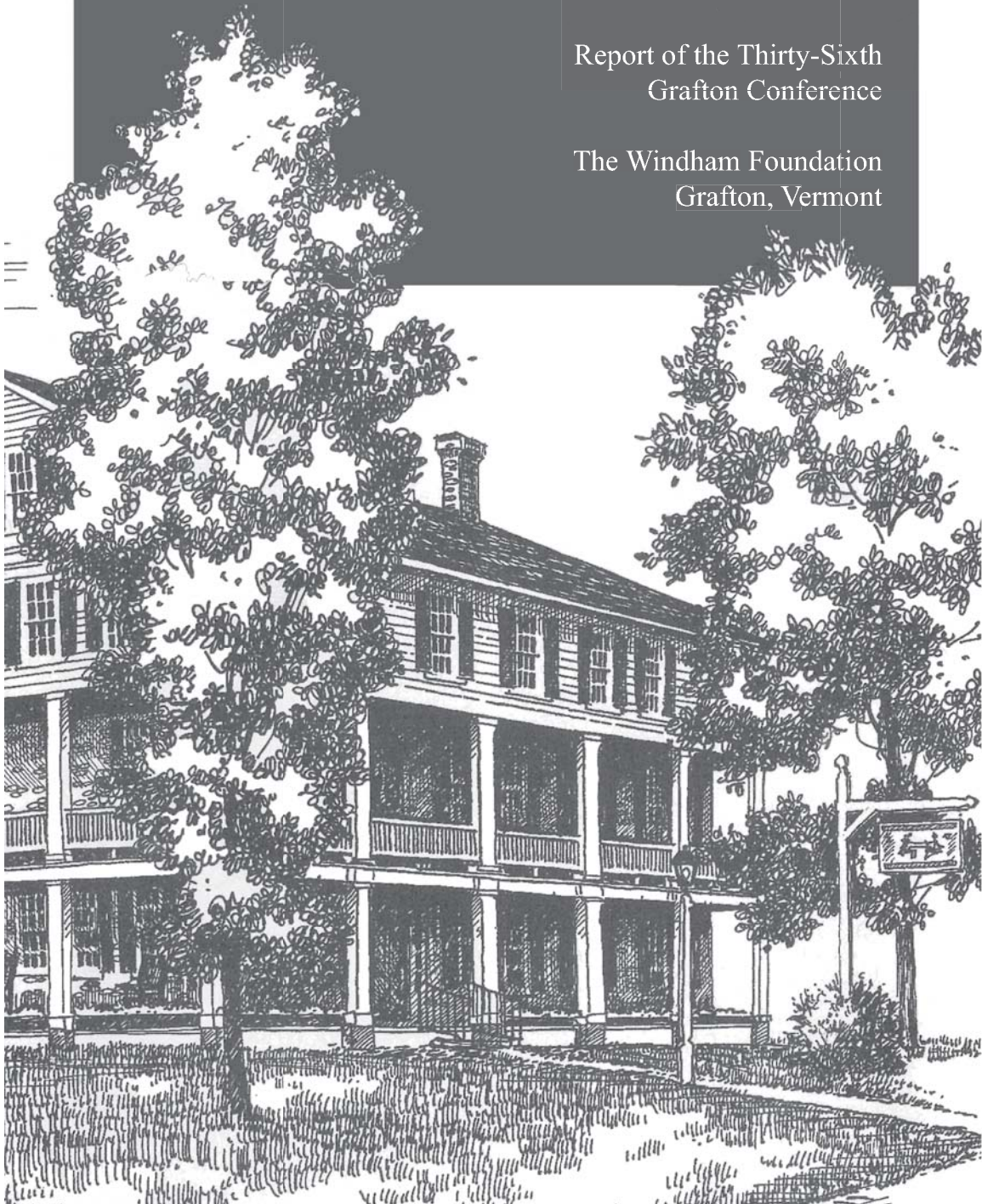


Increasing the Economic and Civic Vitality of  
Our State: Ensuring 70 Percent of  
Vermonters Possess a Degree  
or Credential by 2025

