

Vermont Health Connect Open Enrollment

(November 1 - December 15)

December 15 is the Deadline to Enroll in Vermont Health Connect for 2019.

The open enrollment period for buying (or changing) a 2019 Vermont Health Connect plan is November 1 to December 15, 2018. When you sign up for a health plan during this time, your plan will start January 1.

Big Changes, Big Opportunities

In 2019, everyone needs to be aware of the big changes in how much VHC plans cost.

- The premium cost of Silver plans on VHC go up a lot.
- You can get a Gold plan for a similar cost as a Silver plan.
- Families will get \$1,200 more Premium Tax Credits (PTC) on average to make up for the premium cost increase.
- Most uninsured Vermonters can get a free bronze plan.

Take These Steps Before December 15

The 2019 changes impacts each household differently.

1. Find out what VHC plan you currently have. If you have a Silver plan, find out what level cost-sharing (Silver 94, Silver 87, Silver 77, Silver 73, or Silver 70).
2. If you aren't sure which plan or level you have, check at your monthly bill or call your insurance company or VHC.
3. Review your expected 2019 yearly income.
4. Enter your information in the plan comparison tool on VHC's website. Find out if you are eligible for PTC for 2019 and find the best plan for your household.
5. Call VHC by December 15 to change plans and update your income or other household information.

Need More Help?

Call 1-800-917-7787 to talk with a health care advocate. The Office of the Health Care Advocate (HCA) is a free resource available to help all Vermonters solve problems related to health care. We are part of Vermont Legal Aid, an independent non-profit law firm.

If you buy a full-cost Silver health plan without premium tax credits:

If you don't get APTC and want to stay on Silver plan, enroll directly with BCBSVT or MVP on a "Reflective Silver" plan. The Reflective Silver plans are for Vermonters without APTC. They are very similar to VHC plans, but they cost less.

Remember, you cannot get APTC to help pay for Reflective Silver plans. Only enroll in Reflective Silver plans if you are NOT eligible for APTC.

Contact Vermont Health Connect:

1-855-899-9600

www.VermontHealthConnect.gov

Vermont Health Connect has the 2019 health plans on their website, including the plan comparison tool.



Vermont Legal Aid

What you need to know: The Public Charge Rule and Immigrant Families

On September 22, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security posted a proposed new immigration rule changing the definition of who may be considered a “public charge” in the U.S. “Public charge” is a term used in immigration law to refer to a person who is likely to become primarily dependent on government benefits to meet their basic needs. The proposed rule, if enacted, would make significant and harmful changes to immigration law and discourage many immigrants from accessing programs that help them meet their basic food, housing, and healthcare needs.

What is the “public charge” test?

The public charge test only applies to a small subset of non-citizens and it only comes into play at limited times. **The “public charge” test is never applied to refugees, asylees, applicants for a green card under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and other protected categories (U and T visa applicants, children seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, etc.).** Further, the government only tests for public charge status at three possible times: (1) when a person applies to immigrate to the United States from abroad; (2) when a person applies to adjust status to become a Lawful Permanent Resident (green card holder); or (3) if a green card holder leaves the United States for more than six months and tries to reenter the United States. **The test does not apply when renewing a green card. The test is not used when applying to become a U.S. citizen. The test does not apply to U.S. citizens.**

Under the current public charge rule, immigration officials may consider a person to be likely to become a “public charge” if they receive Reach Up (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance (or other state cash assistance programs), or long-term institutional care paid by the government (e.g., Medicaid to stay in a nursing home). The newly proposed rule would add the following benefits into the public charge test: (1) any health coverage through Medicaid other than emergency Medicaid; (2) 3SquaresVT (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or “food stamps”); (3) the low income subsidy for prescriptions under Medicare Part D, and (4) HUD-subsidized rental assistance, including the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, Project-Based Section 8, and public housing. Benefits received by other family members (like citizen children) are not considered in the test.

Again, the “public charge” test would not apply to refugees, asylees, persons applying for citizenship – many of the non-citizens here in Vermont.

Advising Non-Citizen Families

If an individual or family is receiving benefits to go to the doctor, pay for food, or pay rent, they absolutely do not need to stop getting their benefits. The proposed rule is not yet final and if it is finalized, it will not be in effect for months. If the proposed rule is implemented, it will not be retroactive.

No one should terminate their benefits or decline to apply because of the proposed change to the public charge rule. **If you, a friend, or a client is considering terminating benefits or declining to apply because of the proposed change, please consult with an attorney, like the South Royalton Legal Clinic or Vermont Legal Aid, or a nonprofit serving immigrants, like the Association for Africans Living in Vermont or the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program.**

Take Action

You can take action to fight this proposed change and to protect our non-citizen residents.

