

Career & Education Wellness

COURSE OFFERINGS

FOR EMPLOYEES

Professional Growth and Career Planning (7-part series)

In this workshop series, you'll discover your interests, needs, and strengths to enhance your career path. You'll build a proactive professional development plan that includes goals, milestones, and practical and meaningful education that will have a real impact on your current position and organization.

Each section of this series is designed to build upon the previous sections, but each may also be taken separately.

Course offerings will strengthen your workforce by supporting employees in expanding the skills they bring to work every day. We cover several topics, including career plans, financial aid options, and repayment information.

Part 1: Assessing Your Current Work Situation

You'll work on the "4 Cs" to clarify the content, conditions, compensation, and congruence in your current work situation. You'll identify areas you'd like to change or develop and then create action steps to address those areas.

Part 2: Career Self-Assessment and Transferable Skills

Utilizing an assessment tool, you'll evaluate your current skill levels and identify areas for further development. You'll then build action steps—including professional development activities, further education, supervision, and mentoring—that are aligned with your company's needs so you can improve the skills you want to develop.

Part 3: Personality and Career Choice

You'll identify and assess your personality preferences using the *Do What You Are* online tool. You'll then work to relate to your personality preferences to your current work situation and create realistic plans to maximize your productivity and performance based on these preferences.

Part 4: Identifying Career Interests and Energy Builders

In this workshop, you'll first use an interest assessment tool to identify your interests and "energy builders," and then clarify your career interests and the activities that motivate and engage you. Along the way, you'll create action steps to incorporate your interests and energy builders into your work environment.

Part 5: Returning to Learning

You'll explore education, training, and financial options relevant to working adults and will clarify options that assist you in enhancing your current work situation.

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Part 6: Developing Mentor Relationships and Professional Networks

You'll learn how to develop mentor relationships and professional networks that maximize your work performance and opportunities, and you'll build a plan of action that includes activities such as information interviewing and job shadowing.

Part 7: Creating a Professional Portfolio

In this workshop, you'll clarify the purpose and value of maintaining a professional portfolio. We'll cover ways to identify the specific documents that you may want to include and will get you started on creating a portfolio as a "living document."

Financial Aid for Education

In this workshop, you'll explore options to pay for continued education or a degree. We'll cover full-time and part-time enrollment, and how to apply for federal student aid, including obtaining a Federal Student Aid ID and completing necessary financial aid applications and forms. You'll also learn about Vermont degree and non-degree grants from VSAC, along with scholarships that you may be eligible for.

In some cases, one-to-one counseling sessions, to address individual needs can be made available with the program.

Student Loan Repayment (3-part series)

This series of workshops is designed to give you the information and tools you need to navigate student loan repayment and to understand whether there's a federal student loan forgiveness option for you.

Part 1: Student Loan Repayment Basics

This introductory workshop will provide an overview of terms and federal repayment programs. You'll leave with tools to find your "servicer," ways to identify type of loans you may have, and other key information that will assist in preparation for the next two workshops in this series or your own personal plan for navigating your student loan repayment options.

Part 2: Loan Forgiveness Programs

In this session, you'll learn about federally sponsored student loan forgiveness and the specific situations that may make you eligible. Programs include Teacher Loan Forgiveness, Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and forgiveness associated with income-driven repayment plans. As a follow-up to this workshop, individual sessions are available to address individual circumstances.

Part 3: Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Building on the knowledge you gained in the broad loan forgiveness workshop above, this workshop will break down all the requirements on qualifying and applying for Public Service Loan Forgiveness. You'll leave this workshop with contact information and additional resources to assist you in the application process. As a follow-up to this workshop, individual sessions are available to address individual circumstances.

Navigating Student Loan Default

Are you struggling to make your student loan payments and concerned that you may default? Or are you already in default? This workshop will help you understand the implications of being delinquent or in default. You'll gain an understanding of the options for managing student loan default and hear about scenarios for getting out of default and improving your credit history. One-on-one sessions will be available as follow-through from this workshop.

We're working to expand our workshops to include offerings from our public and nonprofit partners. As a result, we're proud to share a new workshop from one of our partners, the Vermont State Colleges System.

Prior Learning Assessment: Get Credit for What You Already Know

In this session, learn about a Vermont State Colleges System program that helps adults receive college credit for learning acquired outside of the college classroom. You'll hear about the options for documenting your prior learning through portfolios, standardized testing, and course challenges that will save money as you move closer to your education goals.



FOR EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Navigating the Vermont Public School System (4-part series)

This 4-part series delves into the workings of our public school systems and offers practical suggestions for ways you can support and advocate for your children as they progress through the K-12 system in Vermont.

Part 1: Navigating the School System: Common Core

This session provides an overview of Common Core, covering a basic understanding of these standards and how they may be reflected on your child's report card. The session will enable you to have a better connection with your child and their school work, and the teachers in your school system.

Part 2: Navigating the School System: Personal Learning Plans

This session offers an overview of PLPs, which began implementation in the fall of 2015. You'll learn what PLPs are and why they're used, and will gain an understanding of the role you play in developing a PLP for your child(ren).

