruitment. Housing, childcare and diversity affect New Chapter’s hiring and retention. To briefly summarize some challenges identified:

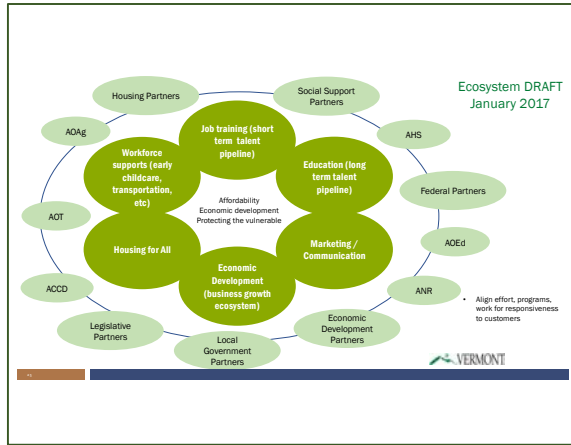
- Housing options in the region are limited especially in comparison to other national markets where recent development has occurred. Old homes abound. There are bargains at the high end, but mid-level housing is costly and age / condition an issue.
- Cost of living is high, in relation to wages. This can come as a surprise to people as they begin to consider a move. When regional assets are poorly understood, cost can undermine appeal.
- Childcare is limited both in supply and location, a challenge for working families with real consequences in the workplace.
- As with many things here, housing and childcare solutions are often small or informal. Navigating this without having established social networks is nearly impossible.
- A lack of ethnic and racial diversity in the population and therefore in most workplaces may be a serious deterrent in terms of trying to attract more diverse workers and their families, which further limits the pool of people who “fit”. Stacking on top of the skills + lifestyle fit additional, unnecessary constraints makes the recruitment lift even more difficult than it already is.

Meeting Content

External factors can become barriers to recruitment. This Task Force meeting provided an opportunity to delve into more detail on what these factors look like in Vermont and Windham County, without expectation that we can find immediate solutions. The Task Force took this opportunity to better understand which challenges are common across employers. Presentations helped identify some of touchpoints with policy and programs that might, in the future, help create solutions.

Presentations were made by three subject-area specialists. Josh Hanford Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development talked about how the current administration’s “Housing for All” policy fits within a broad and integrated approach to economic development, including housing as a piece of attracting and retaining workforce. Vicky Senni from LetsGrowKids presented data and research on the lack of access to licensed and affordable childcare, and why investing in policy and programs creates long term benefits in our workforce. Peter Elwell, Town Manager for Brattleboro, described a recent and ongoing effort to change how the town recruits and hires, based on its own lack of racial and ethnic diversity among staff. The town is using this opportunity to take a deep dive into specific practices, workplace culture, and to prepare itself for new opportunities to diversify its workforce as the town, like all regional employers, faces increasing numbers of retirements in the coming years.

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS PRESENTATIONS



Housing for All - Sample Strategies:

- Reduce barriers to development: -Align local and state permitting, incentivize municipalities to update and simplify zoning regulations
- Support housing needs data collection on regional market demand, needs in employment centers
- Reduce the cost per housing unit
- Increase the number of net new units of housing
- Rehab existing, unused, underutilized units
- Create opportunities/incentives for small scale, private landlords and incremental redevelopment
- Explore innovative financing for downtown development



Childcare and Early Childhood Education – State and County needs:

- 73% of infants and toddlers in Windham County do not have access to high-quality programs
- Many don't have access to licensed & registered programs
- In Vermont 68% of infants don't have access to any regulated programs
- Research on early childcare validates investment at this stage pays off throughout a child's lifetime
- Let'sGrowKids is focused on increased public investment in critical stages of early development



It is the policy of the Town of Brattleboro to guarantee equal opportunity to all qualified applicants and to all employees. The Town will not discriminate with respect to initial appointment, advancement, and general working conditions against any person regardless of their age, race, biological sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, religious or political affiliation, or disabilities. The Town of Brattleboro is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we strongly encourage people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ applicants, and people from other underrepresented groups to apply, recognizing and respecting that diverse perspectives and experiences are valuable to our team and essential to our public service.

