

# STAY TO STAY

## A REPORT ON THE STAY TO STAY WEEKENDS

2018 Pilot Program Recap



LIVE

GROW

WORK

PLAY

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# SUMMARY

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The Stay to Stay program is a targeted economic development tourism initiative developed by the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) as part of the Scott Administration's strategy to attract more working families and young professionals to Vermont in response to the State's declining workforce.

The 3-day networking weekends are specifically designed for visitors interested in living and working in Vermont. The 2018 pilot program included four communities and four separate Stay to Stay Weekends administered jointly by VDTM and regional partners.

The Stay to Stay Weekends connect participants to community leaders, employers, entrepreneurs, realtors, potential neighbors, and state and local officials to begin building a support network that can help facilitate their relocation to Vermont.

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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### Objective

Identify and attract visitors who are most interested in relocating to Vermont, and then support those people in becoming full-time Vermont residents.

### Participating Communities

- Rutland
- Bennington/Manchester
- Brattleboro
- Burlington

Criteria for selection of a community included: a committed local chamber/young professional network partner, and generator/co-working space in the community, and employers that are hiring.

### Local Partners

- **Rutland:** Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce and Rutland Young Professionals
- **Bennington/Manchester:** Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Brattleboro:** Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp, Downtown Brattleboro Alliance
- **Burlington:** Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce

### 2018 Weekend Dates

- April 6-9
- June 1-4
- August 10-13
- October 19-22

*“We’re really excited about our move to Vermont. Even the dogs know something good is coming soon. I’m still in touch with Chuck and Alexa from the Brattleboro Stay to Stay Weekend. That’s how excellent the program is; it really builds community even before Vermonters become Vermonters.”*

**Orlando**  
**Relocated from Florida**

## WEEKEND SCHEDULE

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### Friday Evening Welcome Reception

Participants arrive Friday evening, check into their choice of lodging accommodations, and then attend a welcome reception hosted by the local chamber or young professional network (YPN). Community representatives that welcome the participants include local businesses owners and entrepreneurs, state and local officials, and residents. Each participant receives a Vermont welcome bag with the official attractions map, local tourism information, ThinkVermont collateral, specialty products, and swag from Vermont companies.

### Saturday and Sunday Exploration

Participants enjoy two unstructured days to explore Vermont's as a visitor or can opt to arrange additional meetings with realtors or other local professionals. VDTM and local chambers served as concierges with suggested things to do and people to meet.

### Monday Morning Networking Event

Participants sign up in advance for one of three activities designed to give them insight about living and working in Vermont:

1. Tour with a realtor.
2. Visit a co-maker or generator space to meet entrepreneurs.
3. Meet with employers.

*"We are very grateful for the Stay to Stay program and individuals like Matt Harrington who have made it so easy and fun for us to settle into this beautiful state."*

**Nicole**

**Relocated from Colorado**

## PROMOTION

VDTM targets potential Stay to Stay participants through its sophisticated digital tools and social profiling in key markets like Boston, NYC, upstate New York and the Adirondacks, and smaller New England cities. VDTM promotes the Stay to Stay Weekends through its website, consumer newsletters, social media channels, and video advertising campaigns. VDTM created a cooperative marketing program with its Stay to Stay partners to leverage their marketing dollars for maximum exposure. In addition, the timeliness and uniqueness of the program earned national and regional media coverage including *NBC Nightly News*, *Weekend Edition/NPR*, *Here and Now/NPR*, *Washington Post* and *CNN*.

### STAY-TO-STAY WEEKENDS AS COVERED BY NBC NIGHTLY NEWS



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## MEDIA CAMPAIGN RECAP

### VERMONT MAKES HEADLINES

#### REMOTE WORKER & STAY-TO-STAY WEEKENDS DOMINATES NATIONAL MEDIA



Number of Resulting Inquiries:  
2,500+



802+YOU Newsletter Signups:  
10,369 (2,720% increase)



Publicity Value:  
\$4,847,667+



Stay-to-Stay Newsletter Signups:  
1,500 (679% increase)



Number of Articles:  
959+



Max Engagement Increase:  
1,293%



Total Impressions:  
1,716,322,486+



Max Impressions Increase:  
177%

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## REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION DATA

Registration and participation data were collected via the submissions to VDTM's online registration form and post-event reporting from local partners on actual participation rates.

