



# BUILDING WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

*for Economic Progress*



BRATTLEBORO  
DEVELOPMENT  
CREDIT CORPORATION



## The Skills Gap

# BREAKING THE BARRIER

Vermonters can access high-wage, high-growth, high-opportunity, and high-skills careers. **Increased skills** are key to closing a wage gap to bring the region's \$17.74/hr on par with Vermont's \$18.23 average wage.

### PEOPLE NEED OPPORTUNITIES & EMPLOYERS NEED PEOPLE



*only 34 percent*

of VT high school students obtained a college degree within four years of graduating high school

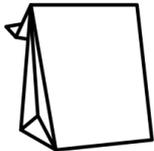
Source: Vermont Student Assistance Corporation VSAC



*55* VT occupations have *100+* job openings that offer at least *\$20/hour*

Source: McClure Foundation and Vermont Community Foundation

Many Windham high school students are *Low Income*, hindering access to resources



*45%* of high school students qualify for free and reduced lunch

*80%* of elementary school students qualify

*3 percent unemployment*

means few available workers and jobs going unfilled

**Contributors:** Low population growth & high rate of retirements



*\$17.74 per hour*

Southern Vermont has lower wages than the state and nation

*2,361*

fewer workers are in the Windham Labor Force than 10 years ago, a drop of 11%



“ *The more we can invest in the skills of our local workforce, the stronger and more successful our businesses will be.* ”

Thorin Magbie, Senior Director of HR at Mount Snow

*A thriving economy needs*

# TALENT

Today, limited access to a qualified workforce is a serious obstacle to growing rural regional economies. To increase the size and quality of the workforce, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) created the **BDCC WORKFORCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE** to execute employer-driven workforce development through programs and regional partnerships.

Our vision is that every Vermonter in the Windham Region has access to the education, training, and support they need to obtain meaningful, high-wage careers, so that no good job goes unfilled.

With our partners, BDCC is investing in a flexible, responsive workforce system to meet the evolving needs of employers while helping people access career opportunities. Guided by a grassroots SeVEDS Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, BDCC works to engage municipalities, residents, employers, and service providers throughout Southern Vermont in building a more vibrant regional economy.

We strive to increase wages and develop a 21st century labor force. Our goal is to give every working member of this community the best possible chance at a promising future.



Employers connect with job seekers at hiring events like the annual **Southern Vermont Career Expo** organized by VDOL, BDCC, Creative Workforce Solutions, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



BDCC's **Paid Internship Program** connects hundreds of college students with internship opportunities in the Windham region. Internships and other college-to-career programs retain highly educated workers: BDCC interns have a 25% hire-on rate.



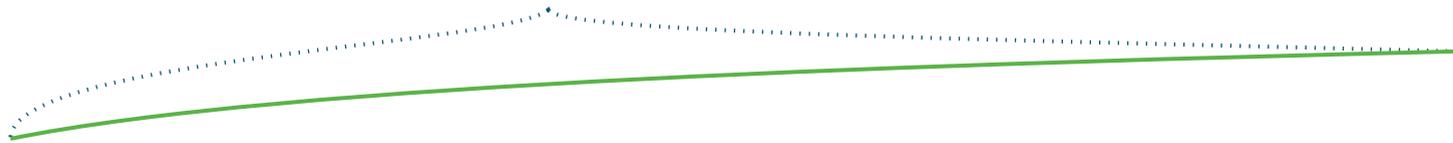
Students in all four regional school systems develop career awareness at events like middle school career expos and the **Sophomore Summit**, where local sophomores connect with dozens of local professionals and employers.

## *The Regional Workforce System*

# FROM CLASS TO CAREER

The **BDCC WORKFORCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE** is part of a regional workforce system that involves dozens of partners, programs, and initiatives working to create an effective talent pipeline. Through ongoing efforts to increase collaboration and coordination, these partners have come together as the Windham Workforce Development Network. This network is building one of

### EDUCATION & TRAINING



Career  
Awareness

Soft Skills  
Development

Career  
Exploration

Work-based  
Learning &  
Internships

Pre-  
Employment  
Training

Onbo



#### SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

*Connecting future workers to careers early is key. **BDCC's Fast Tracks to Success** program gets high school students out of the classroom to explore career opportunities with local employers.*



#### CAREER EXPLORATION

*Career Awareness programs ensure young people make educational plans informed by promising career pathways. BDCC partners with employers, educators, and training providers to expose students to career opportunities in the region.*

Vermont's most robust regional workforce systems.

**The Windham regional workforce system connects people with the right resources and opportunities as they progress through the continuum of workforce readiness, whether they start as youths in middle school with Career Awareness or enter**

**through a training opportunity as working adults.**

As individuals become aware of and prepare for high-opportunity occupations and industries, a holistic workforce system meets every job-seeker and employer where they are. Education, training, employment, and economic mobility are all integral components of a workforce development continuum that spans from classroom to career.

## EMPLOYMENT & MOBILITY



### UPSKILLING

*Access to great jobs requires skills and training. BDCC helps connect employers with resources and training expertise to invest in the people they need, like this local hospitality and supervision training.*



### CAREER GROWTH

*The region needs to attract and retain talented people in order to thrive. BDCC's **Southern Vermont Young Professionals** program provides professional development and social networking to help a new generation build lives and careers here.*

*Workforce Center of Excellence*

# FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

The **BDCC WORKFORCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE** operates several flagship programs that impact critical points in the talent pipeline. BDCC workforce programs provide workforce development and educational opportunities connecting Windham County employers, workforce partners and people of all ages.

In addition to programs, the Workforce Center of Excellence leads and partners on targeted initiatives like trainings and career events. BDCC has emerged as a convener and facilitator helping leverage the region's extensive workforce assets to increase collaboration among workforce partners and increase impact.

These broad-ranging efforts are necessary to build a system that helps employers successfully meet their needs for qualified employees, now and into the future, by investing in the regional labor force and working to attract and retain people so we can enhance the size and quality of the workforce over time.

By improving skills and linking training with demand among local employers, BDCC helps people access opportunities and career pathways.

***Fast Tracks to Success:***  
Middle & High School

***Pipelines and Pathways:***  
High School

***BDCC Paid Internships:***  
College Students

***Training & Job Events:***  
Incumbent Workers

***Southern Vermont Young Professionals:*** Adults 25-45

***Targeted Expertise Recruitment and Retention:*** Specialized Workers

***SoVermont Marketing & Recruitment:*** Out-of-Region Workforce

# PARTNERS IN GROWTH



The **Windham Workforce Development Network** connects educators, employers, and service providers who make up the regional workforce system. The Network provides:

1. A **Touchpoint** to connect the region with state and federal workforce partners, to secure resources and ensure local needs are communicated.
2. A **Nexus** for communication and coordination among the many regional partners in workforce training and education.
3. A **Catalyst** for the many collaborations and initiatives needed to create maximum impact for the region's people and employers.

**BDCC convenes quarterly meetings of the Windham Workforce Development Network.**



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