Diversity from the ground up in Brattleboro:

- Vermont Partnership for Diversity pointed out the lack of staff diversity
- Town Manager prepared a report on increasing diversity presented September 19th 2017
- The Selectboard unanimously accepted recommendations on inclusion, diversity & equity
- The report highlights local schools have 20% non-white students - "diversity is here"
- Town formed a recruitment outreach network for job postings to reach more diverse audiences
- Town materials are being revamped, and trainings are in the works for town employees

Findings

This fourth meeting touched on areas typically considered the realm of policy and the marketplace, not employers. However, we heard over and over again that these factors may affect recruitment. Conversely, the instances where housing, childcare and diversity and childcare factored positively into a relocation experience only served to underscore the potential for these to become additional attractors, and regional differentiators. Some key findings from this and other meetings:

Our homes and communities must be attractive to the people we need. People who have sold homes in an expensive market elsewhere enjoy excellent choices, even bargains. But not everyone's needs are satisfied. It would be useful to understand housing choices made by recent transplants. At New Chapter with over half of the 20 positions filled, none are reported to have chosen Brattleboro—a lost opportunity. The spending power, social capital, intellectual capital we attract to high level positions would benefit the region and state more fully if we could land people here.

Windham County has a flat and aging population. If BDCC and SeVEDS are to leverage recruitment as part of a strategy to grow the population and add workforce here, Southern Vermont has to attract more residents and workforce. Given the short window for relocations (a week for the transition is typical, with one previous trip to find housing and interview). Recruiters can build relationships with knowledgeable realtors who excel at finding community fit, and who work well with clients remotely. This kind of relocation support will be features of the TER Relo Referral Network.

Childcare trends towards fewer spots may require employers to become proactive. Prior to the Task Force, New Chapter and the Brattleboro Retreat had already been talking possible collaboration. The Retreat has an on-site childcare for employees, a benefit unique to the region's largest employer, and one which aids in recruitment. Access to Retreat childcare for employees may help New Chapter, and help the Retreat finance a much-needed expansion. Childcare needs will likely grow since number of childcare spots available in Vermont remains constrained due to factors such as low current demand from an aging population, an aging childcare workforce, and a new regulatory framework that small providers found too onerous. From May to November 2016 Vermont lost over 50 home-based providers and 500 slots. This trend fails to support a need to grow and reduce the age of our workforce.

Community diversity will help recruit a more diverse workforce. The presentation from Peter Elwell on diversity in the Brattleboro described the town's new commitment to examine and address the underlying reasons for the town staff lacking racial diversity. New Chapter's CEO is forthcoming about having made a personal choice to select a community in the five colleges area of Massachusetts which, based on demographic data, would better reflect his own family's background in order for his children to enjoy a school and community environment where they would feel welcome.

However, the region's diversity is not as low as it appears from the outside. Brattleboro schools are 20% non-white and diversity has been growing steadily. BDCC's WFCoE and regional workforce partners are working to accelerate changes in workplaces through programs that connect students with employers directly. As the region's workforce continues to change due to replacements based on an increasing number of retirements, the opportunity to bring people from more backgrounds into the workforce will be tremendous. Based on conversations with other employers, it is clear that there is a wide range of workplace cultures and practices, with room to improve how they seek and welcome diversity. The Town of Brattleboro's leadership in this area comes at an important time when there is a need for local models and best practices for reaching out to, welcoming, and retaining a diverse workforce in the workplace and in communities.

New Chapter: Best Practices and Recommendations

New Chapter provided valuable direct feedback throughout the Task Force process. Testing ideas in “real time” as New Chapter conducted multiple high-level searches made it possible for the Task Force to understand the recruitment “pain points”, and what kind of support could be most useful. This section of the report focuses specifically on New Chapter’s experience and response to TER Program concepts being explored. Recommendations are presented with some ways in which New Chapter might continue developing recruitment practices based on research and findings from the Task Force, and where the BDCC TER Program will pick up and provide support going forward.

Current Best Practices

The value of this opportunity to work with New Chapter on the issue of talent attraction cannot be overstated. This is a growing company with national reach, one which has one of the most robust human resources and recruiting departments in the region. New Chapter’s participation helped bring a group of innovative leaders to the table. The generosity of these participants made possible a deep, rigorous, multi-faceted learning and program development process.