Fight back! We can all speak up and oppose this rule change.

Let the government know that this rule does not reflect your values and that it would harm you, your family, your community, and our country. Join us by submitting comments on the proposed change. The government must consider all unique comments submitted, and responding to a barrage of comments will take the government weeks or even months. If changes are made in response to the comments, it will take longer for the rule to start, and Congress may slow down or block the rule. Comments are due by December 10, 2018. Go to <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/#take-action> to submit a comment, and to get more information, go to www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org.





City of Winooski All-Resident Voting Charter Change Committee

The City of Winooski is currently seeking applications for membership on the new All-resident Voting Charter Change Committee.

Winooski City Council voted on 10/1 to establish this committee, who will examine options to present voters with a charter change that would enable non-citizen residents to vote in our municipal elections.

The All-resident Voting Charter Change Committee will be responsible for conducting public outreach to the community, including information sessions, forums, direct outreach, and more.

Interested in joining? Sign up today:

winooskivt.org/all-resident

Questions? Email:

Councilor Eric Covey (ecovey@winooskivt.org)

Councilor Nicole Mace (nmace@winooskivt.org)





Technology For Tomorrow

Empowering People in Need with Technology Education

A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

Technology Education for New Americans



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United States and Vermont Labor Market Facts

Q & A



Are tech companies actually hiring? And are they hiring in the United States and Vermont? The answer to both questions is yes.

Fact



The majority of the jobs created in the United States between 2010 and 2016 required medium to advanced technology skills.

Fact



Employment of computer and information technology occupations in the United States is projected to grow 13 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations.

Fact



More than 50% of the jobs today require some degree of technology skills and this number will increase to over 75% within ten years.

Fact



According to a research study, in 2002 56 percent of the jobs required low amounts of digital skills. Nearly 40 percent of jobs required medium digital skills and just 5 percent required high digital skills.

By 2016, the share of jobs requiring high digital skills had jumped to 23 percent. The share requiring medium digital skills rose to 48 percent. And in a huge shift, the share of jobs requiring low digital skills fell from 56 to 30 percent.

Fact



There are over 600,000 vacant technology jobs in the United States.

Fact



25% of all Vermont employment takes the form of technology jobs. The growth for technology jobs is 7 times faster than the growth in all Vermont employment.

So What?



The need to acquire technology skills is greater than ever and will continue to grow in importance and New Americans must be offered opportunities to pursue this in a seamless affordable way.



Europe 2015 Refugee Crisis

Microsoft, Cisco, Google and other technology companies provided laptops and cell phones to refugees to meet immediate connectivity needs = short term approach.

In Germany, Intel took different approach by funding \$1 million to provide 1,000 refugees STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and employment services = long term approach.

<https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2018/2/24/refugees-irc-intel-stem-skills-germany>

Technology for Tomorrow Goal

To offer New Americans a structured



technology career path!

Tier 1 Program

Basic Technology Skills (Survival)



- Keyboarding
- Gmail
- Facebook/Messenger
- Online Banking
- Internet Safety
- Password Management
- Online State Benefits
- Housing Searching
- Job Searching
- Craigslist
- Online News
- Google Translate
- Fletcher Free Library
- Digital Citizenship
- YouTube
- What's App
- Google Search
- Video Chat

Tier 2 Program

Intermediate Technology Skills (Entry Level Job)



- Job Searching
- LinkedIn
- Microsoft Office
- Google Suite

- Google Drive
- Word Processing
 - Resume
 - Application Letter
- Spreadsheets
 - Budgets
- Slideshows
 - Presentations
- Calendar
- Maps

Tier 3 Program

Advanced Technology Skills (Upward Mobility)



- IC3 Certification
 - Computing Fundamentals
 - Key Applications
 - Living Online
- Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications
 - Word
 - Excel
 - PowerPoint
 - Access

Tech Ed in Action

Tasks:

1. Open Gmail account
2. Send/Receive Gmail
3. Basic Keyboarding
 - a. Mouse
 - b. Scrolling
 - c. copy/paste
 - d. Search bar
 - e. Delete, Enter, Shift
4. Typing Club Practice
5. Online Job Application

Support

1. SMC MA TESOL Students
2. Undergraduate volunteers





The 10,000 Hour Rule -

Outliers by Malcom Gladwell

Scenario #1: One 3-hour adult education course per week x 52 weeks = 166 hours

Scenario #2: One year of language learning in school = 4 hours per week x 12 weeks x 2 semesters = 96 hours

Scenario #3: One year of total immersion in the new language (Assuming that in a 24-hour day, we allow 8 hours for sleeping per day) = 16 hours per day x 365 days = 5840 hours

Time to become Expert

Scenario #1 – Adult education classes – 416 courses of 24 hours per course. If you did 2 courses per year, you'd need 208 years to become fluent.

