

Category	Recommendation	Source
Policy	The Department for Children and Families (DCF) will contract an analysis of Vermont’s benefit programs and their interaction with federal benefit programs to identify the cliffs facing working Vermont parents.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Informed by the results of that analysis, the DCF Commissioner will develop a proposal to adjust Vermont’s benefit programs to end benefit cliffs and move to benefit “step-downs” in order to eliminate economic disincentives for wage advancement.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The DCF Commissioner will develop a proposal for presentation to the next federal administration to have Vermont serve as a demonstration project for adjustment of federal benefit programs to end benefit cliffs and move to benefit step-downs. The goal of the project will be to determine if, over time, step-downs are an effective alternative to cliffs to help move working parents out of poverty and keep them out of poverty.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The DCF Commissioner will collaborate with the Department of Taxes Commissioner to determine whether changes in tax incentives for low-income families could complement benefit programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Appoint a standing Commission on Hunger in Vermont that would last beyond the three-year term of the Hunger Task Force. The commission would advise the Governor’s Office, receive feedback from those experiencing food insecurity, provide input into policymaking, and monitor progress on the Task Force’s recommendations. It would include state, non-profit, business, and community representatives.	Governor’s Hunger Task Force Report
	<p>Appoint a full-time Director of the Commission on Hunger to coordinate, support, and move forward our state’s anti-hunger efforts, and facilitate the work of the Hunger Commission. Working in tandem, a dedicated staff person and the Commission on Hunger will provide many key services, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as a neutral convener for the multiple local, non-profit, and government organizations working on hunger to come together to promote coordinated efforts. • Introducing a perspective on hunger into work in related fields, including energy costs, affordable housing, children’s issues, job creation, refugee resettlement, and seniors’ issues. • Collecting data gathered statewide on hunger issues and monitoring progress; making information available for research, informed policymaking, and public education. • Generating an ongoing public conversation on hunger that reduces its stigma. 	Governor’s Hunger Task Force Report

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Policy (Cont...)	Convene regular meetings of government departments and non-profit organizations that review federal funding opportunities to identify 1) programs that do not make full use of federal funds (e.g., childcare and adult care centers, alternative high schools, schools without free breakfast, etc.); and 2) strategies to increase their usage, in conjunction with the outreach described in Recommendation #5.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Contribute to publicity and education campaigns that mobilize Vermont citizens to get involved in food and fund drives, volunteerism at local food shelves and meal sites, and other projects to end hunger.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Help the charitable food system meet budgets for serving a sharply increasing number of Vermont households by providing direct funding, directing the Hunger Council's director to assist in teaching volunteers about fundraising and in developing grant proposals, and raising the profile of the need (see Recommendation #11).	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Assign the Hunger Commission as a body to hear recommendations from all Vermonters and state staff on federal program changes that could improve efforts to end hunger. Report these findings to Congressional staff.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Assess where current federal programs have gaps and seek alternate funds to bridge those gaps. Although it is necessary to advocate for federal policies that meet the needs of our rural nutrition programs, Vermont also cannot let critical needs go unmet. Examples of areas where the state could fill gaps include matching reimbursement rates for meal programs and assessing and eliminating "benefit cliffs"	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	The DCF Commissioner will streamline the application process to ensure families can easily access nutrition programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The State of Vermont must recognize in its public policies that schools and educators are not solely responsible for the successful education of Vermont's children. The effects of chronic poverty and other social problems will be addressed through strong partnerships among families, schools, communities, and state social service agencies.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will expand, and renew funding for, existing individual development account programs to allow for savings related to car purchases, as well as evaluate current programs that provide transportation-related assistance to low-income Vermonters. The state should explore the need for additional resources and program expansion, such as revolving loan funds, in light of community needs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report