Report of the Thirty-Sixth  
Grafton Conference

The Windham Foundation  
Grafton, Vermont



**Increasing the Economic and Civic Vitality of  
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June 22 & 23, 2017

The Windham Foundation, Grafton, Vermont



*Supporting Vermont's rural communities*

## Introduction

In June 2017, 70x2025vt, a collective-action initiative based at the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), convened at the Grafton Inn to hold the inaugural meeting of its leadership as the Windham Foundation's 36<sup>th</sup> Grafton Conference. The conference carried on the long tradition of providing the setting and resources for decision makers and leaders to debate topics, formulate policies, and offer recommendations that will make a positive impact on Vermonters' lives and livelihoods.

The two-day event, **Increasing the Economic and Civic Vitality of Our State: Ensuring 70 Percent of Vermonters Possess a Degree or Credential by 2025**, examined the urgent need for Vermont to find the means and methods to encourage our citizens — both youth and adult— to advance beyond high school to better prepare for their roles in the economy and in society.

The conference was attended by the 70x2025vt Council, comprising influential leaders who include private and nonprofit sector executives and state officials representing employers, the preK-12 sector, higher education and training, civic groups, and policymakers. This Grafton Conference, like the others before it, seeks to highlight the significant work accomplished at the conference and is published electronically, available for downloading through the Windham Foundation's website, [www.windham-foundation.org](http://www.windham-foundation.org).

The Windham Foundation recognizes that the economy is rapidly changing; many jobs that once required a high school degree now require additional credentials in the form of a two- or four-year college degree or higher, a certificate obtained from further technical training, or an apprenticeship. The benefits of education and training beyond high school are well-documented: higher earnings, healthier families, and greater participation in civic affairs. Right now, only about 47 percent of Vermonters hold some form of postsecondary credential, while research shows that two-thirds of jobs in Vermont will require such preparation.

For Vermonters to enjoy a more secure economic future, for children to thrive, and for our society to have the benefits of everyone's talents, we must find ways for young people and for adults already in the workforce to continue to learn, find satisfying vocations, and participate in their communities — ensuring that all are able to equally contribute to society.

The Windham Foundation is devoted to reaching the 70x2025vt goal to improve equity and individual opportunity, address urgent workforce and economic development needs, and to secure the public benefits of an educated citizenry for Vermont's future.

*Ellen McCulloch-Lovell*

*Trustee, Windham Foundation and Former President, Marlboro College*

## The Road to Grafton

As Vermont's population ages, as the economy changes, and as the cost of public services increases, the need for more public participation in civic life is greater than ever. Educators, employers, and state policymakers have become increasingly aware of the need for more Vermonters to continue their education and training beyond high school.

In 2009, Vermont state government and higher education leaders signed a compact to increase the percentage of Vermonters who have completed college degrees from 42 percent to 60 percent by 2019. A year later, Act 133 established the PreK-16 Council with responsibility for coordinating efforts between the preK-12 and higher education communities to reach the statewide goal that "at least 60 percent of the adult population will have earned an associate's degree or higher-level degree by 2020."

*"This is an important issue for the state to address if we are going to succeed as a society and an economy."*

*—Lisa Ventriss, President,  
Vermont Business Roundtable*

Additionally, a landmark piece of legislation, Act 77, was passed in 2013 to create a statewide dual enrollment program, expand early college and work-based learning, and to require middle and high school students to have personalized learning plans. This "flexible pathways" legislation laid the groundwork for Vermont to be a leader in student-centered learning to drive college and career readiness.

Vermont's efforts to increase postsecondary attainment thus became aligned with a national movement led by former President Barack Obama. These efforts were bolstered by the work of the Lumina Foundation, a private foundation "committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all." Lumina has set a nationwide goal to achieve 60 percent postsecondary attainment by 2025 and has been funding efforts for states to advance similar goals. To date, at least 40 states have set attainment goals and established coordinated efforts to reach them.

