

May 1, 2020

To the Editor:

As our public health paradigm shifts with the emergence of Covid-19, many Vermonters are experiencing loss---of connection, of livelihood, of basic necessities, and some have lost loved ones. We are living with uncertainty. The road forward must be paved with time for grieving, resources for the vulnerable, and opportunities to restart Vermont's economic engine.

Vermonters with lower educational levels, training, and/or limited language skills are more vulnerable during periods of economic insecurity. According to Advance Vermont, four out of five workers who lost their jobs during the last recession lacked high school diplomas or were low-skilled. Vermont will, likely, experience similar outcomes in the wake of the pandemic.

Vermont Adult Learning, and other adult learning providers throughout the state, stand ready to assist those seeking to earn their high school credentials; train for a new job; learn English; or brush up on their reading, writing, and computer skills---for free – with funding through the Vermont Agency of Education. We help students advance to apprenticeships and post-secondary education. We partner with employers to assist them with meeting workforce demands. We have helped tens of thousands of Vermonters, ages 16 and older, advance in their education and careers since our founding in 1980. Vermont Adult Learning serves seven of Vermont's fourteen counties, offering learning centers with classrooms, computer labs, and highly skilled teachers and academic advisors. We host dedicated volunteers eager to provide 1:1 support.

We are delivering services virtually during Vermont's shelter in place order. We are prepared to support current students while welcoming new ones. We are able to assist students with their technology needs, endeavoring to lessen the digital divide in this time of unease.

We are passionate about our work, viewing education as a ticket out of poverty. We are here to help Vermont rebuild, one aspiring student at a time. Find us at www.vtadultlearning.org.

Hal Cohen
Executive Director

Source: <https://advancevermont.org/>