

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.

Engage Underrepresented Workers to Meet State Workforce Needs

Vermont continues to experience an incredibly tight labor market, especially within the construction and skilled trades. To meet labor needs and ensure a thriving economy, Vermont employers and training programs must prioritize the recruitment and retention of underrepresented workers, including women. By neglecting to recruit and retain women, employers are missing out on a motivated, skilled, and valuable section of the workforce.

VWW recommends:

- Support pre-apprenticeship programs that provide viable pathways for women into high-wage, high-growth careers through flexible, annual funding.
- Prioritize additional pathways for rural Vermonters to access skilled trades careers through apprenticeship programs and adult education opportunities at CTE's. In 2024, only 13% of all registered apprentices in Vermont were women.
- Identify mechanisms to support employers' ability to establish and grow apprenticeship pathways, especially for small Vermont trades businesses.



Strengthen Employment Services for Justice-Involved Individuals

VWW has been working as a contracted in-facility service provider for the Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) 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. 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:

- Improving Contract Oversight: Ensure DOC staff work collaboratively with service providers to maintain and enhance in-facility programming available to all, especially considering the delay of a new facility.
- Addressing Service Disparities: Increase access to programs and case management services for detainees. Detained incarcerated women have limited access to services compared to sentenced incarcerated women, yet they often face longer pretrial stays, higher trauma rates, and limited reentry support. Targeted investments and supports for this population can improve outcomes, reduce recidivism, and ensure they are able to successfully enter the Vermont workforce.





Address Wage Gap in Economic and Workforce Investments

Vermont Works for Women, Vermont Women's Fund, and the Vermont Commission on Women are reigniting the effort to update Vermont's data on the gender wage gap and occupational segregation. We're launching a new, streamlined bi-annual data report focused on the economic status and opportunities for Vermont women. It is critical to incorporate this data into decision-making processes in the legislative committees focused on workforce, education, housing, justice systems, and childcare. The wage gap persists in Vermont (women make \$0.86 to every \$1 men make).

VWW recommends:

- The 2025 Pay Transparency Act (Act 155) is an important step forward and needs strong education and enforcement efforts to ensure compliance across employers.
- Strengthen efforts to increase female student representation at Technical Education Centers in high-wage, nontraditional occupations through early exposure for all students.
- Continue to fund and support childcare subsidies and universal school meals that provide working parents more support, flexibility, and opportunity to re-enter the workplace.

CONNECT WITH VERMONT WORKS FOR WOMEN

Our advocacy goal is to elevate the critical voices across our state who can best speak to the policies, challenges, and opportunities to improve the lives of Vermont women through legislative action.

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.



STAY UP TO DATE



@vtworks4women



@vtworksforwomen



www.vtworksforwomen.org/newsletter-signup

CONTACT US



Rhoni Basden
Executive Director
rbasden@vtworksforwomen.org
802-655-8900 x 101



www.vtworksforwomen.org
802-655-8900

Vermont Works for Women
32A Malletts Bay Ave
Winooski, VT 05404