



Financial Aid Training

Vermont Student
Assistance Corporation

Fall 2022





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
 - 802 Opportunity
- VSAC-assisted scholarship program
- VSAC student and parent loans
- Education loan coaches
- Loan servicing
- Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan (VT 529)
- 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

State Workforce Development Funding

The Vermont Legislature was very focused this past session on statewide workforce development.

A number of programs were either created or expanded in support of this goal.

www.vsac.org/workforce-development-funding



802 Opportunity Grant

Any aged student with a family Adjusted Gross Income of \$75,000 or less can attend the **Community College of Vermont tuition free** between their Federal Pell Grant, their Vermont state aid, and 802 Opportunity.

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



Interest-free forgivable loans

The State of Vermont offers several forgivable loan programs to encourage students to enter the Vermont workforce in specific high-demand fields.

These unique **interest-free** loans:

- Require awarded students to sign a promissory note committing to specific work obligations when they accept the funding.
- Do not require payment while the student is enrolled in the applicable degree or training program.
- Are “forgiven” — loan does not have to be paid back when the student meets the work obligations outlined in the promissory note they signed.
- Must be repaid if the student doesn’t complete the program, doesn’t receive their license, or doesn’t work in the field in Vermont following licensure.

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

Available to adult students and recent high school grads.

- Full-tuition at public institutions and up to \$16,280 at Vermont private and out-of-state institutions.
- Available for 1-, 2-, and 4-year and graduate nursing programs.
- Rolling deadlines.
- Loan is forgiven if the student works in Vermont in the nursing field for one year per year of award.

www.vsac.org/pursue-career-nursing-tuition-free

VT Trades Scholarship

(Interest-free and forgivable loan)

Must be enrolled in industry-recognized training and certification program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building, mechanical, industrial, or medical trade; emergency services, including paramedics; energy, including clean energy, energy efficiency, or weatherization; transportation, including clean transportation; broadband; robotics or other high demand sectors.

- Awards can cover tuition, exam fees and licensing fees
- Must register with VT Dept of Labor if unemployed.
- For courses starting after September 1, 2022.

www.vsac.org/pursue-career-skilled-trades-tuition-free

Scholarship Program for Prospective Early Childhood Educators (Interest-free and forgivable loan)

A program to incent students to pursue a career in early childhood education or early childhood special education.

- Awards cover full tuition.
- Must attend a participating school — Castleton, Champlain College, CCV, Goddard College, Northern Vermont University, St. Michael's College, Springfield College, or University of Vermont.
- Work in a regulated, privately operated center-based child-care program or regulated family child-care home in Vermont.

www.vsac.org/become-early-childhood-educator-vermont-tuition-free

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.

Funds for training programs

CURTIS Credential of Value Program:

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

VT 529 plan

Vermont Higher Education Investment Plan (VHEIP) is now VT 529.

- 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 \$533,266,897 invested in 27,247 accounts.
- More than \$312,592,084 has been withdrawn to pay for college-related expenses for more than 11,231 students since 1991.

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.
- Providing support for Public Service Loan Forgiveness/IDR, etc.
- Providing assistance and information to Vermont borrowers for Federal Loan cancellation whether or not they borrowed from VSAC.

Contact info:

- info@vsac.org
- 1-833-802-8722

VSAC research

Class of 2018 White Paper

- Gender matters
 - Only 58% of 1st generation boys aspire to college.
 - The aspiration rate for 2nd generation boys has declined by 6.5% in the past decade.
 - The gender gap for postsecondary enrollment is wider in Vermont than in the US.
- Students report that their parent's postsecondary aspirations for them are shifting—away from college.



VERMONT NEEDS TO DO BETTER

Class of 2012
at high school
graduation



Students who at
some point thought
they would enroll
in the fall of 2012



High school
graduates who
planned to enroll
in the fall of 2012



High school
graduates who
enrolled at a 2-
or 4-yr college



First-year college
students who
enrolled for a
second year



High school
graduates who
attained an
associate or
bachelor's degree
in 4 years



High school
graduates who
attained an
associate or
bachelor's degree
in 6 years



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Fall financial aid support

VSAC Shows You How

- How to File your FAFSA — October 25, 6:00 pm

FAFSA Help

- 1:1 help from a VSAC Outreach counselor
 - October 2022 through January 2023
 - In-person and virtual opportunities available
 - Dates and times at vsac.org/events
- Drop-in hours at the VSAC Resource Center
 - Tuesday–Thursday, 9:00 am–3:00 pm
- FAFSA hotline Monday–Friday, 8:00 am–4:30 pm 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?"

Vermont Career Connect

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

- **Oct 4, 9:00 am–1:15 pm:** In-person Kingdom Career Connect event at NVU-Lyndon. NEK schools invited to bring 7th & 8th graders to participate in hands-on career exploration workshops.
- **Late fall:** Virtual career panel focused on Vermont's most promising jobs. Vermont middle schools invited to participate virtually with 7th & 8th grade classrooms.

vsac.org/vermont-career-connect

- career interest survey
- 100+ recorded career interviews
- additional career exploration resources and activities.

College and Career Pathways

2023 event plans: Planning live, in-person events again.

- All Vermont high schools are invited to bring students.
- Dates/locations:
 - Feb 7 – Bennington College
 - Feb 23 – NVU-Lyndon
 - Mar 16 – Saint Michael's College
 - Mar 18 – UVM Saturday event for families (see below)
 - Apr 5 – Castleton University
- Workshops targeted to 10th and 11th graders (but open to 9th, 12th graders).
- Planning to offer one Saturday event in Burlington area for HS families. Workshops will be offered in-person, as well as live streamed and recorded.
- Contact Anna Telensky (telensky@vsac.org)

Transition and Career Conference

17-year collaboration between VSAC, AOE, VTSCA & HireAbility Vermont

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

2023 conference plans:

- Opportunities for Vermont learners and career seekers through innovative pathways, new initiatives, and collaborations
- Friday, May 12, 2023
- Stoweflake Resort in Stowe
- Contact Cathy Printon: (printon@vsac.org)

Senior Survey Professional Development

For individuals or school teams of 2–5 high school leaders (counselors, principals, WBL coordinators, advisory leaders, or other educators who take the lead in implementing post-high school planning at your school site).

Participants will:

- Examine your school-specific 2022 data with guidance from experienced VSAC staff.
- Use data to identify areas of celebration and opportunities to improve post-high school planning for students and families at your school.

November 2

www.vsac.org/events/vsac-senior-survey-professional-learning

Essential Math for College & Careers

- Entering 4th year of implementation.
- Designed for high school Juniors and Seniors
- Data shows positive outcomes, despite challenges of COVID. In AY 21–22:
 - 70% of students reported feeling better about math.
 - 70% of students reported improved math skills.
 - 66% of students reported improved confidence in their math ability.
- Now available for **free** on Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative (VTVLC).
- Currently seeking schools to teach this course in AY 23-24.

www.vsac.org/emc2

Helping students take the next step

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

- VSAC counselors in more than 80 Vermont middle schools and high schools, serving 3,500 students annually (+300 in postsecondary).
- Primarily serving modest-income or first-generation students and families.

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.

www.vvac.org/plan/adult-learners

VSAC Aspirations 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.

2022–2023:

- Closed out partnership with Twinfield, Spaulding in '21–22.
- Currently working with Harwood Union School, Missisquoi Union School.
- Seeking school partners for '23–24 school year (4-year engagement or shorter-term consultancy) .
- Contact Ellen Bagnato: bagnato@vsac.org

Thank you!



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