

Training Dollars Available to Employers - Find Out More!

One of the most valuable assets of a company is their trained workforce. The Vermont Legislature appropriated funding through the Vermont Department of Labor's (VDOL) Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) and the Vermont Department of Economic Development's (VDED) Vermont Training Program (VTP) for workforce development programs. These programs share a common purpose: to increase career opportunities for workers and to increase the number of workers with skills that meet the needs of Vermont employers.

These Workforce Development Programs through VDOL promote the creation and retention of high quality jobs, and the growth of a highly skilled workforce, by funding occupational skills training, employment

experiences and career awareness activities for adults, students, and other specialized training leading to employment with new and existing businesses. Eligible applicants include employers, and public and private training providers in collaboration with employers. Activities under this program can include occupational skill training/education and apprenticeships. Projects may also train current (incumbent) workers for promotions or upgrades, or workers who would otherwise be laid off or have their work hours reduced. WETF projects that train incumbent workers must project specific outcomes related to increased pay or layoff aversion.

The Vermont Training Program provides funds for the training of employees in new and existing busi-

nesses. The state offers three training initiatives: new employment, upgrade, and crossover training for incumbent workers.

These training funds are available immediately, and will be granted on an on-going basis. There are no upper or lower limits on the amounts that can be requested, but applications requesting more than \$150,000 must demonstrate their projects will have statewide impact, and/or will result in the creation of a significant number of new jobs.

Potential applicants should visit the VDOL website www.labor.vermont.gov for the essential eligibility criteria for the WETF programs and the VDED website www.thinkvermont.com/Programs/WorkforceTraining/VermontTrainingProgram for eligibility criteria for the VTP.

LEAP: Learn, Earn, And Prosper Program is Underway!

This summer, five visually impaired youth are participating in LEAP, a 4 week residential program where they develop employment skills while working four days a week in vocational training programs at ReSource in Burlington. While living and working together, all LEAP members contribute to meal preparation and other group tasks and chores, use public transportation, participate in community service projects, and engage in recreational activities. Linking Learning to Life coordinates career workshops that help participants explore their individual values and career interests and set goals for the future. LLL also exposes them to different workplaces such as 95Tri-

pleX and Ben & Jerry's headquarters. Members also have the opportunity to continue the program with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and experience living in lean-tos and learn how to do conservation and trail work. This is the fourth year of LEAP and 18 students have participated in the program.

LEAP is a partnership of Linking Learning to Life, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, ReSource, State of Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Vermont Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Vermont Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation, and The Gibney Family Founda-



tion. The partnership was awarded by the Northeast Association for the Education & Rehabilitation for their successful work. For more information and to watch a video about the program, please visit: www.llvt.org/programs/career-programs/learn-earn-and-prosper.