



## **Media Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers**

Vermont places great value on the many positive contributions of its older citizens. As the second oldest state in the country, it is estimated that by 2030, 29% of Vermont's population will be over the age of 65. When older Vermonters maintain their health and remain active in their communities, it has a positive impact on the State's economic sustainability and also improves their physical, mental and financial well-being.

Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the Department of Labor (DOL) are co-sponsoring the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers. In partnership with Vermont's Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) and AARP Vermont, the award recognizes Vermont employers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to employment practices that benefit and support the inclusion and retention of mature workers.

Criteria for the award include:

1. Recruitment and retention policies
  2. Work schedule flexibility and accommodations
  3. Training and skill development opportunities
  4. Retirement and retirement planning

Governor Phil Scott states: “The mature worker is a tremendous economic asset for our state, helping us address our important workforce needs while growing Vermont’s economy. The Business Excellence Award provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the support our employers are providing our mature workers in this most critical endeavor”.

"It is exciting to have the opportunity to illuminate and recognize business practices of Vermont employers who hire, train and retain our mature workforce.

This segment of our workforce has extensive skills and experience and reactivating these talented employees is an important strategy for growing the Vermont economy and ensuring that businesses have a strong workforce”, said Michael Schirling, ACCD Secretary.

Commissioner Monica Caserta Hutt of DAIL notes that: “Vermonters value inclusion and the contributions of each and every citizen; these awards honor those businesses that put that spirit into concrete practice. The opportunity to recognize Vermont businesses that strive to create an inclusive workforce is truly something to be celebrated”.

“Mature workers are vitally important to the well-being of the Vermont economy. As a former small business owner, I can attest firsthand to the value of mature workers and the expertise and strong work ethic they bring to a business,” said DOL Commissioner Lindsay Kurrel.

AARP’s Vermont State Director, Greg Marchildon believes that, “no one’s possibilities should ever be limited by their age, especially in the workforce. We are proud to be part of recognizing the Vermont businesses that promote the recruitment and retention of experienced workers, and hope this encourages more employers to follow suit”.

Applications will be available beginning June 5, 2017 on the following websites:

<http://accd.vermont.gov/>

<http://labor.vermont.gov/>

<http://dail.vermont.gov/>

<http://states.aarp.org/region/vermont/>

Completed applications are due no later than July 14, 2017 and can be e-mailed to: [Greg.Voorheis@vermont.gov](mailto:Greg.Voorheis@vermont.gov). Awards will be presented in an official ceremony in September 2017 at the Vermont Society for Human Resource Management’s fall conference.

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# EXPERIENCE Matters



*Governor's Award*  
for Business Excellence in  
Supporting Mature Workers

## **GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING MATURE WORKERS - Guidelines**

Awards will be based on how well the applicant demonstrates they have programs and policies that fall within the key criteria listed below. Please provide supporting documentation and/or a narrative commentary that outlines and describes specific practices, policies or programs that are present within your workplace. It is understood that not every employer will have policies in each category and therefore, responses will be limited to categories that are applicable to their business operations.

Examples of policies or programs that support mature workers are provided to help you identify these within your company. Please note that the list of criteria or examples is not exhaustive. Employers who have unique programs or policies that benefit mature workers are encouraged to highlight those, even if those programs are not reflected here.

### **1) Employment Opportunity: Recruitment and Retention**

- Recruitment practices are openly inclusive of mature workers.
- Recruitment/job advertising seeks mature workers by targeting their favored media.
- The employer supports long term employee retention by providing a reasonable benefit package.
- The employer offers onsite services, such as Life Resources or other similar program, to assist employees in overcoming daily life challenges such as a financial crisis.
- The employer provides, identifies or supports transportation assistance to employees. This may include information only or include financial assistance for commuting.
- The employer provides or identifies care giving (giver) support.
- The employer offers paid sick leave and allows its use for medical appointments, care giving and other family medical needs.
- The employer offers wellness programs that may include: flu shots, screening programs, smoking cessation, nutrition counseling, and diet planning, employee fitness participation (e.g. pedometer program), etc.
- The employer has policies that support the use of healthy foods within the place of employment (for example, vending machines offer healthy food choices in lieu of high fat snack food options).

## **GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING MATURE WORKERS - Guidelines**

- The employer encourages employee mentoring by other employees (for example, younger employees might tutor older employees in IT-related areas; older employees might provide institutional and historical knowledge).

### **2) Work Schedule Flexibility and Accommodations**

- The employer has flexible hours and allows flexible work schedules for its employees.
- The employer provides full and part-time work options for its employees.
- The employer permits the sharing of jobs.
- The employer provides seasonal employment opportunities.
- The employer allows telecommuting work options.

### **3) Training and Skills Development**

- The employer provides employees with the opportunity for skill building through online, classroom or other training methods (whether in-house or through the use of a vendor).
- The employer offers workers the opportunity to develop skills in an alternative career path or subject that is different from their current position.
- The employer provides incentive for employees to build their knowledge and skills through training.
- The employer provides college tuition reimbursement.

### **4) Retirement and Retirement Planning**

- The company provides for a phased retirement that permits the employee to slowly reduce their schedule over time.
- The employer has a policy/practice that allows older employees committed to retirement to transfer knowledge to co-workers to ensure business continuity and take advantage of the lifelong knowledge accumulated by the retiring employee.
- The company provides some form of financial support for retirement (e.g. 401(k) matching, pension, etc.).
- The company provides education/information to employees to help them plan for retirement. (Examples might include specific retirement planning services, assistance with coordination of or planning for social security benefits, information on Medicare, etc.).

## **GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING MATURE WORKERS - Guidelines**

As noted previously, it is important that each applicant provide documentation to support their application. Human resource policies and practices may provide a good source of this information. Individual testimonials from employees, former employees, other employers, agencies, etc. are encouraged, but should not be the relied on as the sole method of documenting mature worker-friendly policies.

Because policies that are favorable for mature workers are often beneficial for all, employers are not required to have programs dedicated exclusively to older employees. However, employers who can demonstrate that their programs are particularly valued by mature workers are encouraged to elaborate on that.

By submitting an application for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers, employers attest that they are in substantial compliance with applicable regulations and statutes.

Employers who are selected to receive an award will be provided an opportunity to participate in an awards ceremony where each will be recognized for their contributions to the State of Vermont, and in particular, to mature workers.

## **GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING MATURE WORKERS-Application Cover Sheet**

Vermont places great value on the contributions of its older citizens. It is important that older Vermonters maintain their health and remain active in their communities as this has a positive impact on the State's economic sustainability while at the same time improving the physical, mental and financial well-being of older Vermonters.

To recognize Vermont employers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to employment practices that benefit and support the inclusion and retention of mature workers, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL), and the AARP in partnership with the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living and the Governor are co-sponsoring this Governor's Award.

Employers who believe they have employment practices and policies that are highly supportive of the mature workforce are encouraged to apply. Key selection criteria and examples of best practices are outlined in the application guidelines; however, employers with unique policies or programs not listed here are also encouraged to apply.

The following is an application for the Governor's Award for Business Excellence. Please complete and submit your application electronically to [greg.voorheis@vermont.gov](mailto:greg.voorheis@vermont.gov).

Applications are due no later than Friday, July 14, 2017. Awards will be made September 28, 2017 at the Vermont Society of Human Resource Management's fall conference. Thank you for your interest in supporting the mature worker.

**NOTE: Please attach documentation to support your application. Written policies, programs, Testimonials, etc. are encouraged.**

Employer Name (Applicant):

Type of Business: # of Employees:

Contact Person: % of Employees 55 and over:

Contact's Phone: Contact's E-mail: