

[WCAX \(video included\)](#)

"The challenge that we have now is to figure out how to get back to fiscal balance, that's really essential," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vermont.

Congressman Welch brought together two key elements of Vermont's economy: business and academics. The purpose? To talk about how federal budget cuts might affect both in Vermont. The concern lies around how the Green Mountain State employers train their workers.

"That is going to be the biggest contributor to reducing our deficit that we can have," Welch said.

The federal government plans to reduce funds going to the Workforce and Education training program along with cuts to the Pell Grant program, both provide grants to Vermonters to either sharpen their work skills or promote post-secondary education. Pell Grant cuts could eliminate funding for more than 2,000 Vermont students.

"We've hired 44 people since October," said Adam Knudsen, the Chief Operating Officer at Dynapower.

Dynapower is a growing South Burlington-based company that specializes in storage equipment for energy made from renewable sources. Cutting workforce development money could affect the way they train their highly specialized workforce.

"We would still need to educate and train our workforce, but we may not be able to do it as quickly," Knudsen said. "It's an extremely competitive market space."

Dynapower is competing with out-of-state manufacturers for business and talent. Their robust

training is icing on the cake for potential employees.

"And that training takes years. We need to condense that down significantly if we can continue our competitive advantage in that space," Knudsen said. "Budget cuts are part of the equation, investing in the right programs is also part of the equation for long term. I think workforce training and development is a program on top of the list."

Welch took notes at the roundtable, vowing to take the information back to Washington. But this year's budget is a done deal.