In 2015, led by the Vermont State Colleges System and VSAC — with the support of former Governor Peter Shumlin, the state's PreK-16 Council, the University of Vermont (UVM) and other important partners — Vermont was awarded a Lumina Foundation State Policy Academy Grant.

The Policy Academy Grant convened a diverse group of stakeholders to review and further develop postsecondary attainment goals and policies. The working group reviewed national and state data from education and economic development experts

and determined that a new, higher, and more inclusive goal and timeline was needed. In early 2016, a statewide convening was held to announce a revised attainment goal that 70 percent of Vermonters will possess a postsecondary degree or credential of value by 2025.

To advance the goal, a collective-action organization was established and named 70x2025vt ([70x2025vt.org](http://70x2025vt.org)). VSAC was selected as a permanent home for the new initiative. In early 2017, 70x2025vt established its Leadership Council, comprising chief executive officers from both the private and nonprofit sectors, along with members of administration of Governor Phil Scott, including the secretaries of the Agency of Education (AOE) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and leaders of the House and Senate education committees. The Council guides the effort and act as ambassadors and spokespeople for the 70x2025vt goal.

Supporting the Council are project-focused working groups made up of issue-area experts to manage and drive forward the objectives established by the Council at the Grafton Conference (explained in depth later in this report). A network of “influencers” provides additional depth and more localized support to 70x2025vt.

70x2025vt seeks to drive postsecondary attainment by approaching its work in three fundamental ways:

1. Connect and facilitate collaboration among the existing and future efforts of employers, postsecondary education/training, preK-12, civic/philanthropic organizations, and policymakers;
2. Identify and fill the gaps where current efforts need a boost;
3. Change the conversation by making the case for postsecondary education to local, regional, and statewide influencers, as well as students, parents and the community at large.

The goal of the 36<sup>th</sup> Grafton Conference was to identify the major objectives of 70x2025vt and to formulate a strategy for ensuring that by 2025, 70 percent of Vermonters will possess a postsecondary degree or credential of value. This report aims to capture the discussion and deliberations of the Council at the Conference and to present its vision for increasing the economic and civic vitality of Vermont through educational attainment.

## Reasons for Action

To remain vibrant, Vermont must fully develop the potential of all of its citizens through postsecondary education. The individual and societal benefits of higher education are

clear: individuals with education or training beyond high school are more likely to be financially secure, have healthy families, have children who perform well in school, vote, volunteer, serve on civic boards, and patronize the arts. The risks of inaction are equally significant; state revenues will lag, and employers will struggle to find the talent needed to keep their businesses thriving.

According to the Lumina Foundation's Stronger Nation Report, 46.6 percent of Vermonters currently possess an associate's degree or higher, while just 1 percent holds a credential of value. But given Vermont's aging population, if no new action is taken to increase postsecondary attainment, Vermont will lose some 6,600 members of its workforce who possess a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.

### *Individual Prosperity and Equity*

The personal financial imperative to postsecondary education is compelling. Gaps in expected annual earnings for those with and without postsecondary credentials are dramatic, with bachelor's degree holders annually earning about \$12,500 more than high school graduates or those with GEDs alone. Graduate or professional degree-holders earn an additional \$23,530 annually.

The McClure Foundation's Pathways to Promising Careers report states that 43 percent of Vermonters who work full time do not make enough to cover basic living expenses. Thirty-seven percent of single mothers with children live in poverty. According to 2014 Census data, nearly one-quarter of Vermonters living below the poverty line possess less than a high school degree, 12 percent possess a high school degree, and 10 percent have some college or hold an associate's degree. Only 4.4 percent of those who hold a bachelor's degree or higher live in poverty.