New Chapter has already implemented many best practices and leveraged key assets for recruitment, including but not limited to:

- Thinking big and long term about recruitment
- Management direct involvement in recruitment and onboarding
- Promoting multiple high-level jobs to create a sense of opportunities in a growing company
- Using best practices in online job advertising: company career web pages with updated listings, LinkedIn career pages, Indeed and other platforms
- Offering the best of both worlds: a global brand, with local feel and founders touch
- Values that resonate for young workers - a commitment B-Corp values and sustainability
- Creating a workplace that is comfortable and healthy, high tech and professional
- Cultivating a highly experienced Human Resources team and VP level leadership
- Leveraging the tri-state region to sell diverse career and living options
- Understanding recruitment + relocation can mean “hiring” a household, not just an individual
- Internal Onboarding attention such as new-hire meetings and buddy system
- Attention to external community onboarding supports including investment in SoVermont Young Professionals and working with Brattleboro Retreat on childcare

New Chapter’s collaborative approach made this work possible, and provides the model we need to move forward with programmatic support. A TER Program will need a critical mass of employers to support and invest in collaborative solutions like regional marketing and a job board. New Chapter’s leadership has been, and will continue to be, essential, particularly in working with organizations who have not yet grasped the extent of the talent supply challenge.

Potential Gains

In working to identify models, programs and consultants to help BDCC design and deliver a TER Program, we identified some metrics for the true cost of recruitment. While this information was not directly reviewed with the Task Force, it complements and confirms the qualitative costs that were discussed. With the goal of increasing recruitment ROI for employers, it seemed fitting to include in this report an example of direct costs employers experience. These replacement costs are above and beyond the salary itself. They measure everything from lost productivity, recruitment costs, management involvement, training, and other related costs. The table below with some examples relevant to the Brattleboro region underscore just how expensive recruitment can be.

Southern Vermont (Non Metropolitan Area)

Occupation	Average Annual Salary (Southern VT Area)	Total Direct and Indirect Replacement Cost (150 % under 100K, 213 % Over 100k) for Southern VT Area
Pediatrician	163,740	\$348,766
Psychiatrist	208,000	\$443,040
Mechanical Engineer	74,590	\$111,885
Family and General Practitioners	210,720	\$448,834
Internists, General	224,310	\$477,780
Marketing Manager (3)	122,620	\$261,181
S/W Developer, Applications	92,950	\$139,425
S/W Developer, Systems Software	208,000	\$443,040
Financial Manager	118,470	\$252,341
Personal Financial Advisor	76,910	\$115,365

Estimates from Connect Consulting based on their methodology and experience with client regions. Salaries based on Bureau of Labor Standards, except Vermont (Statewide) average annual salary was used for Marketing Managers (Southern Vermont data unavailable).

Recommendations: Independent and TER Supported Next Steps

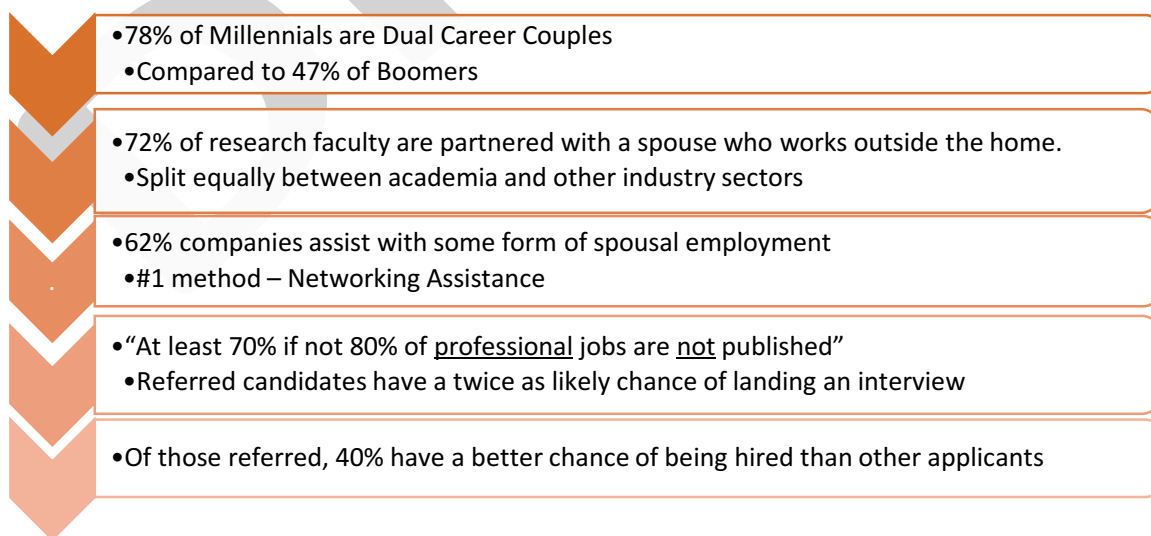
New Chapter has by now filled over half of the twenty positions for which they have been recruiting. The five categories of recommendations outlined below are based on New Chapter best practices, and on feedback from them about what they found most useful in the Task Force presentations.