### Registrations Broken Out by Region/Dates

Town	April	June	August	October	Grand Total
Bennington	5	-	41	-	46
Brattleboro	12	30	63	96	201
Burlington	-	23	30	143	196
Manchester	-	14	-	52	66
Rutland	5	32	51	55	143
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>652</b>

*"The Stay to Stay program gave me an immediate social network. Seven months after I moved to Vermont, I am still friends with some of the people I met during the Stay to Stay weekend I attended in Bennington. From the very first day I moved here, I knew I had a group of friends I could count on."*

**Jacqueline**

**Relocated from Mississippi**

### Participation Broken Out by Region/Dates

Town	April	June	August	October	Grand Total
Bennington	-	-	8	-	8
Brattleboro	1	-	13	15	29
Burlington	-	-	9	61	70
Manchester	-	1	-	10	11
Rutland	-	1	9	12	22
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>140</b>

### Conversion Broken Out by Region

Town	Participants Who Have Moved	Participants Currently Job/House Hunting	Participants Planning/Considering to Move This Year	Participants Not Moving
Bennington	3	1	1	-
Brattleboro	2	6	3	17
Burlington	2	7	3	25
Manchester	-	2	5	-
Rutland	3	6	3	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>46</b>

Participants who moved to Vermont came from CO, FL, KS, MI, MS, NJ, PA, and SC. The other participants came from AL, AZ, CA, CAN, CO, CT, FL, GA, IA, IL, MA, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, PA, SC, UT, and VA.

## PARTICIPANT SURVEY

*"We have had a wonderful experience in the Rutland area this weekend. Friday evening's event was an excellent opportunity for us to meet people and get an authentic feel for the social and professional community in Rutland. It showcased the great people here who made us feel truly welcome and valued. I believe we are both even more convinced that moving to Vermont will be the right choice for us and are more confident now that we will be able to make it a home in every sense of the word."*

**Ian & Caroline**  
**Considering moving**  
**from Minnesota**

VDTM surveyed 2,100 individuals who signed up for more information or participated in a Stay to Stay Weekend to solicit feedback from registrants and participants about their experience with the program and opportunities for program improvement. Roughly forty-five percent (45%) of the 94 respondents learned about the program from news articles or broadcast stories.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) found the local connections offered by the program and the opportunity to visit or explore Vermont more thoroughly were the program's most beneficial aspects. Forty-five (45%) percent of respondents said they are likely to move to Vermont as a result of Stay to Stay and are either working on it or have already secured employment and/or housing here. These findings are in line with the statistics reported directly from the local partners.

Over seventy percent (70%) of survey respondents cited access to outdoor recreation as their primary reason for wanting to move to Vermont, while thirty-three percent (33%) cited the quality of life and local culture as the top consideration for moving to Vermont. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents reported no prior experience in Vermont and sixty-three percent (63%) had vacationed or visited friends and family in Vermont prior to learning about Stay to Stay Weekends.

The most useful aspects of Stay to Stay Weekends, as reported by survey responses, were local connections to town officials, employers and realtors (29%) and opportunity to visit Vermont or explore it in more depth (13%).

57%

of respondents found the local connections offered by the program and the opportunity to visit Vermont or explore it more thoroughly were its most beneficial aspects.

45%

of respondents said they are likely to move to Vermont as a result of Stay to Stay, are working on it or have already secured employment and/or housing here.

28%

of respondents reported no prior experience in Vermont.

