



Employment and Career Pathways

Vermont Works for Women (VWW) provides girls and gender non-conforming youth in Vermont with opportunities to explore career fields underrepresented by their gender and interact with diverse role models through career exploration conferences (Women Can Do), afterschool programs and summer camps (Rosie's Girls), and programs that work directly with tech centers (Tech@Work, Girls Tech, & Career Challenge Day). These career exploration opportunities, plus gender equity trainings around how to create inclusive spaces, are available to all schools across the state.

VWW also offers gender equity trainings and consultations for employers to help them improve their human resources policies and provides tools and strategies to create an inclusive work environment and attract and retain diverse employees. Please contact VWW for testimony, participant stories, or shared expertise in any related matters.

VWW calls on Vermont employers to increase flexibility in their workplaces to better support working families, and recruit and retain female employees.

Workplace flexibility – for example, the ability to work from home or have a flexible schedule – is a win-win for employees and businesses.

Flexibility does not alter a job's scope of responsibilities or expected results - it increases the compatibility between employee and employer. It allows employees to achieve a better work/life balance, save time, reduce stress, and manage unforeseen scheduling conflicts, such as a child care emergency, and benefits the employer by increasing employee productivity, engagement, and retention.

The demand for flexible work is substantial: over 90 percent of Millennials identify flexibility as a top priority when searching for jobs, and 80 percent of women and 52 percent of men want flexibility in their next role, according to recent research by Capability Jane.

Lack of access to flexibility has significant consequences. According to a Bain study conducted pre-pandemic, of the 30 percent of women who dropped out of the workforce, 70 percent said they would have stayed working if they had access to flexibility. Stepping away from work, even temporarily, negatively impacts women's economic independence due to lost wages, future wage increases, and lost retirement and social security contributions.

Workplace flexibility is a simple, low-cost strategy to recruit and retain women in the workplace, and close the leadership gap among men and women. Gender diverse organizations are 15 percent more likely to outperform their peers, reports McKinsey & Company.

TOP 3 FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS



**Telework on an
ad-hoc basis**



Flex time

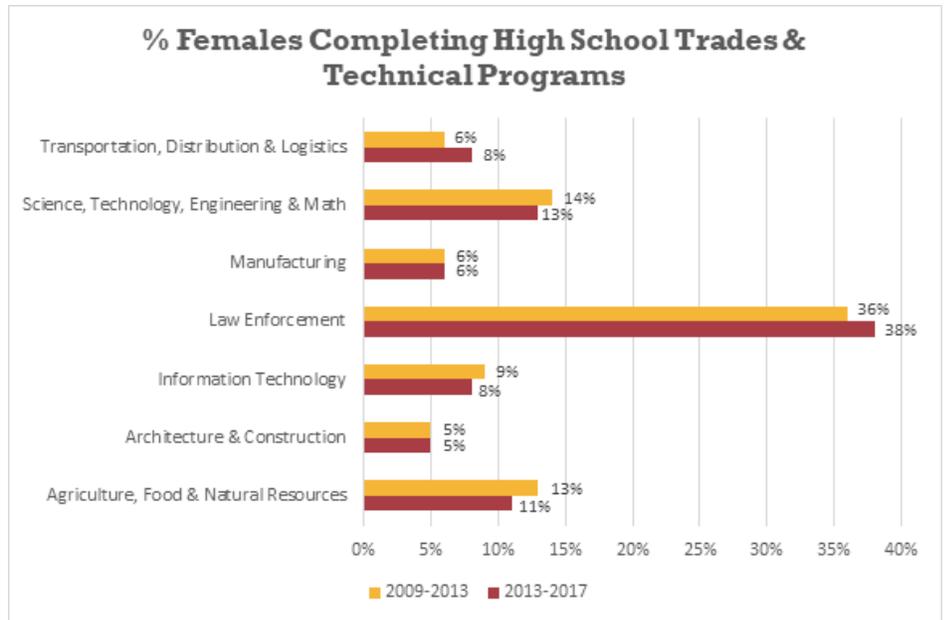


**Part-time
schedules**

-WorldatWork survey

Vermont must strengthen pathways to careers in STEM and trade industries for girls, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC youth. Gender and racially equitable recruitment, programming and career guidance in schools and career and technical education centers (CTE) can reduce occupational segregation and grow Vermont's workforce in these high-demand fields.

Female and gender non-conforming youth occupy a small margin of students enrolled in non-traditional programs at Vermont CTE centers. According to Change The Story's 2019 report: *Women, Work and Wages in VT*, the number of VT female students completing non-traditional programs has remained between 5 - 14 percent since 2009, except for law enforcement.



In addition, CTE centers nationwide, including in Vermont, struggle to maintain a racially and ethnically diverse student body; a study from the National Center for Education Statistics showed that while white, Black and Hispanic students enrolled roughly equally in one CTE class, disparities emerged in the percentage of students who went on to concentrate in CTE programs: 22 percent of white students, 18 percent of Black students, and 16 percent of Hispanic students.

Many careers in STEM and trade industries are described as “Vermont’s most promising jobs” by The J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor. In October 2020, they outlined 60 jobs – engineers, electricians, water treatment plant operators, and mechanics, to name a few - which pay a median wage of at least \$22/hour and are expected to have at least 220 openings over the next 10 years.

Persistent underrepresentation of girls, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC youth in CTE programs can limit their access to these higher-paying careers, which contributes to the intersectional pay gap and economic insecurity, and reinforces gender and racial stereotyping in the field. All of Vermont’s students need to be exposed to career fields that are non-traditional for their gender and race, and feel safe and supported if they choose to enroll in a program that is non-traditional. Additionally, students need to be shown diverse role models and receive gender neutral career guidance.

VWW also calls for schools and CTE centers to mandate trainings for educators, staff and students on gender and racial equity, dismantling gender norms, and sexual harassment. Gender and racial equity training are critical to CTE centers' and employers' ability to recruit and retain girls, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC individuals, and to create spaces that are safe, welcoming and supportive.



Contact:
Alison Lamagna
Director of Programs and Gender Equity
Vermont Works for Women
alamagna@vtworksforwomen.org
802-655-8900 x 104

