Employer Resource Guide: Recruitment and Retention

The following are tools and resources to help organizations determine if the wages associated with a position are competitive and livable.

Wage Setting and Comparison Tools

MIT Living Wage Calculator

What is it: The MIT Living Wage Calculator provides an outline for the living wage an individual needs to earn on an hourly basis to support themselves and/or their family. The parameters are based on working full-time (2080 hours per year) and demonstrate different scenarios of family size and number of working adults in the household.

How to use it: Each state has a table that defines the household size, number of working adults, and number of children, comparing these against the estimated living wage, poverty wage, and current minimum wage for that state. (See example below) This tool also provides an outline for typical expenses, including food, childcare, housing, and many more.

	1 ADULT				2 ADULTS (1 WORKING)			
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Living Wage	$23.95	$47.29	$63.91	$80.30	$34.11	$41.10	$45.47	$52.07
Poverty Wage	$7.52	$10.17	$12.81	$15.46	$10.17	$12.81	$15.46	$18.10
Minimum Wage	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01	$14.01

O*Net Online from the Employment & Training Administration

What is it: O*Net Program is a primary source of occupational information covering ~1,000 occupations within the U.S. economy. The database is available to the public at no cost and is regularly updated. This tool can allow an employer to evaluate the potential wages for a job being listed, as well as the skillset required for the position. This tool can also be used to evaluate the eligibility of a potential candidate.

How to use it: O*Net Online allows for the search of any occupation in the U.S. economy. It can provide a comprehensive outline of the occupation, the information includes:

- Work activities for that occupation
- Training & credential requirements
- Needed Skills and Knowledge
- Wage comparison information based on location (see example below)

Industry Wage Data - Access via Springfield Regional Development Corp.

What is it: As a Regional Development Corp., SRDC has access to data sets that are typically not available to the public. This includes regional data on wage rates for specific industries. This data is broken down by NAICS code and excludes the data from the Burlington Region, so if more accurate for the Springfield Region.

How to use it: Like the tools above, this data set can help a business determine if the wages offered for a position(s) are aligned with similar industries or other employers in the larger Southern Vermont region. To access, contact SRDC staff.

Creative Benefits

Understandably, not all employers are able to provide robust benefits packages that include standard benefits such as health or dental insurance. However, there are opportunities to create unique benefits that meet the needs of staff in other ways and make the organization an attractive place to work.

- **Cost Offsetting:** If an organization has lower-wage staff and is not able to offer traditional benefits, then there is the potential to provide staff with stipends to offset costs or living expenses.
    - **Example:** Stipend for phone bills - If staff are required to be on call or utilize their personal cell phone, offering a stipend to help cover the cost of their monthly phone bill can help reduce the burden.
    - **Example:** Providing food onsite for breakfast or lunch. This helps reduce household costs, concerns about food insecurity, and establishes a sense of community among staff.
- ***Provide opportunities for growth within an organization - see "Encourage Workplace Learning Opportunities" below.***

- **Offer Dynamic & Flexible Scheduling Options -** offering staff flexible scheduling options allows them to meet their work-life balance needs, but also can be seen as a potential net positive when competing with other employers for staff

  - Options to Work from Home
  - "Parents' hours"
  - Shifting schedules from 5 days to 4 days
  - Job sharing/Splitting
  - Flexible PTO

Underutilization of Existing Benefits

Do the staff at your organization not fully utilize their existing benefits?

There are a number of reasons staff members may not be taking advantage of the benefits that are being offered to them, these could include:

- The benefits are not relevant for their needs i.e. they access health insurance through their spouse or parent.
- They do not understand what benefits are available beyond the essentials.
- Staff may not know or feel comfortable asking for assistance accessing support, especially if it relates to a personal issue, such as a mental health condition.

Here are questions to determine why benefits may not be fully utilized:

1. Do the staff understand what is available to them?
2. Do staff understand how to access those benefits?
3. Is there a designated time and place for employees to ask questions about how to access their benefits?
4. Is there a designated staff member, such as an HR person, who can help staff members access and understand their benefits?

Options for addressing the issue and increasing accessibility:

Make sure to effectively communicate what benefits are available to staff beyond just the hiring period. Onboarding can be a stressful process for many new employees. They are focused on ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities; the added stress of retaining information about benefits may not be accessible to them. Here are some additional suggestions:

- Put information about benefits in highly visible locations such as lunch/break rooms, bathrooms, and locker rooms.

- Set aside time regularly to review an aspect of the benefits package with all staff, such as a monthly or weekly staff meeting.
- Keep the information simple, only focus on one benefit at a time, instead of trying to provide a comprehensive overview.
- Make sure there is a designated staff person who can answer questions pertaining to benefits.

Alter Degree & Job Requirements

A possible strategy for expanding the applicant pool for a position is to modify the stated degree or other specific job requirements that are not essential. These adjustments can be integrated into job postings on recruitment websites and employer career pages. By eliminating unnecessary requirements, you can lessen the likelihood of potential candidates self-eliminating job opportunities, as they may possess valuable transferable skills from previous roles.

Instead of relying on traditional requirements in job listings, **adopting Skill-Based Hiring practices** can effectively convey the true necessities of a position, making it more accessible for potential applicants to submit their applications.

See Skill-Based Hiring practices below for additional resources.

Skills-Based Hiring Practices

Skills-Based Hiring is a system for employers to pinpoint and communicate the necessary skills for a position, rather than relying on education or credentials to assess an applicant's suitability. By providing concise language around job skill requirements, it can help applicants identify potentially transferable skills from previous experiences.

