



What's happening

Our Goal

Share what new things are going on in the ways we're helping students take their next steps and highlight upcoming initiatives

State and local challenges

- 53% of working-age Vermonters have a postsecondary credential.¹
- 100% of Vermont's high-growth high-wage jobs require education and training after high school.²
- Only 26% of first-generation boys from the Class of 2012 obtained a 2- or 4-year degree within 6 years of high school graduation.³

To remain economically competitive and to ensure civically engaged communities, Vermont must fully develop the potential of its citizens.

¹ VSAC, "70X25vt," 2018

² McClure Pathways to Promising Careers

³ VSAC Six Year Completion of the Vermont High School Class of 2012.

VSAC services

- Vermont Grant Program
 - Full-time
 - Part-time
 - Advancement grants
 - Microgrants
- VSAC-assisted scholarship program
- Advantage student and parent loans
- Education loan coaches
- Loan servicing
- Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan
- Career and Education Wellness
- Whole-school aspiration partnerships
- Student/adult counseling
 - Talent Search
 - GEARUP
 - Education Opportunity Center
- College/training access information services
 - Toll-free phone access
 - One-on-one appointments
 - Career and College Pathways
 - Paying for College events
 - Financial Aid Application Forms Nights
 - Zoom Rooms
 - VSAC Shows You How

Green Mountain Grad

Free tuition for up to one course at the VSCS — Northern VT University, Community College of VT, Castleton University, Vermont Technical College

- Any graduate of the high school classes of 2020 or 2021.
- Student enrolls at the school of their choice.
- For courses that start on or after July 1, 2021.
- Eligible courses include online, in-person, or hybrid.
- Students are responsible for books and course fees.

802 Opportunity Grant

Any aged student with a family Adjusted Gross Income of \$50,000 or less can attend the **Community College of Vermont tuition free** between their Federal Pell Grant, their Vermont state aid, and 802 Opportunity.

- Program begins September 1, 2021.
- Student must be enrolled in a degree program, either full time or part time.
- Eligible courses include online, in-person or hybrid.



VT Nursing Workforce Incentive Loan Program (Interest free and forgivable)

Available to adult students and recent high school grads

- \$6,000/year
- Available for 1-, 2-, and 4-year nursing programs.
- Rolling deadlines.
- Loan is forgiven if the student works in Vermont in the nursing field for one year per year of award.

Choose Vermont Scholarship

This program encourages students to attend one of Vermont's higher education institutions.

- In-state or out-of-state students entering a Vermont college for the first time.
- \$5,000 awards.
- 13 Vermont institutions and VSAC participated in the program.
- Application is available in mid-winter.
- Apply online at thinkvermont.com/scholarship.
- No essays or letters of recommendations.

Dual enrollment/early college stipend

Created to ensure that needy students have access to dual enrollment or early college classes.

- Stipend of \$150 to offset cost of books, fees, transportation.

Who's eligible?

- High school students enrolled in a dual enrollment course
 - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch eligible
 - Verified costs for books, fees, and/or transportation
- High school students enrolled in early college
 - Must file both a FAFSA and a Vermont grant application.
 - Must be eligible for a Vermont grant.

Emergency microgrants

Microgrants — grants to help prevent Vermont students from dropping or stopping out of school due to a relatively small unexpected expense.

- Student must be nominated using the Microgrant Nominated Form.
- Form must be completed by VSAC Outreach counselors or college staff member.
- Brief explanation of unexpected expense.
- Amount of unexpected expense.

VSAC appeals for 2021-2022

VSAC continues to see a significant increase in the number of appeals from Vermont families whose income and overall financial health has been negatively impacted.

FY	# of Appeals funded	COVID related	Average change in award w/ COVID Appeal
2022 to date	842	349	\$2,280
2021	2083	854	\$2,384
2020	644	n/a	n/a
2019	650	n/a	n/a
2018	694	n/a	n/a

Funds for training programs

CTE Scholarship for Adults:

(Career Technical Education)

\$100,000 program created by the Vermont Legislature to support adult learners.