More detailed recommendations included are for continued, strategic growth in these key areas, highlighting where a TER Program will come in to play.

Improve perception of the region, jobs and opportunities here to attract talent.

- New Chapter can benefit by connecting with the state of Vermont’s marketing and recruitment ThinkVermont web site. Linking New Chapter career pages will leverage place-based marketing of the state and Sothern Vermont, without having to create new content.
- As more companies, visitors and “Ambassadors” like BDCC staff use that portal, which promotes lifestyle and opportunities side by side, it is helping us demonstrate the huge opportunity for collaborative marketing, to pool resources and work across sectors.
- Materials that constitute a “welcome packet” are available from regional sources like the Brattleboro Chamber, or customized to introduce potential hires to the regional amenities. Recruitment oriented welcome materials for recruiters to use will be part of a TER Program.
- Sell the area to talent with the “differentiators”. Nature and beauty don’t help us compete against other rural areas, and things like a high concentration of higher ed and progressive culture, to world class food and proximity to Boston and NYC are not clear to outsiders.
- As TER launches, New Chapter will part of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing and Recruitment Program. The company will benefit from a broad effort to shape and export messaging on the region’s assets and opportunities here especially when it comes to increasing appeal to partners and families.
- Ultimately the SoVT SMRP will dovetail with TER with the launch of a regional Job Board, somewhat as a platform for specific jobs but envisioned mainly for cross-promotion of great companies and opportunities in the region, in order to sell the region. Elevating the regional brand will have deep and lasting impact on New Chapter’s ability to recruit and retain talent.

Connect Consulting on the Value of Accelerating Networks, November 2017



Market the broader region.

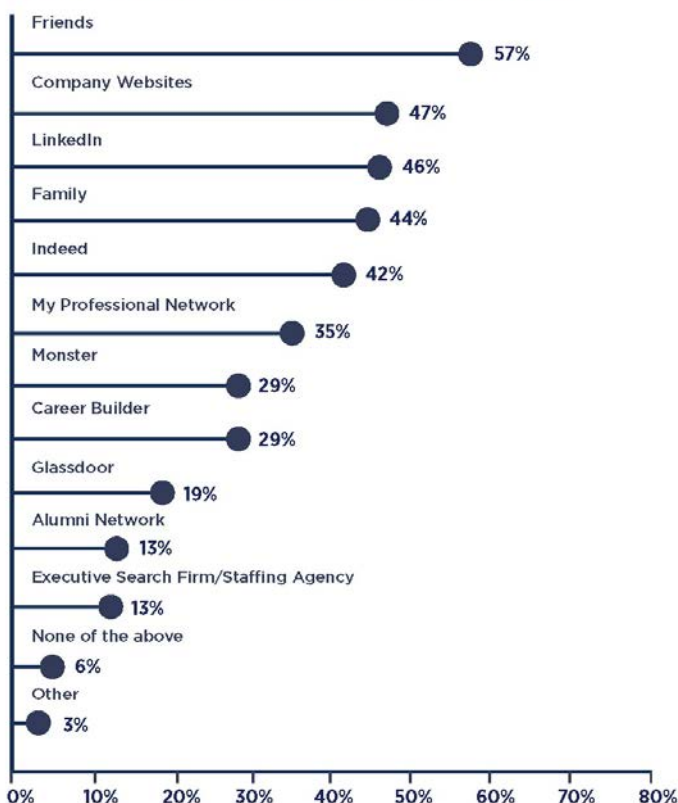
- New Chapter already markets the broader region because they have found it works: Most recent recruits are not choosing Brattleboro or Vermont. While this is a “lost opportunity for Vermont,” in the words of the CEO, the broader region nonetheless affords recruits and their families a much more diverse range of career and living opportunities, as well as amenities, along the 91 and route 9 axes and three state area.
- Backmapping: Interviewing recent transplants in the firm would help to identify the factors that helped, and hindered, in attracting them here. BDCC has developed a questionnaire that will help New Chapter begin to methodically assess, and incorporate findings into communications with prospective hires.
- White Glove and Realtor Relo Network: TER will provide additional help selling the region with a supportive team of realtors across the region.

