

Training Dollars Available to Employers

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 Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) for workforce development programs. These programs share a common purpose: to increase career opportunities for workers and strengthen career awareness for students about to enter the workforce in Vermont and to increase the number of workers with skills that meet the needs of Vermont employers.

These Workforce Development Programs 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. Occupational skill training may include soft skills or work readiness components that are woven into the training curriculum. Extra weight will be given to projects that train for new or vacant jobs. 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.

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 programs. For more information contact Lisa Quinlan, quinlan@vermont.org, or call (802) 863-3489 ext. 221.

Linking Learning to Life Assesses Youth Program

Linking Learning to Life (LLL) develops and manages a wide range of programs and services to help prepare youth for life after high school, especially as is related to careers and continuing education. It has been doing this for the past 13 years by connecting Vermont schools with local businesses, colleges, and other community organizations to help create exciting student learning opportunities. (see www.lllvt.org).

LLL's current program evaluation was designed by Dr. Monika Baege at UVM when she worked with LLL staff in 2008. Student, parent, teacher, and employer surveys developed through that process have been administered in each of the following years, so that now a 3-year, longitudinal data set is available for comparative analysis. In the

first 2 years of the survey 42 and 44 students respectively completed the survey. In year 3 the student response rate grew to 112.

Student surveys are made up of two distinct sections. One is a retrospective pre-post - that is, it asks students to reflect on how they felt about a statement prior to taking part in their LLL program, and how they feel about it now. Individual students' responses to both the pre and post-statements are thought of as being "matched." In 2008-2009 there were 42 matched student responses available for analysis. In 2009-2010 there are 88 matched pre-post responses.

The focus of LLL's programs is on students' growing understanding of the many career, college, and community resources available to them. The 17 retrospective pre post

questions found on the student survey reflect these interests. With 3 years of data to draw on patterns are emerging. Positive gain has been found across all 17 questions over all three years of the evaluation. Significant gain (not be attributed to chance) was recorded on 11 of the questions in year 1, on 13 in year 2, and on 14 in year 3. Some statements with significant gain in year 3 but not in earlier years are: "I focus and do well in school", "I have goals for my education or work" and "I can earn a college degree."

LLL's commitment to self-study dates back to its earliest days. Reflective practice is one component that helps this educational non-profit organization to maintain its position as the go-to provider of hands-on, real life, school and career experiences for Vermont youth.