

Heating Fuel and Service Workforce Training Pilot Program

Governor Phil Scott has signed the Heating Fuel and Service Workforce Training Pilot Program into law. The pilot program is designed to identify individuals who need work, get them trained, and place them with heating fuel and service companies. Working with the Technical Training Centers, Vermont Department of Labor, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, VFDA has identified the following opportunities as part of this pilot program.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Assistance (WIOA)

As a result of this law, VFDA's Oilheat and Propane Certification Programs are now on the *Vermont Eligible Training Provider* list for [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) tuition dollars. This federal funding is available to train dislocated workers, young people (up to 24) and adults that meet certain income eligibility. The Department of Labor Regional Centers will begin to distribute VFDA's Training Program marketing materials, we will be listed on the DOL website, and the Unemployment Insurance Portal for those looking for work. We are negotiating with DOL lawyers a key provision: how individual companies can use a commitment to hire letter to a prospective employee to allow them to continue to receive unemployment insurance and waive the work search requirement.

Applying for Workforce Investment and Opportunity Assistance (WIOA)

- Individuals should be instructed to contact their local American Jobs Center to set up a meeting with a Case Manager. More information can be found at <http://www.careeronestop.org/>
- If an individual inquires about the program, they will speak with the front desk staff of the office. That person will have knowledge of the program, the next step is to set up a meeting with a Case Manager to start the assessment process.
- During the meeting at the AJC (these meetings can last an hour), the individual will engage in a conversation with the case manager who will ask a series of questions that will help determine their eligibility for WIOA assistance and their interest in the program.
- If someone is collecting unemployment benefits and needs a training waiver (waived from work search obligation)
- Individuals should be instructed to contact their local Career Resource Center to set up a meeting. At that meeting, they will complete a B-130 form with a staff member.
- The training waiver is sent to the VDOL central office by the VDOL regional manager for a final decision. Not all waivers are approved.

Vermont Student Assistance Corp.

VFDA's Oilheat and Propane Certification Programs have qualified as a reimbursable Non-Degree Grant funding through the [Vermont Student Assistance Corp.](#) (VSAC). These can be used to reimburse young adults and unemployed individuals for tuition.

Vermont Training Program

Heating fuel and service companies that train incumbent employees in VFDA's Oilheat and Propane Certification Programs will be reimbursed for tuition expenses through ACCD's [Vermont Training Program](#) (VTP). These state grants provide up to 50% of the training costs, paid out to employers on a reimbursement basis upon completion of employee training.

Veterans

Many military veterans have skills that transfer well to the heating industry, whether it is driving delivery trucks or working with heating equipment. The federal [Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#) (WOTC) and the Returning Heroes Tax Credit provides incentives of up to \$5,600 for hiring unemployed veterans and the Wounded Warriors Tax Credit doubles the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit for long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities, to up to \$9,600. VFDA will reach out to local veterans groups and member companies to connect those veterans that need work with companies that need to hire.

In addition there is a program called Vets2Techs which works across the region to find veterans and place them with heating fuel and service companies. More information on that can be found at vets2techs.com