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## **Virtual Vermont: Telecommuters and Talent Supply**

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*To successfully compete against other regions for the talent we need, Vermont can leverage great quality of life to attract people who value work-life balance. With a strong existing base of people who work from home, it makes sense to focus on increasing the number remote workers. This means ensuring they have everything they need: access to highways and airports, robust cell service and superior broadband service. By creating the right conditions we can attract 'footloose' workers and give Vermont a competitive edge in the talent marketplace.*

Vermont's economic challenges, including our workforce constraints, are not unique. The question is whether we can successfully compete against other regions to attract more great people and businesses to invest in a future here. We can leverage quality of life to attract those who value work-life balance. What else creates a competitive edge with people who consider moving to, returning to, or staying in Vermont?

One group to consider is telecommuters, or home-based workers, whose ranks have been growing steadily. Nowadays, most are employees of a company, not self-employed, splitting time between the workplace and a home office. Vermont ranks top 10 nationally in our share of workers who telecommute. Ensuring good conditions for telecommuters is critical to Vermont's economic health because it:

- Helps employers attract and retain great people by offering flexibility and the option to work from home.
- Can resolve the spousal employment challenge when firms recruit someone whose partner's needs fit poorly with local opportunities.
- Imports talent, and often earnings, to Vermont.
- Supports highly educated workers and high-wage occupations.
- Bolsters Vermont's tech sector and tech workforce.
- Welcomes people who can choose to live anywhere.

A recent survey of 10 best places for telecommuters emphasized factors mainly relating to affordability and amenities. Much of Vermont offers affordability or amenities. Moreover, many locations lack robust virtual and physical connectivity. The ability to live near airports and highways, with robust cell service and broadband, paired with Vermont's quality of life constitutes a successful recipe to attract 'footloose' workers to Vermont.