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Career & Workforce Development	The Department for Children and Families and the Department of Labor will establish clearly defined connections between Reach Up participants and Next Generation funding. This effort will include recruiting Reach Up participants to enroll in Next Generation funded training programs, working with employers to develop training programs targeted at Reach Up participants, and developing the necessary pre-training programs to enable participants to have the greatest opportunity for successful job training.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Labor Commissioner and the DCF Commissioner will develop and administer the necessary support and wrap-around services to enhance participation and success in education and training programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Labor Commissioner and the DCF Commissioner will continue to place appropriate Reach Up and other low income youth in Next Generation-sponsored career exploration and alternative education programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The General Assembly will explore expansion of existing micro-business programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Labor Commissioner and the Department of Education Commissioner will develop pilot programs for career pathways, possibly in the health care and construction trades sectors.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Commissioners will look to models in other states for guidance. Specifically, the Commissioners will study efforts including Carreres en Salud, the successful nursing program developed by the Instituto Del Progreso Latino, Association House of Chicago, Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center (HPVEC) of Wilbur Wright College, and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) in Chicago, Illinois.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Assess and understand employer skill needs. Actions: Periodically conduct employer needs assessments through surveys and focus groups. (Regional WIBs VSC., DED, DOL, WDC); Establish a pilot in one sector each year that transitions Tech Ed students to higher education beginning in 2009. (DOL, DOL, Colleges)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Identify economic sectors that provide high wages, and are experiencing skill gaps and worker shortages. Actions: Implement training programs in these sectors. (WDC, VSC, DED & training providers)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Increase the effectiveness of customized training programs statewide. Actions: Work with trade associations and employer groups to develop collaborative training initiatives. (DED, DOL and Others); Ensure that customized workforce training programs are reasonably available in all regions of the state. (DOL, DED, DOE)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee

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Career & Workforce Development (Cont...)	Develop a workplace readiness credential statewide. Actions: Implement a pilot Work-Keys program in 2009. (DOL, CCV and Others); Imbed pre/post Work-Keys assessments in all applicable WETF programs (DOL)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Provide programs that prepare Vermonters with barriers to employment with competitive work skills. Action: Increase successful employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Increase awareness of & participation in adult workforce preparation programs. Actions: Develop a single web portal for adult education programs at tech centers with links to VSC and other providers (ATE Assoc.); increase enrollment in adult job related education and training programs; provide VSAC non-degree grant opportunities for adults based on economic need (VSAC)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Ensure VT workforce's educational achievement exceeds that of other states and increases over time. Action: Develop strategies to maximize the performance of existing workforce development systems by steadily improving successful completion rates (all WDC members)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Use DOL tracking data to determine placement and earnings outcomes for workforce programs. Action: Develop procedures for gathering and analyzing data on Next Gen. training participants per Sec. 5.801.1. of the '08 Appr. Bill. (DOL, DED)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Improve training program response to business needs in high growth industries. Action: Survey all WETF and VTP training grantees for data on satisfaction responsiveness. (DOL, DED)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Implement a workplace readiness credential that is valued by employers. Action: Determine employer interest in a workplace readiness credential. (DOL)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Expand the Registered Apprenticeship program in new occupational areas. Action: Identify at least two new Apprenticeship program areas with potential for growth. (DOL/Appr. Council)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Provide growing employers with qualified and productive employees. Action: Identify businesses that are growing or have potential, and meet their training needs. (All WDC Members)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	Increase public awareness of workforce education and training programs. Actions: Develop a web portal with universal access to VT schools, colleges, training programs and career info (VSAC, VSC, DOL); develop public events to highlight successful WETF/ VTP programs (DOL, DED,VTP); Seek press opportunities to promote Next Generation program opportunities to employers and the public. (All NG Agencies, Institutions and Grantees)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee

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Rural Economic Development	State government will improve and expand existing economic development programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of rural Vermont.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Council will include state agency and community partners who specialize in rural economic development in pursuing the shared goal of creating infrastructure, developing innovative job creation programs, and ensuring supports for families seeking employment or creating a small business.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will continue its efforts to increase the availability of public transportation, especially in our rural areas.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
Food & Nutrition	The Department of Education will continue its efforts to ensure that every school has a free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch program available to low-income children.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will assist efforts by schools and communities to embrace the challenge of continuing meals programs through summers and school vacations.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Education Commissioner will assist eligible child care programs, especially those accepting child care subsidies from the Department for Children and Families, to participate in the Child Care Meals Program.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The DCF Commissioner will work with the General Assembly to maximize state options and waivers available in the federal nutrition programs, such as food stamps, the child and adult care meals programs, and others to increase the number of families eligible to participate in the programs. The Department will also work with the General Assembly to ensure eligible families are aware of and enrolled in these nutrition programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Council, the Governor, and the General Assembly will advocate for changes at the federal level that will assist in increasing participation and benefits for families.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Ensure that the Agency of Human Services has the funds needed to fully complete its proposed updated, centralized system for learning about all options available for Vermonters in need of food assistance. This information center should provide guidance covering everything from explaining federal programs to mapping the nearest food shelves. It should also appear in multiple formats, including online, printed brochures, and multiple languages. The process of creating a streamlined information center should also address streamlining entrance into programs, particularly by combining applications where possible.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report

Category	Recommendation	Source
Food & Nutrition (Cont...)	<p>Invest in expanded direct outreach around food assistance. The state of Vermont can improve the quality of existing services and the reach of these services. Examples of needs include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing assistance offices in more remote regions of the state; 2. More aggressive efforts to remove language barriers with refugee families; and 3. Information campaigns designed to reach the working poor. 	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	<p>Develop an outreach program targeted at service providers. While individuals seeking assistance need clear information, the many intermediaries who connect them with food also need to be clear on all program options, how enrollment in one program may prequalify a participant for another, and any changes in federal, state, and charitable opportunities.</p>	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	<p>Encourage all towns, or regional groupings of towns, to develop a food plan that addresses every aspect of food security, from charitable food systems to transportation, agricultural land use, and emergency planning.</p>	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	<p>Expand local production of basic foods. Investing in bringing local foods into the supplemental food system not only connects people with local foods, but provides a starting point for farmers who want to expand commercial production of these basic goods. The state should actively build this type of development. Examples of programs to provide a starting point include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A subsidized basket to food shelves ▪ Reduced price CSA shares ▪ Resource to build up the Farm-to-Family coupon & EBT at Farmer Markets programs ▪ Increased use of local products at congregate meal sites, including the Farm-to-Table distribution model ▪ Farm-to-School meal & education programs ▪ Local products in WIC baskets 	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	<p>Support the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's pledge to make local food accessible to all Vermonters within 5 years. Projects like the Farm-to-School lunch program, gleaning for the charitable food system, building the wholesale market demand, and innovative distribution experiments, have started to address this challenge.</p>	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report

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Food & Nutrition (Cont...)	Provide start up grants that help schools, senior centers, community centers, municipal governments, and other organizations build the programs needed to introduce food into daily gathering places for vulnerable populations, and make future use of federal or private funding.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Integrate food access into planning at the Agency of Transportation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building grocery store stops into public transit routes that currently lack them • Adding farmers' market stops on the days of market operations • Ensuring that affordable housing and senior centers have reliable public transportation connecting them to food shopping, food shelves, and meal sites • Advertising all options for reaching food 	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Use the Commission on Hunger and its Director to provide technical assistance to communities and regions as they develop food councils and hunger action plans. Services should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing best practices for how to conduct a community needs assessment, including providing relevant background data and studies on hunger, food access, and risk factors for hunger • Sharing models of best practices, both in Vermont and in other areas of the country, for drafting and implementing an effective food plan • Including access to food for at-risk or marginally at-risk citizens when planning for emergencies and providing sample materials for how emergency planning can be done • Adding a food security component to state-level planning that can be a reference point for individual communities, for example in emergency planning, public transit planning, use of prime agricultural soils in developing regions, etc. • Building and administering a pool of state, federal, and charitable funds that communities can access to support effective planning. Examples of expenses include professional facilitators, community forums, accurate survey work and attending trainings / educational opportunities 	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report
	Seniors face particular challenges finding transportation to food. The Governor's Office should build on existing transportation options for this group (e.g., matching state funds to Medicaid -funded travel to include trips to grocery stores and meal sites or providing better reimbursement for drivers bringing food to seniors.	Governor's Hunger Task Force Report

