

Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

September 22, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Boardroom, VSAC Offices
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, Vermont 05404

Committee Members Present: Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Clarence Davis, Tim Chamberlin, Mary-Katherine Stone

Committee Members Absent: Ryan Dulude

VSAC Staff Present: Patrick Leduc, Tom Little, Meghan Metzler, Brad Fallon

Chair, Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. With a quorum established, the Committee proceeded to the first order of business.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion made by Dave Larsen and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee Members voted to approve the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of May 19, 2025, with one update requested to add the word technology with projects on page 2.

Public Comment

There were no public comments given during the public comment period.

Review Proposed Workplan

Patrick Leduc reviewed this year's proposed work plan for the committee, as previously distributed. He highlighted that when the Committee completes the policy review this year, the committee will have met its commitment to review policies every three years.

Upon a motion made by David Larsen and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee Members voted to approve the Programs & Services FY26 Work Plan as presented.

Clarence Davis entered the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Grant Policy – Ongoing Review

- **Application Requirements Policy** – Patrick Leduc reviewed the updated policy, and that it now includes the contents of the Cancellation Policy by including the fact that VSAC cancels incomplete grant applications 60 days after VSAC has requested additional

information necessary to complete the application. This change makes what was procedure into policy. There were no other material changes to the policy.

- **Cancellation Policy** – This policy is retired as the content is now included in the Application Requirements Policy.

The Committee discussed the policies and Patrick responded to questions.

Upon a motion made by Dave Larsen and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee Members voted to recommend that the full Board approve the Application Requirements Policy, as presented.

Loan Programs and VT529

Upon a motion made by Clarence Davis and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee voted unanimously to enter executive session at 10:23 a.m. in order to (a) consider pending contractual matters, premature public knowledge of which would clearly place VSAC at a substantial disadvantage; and b) to receive confidential advice from legal counsel. 1 V.S.A. sec. 313

The following staff were requested to remain in the meeting, as they have information needed for the executive session: Tom Little, Meghan Metzler, and Patrick Leduc

Having completed its discussions, the Committee exited the executive session at 10:43 a.m.

Operations Updates

Patrick Leduc briefed the Committee on the following:

- First Grant Awarding - This year the expected family contribution from FAFSA averaged higher than in the past, which typically reduces grant awards. However, as projected, due to other factors, grants increased on average by about \$500.
- Student and Parent Loan Originations – There was an early spike in applications and now volume is normalizing. The program continues to grow in annual loan volume.
- Award Advisor App – The app is expected to be available in app stores within the next two weeks. VSAC is working with peer organizations, who will be working within their states to market the app. VSAC is planning marketing for Vermont and getting the word out locally and nationally to professional groups.
- Private loan Servicing conversion - VSAC's vendor needed to move VSAC's conversion date from 12/31/25 to 6/30/26, and VSAC negotiated additional assurances from the vendor that increase the likelihood that the project now ends on time.
- VT529 plan - Meghan Metzler expressed that the program continues to see growth in customers and investments. VSAC's 529 team continues to work on the change of Program Manager, which is expected to take place on October 18th.

The Committee and Patrick Leduc discussed the standing reports.

Federal Update

Patrick Leduc provided status updates on VSAC's Federal grants, suggesting that VSAC will likely hear this week if it is awarded a new 7 year GEAR UP grant. He also confirmed that the Federal funds for the TRIO Talent Search program were approved for the final year of the grant. However, the Department of Education decided not to continue funding our TRIO EOC grant, and VSAC has submitted a request for reconsideration. Both the TRIO programs are entering their final year and VSAC is making plans to apply for new grant awards in the coming year. Patrick continued by reviewing the recent changes made from the Federal HR1 Bill that impact federal student loans that are largely effective July 1, 2026. He concluded his updates by stating that if there is a Federal Government shutdown on October 1, 2025, VSAC does not expect any immediate impacts.

Vermont Update

Tom Little reviewed the state statute of the Higher Education Endowment Trust Fund, its history, how funds are endowed and spent, and that there was a significant increase in endowed funds last year. Patrick Leduc then explained that the funds VSAC receives are expended as scholarships. UVM and VTSU also receive funds from this statute, and all three organizations are working together to pull data to exhibit how the fund is being utilized.

Patrick Leduc then discussed the highlights of the new Freedom and Unity program and how it has exceeded initial expectations. VSAC through a partnership with VTSU, Vermonters with a household income of \$65,000 or less can attend VTSU tuition free in both PT and FT enrollment.

Patrick then touched on the state implications of Workforce Pell, that was part of the Federal HR1 Bill. As we learn more, we may be asked to help navigate state implementation due to our experience with the Advancement Grant program.

Patrick responded to questions from the Committee

Other Business

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Leduc, Secretary