

**Request for Information on Using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act resources
to Expand the Role of the Employer in Providing Supports for Employees With
Disabilities**

The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is requesting public input on ways to incent business and enhance the capacity of its partners to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities who are participants in Vermont's Employment programs. DVR will be holding a public meeting to explore ideas that are raised on November 13, 2009 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at:

Vermont Interactive TV Waterbury site

Stanley Hall

103 South Main Street
State Office Complex
Waterbury, VT -- 05671-2801

Members of the public can also join this meeting at the Bennington, Springfield, Lyndonville, and Williston VIT sites (directions are listed below). The complete Request For Information is listed below. Members of the public can access the Request for Information in hardcopy or alternate formats by contacting Jerry Wood at (802) 241-2195 or via E mail at jerrold.wood@ahs.state.vt.us. Written comments can be submitted to Jerry Wood at DVR, Weeks 1A, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671 or via E mail at jerrold.wood@ahs.state.vt.us.

Sign Language Interpreters will be available at Waterbury and Springfield. Other accommodations will be made upon request to jerrold.wood@ahs.state.vt.us.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
Expanding the Role of the Employer in Providing Ongoing
Supports for Employees With Disabilities
AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

Issued By:

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, part of the Department of Aging and Independent Living within the Agency of Human Services.

Request For Information:

DVR (Vocational Rehabilitation) is looking for ways to incent business and enhance the capacity of its partners to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities who are participants in Vermont's Supported Employment programs. This includes increasing the employment rate and the weekly hours worked by people with disabilities. DVR is seeking suggestions on innovative initiatives from: organizations that provide employment services, businesses, individuals with disabilities and their families, and the general public. Vermont DVR hopes to use some of the money received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the purpose of helping to revitalize local economies by piloting one or more of the innovative approaches identified through this Request for Information.

DVR is part of a federal/state partnership to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain meaningful employment. Along with its community partners, DVR aims to provide enhanced incentives to local businesses to recruit, train, and retain qualified employees with disabilities. DVR would like to identify what kind of incentives would result in the increased involvement of local employers in providing workplace supports to employees who need them. Suggestions of approaches that directly compensate employers for providing employee workplace supports are desired.

Approach

For the purposes of this initiative, DVR is interested in information and ideas which address the following:

1. What financial incentives might be provided to businesses that will cause them to increase the workplace supports directly provided to an employee with a disability? How could an injection of ARRA resources to a business be useful in developing a model for both short-term and long-term workplace supports?

DVR wants to clearly demonstrate how ARRA resources can be used to increase and enhance the role of employers in assisting employees who require ongoing supports to maximize their independence on the job.

2. How could the role of the Employment Specialist change as a business becomes more directly involved in providing workplace supports?

For example, as an employee's hours of work increase beyond the capacity of the Employment Specialist's ability to provide direct workplace supports their role will shift to more of a consultant to both the employee and business. What are the key staff competencies and activities to facilitate this shift? Any approach supported by ARRA resources should clearly demonstrate how the project will increase the involvement of the employer during the work stabilization process.

3. What are the ways in which directly incenting business might lead to increased weekly hours of work per employee without an increase in provision of workplace supports by an Employment Specialist?

DVR believes that one result of people working more hours per week will be the achievement of higher earnings levels. This will lead to more individuals attaining earnings levels resulting in higher payment to DVR and Designated Agencies under the Social Security Administration's Ticket To Work program.

4. DVR is interested in approaches that are sustainable once an employee who is a consumer of supported employment services is no longer being provided services that are funded by DVR.

How to Submit a Response

DVR anticipates that the responses to this RFI may require a meeting to further explore the ideas that are raised. We have arranged to hold a public Vermont Interactive Television (VIT) meeting on November 13, 2009 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The meeting will be based out of the Waterbury VIT meeting room. If you can't join us face-to-face then join us at the Bennington, Lyndonville, Springfield, or Williston locations. Refer to attachment for directions. (<http://www.vitlink.org/DirectionsToSites.php>) Everyone who responds to this RFI will be invited to this meeting. Details about the meeting will also be posted on the DVR website at <http://vocrehab.vermont.gov/>.

DVR has arranged for sign language interpreters at the Waterbury and Springfield locations. Please inform Jerry Wood as soon as possible if you require any other accommodations.

