



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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[Vermont Chamber Leading Businesses from Relief to Recovery](#)

Work in Vermont is steadily underway as business community leaders begin planning for economic recovery. This week, Vermont Chamber Vice President of Business Development Chris Carrigan joined a sub-taskforce for Vermont's manufacturing sector, supporting Governor Phil Scott's Restart Vermont Guidance Advisory Council. Vermont Chamber Vice President of Tourism Amy Spear is also supporting restaurant and lodging leaders planning economic recovery in the state. On Wednesday, Vermont Chamber President Betsy Bishop published an op-ed detailing the path forward for Vermont businesses, from relief to recovery, including initial policy recommendations. Additionally, this week the Vermont Chamber launched the Solutions Hub to collect policy suggestions and ideas to help businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and afterward.

[Vermont Businesses Receive \\$1 Billion From Paycheck Protection Program](#)

The Small Business Association issued a state-by-state summary on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) with this first round, logging 1.7 million loans totaling \$342 billion, with an average loan of \$206,000. Vermont lenders wrote nearly 7,000 loans totaling just over \$1 billion, and while that is a large number, the Vermont Chamber continues to advocate for more money at the federal level and looser restrictions to allow more of these loans to be converted to grants to help businesses.

Industry (National)	Approved Loans	Approved Dollars	% of Amount
Construction	177,905	\$44,906,538,010	13.12%
Professional, Scientific, Technical	208,360	\$43,294,713,938	12.65%
Manufacturing	108,863	\$40,922,240,021	11.96%
Health Care and Social Assistance	183,542	\$39,892,493,481	11.65%
Accommodation and Food Services	161,876	\$30,500,417,573	8.91%

Senate Advances Temporary Changes to Workers' Compensation

The Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs voted 5-0-0 to advance changes to workers' compensation coverage that would remain in effect during the State of Emergency and for up to 45 days after. If enacted, the changes would provide a presumption that certain workers who are diagnosed with COVID-19 are entitled to workers' compensation for the disease. The legislation advanced despite little being known about the impact these changes could have on employers' workers' compensation insurance rates. The Vermont Chamber is regularly communicating with both Senate and House legislators to advocate for a result that does not place unsustainable additional costs on businesses, many of which continue to struggle financially due to COVID-19.

ACCD Briefs Senate on Economic Impact of COVID-19

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) testified in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, providing legislators with preliminary numbers on the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 crisis. ACCD reported an initial estimate of \$1 billion in total impact. The testimony also highlighted the role the recently established RestartVT team will play in helping to develop reopening plans for various sectors as recovery continues. The Vermont Chamber is communicating daily with the Administration to assist in developing economic restart and recovery plans that appropriately meet the business community's needs.

Vermont Chamber Highlights Liability Concerns in Task Force Letter

The Vermont Chamber sent a letter this week to Governor Scott and the recently created Economic Mitigation and Recovery Task Force highlighting certain employer liability concerns related to restarting businesses. While not yet a widespread issue in Vermont, employers in many states are facing litigation as a result of the implementation of mandatory workplace safety practices that can, in certain instances, conflict with existing privacy and employee rights laws. The Vermont Chamber will continue to advocate for policies that appropriately account for the impact of new workplace safety requirements on employee rights and employer liability.

COVID-19 Employer Responsibilities: Questions and Answers

With guidance provided by Vermont Chamber of Commerce member Paul Frank and Collins, the Vermont Chamber published a questions and answers sheet highlighting newly permitted or mandated employer practices related to COVID-19. The document summarizes health and safety procedures employers may implement at workplaces in response to the pandemic. It also provides guidance on temporary changes to laws impacting employee health privacy.

Blueprint for Restaurant Recovery

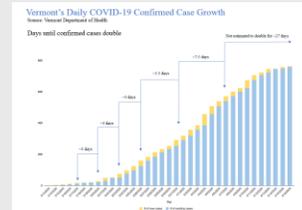
The National Restaurant Association has released a blueprint for restaurant recovery at the national level. The document outlines targeted federal government requests to advance recovery. The Vermont Chamber is supportive of these proposals and is working to advance a similar plan at the state level.

Meals and Rooms Tax Deadline Relief

The Department of Taxes is providing temporary relief to Vermont businesses that owe Meals and Rooms Tax or Sales and Use Tax. Businesses that are unable to meet the April 25th filing deadline will not be charged any penalty or interest for late payment. This is not an abatement of the tax, but instead a waiving of any interest or penalty for late payments. The Vermont Chamber is continuing to lobby the Legislature for full abatement of the February and March Meals and Rooms Tax.

Vermont-Specific Data for COVID-19

The State of Vermont is working with several infectious disease experts to forecast the impact of COVID-19 in our state as accurately as possible. Vermont-specific modeling is being used to help prepare the State's response to COVID-19 and guide policy decisions. The Department of Financial Regulation has published this data that demonstrates the trajectory of the COVID-19 virus in Vermont and our health care system's capacity to respond. The slide deck provided shows the progress Vermont is making, and many of the charts show that the state is effectively flattening the curve.



Resource Roundup

The Vermont Chamber staff has spent hundreds of hours on COVID-19 Zoom calls, conference calls, and webinars learning so that we can answer your questions in this ever-changing time. Collectively, we have had thousands of individual communications with members and non-members during the crisis. It is likely we can help you, too.

Want to understand the new UI rules? Tax deadlines? Online reservation guidance? PPP eligibility? Contact us for information and we will get the answer for you. We have also seen excellent content from our members, which will be compiled weekly in our *Resource Roundup*. If you have content to include, send your links to news@vtchamber.com.

Thank you for your continued support. Remember, we are in this together.

In Case You Missed It

[New Workplace Guidance and Updates to Vermont's Stay Home, Stay Safe Order](#)

[Tax Revenues Not Bad for March, but Expected to Get Much Worse](#)

Business Leaders Warn Loss of VTC Campus Would Undermine Economy

Boston Fed Outlines Grim Economic Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic in New England

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In business since 1912, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit business organization with 1,500 members employing 45,000 people and representing all sectors of the state's economy. Our mission is to create an economic climate conducive to business growth and the preservation of the Vermont quality of life. Copyright ©2018 The Vermont Chamber of Commerce. All Rights Reserved.

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