*"In order to be successful,  
we have to put equity  
ahead of the status quo."*

*—Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary,  
Vermont Agency of Education*

While it is clear that postsecondary education remains an important pathway out of poverty for many, low-income Vermonters are not obtaining credentials at the rate of their more financially secure peers. For example, according to the New England Secondary School Consortium, in 2016 only 36 percent of economically disadvantaged students in Vermont continued on to college, compared to 58 percent of more affluent students. Both numbers lag New England averages with approximately 45 percent of economically disadvantaged students enrolling compared to 73 percent of affluent students.



Of those that do enroll, a gender gap is evident. According to a VSAC report tracking the Class of 2014, 68 percent of females and 52 percent of males enrolled in a college or training program after high school. That 16-percent gap double an alarming national trend of 8 percent.

An added challenge is the geographic disparity among those that aspire to and complete a degree or credential program. For the class of 2012, in Lamoille County, 85 percent of non-first generation students and 53 percent of first-generation students aspired to continue education after high school, yet only 50 percent enrolled. In Chittenden County, the state's most affluent county, a full 89 percent of non-first generation students and 70 percent of first-generation students aspired to continue, and 67 percent enrolled.

While the inequities illuminated above serve as a catalyst enough for action, the workforce demands further underscore the need to act.

### *Economic Imperative*

Vermont's workforce is changing. In addition to the pressures created by an aging population, during the Great Recession four out of five jobs lost were held by workers who did not obtain a degree or credential after high school. According to Georgetown University's Center for Education and the Workforce, by 2020, two-thirds of the jobs in Vermont will require a postsecondary credential. Yet a recent survey of Vermont CEOs indicated that 47 percent had found it difficult to hire employees with the skills the job requires. Moreover, 55 percent predicted it will be more difficult in five years to meet their hiring needs.

The mismatch between worker skills and employer requirements was a major issue raised in the Vermont 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, authored by ACCD in 2014. Employers reported that they seek workers who have better mathematics and written and oral communication skills. Employers seek not only specific technical skills but also critical thinking skills, valuing those who will continue to learn while employed as jobs change.

*"We have tapped out local talent, yet we are expanding and need talent more than ever."*

*—Paul Millman, CEO,  
Chroma Technologies*

State revenues are not immune to workforce changes. Based on current trends, Vermont's projected loss in educated workers will generate a net loss of over \$20

million from decreased state tax revenues and increased Medicaid and corrections spending.

As a result, the state needs 30,000 more working-age Vermont residents to possess a college degree or credential of value by 2025. This means nearly 50 percent more graduates will need to enter the workforce in Vermont each year.

These statistics make the case for action to increase Vermont's postsecondary attainment rate. Inaction will be dire to our state's economic and civic vitality and will further the inequity already too present in our communities.

## Conference Outline

Dates: June 22-23, 2017

Facilitator: Carrie Williams Howe, Executive Director, Vermont Higher Education Council

### *Day One*

**Welcome and introductions:** Scott Giles, President of VSAC, and by Tom Cheney, Director of 70x2025vt.

**Presentation:** What is the 70x2025 goal and how did we get here?

Context and data was presented to illustrate why the continuation of learning is important to individuals, the state, and the nation. A history of Vermont's efforts and a 70x2025vt organizational overview was also presented.

*Speakers: Tom Cheney; Malia Sieve, Director, HMC Strategists; and Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer, Vermont State College System.*

**Panel Sessions:** A Snapshot of Current Efforts to Advance the Goal

- *PreK –12 and Adult Education:* Kirstin Boehm, Director, Career and Education Outreach, VSAC; Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education; Pixie Loomis, Executive Director, Vermont Adult Learning; and Mary Moran, Superintendent, Rutland City Schools, addressed the barriers to both youth and working adults to continue their educations.
- *Postsecondary Education and Training:* David Evans, President of Southern Vermont College and representing Association of Vermont Independent Colleges; Eileen Illuzzi, Director, North Country Career Center; Joyce Judy, President, Community College of Vermont; and Dan Smith, President and CEO, Vermont Community Foundation and former President of Vermont Technical College,



offered examples of programs and possible approaches based on their experiences.

