



A Silent Threat to Vermont's Economic Health

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Many Vermont employers report that their businesses have never been fully staffed since opening. The cost to these organizations of not having enough people, or the right people, is enormous. The cost to our economy in terms of lost wages and taxes is unfathomable. Workforce leaders in Vermont are striving to attune pipelines and programs to better fit demand. That's made difficult because that demand data is elusive and imprecise. It's time to invest in attracting, training, and retaining the people needed to power the Vermont economy.

by Jennifer Stromsten

Recently a business counselor was touring a production facility and asked how many jobs they could fill if they could find the right people.

The manager replied, "Oh, about eighty." We hear this repeatedly from employers, ranging from the owner of a local restaurant that's never been fully staffed since opening in 2015, to a bank president with 50 open positions across the state.

The cost to these organizations of not having enough people, or the right people, is enormous. The cost to our economy in terms of lost wages, taxes, and in some cases the employers if they can't succeed here, is unfathomable.

Business, education, and workforce leaders in Vermont have heard this message and are striving to attune pipelines and programs to better fit demand. That's made difficult because that demand data is elusive and imprecise. For instance, a job unfilled is a job unmeasured. That means those 80 jobs don't show up in our data. Vermont must plan and make investments based on current and past data that are turned into projections. And even that imprecise measure is telling us that we don't have enough people in the right kind of training and education pathways to fill our talent needs.

It's time to get serious and invest in attracting, training, and retaining all of the people we need to power the Vermont economy.

To learn how you can get involved, please visit www.VTFuturesProject.org or email futures@vtfuturesproject.org