Scenario #2 – Foreign language studies at school – 96 hours of classes per year = 104 years to achieve fluency.

Scenario #3 – Total immersion – Approximately 2 years

SALVATION FARMS

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

At the Vermont Commodity Program, trainees are part of a fun, productive team that helps get local food into the community. Trainees learn skills in food handling and manufacturing, earn industry recognized certifications, and receive support in finding the right job for the long-term.



Program Experience:

- Clean, process, and pack produce for your community
- Receive training on useful skills and professional development
- Learn from guest presenters and field trips

Commitment and Eligibility:

- 16-week program
- Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 3 PM
- 18 years or older
- Basic ability to read, write, and speak in English
- Commit to full participation in the program
- Committed to finding employment after the program

Training starts soon, positions are limited!

To learn more and apply, contact Jake:

Jake@salvationfarms.org | 802.291.1098

More details at www.salvationfarms.org/get-involved



“I was at a point where no one was hiring me, and I said ‘Okay, I gotta do something.’ It was way better than I expected, I had no idea how good it would be.”

- FORMER VCP TRAINEE, CURRENTLY EMPLOYED FULL TIME



Vermont Commodity Program Overview

Program Description:

Salvation Farms runs the Vermont Commodity Program, a food hub that takes fruits and vegetables that farmers can't sell and moves them into our community.

The food hub doubles as a workforce development training program. The Vermont Commodity Program does two things: 1) moves fruits and vegetables that otherwise wouldn't be eaten to Vermont's food shelves and meal programs and 2) offers trainees experience, work-readiness skills, and valuable certifications.

The program is 30 hrs/week for 16 weeks, running 9am – 3pm Monday-Friday. Trainees receive:

Compensation: \$10.50/ hour for Department of Labor WIOA eligible participants, or \$250/ month for non-eligible participants or those who elect not to receive a wage.

Production Experience (roughly 2/3 of the total program): Trainees work as a team to operate production lines cleaning, quality assessing, and packing vegetables and fruits. The work is hands on and active, and requires attention to detail and persistence. Trainees learn to ship and receive, track product, manage inventories, and ensure workplace safety and food safety. Produce handling takes place throughout the program and can be a dirty and wet job, sometimes requiring heavy lifting. Each cohort moves over 250,000 servings of food into the community!

Classroom Learning (roughly 1/3 of the total program): Trainees engage in a variety of learning activities throughout the 16-week program. This includes:

- Soft skill development: Learn skills necessary for success in any workplace such as communication skills, conflict resolution, resume/ cover letter writing, interview preparation.
- Certifications in ServSafe, OSHA, and Red Cross First Aid/CPR
- Employment application and placement support
- Field trips to visit local employers in food and manufacturing

If you, or someone you work with may be interested in this program, please call, text, or email or Jake to learn more:

Jake Kornfeld: 802-291-1098; jake@salvationfarms.org

"I was at a point where no one was hiring me, and I said 'Okay, I gotta do something.' It was way better than I expected, I had no idea how good it would be."

- Former VCP Trainee, currently employed full time.

Classroom Activities:



ServSafe - Learn how to safely prepare food and work in a kitchen setting.



American Red Cross

CPR/First Aid - Learn how to respond to someone having a first aid emergency – anything from a small cut to a heart attack.



OSHA 10 General - Learn to recognize and prevent health and safety issues in the workplace.



Soft Skill Development – Work with peers, Salvation Farms staff, and guest instructors to build the foundational skills needed for success in any workplace. Trainees work on professionalism, communication, goal setting, interview skills, and much more.



Food Safety Training - Learn how to safely manage, store, and handle food, as well as understand and follow Standard Operating Procedures, which are important in many food or manufacturing jobs.



Field Trips - Field trips provide an opportunity to see what sort of work is out there for people with skills like those trainees are gaining. Trainees hear directly from employers what is important to them in hiring and retaining employees.



Food System Education - Learn about food waste and the greater food system through documentaries, activities, and guest speakers.

Eligibility:

- At least 18 years of age, and legally able to work in the United States
- Commitment to participating in the full program
- Basic literacy skills and ability to speak basic English
- Commitment to find employment or pursue educational opportunities following participation in the program