- *Employers:* Alex Beck, Workforce and Education Specialist with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation; Paul Millman, President of Chroma Technology Corporation; and Lisa Ventriss, President, Vermont Business Roundtable, gave their perspectives on the difficulty recruiting qualified candidates for jobs in Vermont, the economic climate, and on efforts to create a “talent pipeline.”

**Dinner Discussion:** Where are the gaps? What is the focus of 70x2025vt? The Council was invited to discuss the objectives (described below) that were introduced earlier in the day.

## *Day Two*

**Breakout Session:** Having finalized the objectives, small groups brainstormed potential initiatives and strategies to identify those having the most impact.

**Facilitated Discussion:** Reports back from the small group, according to objective. The reports and comments set priorities for strategies to be implemented, focusing on those that lay the foundation for 70x2025vt and are most likely to move the attainment needle.

**Lunch Discussion:** Finalized the work plan and looked ahead to tasks for the coming year.

## **Objectives, Goals, and Strategies**

As a collective-action initiative, 70x2025vt acts as a coordinating entity to help ensure that the efforts of the preK-12 system, postsecondary education system, employers, civic and philanthropic organizations, and policymakers are aligned, supported, and communicated to the public. The dialogue throughout the Grafton Conference was focused on highlighting the progress that has been made, illuminating the challenges that remain, and ensuring that the work of 70x2025vt enhances but does not duplicate current efforts.

To help focus the work of 70x2025vt, the Council restated its mission and adopted four main objectives. The aim was to develop objectives that were clear and that could be easily communicated with an overarching goal and message. Preliminary strategies to

help achieve the mission and its objectives were discussed. Future working groups will build out strategies in further detail.

**Mission:** Increase the economic and civic vitality of Vermont through education attainment. By 2025, 70 percent of working-age Vermonters will possess a postsecondary degree or credential of value.

**Objectives:**

- Identify and eliminate barriers to postsecondary access and success for youth and adults.
- Strengthen pathways between education and employment.
- Change the narrative to ensure public recognition of postsecondary education and college and career readiness as a shared value.
- Align state policy with the 70x2025 goal.

*Identify and eliminate barriers to postsecondary access and success for youth and adults*

While it is important to recognize that youth and adults face many of the same barriers to achieving a postsecondary degree or credential, both groups have unique challenges to overcome.

**Youth**

*Summary of the challenge*

While Vermont's high school graduation rate is among the highest in the nation, the state's postsecondary continuation is not on par. Nearly 90 percent of Vermonters graduate from high school, and 70 percent aspire to continue onto postsecondary education at a two or four year school. Less than 60 percent of Vermont graduates enroll in the fall following graduation—the lowest continuation rate in New England. Only 35 percent of those seniors will have earned a two or four year degree after four years, 45 percent complete in six years. As noted earlier, the attainment disparity between first-generation, low-income students and their peers is great.

*"It is critical that we involve our students in career opportunities at a young age."*

*—Rep. Dave Sharpe, Chair, House Education Committee*

*Goals*

- Increase postsecondary aspiration, continuation rates, and graduation.

- Prepare students for success in postsecondary education, career, citizenship, and life.
- Make postsecondary education and training affordable and accessible.

