

Comments on the Report of the Next Generation Commission

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January 2007

The report of the Next Generation Commission was a good point of departure for discussion but did not provide policy makers with sufficient information to make choices. To do so, we need to know more about estimated future job openings and what education and training will be required. This was not addressed in any detail in the report.

The report stated, "*It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the 25 occupations expected to grow the fastest in Vermont between now and [2014] will require postsecondary training.*"¹ The statement is true, but the key is not how many occupations, but how many jobs. And while growth is of interest, we should add net replacement because together they equal the total number of annual job openings by occupation.

When you consider both, the top 25 fastest growing occupations represent less than 7% of annual job openings.² This is the difference between the rate of growth and the number of jobs (see below for rankings by jobs³).

More importantly, the estimated number of annual job openings requiring postsecondary training is only 27% of total job openings (about 3,100/year), while 61% require no more than short- or moderate-term on-the-job training. The point is not to diminish the importance of postsecondary education, only to keep it in perspective when considering options.

When we examine occupational categories by the number of expected job openings, we find the largest categories requiring postsecondary training are education and healthcare practitioners.

Of 821 annual job openings in education, 21% are for Teacher Assistant, which requires no postsecondary

Estimated Annual Job Openings by Educational / Training Requirements, 2004 - 2014*						
Educational / Training Category	Est. annual job openings from growth		Est. annual job openings from net replacement		Est. total annual job openings	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Short-term on-the-job training (less than 1 month)	1,230	34%	3,749	48%	4,979	44%
Moderate-term on-the-job training (1 to 12 months)	545	15%	1,413	18%	1,958	17%
Long-term on-the-job training (12 months or more)**	225	6%	522	7%	747	7%
Work experience in a related occupation	181	5%	448	6%	629	6%
Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S.)	520	14%	728	9%	1,248	11%
Postsecondary vocational award	230	6%	350	4%	580	5%
Associate's degree	252	7%	230	3%	482	4%
Bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience	113	3%	170	2%	283	2%
Master's degree (M.A., M.S.)	134	4%	148	2%	282	2%
First professional degree (e.g., M.D., L.L.D.)	68	2%	74	1%	142	1%
Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)	46	1%	49	1%	95	1%
Totals	3,544		7,881		11,425	
All postsecondary training***	1,363	38%	1,749	22%	3,112	27%
* Source: VT Dept. of Labor, Occupational Projections 2004 - 2014, released 10/30/06.						
** Mostly construction trades.						
*** Defined as non-employment based training.						
Note: Some figures don't match DoL published data due to rounding.						

¹ "Linking Learning to Earning in Vermont", Next Generation Commission, December 2006, p.5.

² VT Department of Labor, Occupational Projections 2004 - 2014.

³ When all 512 occupations are ranked by total job openings, the top 25 fastest growing are ranked 5, 11, 28, 51, 68, 81, 83, 95, 96, 105, 106, 118, 141, 150, 177, 225, 226, 271, 291, 292, 318-320, 356, 391.

education or training. [Note: another 8% require a Ph.D., jobs usually filled after a national search.]

Although we will need a lot of teachers (313 per year), the starting salary for teachers in Vermont is only \$25,819.

Of the 659 estimated annual job openings for healthcare practitioners, 67% (441) are for nurses and technicians, who require Associates degrees and vocational training rather than four year undergraduate degrees.

So let's look at the supply of nurses and teachers. The state already has several programs that provide financial incentives for nursing students. By all accounts, the programs work so this might be a sensible area for expansion.

As for teachers, do we know how many applicants

there are for each opening? Are there shortages in particular subject areas or grade levels? Policy makers need this information.

With these questions in mind, what will we accomplish if we offer general scholarships without focusing on specific needs? And will scholarships alone increase the number of graduates? If not, we will have subsidized more students (certainly not a bad thing) without really addressing the problem. The point is that an indiscriminate shotgun approach is unlikely to succeed.

On the other hand, there will be a need for more people in skilled construction trades and in certain skilled installation, maintenance, and repair occupations. These jobs pay comparatively well and require vocational training and / or apprenticeships. This area is ripe for further investigation.

The Next Generation Commission did not address these issues in detail. The legislature will have to do the hard work.

Occupational Categories	Annual Job Openings				Predominant Educational / Training Requirement(s)
	due to Growth	due to Net Replacement	Total		
			#	%	
Sales & Related (mostly retail)	309	1,216	1,521	13%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Office & Administrative Support	307	1,200	1,506	13%	Short / Moderate-term O-T-J-T
Food Preparation & Serving Related	240	1,019	1,261	11%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Education, Training & Library	313	511	821	7%	BA / BS, MA, Ph.D.
Production	60	613	673	6%	Moderate-term O-T-J-T
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	363	297	659	6%	AA, Voc. Training & MD
Construction & Extraction	243	400	642	6%	Moderate / Long-term O-T-J-T
Transportation & Material Moving	151	372	524	5%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Personal Care & Service	216	269	482	4%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	139	308	446	4%	Voc. Training & Moderate-term O-T-J-T
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	151	265	415	4%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Healthcare Support	248	144	392	3%	Short-term O-T-J-T & Voc. Training
Business & Financial Operations	149	212	357	3%	BA / BS
Management	126	216	338	3%	Bachelor's or higher + work experience
Community & Social Services	189	132	320	3%	Moderate-term O-T-J-T & BA / MA
Computer & Mathematical	146	82	229	2%	BA / BS
Protective Services	45	128	174	2%	Short / Long-term O-T-J-T
Arts/Design/Entertainment/Sports/Media	61	108	170	1%	BA / BS
Architecture & Engineering	23	128	149	1%	BA / BS
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	149	149	1%	Short-term O-T-J-T
Life, Physical & Social Science	40	83	121	1%	BA / BS, MA, Ph.D.
Legal	25	29	52	< 1%	JD / AA