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*I thought it was a great way to get to know a city. Making a big move to another city is a stressful deal and this helped take some of the stress off by being able to speak to locals who could answer big questions about work, where to live, etc.*

*We are very interested in relocating to VT and the thought of having a group of people answer our questions was too good to resist.*

*The ability to chat with locals in the community about Vermont and the flexibility of scheduling our own time/vacation with things we wanted to do. It felt balanced in addressing our questions and needs while also allowing us to relax and unwind on vacation.*

*Convenience of job, housing, entertainment information in one weekend.*



*I think it's a great way to learn about an area before making a big move.*

### What specifically interested you about the Stay to Stay program?

*I'm looking for a change, and this seemed like a good way to learn about a new place.*

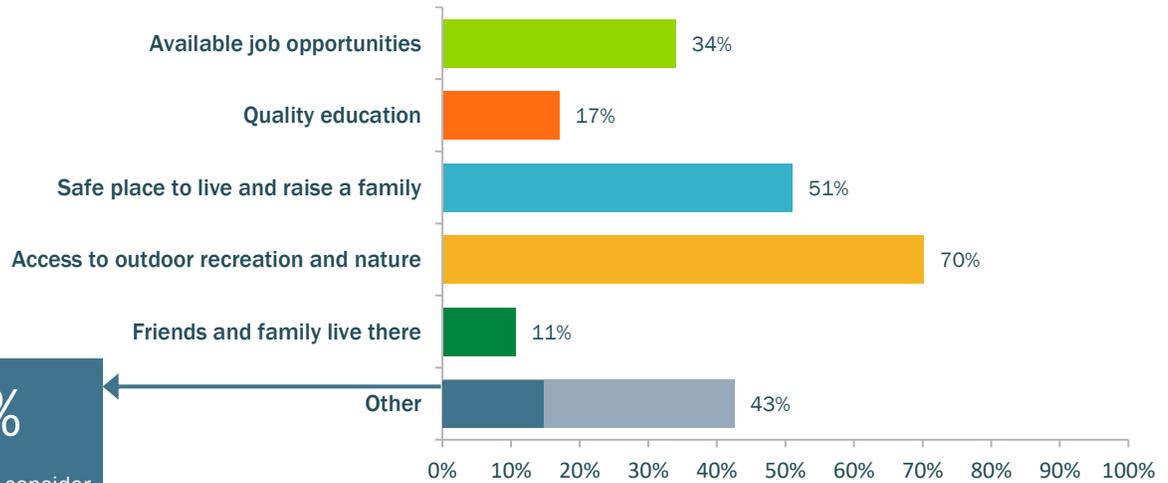
*It was an organized way to see what living in Vermont would be like, including employment options.*

*We already planned to move to Vermont, and S2S seemed like a good way to find employment.*

*I love the state of VT, and this seemed like such a novel and meaningful way to take it from a vacation spot to a full time reality.*

*It was launched about the same time as the remote worker grant program was announced. I have considered the idea of Vermont in the past. The coordinated aspect of the program was appealing vs just making a random trip.*

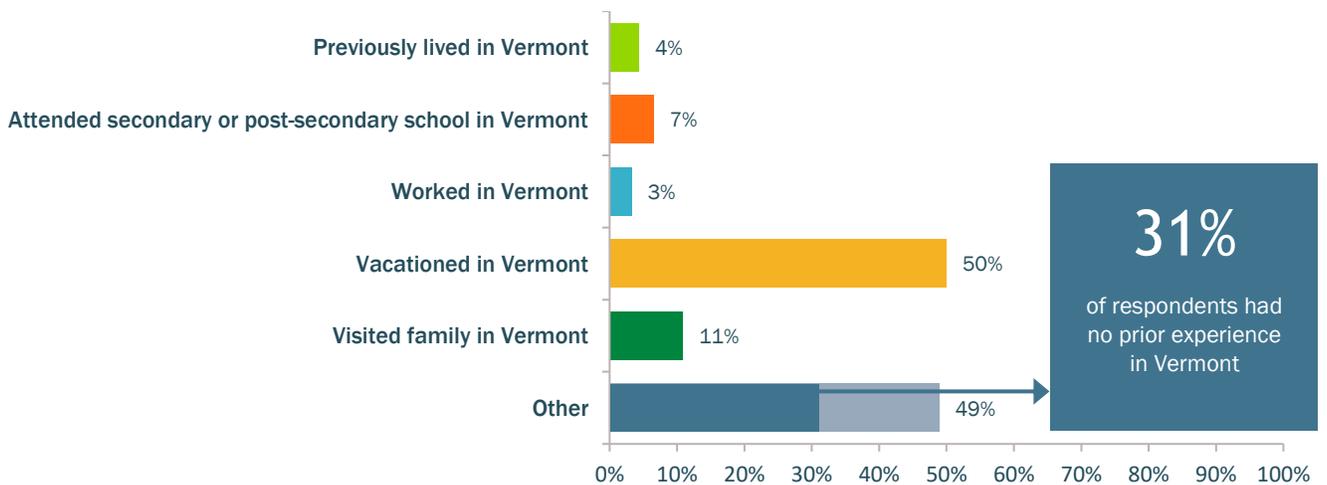
### Why are you considering a move to Vermont?