Part 3: Navigating the School System: Vermont Act 77-Flexible Pathways

There are 4 main components of Flexible Pathways, and this workshop provides an understanding of all of them: dual enrollment, early college, work-based learning, and the role of PLPs in developing these paths for your child(ren).

Part 4: Navigating the School System: Proficiency-Based Learning and Diplomas

What does being "career and college ready" mean in terms of students graduating and transitioning to living independent and successful lives? In this workshop, we'll explain proficiency-based learning and requirements for graduation.

Guiding Your Child(ren) from Birth through High School (4-part series)

This 4-part series concentrates on the different developmental stages of children from pre-school to high school and the ways that this knowledge helps you to assist your child(ren). We'll explore the transition from one stage of education to the next; you'll leave with tips, strategies, conversation starters, and practical information that will support both you and your child(ren) in this important journey.

Part 1: From Birth to Pre-School

With the current expectations put on young children entering the public school system, how do you support children in just being kids and yet still get them ready for school? This workshop will provide an overview of pre-school and kindergarten readiness, along with fun, easy ways to support your child(ren) by cultivating a love of learning.

Part 2: Elementary School

In this session, you'll learn strategies, tips, and activities to use with your elementary school children to promote engagement in learning and establish successful learning habits that will prepare them for the expectations that await them in middle school and beyond.

Part 3: Middle School

This session focuses on strategies for supporting middle schoolers in being successful in school and for preparing them for the rigor of and transition to high school. You'll leave the workshop with ideas and resources to use with your middle schooler to build on their interests and passions.

Part 4: High School

This workshop focuses on the complex task of communicating with and supporting your child(ren) in high school. You'll leave with strategies and resources to navigate the high school experience with your child(ren) and assist them in being prepared for training or college after high school.

Course offerings are designed specifically to address the needs of employees with children in Vermont school systems and to provide support through career and college planning, enrollment, and success.

Testing

This workshop will demystify standardized testing: What do the acronyms mean, and what is being tested? What are the SBAC, SAT, and ACT? How can my child(ren) prepare for testing? How do I interpret the scores, identify next steps, and support my child(ren) in those steps? How does testing affect college and other education opportunities after high school? Follow-up sessions are available to discuss individual testing results.

Helping My Student Find Their Path

Discover strategies and tools to guide conversations and exploration with your son or daughter to discover interests, strengths, and passions; then research potential career paths and a potential education plan that supports those paths.

Paying for College (4-part series)

This 4-part series offers information pertaining to paying for college, setting up an FSA account (with Federal Student Aid), and completing applications, as well as understanding financial aid award letters.

Part 1: Saving for College or Training after High School

Come to this session to learn about 529 college savings plans and to understand why it's a misconception that it will hurt you to save for college. This session also covers the difference between "net price" and "sticker price" of college.

Part 2: Types of Financial Aid

In this session, you'll learn what grants, loans, merit aid, and scholarships are and will leave with necessary information and resources to support your child(ren) in building the mix of financial resources and plans needed to attend training or college after high school.

Part 3: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is the primary starting point for financial aid. We'll train you to set up an FSA account, understand how to complete the FAFSA, and identify the information you'll need. We'll also include tips on how to keep track of financial aid deadlines.

Part 4: Understanding Financial Aid Award Letters

How do you read an award letter? In this workshop, you'll learn how to interpret the many important parts of an award letter, including aid that needs to be paid back (loans) and aid that does not (grants and scholarships). In addition, we'll share important online tools that you can utilize with your child(ren) to compare financial aid award letters and make an informed choice regarding college offers.

Careers

This workshop focuses on career and training programs, as well as opportunities for young adults who've determined that a 4-year college isn't right for them at this time. What's available to students to enable them to join an ever-changing work force, and how do they go about finding programs and possible career options? Join this training to gather information and make a connection to VSAC resources in your area.

College (4-part series)

This 4-part series provides an overview of how to choose a college. It will provide a discussion of cost, the admissions process for college, and an introduction to the "gap year." You'll take away knowledge on the best practices for you, as a parent, once your child is attending college and how best to provide support when challenges occur.

Part 1: The Right Fit

This session focuses on how to find the right fit when looking for a college. We'll delve into the questions you should ask and where to find answers in choosing an institution or program that will prepare your young person for life.

Part 2: The Application Process

Learn about the application process for college: What should my child(ren) be doing, and when should they be doing it? You'll walk away with specific conversations to have with your child(ren), as well as tools that will assist in meeting deadlines.

Part 3: Gap Year and Volunteer Experiences

This session explains what a gap year is and what it isn't, and why it's important to plan. We'll provide you with resources to help you and your child explore options and formal programs. You'll leave with information that will assist you and your child in deciding what type of experience is the best fit.

Part 4: What is My Role (Now That My Student Is in College)?

This workshop provides suggestions and tips on supporting your young adult in their new adventure as a college student without being a "helicopter parent." You'll learn what the role of a new college parent looks like and how best to support your child in making a successful transition independence, while having your support when it's really needed.

To learn more:

Contact the VSAC career & education wellness program.

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