- Adults attending CTE training programs.
- Up to \$1,000.
- Nominated by VSAC EOC Outreach counselor.
- Must also apply for a Vermont grant (degree or Advancement Grant).

CURTIS Credential of Value Program:

- Adults or recent high school grads.
- Training programs.
- Up to \$1,500.
- Nominated by VSAC EOC Outreach counselor\
- Must also apply for a Vermont grant (degree or Advancement Grant).

VT 529 plan

Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan (VHEIP) has a new name.

- Investment plan to help VT families save for college and training programs.
- Tax credit up to \$250/child/account or \$500/child for joint tax filers.
- Can be opened with as little as \$25.
- Students with college savings accounts are 7 times more likely to attend college or training after high school even with only small amounts saved.
- Vermonters currently have over \$570,000,000 invested in VT529
- More than \$265,000,000 has been withdrawn to pay for college-related expenses for 9,100 students.

VSAC loan services

VSAC loan coaches

- Skilled staff able to counsel borrowers on loan repayment options.
- Vermont borrowers do not need to have borrowed from VSAC to receive help from a coach.

VSAC rehab programs

- Helps borrowers who have defaulted on a private or federal VSAC loan.
- Can remove the default from their credit history.
- In the first year, 184 borrowers were able to rehab their loans, moving almost \$5 million out of default and into good standing.

VSAC research

Class of 2012 6-Year Completion Paper

- Gender and generation matter.
 - Second-generation students are almost twice as likely to earn a 2- or 4-year degree in 6 years than first-generation students.
 - Females outpaced males in earning degrees 52% compared to 39%.
- Gap year strategy takes careful planning. Almost half had not enrolled within 6 years of graduation. Only 24% enrolled in the fall of 2013.



Diversity Equity and Inclusion

VSAC's internal efforts

- VSAC maintains a Diversity Equity and Inclusion workgroup.
- We've surveyed our staff to explore their understanding and gain their input and perspective.
- We've transparently shared the results back with staff.
- We're presenting learning sessions to all our staff on this topic this summer/fall.

Potential outreach to partners, peers, and clients

- As one of our next steps we're preparing to get the input of individuals outside of our organization.
- A lens of equity and inclusion of all our programs and services.
- Potential survey and potential forum opportunities.

Cyber threats and security

Security of the data in our trust

- Through our work with partners and individuals, we store and protect a lot of data.
- We consistently work to educate all our staff, regardless of position, on the importance of protecting data and we provide a lot of tools and controls to protect data.
- Sometimes those controls seem like a burden, but the “bad actors” are more aggressive every day.
- Remote working has spurred more bad actors and more frequent attacks.
- Not a “one and done” situation, and improvement of controls will need to continue,

Safety protocols

VSAC's approach to in-person work

- VSAC has not required staff to be vaccinated but has strongly encouraged it.
- We know that a very high percentage of our staff has opted to be vaccinated.
- VSAC staff have specific guidelines to follow, and we expect those guidelines to evolve as the data and science dictate.
- Our posture, just like your organization's posture, is fluid and we'll adjust as new data becomes available.

College and Career Pathways

Goal: Help 10th and 11th grade families learn about options, get concrete steps, find the right resources, and connect with Vermont experts around choosing, applying to, and paying for college or career training.

2021 event highlights:

- 11 live virtual college and career planning workshops.
- 18 Vermont college and non-degree training provider virtual tour & info sessions.
- 412 people tuned into live sessions with 233 unique attendees.
- Videos have received 1,500+ views and are available at vsac.org/ccp as an ongoing resource for students and teachers.

College and Career Pathways

2022 event plans: Hoping to offer live, in-person events again on four college campuses in February – April 2022. Tentative dates/locations:

- Feb 15 – Castleton
 - Mar 9 – Southern Vermont (TBD location)
 - Mar 16 – St. Michaels
 - Mar 26 – Chittenden County, Saturday event (see below)
 - Apr 4 – NVU, Lyndon
- All Vermont high schools invited to bring students.
 - Workshops targeted to 10th and 11th graders (But open to 9th, 12th graders).
 - Hoping to offer one Saturday event in Burlington area for HS families. Live stream and record workshops. Tours of area colleges. Location TBD.