15%

of respondents consider moving to Vermont because of the progressive culture

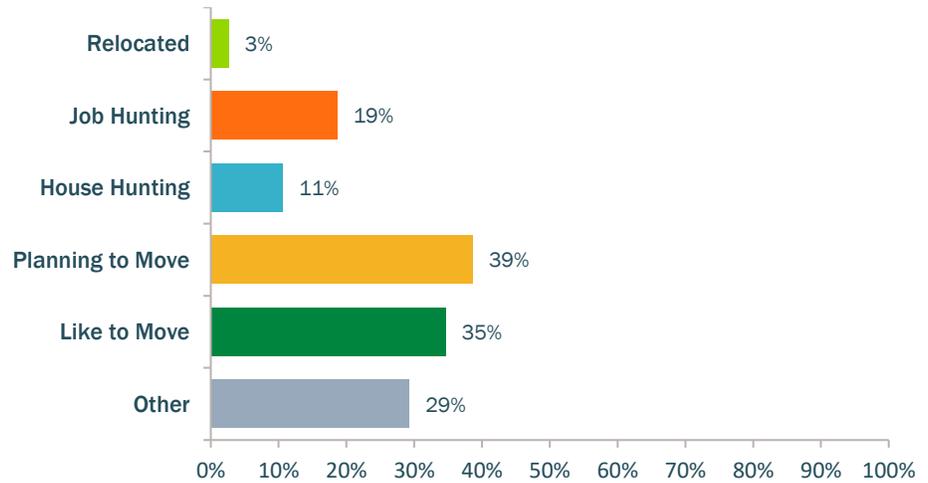
### What prior experience do you have in Vermont?



31%

of respondents had no prior experience in Vermont

**If you attended a Stay to Stay Weekend, what best describes your situation after participating in the weekend?**



## SUMMARY: 2019 AND BEYOND

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*"The Stay to Stay program was honestly such a beneficial event in facilitating our move to Vermont and I'm so happy I took part in it. I no longer have the major questions of "where can I work?" or "where will we live?" Having that blueprint has eliminated a lot of anxiety."*

**Brandon**  
**Relocated from Kansas**

The success of the Stay to Stay pilot program has attracted wide-spread interest from towns, chambers, employers and lodging partners in developing Stay to Stay Weekends in their communities. Additionally, participants surveyed expressed interest in having more weekend options. As such, VDTM and its local partners expanded the 2019 Stay to Stay Weekend dates to 15 weekends from February through November.

In early 2019, VDTM launched three Stay to Stay Ski options, a new collaboration between towns and local ski resorts to entice out-of-state skiers and riders to consider Vermont as a place to live and work. The Stay to Stay ski weekends were piloted at Brattleboro/Mount Snow, Manchester/Bromley, Rutland/Killington and more are planned for the 2019-2020 season.

VDTM recently announced the expansion of the program into Vermont's Northeast Kingdom as part of a workforce development partnership between Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development made possible through a grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission. The new communities that will host Stay to Stay Weekends include Newport and St. Johnsbury.

VDTM is also partnering with the Vermont Mountain Biking Association to develop Stay to Stay mountain biking options this fall. Other options being considered are industry-specific Stay to Stay weekends that highlight the State's technology, block chain, manufacturing, food and beverage, hospitality, and outdoor recreation sectors.

For more information about the Stay-to-Stay initiative, visit [www.VermontVacation.com/staytostay](http://www.VermontVacation.com/staytostay).