



State of Vermont Agency of Human Services
Dept. of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living
280 State Drive HC 2 South
Waterbury, VT 05671-2020
www.dail.vermont.gov

[phone] 802-241-2401
[fax] 802-241-0386

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MEDIA CONTACT

Monica White, Director of Operations
Monica.White@vermont.gov
802-241-0354

Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers

Vermont's workforce shortage is an ongoing concern for Vermont's economy. For Vermonters entering the latter stages of their careers, or for those who are considering a return to the labor market from retirement, having an opportunity to work for a business that understands their unique needs and contributions can make a huge difference. Vermont employers are discovering the many benefits of supporting mature workers as a part of their overall recruitment and retention strategies. Mature workers often bring years of experience and can support the transfer of their knowledge and experience to the next generation of workers. For some Vermonters, full retirement isn't even an option, but they may need the support of their employer to remain productive and engaged in the workplace.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL), and the AARP are sponsoring the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers. In partnership with the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) 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: "With more and more businesses facing critical worker shortages, it has become increasingly important to help all Vermonters who are able to work remain in, join, or reenter the workforce, and this is a priority for my Administration. This work includes ensuring those who are in the latter stages of their careers, are seeking 'encore' careers, or who would benefit from a phased retirement, can do so. I appreciate those businesses who support



and benefit from the talents of mature workers through innovative company policies, flexible pathways and promising practices, and I'm pleased to recognize them with this award."

"Workforce is the most crucial element of Vermont's economy. Our workforce is one of the oldest in the country. Supporting older workers, inviting those who have left the workforce to return, and finding creative ways to keep the incredible talent and experience this cross-section of workers represents, strengthens our economy and the stability of the wide array of innovative businesses and organizations in our state." said Michael Schirling, ACCD Secretary.

Commissioner Monica Caserta Hutt of DAIL notes that: "Study after study has shown that maintaining connections, staying active, and exercising your mind, are all important components of healthy aging. Employment for mature workers represents connection to community, financial independence, and the benefit of both physical and mental engagement. Businesses who support mature workers are promoting policies that are good for all employees and help to build stronger communities in Vermont, ultimately supporting healthy aging for older Vermonters."

"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 an organization. As Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor, I am committed to finding ways to support Vermont businesses who want to keep good workers as they age" said Vermont Department of Labor Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle.

AARP's Vermont State Director, Greg Marchildon, believes that "aging should not prevent a person from fully engaging in the workplace for as long as they desire. We are delighted to support this award and hope that the best practices identified by Vermont businesses will be adopted by many more employers as time goes on. Mature workers represent a critical component of our workforce, and we should be striving to develop strategies and resources to leverage the tremendous knowledge and expertise they bring to Vermont businesses."

Beginning July 23, 2018 applications will be available on the following websites: acd.vermont.gov; labor.vermont.gov; dail.vermont.gov; AARP Vermont's Blog. Completed applications are due no later than August 24, 2018 and can be e-mailed to: hugh.bradshaw@vermont.gov. Awards will be presented in an official ceremony in September 2018 at the Vermont Society for Human Resource Management's fall conference.

About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):

Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect and independence. <https://www.facebook.com/DAILVT/>

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