DVR will also accept written responses through November 30, 2009. Responses by e-mail are strongly preferred. Please send your response to Jerrold.Wood@ahs.state.vt.us.

Inquiries regarding this notice may be directed to:

Jerry Wood,
Supported Employment Coordinator,
Vermont VocRehab
802-241-2195

Directions to VT Interactive TV Sites

Waterbury VIT

103 South Main Street
State Office Complex, Stanley Hall
Waterbury, VT -- 05671-2801
Telephone: 802.882.1002

From the north and the South -Take I-89 to exit 10. Turn right at exit ramp if coming from the North. Take left at end of exit ramp if coming from the South. Go to the "T" and turn left. Travel through the village to the second stop light at Park Street. Turn right. This is the North Entrance to the State Office Complex. The first brick building on the left is Stanley Hall. Turn left into the parking lot. Enter through the main entrance off the parking lot.

From Route 2 east - Take Route 2 into Waterbury. Go to the stoplight at Park Street. (This is the North Entrance to the State Office Complex.) Stanley Hall is the first brick building on the left. Turn Left into the parking lot. The Main Entrance is off the parking lot.

The VIT Studio is at the near end of the building.

Bennington VIT

124 Pleasant Street
Bennington, VT -- 05201
Telephone: 802.753.1003

From the North: Take Rt. 7 or 7A South to Bennington. Continue South on Rt. 7 past the Bank of Bennington. Make a left before the traffic light onto Pleasant Street. Then make a right into the large municipal parking lot across from the Senior Citizens Center. VIT is located in the Senior Center. Go in the main entrance to the waiting lobby, and then through the door on the right. VIT is at the end of the short hallway.

From the South: Take Rt. 7 North to Rt. 9 (Main Street) in Bennington. Make a right at Pleasant Street. Then make a right into the large municipal parking lot across from the Senior Citizens Center. VIT is located in the Senior Center. Go in the main entrance to the waiting lobby, and then through the door on the right. VIT is at the end of the short hallway.

From the East: Take Rt. 9 West to Bennington. In Bennington, Route 9 becomes Main Street. At the 4 corner intersection with Route 7, turn right, then another right at Pleasant Street. Then make a right into the large municipal parking lot across from the Senior Citizens Center. VIT is located in the Senior Center. Go in the main entrance to the waiting lobby, and then through the door on the right. VIT is at the end of the short hallway.

From the West: Take Rt. 9 East to Bennington. In Bennington Route 9 becomes Main Street. At the 4 corner intersection with Route 7, turn left, then right at Pleasant Street. Then make a right into the large municipal parking lot across from the Senior Citizens Center. VIT is located in the Senior Center. Go in the main entrance to the waiting lobby, and then through the door on the right. VIT is at the end of the short hallway.

Lyndonville VIT

1001 College Road
Lyndon State College
Lyndonville, VT -- 05851-7954
Telephone: 802.473.1221

FROM THE SOUTH Take I-91 North to exit 23. At the end of the exit ramp turn right and then take the immediate first left onto the Back Center Road. Travel 1.5 miles to a stop sign. Go ahead one block and turn left onto College St. just before the Football Field.*SEE MAIN DIRECTIONS* FROM THE NORTH Take I-91 to exit 24. At the end of the exit ramp turn left onto Rte. 122. Proceed 1.5 miles until you see a wooden covered bridge on your right. Go over the bridge and proceed until you see a football field on your right. Turn right onto College St.*SEE MAIN DIRECTIONS* FROM ROUTE 5 Go to the junction of Rte 5 and 114. If coming from the south turn left at the blinker - if coming from the north turn right at the blinker by - the Lynburke Motel onto Stevens Loop Rd. Go 5/10s of a mile to the stop sign. Turn left and go over the wooden one lane bridge. Proceed until you see the football field on the right. Turn right onto College St.*SEE MAIN DIRECTIONS* FROM ROUTE 114 At the intersection of Rte 5 and 114, proceed across Rte. 5 at the blinker by the Lynburke Motel. You will be on Stevens Loop Road. Travel 5/10's of a mile to the stop sign. Turn left and go over the one lane wooden bridge. Proceed until you see a football field on your right. Turn right onto College Street. *SEE MAIN DIRECTIONS* *MAIN DIRECTIONS FROM COLLEGE STREET* Drive past Lyndon Institute up the long hill. Drive past the first sign for Lyndon State College. At the second sign for Lyndon State College turn left as indicated on the sign as if you were going to the Rescue Squad. Follow this road until you see a parking lot on the right. Park in the lot and proceed to the ground level entrance of Vail Center (red brick building). The VIT studio is located in the middle of the long hallway on your right. If the lot is full, you may turn right at the end of the parking lot and park in the larger lot in front of Vail Center. If you park in the main parking lot in front of Vail Center, enter through the main door marked "Theodore N. Vail Center" Walk in and take the elevator which is located on the right. Press the 1st floor button. At the first floor proceed down the ramp and the VIT studio will be located on your left. HANDICAP PARKING Handicap parking is available in the main parking lot directly in front of the Theodore N. Vail Center. From the parking lot proceed to the main entrance and the elevator will be located on your right. Take the elevator to the first floor and proceed down the ramp. The VIT studio will be located on your left.

Springfield VIT

307 South Street
Howard Dean Education Center, 2nd Floor
Springfield, VT -- 05156
Telephone: 802.885.8376

From I-91 North or South Take Exit 7 and turn right off the exit ramp to Route 11 West. Follow Route 11 West approximately 3 miles to the first major intersection. (There is a blinking light at about 2 +- miles; continue to the next set of lights.)

At that intersection, make a left turn (South Street) with Valley Real Estate on your left. (Approximately 1/2 mile from the intersection, at the top of the hill, use caution as visibility is limited) Continue another 3/4 mile or so. Springfield High School, The Howard Dean Education Center and the River Valley Technical Center are on your right.

Take the second drive into the complex, and the Howard Dean Center is straight ahead. Parking is on the right as you approach the Dean Center. The entrance to the building is at the end of this parking lot.

From Vermont Route 7: (North) Take Route 103 East from North Clarendon. Go through Ludlow and at the center of Gassetts, turn left onto Route 10. Take Route 10 to North Springfield. Route 10 ends and continue straight onto Route 106 East/South. Continue on Route 106 to the Springfield Shopping Plaza (on your right) where the road becomes Route 11 East. Stay on Route 11 through two sets of lights which will bring you through the center of town. After you cross the bridge, keep right, (the Whitcomb Highrise will be on your right and Valley Real Estate on your left)

(Approximately 1/2 mile from the intersection, at the top of the hill, use caution as visibility is limited) Continue another 3/4 mile or so. Springfield High School, The Howard Dean Education Center and the River Valley Technical Center are on your right.

Take the second drive into the complex, and the Howard Dean Center is straight ahead. Parking is on the right as you approach the Dean Center. The entrance to the building is at the end of this parking lot.

From Route 11 (Chester) Take Route 11 from 103 in Chester. As you come into Springfield, turn right on to Park Street. This is also the turn for Springfield Hospital, which will be on your right as you proceed up the hill. Continue on Park Street until you come to Union Street on your right. There will be a small island at the intersection. Continue to the end of Union Street. It will meet South Street. Turn right, and continue another 3/4 mile or so. Springfield High School, The Howard Dean Education Center and the River Valley Technical Center are on your right.

Take the second drive into the complex, and the Howard Dean Center is straight ahead. Parking is on the right as you approach the Dean Center. The entrance to the building is at the end of this parking lot.

There are handicap spots near the front entrance. Once in the main entrance follow the signs to the second floor where VIT is located.

Williston VIT

451 Lawrence Place
Blair Park
Williston, VT -- 05495
Telephone: 802.288.1581

From the North - on I-89 - Take Exit 12. Turn Left onto 2A North. Travel approximately 1 mile. (Go through Taft's Corners traffic lights.)
Take a left on Paul Street (Note the large maroon and gold "Blair Park" sign.)
Take the next left on Lawrence Place.
Bear left at the fork. VIT is number 451 on the right. You will see the VIT sign in the window. The entrance to the building is to the left of the sign.

From the South - on I-89 - Take Exit 12. Turn Right onto 2A North. Travel approximately 1 mile. (Go through Taft's Corners traffic lights.)
Take a left on Paul Street (Note the large maroon and gold "Blair Park" sign.)
Take the next left on Lawrence Place.
Bear left at the fork. VIT is number 451 on the right. You will see the VIT sign in the window. The entrance to the building is to the left of the sign.