Promote connection between company values and product, and the job opportunities.

- New Chapter found it helpful to see how Green River Software projects company culture through the web site, and leverages this region’s natural and cultural assets to connect with people who will be a lifestyle fit.
- New Chapter already uses the B-Corp job site to promote positions. There may be opportunities to improve visibility there, or to bring that brand forward when posting on other platforms like Indeed and LinkedIn. New Chapter’s job descriptions, online presence and career pages can more fully exploit the appeal of the B-Corp values and other value differentiators like product excellence
- New Chapter’s HR team has been adapting job descriptions to reflect the work-life balance and lifestyle appeal that helps to sell the region. Recruitment may require the sort of attention typically paid to brand promotion in order to attract talent. This additional marketing and communications strategy is above and beyond the typical demands placed on HR and thus requires resources.
- VBSR is increasingly promoting the use of company values to attract talent like their “Creating Irresistible Companies” conference on November 7th, which featured several Brattleboro firms. As a leader in recruiting talent to Vermont New Chapter should continue to be engaged in this statewide discourse and participating as fully as possible in cross-promotional opportunities involving some of the state’s most desirable employers and hottest companies.
- New Chapter hires a wide range of people and is striving to increase diversity. They have been successful putting forward a range of attractors that expands, rather than narrows, the field of people who ‘fit’. Continuing to do so will require managers and HR to either be increasingly knowledgeable regional marketers.
- The BDCC TER Program will leverage key differentiators. This includes aspects that fit neatly with the product and workplace brand of New Chapter: natural products, active and healthy

lifestyles, innovative and values driven companies (B-Corp and VBSR members). Drawing attention to what sets the region apart will help our employers compete for talent.

TABLE B: SOURCES USED TO SEARCH FOR NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES



Instead of just trying to reach potential talent directly, economic development organizations should equally prioritize influencing some of the sources that matter most to talent—such as company websites, LinkedIn and Indeed. It is also important to note that most of the top sources are in the court of local employers, not economic developers.

Development Counsellors International 2017 Q1 Quarterly Research Report

targeting can reach certain audiences more effectively, and increase the chances of finding the limited number of people with that skill + lifestyle fit. New Chapter may consider working with a marketing specialist to use social media and online ads promoting company brand and lifestyle here. Again, this form of marketing is highly specialized and constantly changing, which is why additional expertise from marketing and media specialists can be invaluable.

- In an environment where many of the people New Chapter needs may not be “active” job seekers, we anticipate these challenges will only worsen. Powerful tools are available, but the price is high. LinkedIn Career Pages and job listings add substantial cost but among a certain

Find and reach the right people with new approaches and new tools.

- With no true peer companies in the region, New Chapter has to reach into places like Florida and New Jersey for certain people, and into big metro markets for others. They have dedicated substantial resources to this effort and are therefore succeeding, but stronger pipelines and repeatable, scalable practices will be critical to sustainability in the recruitment program.

- Backmapping or surveying recent hires can identify networks to use in future recruiting.

- New Chapter is working hard to put its job descriptions in front of the right people and wants new ways to do that. BDCC staff met recently with the HR team to review EMSI Modeling and tools to find populations with skills they want. We also identified sub-sector platforms to reach certain skill sets, like two VT tech groups which help firms from every sector connect with the IT talent they need. It will be important to track whether this produces results.

- Geofencing and other means of targeting can reach certain audiences more effectively, and increase the chances of finding the limited number of people with that skill + lifestyle fit. New Chapter may consider working with a marketing specialist to use social media and online ads promoting company brand and lifestyle here. Again, this form of marketing is highly specialized and constantly changing, which is why additional expertise from marketing and media specialists can be invaluable.

segment of the workforce LinkedIn is the platform of choice by a wide margin. With additional investment HR staff can access powerful data to filter people by the skills + lifestyle affinity to find fit, and can connect directly with these people.