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Housing & Homelessness	State government will provide sufficient funding for the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, General Assistance/Emergency Assistance, and other safety net programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will provide sufficient funding for supportive and transitional housing for low-income families with special needs, including long-term commitments to fund the support services necessary for their success.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The General Assembly's work on housing will continue to focus on increasing the supply of safe and affordable housing and improving the energy efficiency of low income homes and rental units.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will restore full funding for the Housing and Conservation Board Trust Fund, a nationally-recognized program that has significantly increased the stock of affordable housing.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will provide a fair and consistent housing code enforcement system to bring substandard housing up to code, enforce lead paint eradication, and ensure the existing housing supply does not become unsafe over time.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Continue supportive housing initiatives for homeless consumers and those at risk for homelessness and document results.	2008 VICH report to Governor
	Measure success through the collection of consistent data at a program and statewide level.	2008 VICH report to Governor
Supports for Strengthening Families	State government will prioritize energy affordability issues and continue to strive to find long-term affordable energy strategies	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Council, the Governor, and the General Assembly will communicate with the Congressional delegation, the President, and other appropriate federal officials the necessity of ensuring that there is sufficient funding for energy affordability programs, especially the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP)	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The General Assembly will examine the state's eligibility standards for LIHEAP due to the growing number of families who are unable to afford heat.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will continue its efforts to ensure universal access to high quality, affordable physical, dental, and mental health care, and to promote healthy communities.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Office of Vermont Health Access and Department of Health will prioritize children's access to quality physical, dental, and mental health care with an emphasis on hard-to-access services.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report

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Supports for Strengthening Families (Cont...)	State government will determine why uninsured children remain uninsured and propose a plan to reach universal coverage of children and pregnant women.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Health will continue to focus on prevention programs which improve the social and physical environments of children in order to enhance their health and cognitive, behavioral, and physical development.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The General Assembly will invest in the child care subsidy program in these three ways: a) increase eligibility guidelines incrementally to match the current cost of living; b) increase subsidy rates incrementally so they provide parents access to 75% of the child care offered in their area (as per federal standards); and c) adjust eligibility guidelines and subsidy rates annually to keep pace with inflation.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department for Children and Families (DCF) will make recommendations on how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase the availability of child care for parents working alternative hours and weekends; b. Increase access to quality care for underserved populations such as infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and school-aged children who need afterschool care; and c. Improve the quality of child care available to all children. 	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will work with localities to review existing public transportation systems and explore potential changes to public services in order to increase the access of low-income parents to employment opportunities, child care, and other resources.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will continue to support prevention programs designed to help families before they are in crisis.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will support nonprofit community organizations working to strengthen families such as the community action programs, parent-child center network, teen parent education programs, and others.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	State government will bring the community together to share and develop best practices at the community level.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report

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Supports for Strengthening Families (Cont...)	<p>Expand access to child care assistance and make it more generous.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child care subsidy program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase payment rates to reflect data from the state’s child care market rate survey; ○ Phase out the value of the state’s subsidy more slowly as family earnings rise; and ○ Increase the income eligibility limit. ▪ Child care tax credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calculate the refundable state child care tax credit based on the federal credit for which a family is <i>potentially</i> eligible; and ○ Make the nonrefundable state child care tax credit refundable. 	<p>Work Supports in Vermont: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of State Policies Supporting Work</p>
	<p>Improve work incentives across programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transition from TANF cash assistance to employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the TANF program’s earned income disregard (such as from 25 percent to 50 percent). ▪ Transition from low-wage work to economic self sufficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restructure state income tax benefits – the state EITC and Renter Rebate – to provide more assistance to families while major federal benefits – such as the federal EITC and food stamps – are phasing out. ○ See suggested reforms of child care assistance above. 	<p>Work Supports in Vermont: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of State Policies Supporting Work</p>
	<p>Enact other reforms to increase overall resource adequacy for low-income working families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ LIHEAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the income limit for Seasonal Fuel Assistance; • Eliminate the benefit cliff by phasing out benefits gradually; and • Ensure that benefit levels reflect rising fuel costs. ◆ Treatment of child support income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the TANF program’s child support disregard (for example, from \$50 a month per household to \$100 a month per child); and • Change Renter Rebate calculations to disregard at least a portion of the child support payments that families receive. ◆ Health insurance for children and parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider further expansions so that families who lack employer-based health benefits can access a subsidized plan, with premiums that rise with income. 	<p>Work Supports in Vermont: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of State Policies Supporting Work</p>