If needed due to COVID, we'll pivot back to fully virtual.

Vermont Career Connect

Middle school career exploration event, offered in partnership with the J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation, Northern Vermont AHEC, Northern Vermont University, and Careers CLiC

Goal: Help 7th and 8th graders think about the future, explore new possibilities, and hear directly from people in a wide variety of careers about their work.

2021 event highlights:

- New online resource for students: vsac.org/vermont-career-connect.
- 74 students participated in live virtual workshop on matching interests with promising careers, followed by choice of 16 career panels (organized by career cluster) where they could directly ask questions of career presenters.

Vermont Career Connect

2022 Plan

- vsac.org/vermont-career-connect to include:
 - A career interest survey
 - 100+ recorded career interviews
 - Additional career exploration resources and activities
- **Oct 20, 10:00–11:15 am:** Virtual career panel focused on Vermont's most promising jobs.

Transition and Career Conference

15-year collaboration between VSAC, AOE, VTSCA and Voc Rehab

Goal: Provide tangible tools and best practices regarding transition and career planning.

2021 conference highlights:

- Keynote by Luis Ortega, Storytellers for Change: *Co-Crafting Empathetic Space*
- More than 160 VT educators and service providers.
- More than 19 workshops, including:
 - Grounding, Gratitude, and Games: Building Success through Relationships
 - A Book Unlike Me: Challenging Our Learners to Read More Windows
 - Empowering Our Adolescents: Through Understanding the Science Behind Them

Transition and Career Conference

2022 conference plans:

- May 12, 2022
- The Stoweflake Resort in Stowe

Keynote and session topics to include:

- Re-engagement, lessons learned, and returning from isolation.
- Opportunities for learning and career exploration with new vision.
- Innovative ideas and improved communication for student and client success.
- Connections, gratitude, celebrations.

Fall financial aid support

VSAC Shows You How — monthly at 6:00 pm

- VT529 — College Investment Plan
- How to File your FAFSA and Vermont grant

FAFSA Help

- 1:1 help from a VSAC Outreach counselor.
- Meet via Zoom, Oct 2021 through Jan 2022.
- Visit vsac.org/events to find a time.
- FAFSA Hotline available M-F, 8:00 am-4:30pm for quick questions (833-802-8722).



"Self service" videos:

vsac.org/financial-aid-videos

- How to apply for grants and scholarships
- Financial aid appeals
- Loans, and "what's next?"

Helping students take the next step

VSAC's Adult Services (Educational Opportunity Center- EOC)

- 1:1 counseling of adults outside the public school system who have minimal access to services.
- Assists more than 1,700 adults annually.
- About 40% of participants are ages 19–27.

Outcomes (2019–2020)

- 92% applied for financial aid.
- 90% applied for and 75% enrolled into PSE.

"My VSAC counselor walked me through all the forms and the process. She took the time to learn more about me and the direction I wanted for my life. Then she explained how I could afford to go back to school."

Vermont adult learner

vsac.org/plan/adult-learners

Helping students take the next step

VSAC's Student Services (GEAR UP & Talent Search)

- VSAC counselors in over 80 Vermont middle schools and high schools, serving 3,500 students annually.
- Serve an additional 300 students per year in postsecondary.
- Primarily serving modest-income or first-generation students and families.

Outcomes (2019–2020)

- Talent Search: 99% graduated from HS, 78% enrolled in PSE.
- GEAR UP: 96% graduated from HS, 59%* enrolled in PSE.

**59% shows some of the impact of the pandemic. In the prior year, 70% of students enrolled in PSE.*

Essential Math for College & Careers

2019–2020

- 8 pilot schools: Green Mountain, North Country, Randolph Tech Center, Richford, Rutland, Springfield, Stowe, West Rutland.
- Variety of formats (½ year, whole year, daily, 2–3 days/week).

2020–2021

- Despite COVID challenges, 3 schools: South Burlington, BFA-Fairfax, Rutland.