- Empowering managers to spend time cultivating specific professional and academic networks, and to work collaboratively with HR, may expand New Market's hiring reach.
- Part of the TER strategy will be to make these targeting functionalities available to employers, with lower barriers to entry in terms of cost, personnel, and technology. TER will target audiences with the regional recruitment message using tools like EMSI and LinkedIn, or other workforce data sources being considered by the state as well as emerging options with Google.

Onboarding within company and community will remain a critical part of recruitment.

- At the very start of the Task Force New Chapter brought in a high-level recruit who was visiting the region with their family. BDCC assembled a network to connect them with in-region hosts to make professional connections for their spouse, and help with community selection. New Chapter's approach is exemplary– taking the networking needs and needs of the whole family as part of the recruitment process.
- New Chapter can do this for more people, not just to recruit them but to improve fit and retention early on. The recruitment costs shown earlier illustrate how expensive lack of retention can be. The Vice President of HR pointed out negative experiences early on can undermine a hire's long term fit and commitment. The reverse is true, which is why New Chapter needs to find ways to keep leveraging its own networks and BDCC's.
- Incorporating tips into recruitment about housing and childcare would help people who may not realize they need to ask. Many recent transplants have reported not understanding at first that to find something like a dry-cleaner or childcare involved personal conversations, not a google search. Offering, rather than waiting to be asked about something like interim housing ideas (for example use Airbnb, let us refer you to a realtor, Keene as a college town has more apartments) can save people time and make a move seem less daunting.
- While this personal approach may be inconsistent with corporate norms, it is an introduction to the regional culture and what makes us special which is the value we place on, and continued reliance on, personal networks. It's not just quaint. It is a hidden beauty of our region, and can be a differentiator from another cookie-cutter hiring experience.
- Structured in-house processes can be continued or developed – monthly new hire meetings, a buddy system, and company social events to expand that personal touch and ensure onboarding continues once people are hired. We underscore that the rural nature of this area places a special burden on employers to help their people through the early months as new bonds form with co-workers and communities.
- TER will further formalize these resources with a structured intake, realtor network, and interim housing listing.

A Targeted Expertise Recruitment Program

The Task Force and New Chapter pilot provided an opportunity to explore the concept of a recruitment support program delivered by BDCC and SeVEDS in three ways. First, the pilot provided a chance for BDCC to learn from New Chapter leadership and Human Resources professionals about their recruitment challenges during an intensive hiring phase. Second, the Task Force meetings convened a group of local, state and other experts and leaders to systematically look at recruitment from various angles. Third, during the six months of Task Force work BDCC and SeVEDS staff conducted research and discussions to understand a wide range of initiatives, services and tools that might offer models and solutions for a place-based recruitment support program.

We learned, among other things, that a recruitment program will help a wide range of Windham region employers for the following reasons:

- Recruitment is expensive, and unfilled positions are damaging to organizations
- It is a drain on companies to devote so much time and resources to recruiting
- This is likely to get harder as our workforce is aging, and competition for talent growing
- Key strategies can only be effective if there are a lot of participants - like marketing and social media
- Help in some areas like household relocation issues and partner career support may be most appropriate coming from an entity outside the hiring firm
- Most small companies don't and won't ever have enough in-house recruitment help but many still need high-level people on a routine basis
- Some local companies find they get poor service from big recruiting firms, especially in terms of selling this region and finding that fit
- BDCC has relationships with our local companies and is already a trusted provider of other forms of technical assistance and support
- BDCC is invested in place-based recruitment on several levels including commitment to workforce, young professionals and population growth
- We think we can improve ROI on finding talent which is good for our employers and our economy
- Together we can act big...
- Yet still keep the personal touch that sets rural communities like ours apart

One of the major findings of the Task Force research has to do with a recruitment when it involves relocation. The disadvantage we face as a rural regional economy is really three-fold:

1. We have small employers, with fewer recruitment resources than larger firms, but with high-level hires they compete against those firms. Larger firms, even just in Burlington or Springfield, MA, can offer executive relo support services that include housing selection and partner job search.

2. A lack of relo-oriented realtors or interim housing, chain stores or malls, or traditional housing developments, can make this area hard to navigate for people considering a move here.
3. We have a small pool of local talent than metro areas, so relocation is nonetheless common.