### *Strategies*

- Lay the groundwork by focusing on the academic achievement students need for opportunities after high school. Ensure fourth-grade and eighth-grade student achievement levels are at or above proficiency in both reading and math.
- Ensure that students are better connected to career pathway options from an early age, with hands-on career exploration, and work-based learning and internship opportunities.
- Train and inform teachers, counselors, and near-peer mentors about the benefits of learning post-high school and the many pathways available to students; include information about career options and hands-on experiences.
- Ensure students at every grade level are provided with an understanding of (1) the resources and assistance to navigate postsecondary education admissions and financial aid processes, and (2) the requisite financial literacy to make informed decisions.
- Reduce the impact of the barriers that a lack of access to financial aid can pose by increasing completion rates of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- Create opportunities for more students to participate in dual enrollment courses.
- Focus on segments of the population least likely to continue onto postsecondary education, specifically first-generation, low-income students, boys of all backgrounds, and new Americans.
- Take a two-generational approach: both parents and students working together to plan for learning after high school.
- Fully embrace personalized learning plans and proficiency-based outcomes to ensure that every student is given access to the learning opportunities that best suit him or her.
- Broaden understanding among students and parents of the benefits of career and technical education.

### **Adults**

#### *Summary of the challenge*

Traditional postsecondary models of education can often present a myriad of obstacles for adults who often have work, family, and financial obligations that create roadblocks to re-entry. This is exemplified by the statistic that there are 60,000 adults in the workforce with some postsecondary education but no degree or credential. As workforce demands change, existing employees will need to augment existing skills, as well as develop new ones through continued training and education.

*Goals*

- Drive postsecondary enrollment and graduation for adult students with some or no education after high school.
- Prepare students for success in postsecondary education, career, citizenship and life.
- Make postsecondary education and training affordable and accessible.

*“While economic barriers facing students are tremendous, fear is often the biggest obstacle.”*

*—Pixie Loomis, Executive Director,  
Vermont Adult Learning*

*Strategies*

- Identify specific skills needed for high-growth jobs in Vermont; communicate these to educators and influencers.
- Determine best practices to engage those who are employed; as part of this strategy, tap into the statewide network of human resources professionals.
- Partner with employers to identify or develop learning pathways for those who are working but not credentialed.
- Create a statewide system for prior learning assessment that is consistent among public and private colleges.
- Target underserved populations, such as those incarcerated in the Vermont prison system, for high school and post-high school credential completion.

*Strengthen pathways between education and employment***Summary of the challenges**

With employers reporting a mismatch between worker skills and employer requirements, and given the current workforce demographic changes, it is vital that we find new ways for employers and educators to work together to increase postsecondary attainment. Closer collaboration is needed to help prepare the workforce of the future by identifying and anticipating the skills that will be needed, and providing guidance in ways to follow the various defined pathways toward careers.

**Goals**

- Build strong partnerships between employers and educators to ensure viable career pathways for students.
- Make postsecondary education and training affordable and accessible.
- Leverage the state’s strong postsecondary program offerings as a tool to retain out-of-state students after degree or credential completion.

*Many in the workforce have high earning potential; we just need to help them find a path that works for them. For some, a short-term credential is a great first step.*

*—Joyce Judy, President,  
Community College of Vermont*

### Strategies

- Strengthen collaborations between employers and educators to ensure students are developing the necessary skills and work-based experiences for successful careers.
- Identify businesses and nonprofits in which the employer sees the value of offering degrees through the workplace or through another institution or organization.
- Define a “credential of value.”
- Focus efforts to retain the approximately 25,000 out-of-state students who are pursuing postsecondary education in Vermont.
- Create new credentials of value for expanding sectors like agriculture, cheese, hospitality, and recreation.
- Produce a comprehensive “Make a Difference, Make a Living” career conference, based on the successful conference hosted by Green Mountain College.
- Improve retention at institutions that act as “on ramps” for postsecondary learning.

*Change the narrative to ensure public recognition of postsecondary education and college and career readiness as a shared value.*

### Summary of challenge

Recent polling data suggest that Americans are losing faith in the value of higher education at a time when it is needed most to keep pace with changing workforce demands. A compelling, research-based message, both targeted and broad, is needed rebuild the public understanding of the importance of postsecondary education and college and career readiness.

### Goals

- Build the case among key influencers and state leaders to spur action to help achieve the 70x2025vt goal.
- Instill a common message for stakeholders to create a culture of continual learning.
- Erase negative public perceptions of postsecondary education; highlight its importance and various pathways for parents, youth, and adult students.