2021-2022

- 7 schools: BFA-Fairfax, Green Mountain, Randolph Tech, Rutland, Springfield, South Burlington, and Windham Regional Career Center.

vsac.org/emc2

Essential Math for College & Careers

A large portion of students report positive outcomes following the course. AY 20–21:

- 73% of students reported feeling better about math.
- 75% of students reported improved math skills.
- 62% of students reported improved confidence in their math ability.

Accuplacer scores were higher at the end of the course than at the beginning of the course.

- Increase was statistically significant but modest, with a mean improvement of approximately 8 points between the pre-test (*Mean* = 238, *Standard Deviation* = 19) and post-test (*M*=246, *SD*=12).

vsac.org/emc2

Whole School Aspiration Partnerships

The Aspirations Model includes:

- Development of school-specific college and career planning curriculum.
- College and career programming for students and families.
- Professional learning for school staff, defined by school staff.

2021-2022:

- Closed out partnership with CVCC this past year.
- Continuing partnership with Twinfield, Spaulding.
- Onboarding Harwood Union School.

VSAC Curriculum Map

The VSAC Curriculum Map organizes, by grade level, the **enduring understandings** and **skills** that VSAC considers important for students to be prepared for college and career opportunities after high school.

- Broken down by grade level.
- Grouped together by a domain (large focus area).
- Sub-grouped into topics (big ideas students will explore).
- Research based and strengthened by VSAC's decades of experience.

VSAC Curriculum Map (e.g. Gr. 6,7,8)

Domain (Focus Area)	Topic (Big Ideas students will explore)	Enduring Understandings (Students will understand...)	Skills (Students will know, be able to do)
Academic	Study Skills	Time management, organizational, and study skills lead to success in school, work and life	Organize learning materials, prepare for class and meetings, and attend on time Students will have fewer than 10 absences per year
	Academic Achievement	Confronting challenges and addressing obstacles allow for a successful transition to high school	Establish and complete goals for the transition to high school, including doing well in necessary coursework Students will pass Pre-Algebra by the end of 8th grade
	Growth Mindset	A growth or fixed mindset has a direct impact on how we face academic and life challenges	Identify and reframe a fixed mindset into a growth mindset
Social	Self-Advocacy	Advocating for yourself and cooperating with others are critical to success in life and work Learning strategies can be based on student's individual learning styles	Practice effective self-advocacy skills through communication and cooperative relationships, in academic and social arenas Identify and apply strengths and learning styles
	Social Emotional Wellbeing	Developing social/emotional health can have a positive impact on your academic and personal life, especially during transitions	Identify and prioritize positive relationships and stress management strategies on a regular basis
Postsecondary Planning	Career Exploration and Awareness	When you choose a job and career based on your interests, values, abilities, and strengths, you are more likely to find success and satisfaction in that job and career	Research career clusters, identify those of interest, and match careers with personal skills Identify values, interests, personalities and abilities Describe the importance of personal skills, abilities and attitudes to job and career success
		Most people have multiple jobs and careers over their lives, and earn higher incomes with higher levels of education, training, and experience	Define postsecondary education terms Identify how education and training match with careers and affect lifetime income potential
	Post-secondary Education and Employment	Employers and educational institutions put great value on personal and interpersonal relationship skills as well as a positive attitude and work habits	Recognize and communicate personal qualities necessary for success in various careers and postsecondary education
	Financial Aid and Literacy	Developing basic money management skills will help you be successful later in life	Explore basic money management topics, including financial decision making and budgeting
Financial aid makes postsecondary education accessible and more affordable		Compare the costs of post-secondary education with the income from a career of choice	

VSAC Early College collaborations

EC+:

- Collaboration with CCV & VSAC.
- Students complete final year of HS, first year of postsecondary, and a certificate program: Cybersecurity Fundamentals, Graphic Design, IT Service Desk Specialist.
- \$1,000 stipend-books, fees (this year).
- Access to VSAC support through a VSAC counselor.

EC Data review:

- Collaboration with VSAC, Agency of Education (AOE), Vermont State College System.
- Exploring data and understanding of EC to date to inform future practice and policy.

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