It is already difficult to find a fit between people who have the right skills + regional affinity. Given the low yield for certain job postings, and the immense time and resources invested to find and screen candidates, employers cannot afford to lose a prospective candidate over factors that can be solved, even if these factors fall outside the traditional scope of the potential employer. This is a long term effort and employers will need to be part of a conversation that will involve public private collaboration, some new tools, local solutions and attention to policy. To succeed, we must emulate the amenities and environment available in larger markets and at larger companies, while leveraging the advantages of small scale and the strength of our personal relationships this scale allows.

TER Program Proposal

A proposal for a Targeted Expertise Recruitment Program of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation will be delivered to the organization's Board of Trustees on November 28, 2017. That proposal outlines an incremental implementation of a TER Program, one which would focus on areas where BDCC can provide direct support to individual employers to improve recruitment outcomes. Task Force research confirmed that targeted expertise recruiting problems are shared widely. It may sometimes impact just a small number of positions annually but these are often roles which, left unfilled, can be devastating to a small firm.

The TER Program is designed to serve multiple companies and a complete range of firms in terms of size and sector. It is designed to provide personalized support, and also to create additional value from collaborations and shared investment in marketing and events.

An important underlying assumption which comes from feedback from New Chapter and other CEOs is that companies like theirs will be helped by the success of other employers. Why? They see value in (1) improving critical mass of young and professional cadres, (2) elevating opportunities that solve for spousal hire or candidate career succession, and (3) generally improving the region's brand as a place of opportunity rather than leisure. Successfully marketing this as a place of opportunity and attracting more talent to the region will help every employer attract and retain the people they need.

The TER implementation recommendations touch upon some places where other organizations provide help, such as developing a Relocation Referral Network of realtors who can become partners with regional recruiters. The vision for a TER Program also involves building a partnership among HR professionals with whom BDCC TER staff would work directly, to form a user group that would help shape the program as we test and refine solutions. The TER program would roll out as a public-private partnership built on the commitment of an initial cohort of employers who see the value of investing in a program to complement their own efforts to bring new talent to the region.

Based on New Chapter's feedback and the other research conducted, BDCC staff identified major areas in which BDCC can provide direct support, develop materials and partnerships. The program design builds from the structure of the Task Force, but is adapted to leverage a broad

collaboration among employers, provide integrated support for each recruiter or hiring manager, and above all offer that personal touch that will help set us apart from other regions competing for talent.

The program is designed to be rolled out in three major Phases. This allows for it to grow incrementally, while offering value from the start to a range of employers. It will be designed as a public private partnership, with a cohort of investor-partner employers matching BDCC's initial investment. BDCC is seeking additional funding from public and private sources to match the organization's own investment in this important initiative.

In 2018 BDCC will ask New Chapter to become a partner in the Targeted Expertise Recruitment Program. New Chapter will be part of a cohort of businesses to whom BDCC will provide a suite of services as outlined in TER Program Proposal. New Chapter's vision and leadership has been critical from the start. When they graciously accepted BDCC's attempt to offer assistance, they transformed that idea into an initiative with value that has the potential to be far reaching and long term. The New Chapter team committed to a rigorous process that helped the Task Force test and refine concepts have shaped a program that has the potential differentiate this region's recruitment from that of our competitors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BDCC would like thank Anupam Martins, CEO of New Chapter, for generously committing his time and that of his team to this endeavor. We would be remiss if we did not offer special thanks to Lynn Bonnette who coordinated the meetings and created such a warm welcome for us all.

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Special thanks to our presenters: Bill Ackerman of Green Mountain Advertising, Josh Hanford Deputy Commissioner of DHCD, and Vicky Senni of LetsGrowKids. Finally, thank you to Serenity Wolfe at Stevens & Associates, to the SoVermont Young Professionals Advisory Board, and to the many young professionals who provided feedback and fresh perspective to shape these recommendations.

Communities all over the country are struggling with how to attract and retain the talent they need. Throughout this process we looked at numerous studies, programs and models. One of the most important findings was the reminder that the open, generous, collaborative, practical and action-oriented approach taken by New Chapter and the Task Force should not be taken for granted. This is not the kind of work that takes place everywhere. The spirit of this endeavor gives truth to our belief that we can, and will, succeed in our efforts to bring talent to the region.