

Since 1987, Vermont Works for Women (VWW) has worked directly with women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals to help them overcome individual and societal barriers to economic security. Through programming, partnerships, and policy, our goal is to ensure education and work are equitable and accessible for all. Explore our current advocacy priorities below. Please contact us for direct experience testimony, data, and recommendations.

Career and Technical Education Pathways and Funding

Vermont Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have the ability and regional access to train our next generation workforce but lack the diversified enrollment to meet labor demands. By increasing gender equity within career and technical education centers in non-traditional programs throughout the state, we can increase the enrollment of underrepresented students and support current students to be more successful post-graduation.

VWW recommends:

- Expanding successful models such as Act 78 and Serve Learn Earn to increase funding for gender-specific programming, beginning in middle school, to provide girls with hands-on exposure to a variety of trades and career paths that are nontraditional for their gender.
- Encouraging CTE centers across Vermont establish goals to increase enrollment of female-identifying students in historically non-traditional program areas to 30% by 2030. For the school year ending June 30, 2024, the statewide average for nontraditional program concentration in CTE was 19.35%.

Supporting Underrepresented Workers to Meet State Workforce Needs

To meet the labor needs across the state and ensure a thriving economy, Vermont needs to prioritize the recruitment and retention of underrepresented workers – particularly women – across our workforce industries. By neglecting to recruit and retain female workers, employers are missing out on a motivated, skilled, and valuable section of the workforce.

VWW recommends:

- Increasing workforce funding towards pre-apprenticeship programs that expand women's access to good-paying jobs and help meet the needs of current and future businesses and industries.
- Establishing a goal to increase representation of females in nontraditional apprenticeship programs across Vermont. According to a 2023 Legislative Report on Vermont's Registered Apprenticeships, only 3.4% of registered apprentices are women in nontraditional trades programs.





Continuity of Services for Justice-Involved Women

VWW has been working as a contracted in-facility service provider for the Vermont Department of Corrections since 2001. Justice-involved women, due to their gender and other intersecting factors, face tremendous barriers to economic independence after being released from Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF). Providing career training programs and wraparound supports to justice-involved women – both in-facility and while in transition – helps their successful reintegration into the community.

VWW recommends:

- The development of a new, smaller, and gender and trauma-responsive women’s correctional facility in Vermont. This facility must be appropriately sized and offer best-practice programming to support healing. There must be robust reentry opportunities including vocational training and work experiences that align with high-paying community jobs. The facility should also be centrally located, making it easy for families to access and close to resources.
- Continuation of the Department of Corrections and the Agency of Buildings and General Services' consistent engagement with the Stakeholders Group throughout the planning and development of a new facility.

CONNECT WITH VERMONT WORKS FOR WOMEN

Our work provides the platform to elevate the voices of many across our state who can best speak to the policies, challenges, and potential that is possible through work at the state level.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these priorities or our organizational work in more detail. We can provide direct testimony, data, insights, and recommendations on these priority areas or any issues that affect women and girls in our state.



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