Category	Recommendation	Source
Education	The State of Vermont will set a goal of eliminating both the disparities in test scores and high school graduation rates between low-income children and their peers.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Education Commissioner will identify best practices for closing the achievement gap and build on the successes of many Vermont schools that are working to meet the needs of low-income students.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The DCF Commissioner and the Department of Health Commissioner will report to the Council and the General Assembly on whether existing programs targeted at school readiness are reaching all eligible families, especially those with children from birth to age three.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Expand capacity to assure access to high-quality pre-K services and Head Start and Early Head Start programs.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Education Commissioner and the Agency of Human Services Secretary will agree to a formal protocol to deploy teams to work with schools and their communities to develop action plans that address the disparities of test scores between students eligible for free and reduced lunches and students who are not. Top priority will be given to those schools identified as being “in need of improvement.”	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	The Department of Education Commissioner and the Agency of Human Services Secretary will develop models for the integration of family services into Vermont’s schools to provide the supports that children who are performing at lower levels need to catch up to their higher performing peers. The models will be promoted to school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, and community groups.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Capacity in afterschool programs will be expanded to assure access.	Vermont Child Poverty Council Report
	Develop a systemic statewide approach to creating career awareness among middle and high school students. Actions: Imbed career awareness in secondary tech ed and in all 9-12 programs (VSAC, DOE, DOL, WDC); Utilize Next Generation resources to expand career awareness initiatives (DOL, VSAC and others)	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee

Category	Recommendation	Source
Education (Cont...)	<p>Imbed career awareness in secondary tech ed and in all 9-12 programs (VSAC, DOE, DOL, WDC) Utilize Next Generation resources to expand career awareness initiatives (DOL, VSAC and others).</p> <p>Actions: Develop the Next Gen. college internship program through employers, trade associations, and colleges. (DOL)*; Develop the Next Gen. secondary internship program into a system that provides access for students statewide. (DOL)</p>	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	<p>Develop programs of study that provide for career pathways from high school to further education and college that lead to good jobs in VT.</p> <p>Actions: Organize Tech Ed Programs of Study into Career pathways (DOE); Establish Industry Skills panels for each career pathway (DOE, DOL); Increase participation in Dual Enrollment Programs (VSC, AVIC, UVM) Increase enrollment in Intro to College Studies (VSC, AVIC)*</p>	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	<p>Increase opportunities for youth to access innovative alternative HS completion programs.</p> <p>Actions: Increase high school completion rate; Increase enrollments in the Act 176 High School Completion Program and Adult Diploma Program in all regions. (DOE, Learning Works); Expand access to Next Gen. Alternative & Intensive Tech Ed programs statewide with start-up funding (DOL)*</p>	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	<p>Increase access to higher education.</p> <p>Actions: Improve student success rate in higher education. (VSC, UVM, AVIC); Address financial barriers to college entry. (VSC, UVM, AVIC)</p>	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee
	<p>Imbed workplace readiness curriculum in all secondary programs.</p> <p>Action: Implement the Workplace Readiness Credential in Secondary Schools (DOE)</p>	Next Generation Report Workforce Leadership Committee