Additionally, clearly stating needed skills allows employers to identify potential gaps in applicant abilities that will need to be addressed with on-the-job training. This practice reduces bias against individuals based on educational attainment and opens the applicant pool to individuals who may opt out of a job opportunity. Ultimately, skill-based hiring practices help to clarify expectations, set up new employees for success, and reduce turnover.
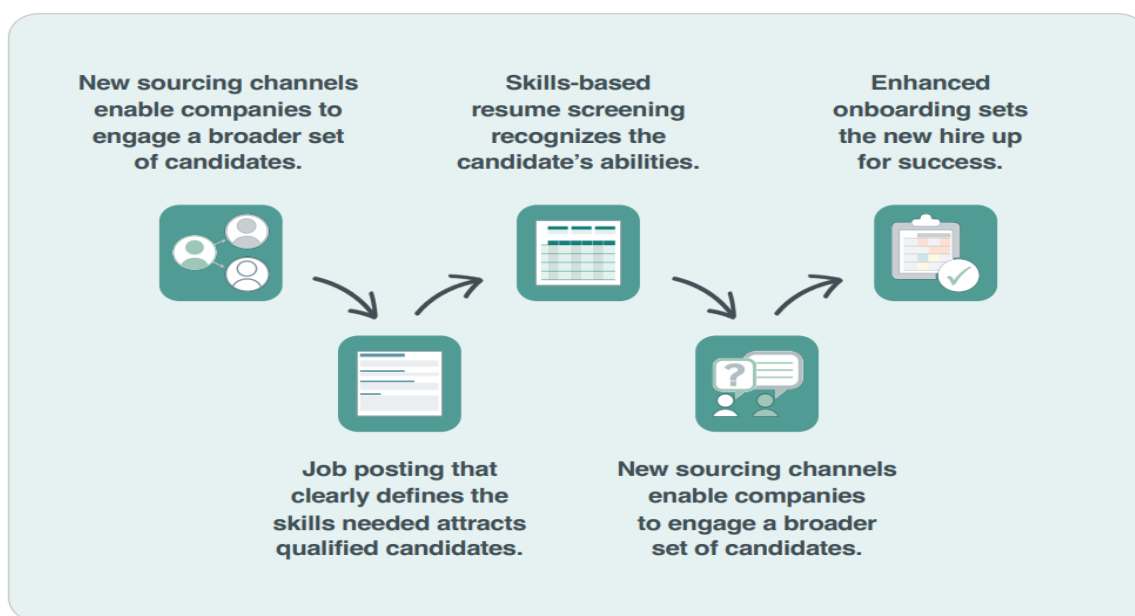
Jobs for the Future: Skills-Based Sourcing & Hiring Playbook

What is it: The Jobs for the Future: Skills-Based Sourcing & Hiring Playbook provides a step-by-step guide for skills-first hiring practices. It provides an overview of the primary concepts, as well

as examples for writing inclusive, skills-based job postings, case studies from other employers, and additional tools and references.

How to use it: Follow the step-by-step guide outlined in the playbook. The playbook includes guides for the following topics in addition to writing job positing.

- Sourcing a talented and diverse applicant pool
- Screening to identify most-qualified candidates efficiently and inclusively
- Inclusive, skills-based interviewing and selection
- Skills-based onboarding

Vermont Employment Pathfinder

What is it: The Vermont Employment Pathfinder is an AI tool that evaluates an individual's previous skills and maps their skill profile to align them with appropriate jobs. This application was developed by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation and has been used to evaluate the skills of the New American population and local job seekers.

How to Use it: This tool can be used by individuals and employers. For Employers, this tool can articulate skill-level demand and filter and analyze the existing talent pool. It can also be used to identify appropriate language and transferable skills from other careers.

Connecting People, Education, & Jobs

using *SKILLS* as the language of opportunity

Skill-alignment and skill development are the best tools we have to empower workers, raise earnings, and build healthy, vibrant communities.

Encourage Workplace Learning Opportunities

Prioritizing mentorship and on-the-job training opportunities can result in long-term retention and advancement, helping to reduce turnover and cultivating a positive workplace environment.

Vermont Registered Apprenticeship Program

What is it: The Vermont Registered Apprenticeship program is an employer-sponsored, work experience. There are currently 700 active apprentices in Vermont across 25 occupations.

How to use: Employers participate in the program by setting a progressive wage scale, agreeing to provide supervised on-the-job training, and helps with financially supported instruction.

Jobs For the Future: Developing Work-Based Learning

What is it: Jobs for the Future had developed an outline for establishing Work-Based Learning Opportunities. This framework identifies seven key principals for an effective model.

How to Use it: The key principles of Work-Based Leaning from Jobs for the Future provides a framework for establishing a system within any organization.

Jobs For the Future provides additional resources for establishing programs within an organization under the Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning.

1 Support entry and advancement in a career track

2 Provide meaningful job tasks that build career skills and knowledge

3 Offer compensation

4 Identify target skills and how gains will be validated

5 Reward skill development

6 Support college entry, persistence, and completion

7 Provide comprehensive student supports

Vermont Training Program

What is it: The Vermont Training Program is a performance-based workforce grant to support employers and their staff. This unique grant program can help employers by covering costs related to pre-employment raining, training for new staff members, and training existing staff. This program can cover up to 50% of the cost of training.

How to use: To learn more about the program and understand if an organization is eligible, contact the Springfield Regional Development Corp.

Questions?
Springfield Regional Development Cooperation

Amanda Sidler, WCC Coordinator
Phone: 802-885-3061
Email: amanda@springfielddevelopment.org
Website: https://www.springfielddevelopment.org/