

Career Readiness Certificate Program trains workers, supports businesses

Rep. Peter Welch on Wednesday announced a \$150,000 federal grant for an innovative job-training program offered by the Community College of Vermont.

Alongside recent graduates and teachers at CCV's Montpelier site, Welch touted the Career Readiness Certificate Program as an effective means of equipping Vermonters with vital entry-level skills, while also supporting Vermont employers in need of a quality workforce.

The federal appropriation Welch secured will help CCV increase the number of students it can serve through the program and expand it to sites around the state.

"In this difficult economy, Vermonters must be equipped with skills that make them competitive in today's workforce, and Vermont businesses require high-quality, well-trained employees to achieve their goals," Welch said. "This grant will help the Community College of Vermont match qualified workers with quality employers through its innovative Career Readiness Certificate Program."

In its first year of operation, the Career Readiness Certificate Program has served 138 Vermonters. The free, 10-week program includes instruction in mathematics, reading, computer skills, data analysis, project management and teamwork. Currently, the program is being offered at CCV's Barre/Montpelier, Upper Valley, St. Johnsbury and Brattleboro sites.

"This program has received national attention because of the way it helps participants develop both the academic skills and the soft skills that employers tell us are needed to land and keep a job," said Community College of Vermont Interim President Joyce Judy. "It benefits employees, who gain the skills to qualify for an interview, a new job, or higher pay, and it benefits employers looking to hire those who have mastered the skills needed for jobs."

Green Mountain Coffee Roasters is one of several Vermont businesses to enroll its employees in the CCV program. Pru Sullivan, the company's director of continuous learning, and supervisor Mike Vasseur took part in Wednesday's announcement.

"Everyone who comes out of this class is a lot more confident across the board as far as learning new skills and taking on new challenges," Vasseur said. "A real philosophy at Green Mountain Coffee Roasters is the better the employee training, the better company you have overall because you have employees who are really stepping up."