

Workforce and Ed Notes  
August 5, 2024

Present: Wendy Morse, Laura Boudreau, Amanda Richardson, Amanda Monick, Lisa Harrington, Faye McDonald, Jack Rossiter Munley, Rob Bahny, Meg Honsinger, Greg Poelker-McKee, Nancy Shuttleworth, Melissa Senecal, Maria Burt, Bill Colvin, Jeannie Jenkins

Next Meeting: September 9, 2024, 8:30 AM over Teams

Jack Rossiter-Munley from ECDC provided an update on refugee resettlement

- ECDC is the official resettlement program in Southern Vermont
- Required to provide resettlement services for first 90 days including housing, employment, cultural orientation, and health and education services
- Certification of credentials from home country is difficult to work out
- Employment is required and is complicated by lack of credentials and, for some, education, language can be a large barrier. First employment does not necessarily follow the desired longer-term career pathway
- New program with VT Comm Foundation funding called Global Women Entrepreneurs in collaboration with the Community Market
  - Provides pathway into food service, culinary jobs
  - Monthly meetings with interpretation and translation
  - Hands-on work in the kitchen and bakery
  - Approximately 10 women involved
  - SW Tech is exploring if they can offer a Serve Safe certification for the group
- Other areas of interest include cosmetology, tailoring, massage,
- ECDC is offering a program (flyer was sent out) for employers to learn more about working with English language learners and the supports offered by ECDC.
- Jack noted that working in a field of interest is a motivator for learning English

⇒ Potential role for group is to expand employers interested in hiring new Americans and developing some pathways that provide upward mobility within pathways

- Wendy noted that Adecco has been an active partner in placing workers
- Noted that a cohort model can be successful if there is a stronger English speaker in the group

Timelines for events: See notes on Sophomore Summit

Partner updates:

BCRC – Bill Colvin

- BCRC is keeping the pulse of business. Completed 118 visits last year.
- Still a strong need for workers and working age demographic
- New challenge since COVID is income.

- Remote workers tend to have higher salaries than on-ground workers in VT.
- Drives up housing prices, skews demographic data
- Must read business start up data carefully as employers of remote workers get added as a new business even though the business is out of state.
- CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development System) for Windham and Bennington Counties is being updated
  - Requesting an economic development District
  - Stakeholder and focus groups have been ongoing
  - Will be public meetings coming up in September

#### SW Tech – Meg Honsinger

- Recent needs assessment demonstrates that programs are meeting needs locally and regionally
- Recent grads
  - 72% pursuing post-secondary work
  - While at SW Tech students are earning Tier 2 credentials and college credits
- 240 of a possible 380 spots for fall 2024 are filled – need to focus on recruitment
- Will continue to offer pre-tech foundation courses for exploration and introduction to tech areas
- Increased focus on math and English this year using WorkKeys
- Adult Ed
  - LNA, Massage and CDL programs strong
  - Increased interest in welding, Excel courses
  - Butchering class ran full (4 students) – may be personal rather than career interest