

# In Challenging Times: Supporting Public Libraries

Finding a Job, Starting a Business



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# Challenges

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## Vermont Workforce

- Agriculture, health care, education, government and small business are major elements in state's economy
- 6.5% statewide unemployment (March 2010)  
Unemployment rates in individual towns: 3.9% - 8.1%
- Net loss of jobs statewide
- Stagnant job creation
- Decline in labor force and net loss of population migration
- Aging workforce; retirees returning to work
- Next Generation: new college graduates and younger population leaving state to find jobs
- Community College enrollment increased 30% in past 5 years
- 80% of future jobs will require post-secondary education



# Challenges

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## Vermont Public Libraries

- 183 independent public libraries
- Only 32 libraries serve populations over 5,000
- No state aid to public libraries
- 25% increase in public computer use in 2009
- Libraries report cuts in staffing and hours of operation
- Limited space in libraries for public computers
- Desperate need for computer training for library staff and general public
- Need high-speed broadband and increased bandwidth to provide online resources for job-seekers



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# Training for Librarians

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*In these Challenging Times: Finding a Job, Starting a Business*  
Workshop developed by the Department of Libraries, with representatives from the Workforce Development Division of the Vermont Department of Labor and the Vermont Small Business Development Center

Vermont Small Business  
Development Center

- Starting a small business in Vermont
- Expanding a small business in Vermont
- Websites for entrepreneurs

Vermont Department of Labor  
Workforce Development Division

- Job searching
- Resume writing
- Interview skills
- Business research

Libraries represented at workshop serve 65,000 Vermonters,  
10% of the total population.



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# Comments from Workshop Participants

"I want to make the information known. We plan to put out a press release highlighting that our library has info/help on unemployment and starting a business."

"The unemployment segment was very helpful; I learned a lot about the process and even found out there's an unemployment office in our town (so far, no one I've asked in this town had ever heard of it either!)."



" We shall now send people to the Department of Labor Center. They have the staff and know-how to really provide the help and to take all the time needed - something we don't have."

# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)

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## Opportunities for Vermont Public Libraries

### **e-Vermont: The Community Broadband Project** *Grant Award: March 2010*

- \$2.4 million grant to Vermont Council on Rural Development
- Vermont Department of Libraries is grant partner
- \$69,000 for libraries in 24 towns
- Enhanced public computing in libraries
- Community-wide problem-solving with emphasis on job creation, small business, online resources and services, and training

### **Vermont Fiber Link** *Application pending* *(Submitted March 2010)*

- Comprehensive Community Infrastructure application submitted by Vermont Telecommunications Authority
- Vermont Department of Libraries is grant partner
- Will bring fiber optic connectivity to 53 libraries in five rural counties
- Promises faster speeds and increased bandwidth for improved online services and resources in libraries

