



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Maisie Howard, Director of Development and Communications  
Phone Number p. 802-655-8900 c. 802-922-3249  
Contact E-mail mhoward@vtworksforwomen.org  
Website URL [vtworksforwomen.org](http://vtworksforwomen.org)

### **VERMONT WORKS FOR WOMEN RECEIVES \$350,000 GRANT FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WOMEN'S BUREAU TO EXPAND WOMEN'S ACCESS TO APPRENTICABLE AND NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS**

WINOOSKI, VERMONT / October 25, 2018 – Vermont Works for Women (VWW) has been awarded \$350,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau to expand women's access to training, apprenticeships, and jobs in the electrical, plumbing, and construction fields.

"There are great jobs for women in the trades that don't require a college degree and can provide life-long financial stability," says Jen Oldham, Executive Director of Vermont Works for Women. "Our goal is to increase women's awareness of these opportunities, support training that not only teaches skills but addresses challenges they may face in a male-dominated workplace, and help employers create environments where women are welcome and can succeed."

The initiative will be carried out in partnership with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 300, the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 693, and the Center for Technology at Essex, will provide up to 40 women with technical skills and workplace knowledge that can launch them directly into apprenticeships or jobs.

"There are huge benefits and financial opportunities that exist in the construction industry, as well as a huge workforce shortage," says Danielle Bombardier of IBEW. Nationally, the gender pay gap in the construction field has narrowed to 97%. "With this partnership, we are opening the door for women across Vermont to take advantage of those opportunities."

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) congratulated Vermont Works for Women for receiving this nationally competitive grant, noting, "For far too long, women have been under-represented in the trades, meaning they have been denied the same opportunities to earn good wages and benefits that are more readily available to men. While we know there is still much work to be done, this grant moves us closer to the goal of equal opportunity, regardless of gender."

"In this state's tight labor market, we must make the most of talent that's right here," says Tiffany Bluemle, Director of Change The Story VT, another key program partner. "In fields where women are a fraction of the workforce, you can bet we're leaving talent on the table." Joe Teegarden, Director of SkillTech at the Center for Technology at Essex, notes, "[We] are proud to reinforce efforts to ensure gender equality. By providing a safe and supportive learning environment for women, we are hopeful that many more will enter the construction industry."

About Vermont Works for Women: The mission of Vermont Works for Women is to help women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue, and excel in work that leads to economic independence. Its three strategic program areas are moving women into employment success; investing in girls to empower the next generation; and advocating for large-scale culture change for women and girls. Learn more at [vtworksforwomen.org](http://vtworksforwomen.org).

###