*“We will not be effective unless we spark a change in culture that is driven by a common message among state leaders, business, leaders, and educators.”*

*—Dan Smith, President and CEO,  
Vermont Community Foundation*

### Strategies

- Develop a comprehensive message that is regularly reinforced by state leaders, influencers, and educators.
- Messages should eliminate negative perceptions and focus on the “value added” of a postsecondary credential to ensure that students see education and training as an investment in the future.
- Develop distinct, research-based, marketing efforts aimed at defined cohorts such as: high school students who are not inclined to continue, adults without a degree or credential of value, out-of-state students who could stay in Vermont, and those out-of-state Vermonters who could be recruited to “come home.”
- Work with partner organizations of all sectors to adapt the message to align with current efforts and marketing and communications strategies.
- Continue to recruit influential Vermonters in each geographic region to advocate for 70x2025vt.
- Use data and analysis to promote the public understanding of the importance of postsecondary attainment.

### *Align state policy with the 70x2025 goal*

#### Summary of the challenge

State policy and programs are essential to ensuring that all 70x2025vt objectives are met. In order to avoid duplication, promote best practices, and better track our progress toward the goal, it is important that state policy and programs are coordinated with existing and future initiatives.

#### Goals

- Align state economic development, workforce development, and education policy with the 70x2025vt goal.
- Make postsecondary education accessible and affordable.

*“Every child should graduate from high school with a plan for the future. Every adult should know that it’s not too late and that there is a path for them.”*

*—Scott Giles, President and CEO, VSAC*

#### Strategies

- Catalogue state and private-sector initiatives already underway that could contribute to achieve the goal.
- Identify ways to leverage these efforts and/or eliminate barriers to collaboration that prevent efficient use of resources to support individual education/training attainment.
- Partner with the PreK-16 Council and the State Workforce Development Board to identify policy barriers.

- Coordinate with state and private sector to identify and track indicators that may inform progress toward the goal.

## Reaching for 70 Percent Attainment

The 36<sup>th</sup> Grafton Conference illuminated the many economic, workforce development, and civic challenges facing Vermont as its population ages, as inequities grow, and as business needs change. Vermont is not alone; in fact, most states are in similar situations, although Vermont's declining preK-12 enrollment and rural nature add a layer of difficulty and urgency.

Simply put, Vermont is facing a postsecondary degree and credential shortage that demands immediate action.

Fortunately, Vermonters have the tenacity to tackle big challenges, and the small size of the state lends itself to innovative transformation. Furthermore, previous and current efforts focused on postsecondary attainment have set the table for work of 70x2025vt. Many promising initiatives and programs were noted at the Conference, including the following:

*“Everyone is working so hard, but we are not always working together. Collective action will change that.”*

*—Eileen Illuzzi, Director,  
North Country Career Center*

- Vermont has a strong career and technical education (CTE) network, which includes 17 centers serving about 31 percent of high school juniors and seniors each year. CTEs work with local employers to support in-demand training.
- The Vermont Higher Education Council and the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges provide coordinating and scaling potential to system-wide higher education initiatives among the six public institutions and 17 private colleges.
- The Vermont Business Roundtable is leading the “Vermont Talent Pipeline Management Project” to map industry-by-industry needs of employers and to collaborate with educators to ensure there are programs and pathways to fill these workforce demands.
- Regional employer associations around the state, like the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, coordinate internship or work-based learning programs such as the “Six College” consortium, which has had success partnering with employers to offer paid internships to students at local institutions.
- The Vermont State Colleges System has had success instituting a prior learning assessment system that allows nontraditional students to receive credit for on-the-job learning or life experiences that can reduce the time needed to complete a degree.



- PreK-12 systems across the state are making postsecondary attainment of their students a mission and embrace Act 77 as a tool to help drive continuation rates. The Agency of Education has made attainment a priority with its Every Student Succeeds Act implementation plan.
- VSAC has 35 counselors embedded in most middle schools and high schools across the state to help predominantly low-income, first-generation students with postsecondary access and planning. VSAC recently launched its Aspirations Project, a state-supported effort that works with all students in a school and is focused on driving aspirations of students and continuation rates.
- The McClure Foundation has funded a number of innovative projects, including a partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor to produce “Pathways to Promising Careers: Vermont’s High-Pay High-Demand Jobs,” a pamphlet and website listing 50 in-demand professions, the schooling required, and the median pay. It has proven to be a great resource for educators, students and parents.

These are just a few examples of the good work already underway in Vermont. There is much work left to be done.

While grasping the enormity of the challenge they are undertaking, the Council members left with optimism and a strong vision for Vermont. By 2025, they envision a vibrant economy in a state that is focused on training for the jobs of the future. They see a state that ensures that every student, young or old, has the access to the education and career pathways he or she needs in order to be successful. They see a state with greater civic participation, higher voting rates, and a reduction in economic inequality.

*“We cannot simply train for the skills of today. We must focus on the skills of tomorrow.”*

*—Al Wakefield, CEO, Wakefield Global*

Council members are dedicated to contributing. Notably, Bill Stritzler, owner and managing director of Smugglers’ Notch Resort, committed to achieving the 70x2025 goal in his workforce. Scott Thomas, dean of the University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services, pledged to train both teachers and counselors at UVM to help their future students navigate career and education pathways.

The Council has charged itself, future working groups, and the 70x2025vt staff to tackle the four objectives in a manner that includes and compliments current efforts and that uses data to inform policy, program, and communications decisions while promoting a common language emphasizing the importance of achieving the 70x2025vt goal.

In the coming year, the public-facing work of 70x2025vt will begin in earnest. A short-term strategic plan will be developed in the fall of 2017 and long-term plan and

progress benchmarks will be adopted by Council by the spring of 2018. Working groups aimed at achieving each of the objectives will be launched, and a public communications campaign will commence. Continued engagement by the Council will build public awareness and support, and bring additional organizational capacity and valuable expertise to the table.

*"We do our best work when we focus on what we do well."*

*—Aly Richards, CEO,  
Vermont Permanent Fund*

Reaching a 70 percent attainment rate by 2025 will not be easy and will take the work of many across the state. The good news is that Vermont has always stepped up to overcome great obstacles in its path. 70x2025vt is committed to leading the effort.

## 70x2025vt Council Members

Bob Allen	President, Green Mountain College
Becca Balint	Vice Chair, Senate Education Committee
Liz Bankowski	President and CEO, Windham Foundation
Tom Dee	President and CEO, Southwestern Vermont Health Care
Liz Gamache	Mayor, City of St. Albans
Scott Giles	President and CEO, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation
Rebecca Holcombe	Secretary, Agency of Education
Eileen Illuzzi	Director, North Country Career Center
Joyce Judy	President of Community College of Vermont, Vermont State Colleges
Pixie Loomis	Executive Director, Vermont Adult Learning
Kate McGowan	Executive Director, United Way Addison County
Mary Alice McKenzie	Former Executive Director, Burlington Boys & Girls Club
Rob Miller	Chief Executive Officer, Vermont State Employees Credit Union
Paul Millman	President, Chroma Technology Corporation
Mary Moran	Superintendent, Rutland City Public Schools
Laurie Patton	President, Middlebury College
Aly Richards	Chief Executive Officer, Permanent Fund
Michael Schirling	Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development
David Sharpe	Chair, House Education Committee
Dan Smith	President and CEO, Vermont Community Foundation
Bill Stritzler	Owner and Managing Director, Smugglers' Notch Resort
Scott Thomas	Dean of College of Education & Social Services, University of Vermont
Lisa Ventriss	President, Vermont Business Roundtable
Al Wakefield	Chief Executive Officer, Wakefield Global