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West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

West Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee

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Executive Summary

The following document is the West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). According to the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), a CEDS is a "strategy-driven plan for regional economic development" that "is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region." The primary purpose of this CEDS is to improve the economic wealth and well-being of all the Region's residents.

The regional development corporations (RDCs) and regional planning commissions (RPCs) serving West Central Vermont decided to pursue a CEDS in the summer of 2020 during the initial economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national conflict related to racial and economic inequity. These two principal topics are a key focus, and a driving force behind the creation of, the West Central Vermont CEDS. The West Central Vermont CEDS also provides an opportunity for the organizations serving this specific geographic region to align economic initiatives more closely and to potentially create an Economic Development District (EDD). Lastly, the West Central Vermont CEDS aims to set the Region on an actionable path to emerge from the pandemic economically stronger and more resilient.

The West Central Vermont CEDS is composed for three main sections:

- Economic Profile: This section reviews existing demographic and economic conditions in the Region with a specific focus on resilience within the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This section also explores the qualitative factors that make West Central Vermont unique and competitive within the national and global economy via a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)/Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) analysis.
- Key Findings: This section explains key concepts and findings about the state of the West Central Vermont economy.
- Strategic Direction, Action Plan, and Evaluation Framework: This section synthetizes our SWOT/SOAR analysis and economic profile with input and direction received during our public engagement process to define clear goals and associated actions that can be accomplished by regional partners to implement the CEDS. This section also establishes data indicators that will allow West Central Vermont CEDS partners to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS over the long-term.

Key CEDS Findings based on the Economic Profile, SWOT/SOAR exercises (Appendix C), the Employer Survey (Appendix B), and the substantial amount of public input received during the development of the CEDS (Appendix A):

- West Central Vermont is the most economically impactful region of Vermont. The Region's geographic size, population, diverse economic base, GDP, personal income, level of education, and infrastructure set it apart from the rest of the State.

- State and Federal response to the pandemic has provided unprecedented levels of funding to offset financial losses to households and businesses resulting from COVID-19 and to rebuild specific economic sectors and needed infrastructure (see Resilience subsection). Vermont received a grand total of $11.3 billion in Federal assistance. This includes $5.1 billion in grant payments (most to the State government and other institutions) and $6.2 billion in non-grant payments (e.g., direct stimulus payments to individuals, Paycheck Protection Program loans,

Electronic Benefit Transfer funding, unemployment benefits). This total does not include $2.2 billion coming to VT via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- Economic stability and long-term growth are challenged due to a shortage of available labor. The labor force participation rate in Vermont (60.9%) is at its lowest point in over 40 years. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused significant dislocation of employment. There are several contributing factors to the labor shortage:

    - Some workers that left the workforce during COVID-19 are unable to return to the workforce due to the lack of access to childcare and/or affordable childcare (see Infrastructure and Resiliency subsections).

    - An aging population, and the risks of COVID, may have led to a substantial amount of worker retirements during the pandemic which exacerbated the labor shortage (see Aging subsection).

    - Both the lack of housing stock, and the cost of housing, is limiting the ability for local employers to attract new workers to the Region (see Housing subsection and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

- The pandemic has had the most severe direct and lasting impact on the Leisure and Hospitality supersector of the economy. Total employment in the supersector remained down 16% in December 2021 compared to December 2019. However, month-to-month gains in total employment show that this supersector is slowly improving.

- Total employment in the Retail sector remains down 6% and the Manufacturing supersector remains down 7%. Total employment in theses economic sectors did not improve on a month-to-month basis in 2021.

- Despite the labor shortage, the Region has generally emerged from the pandemic in a strong economic position. Personal income is up, wages have increased, consumption is strong and job opportunities are plentiful (see Resilience subsection).

- The Region has high location quotient values for niche manufacturing and value-added agricultural products – but the manufacturing sector has generally not added jobs at the same rate as other sectors and wage growth in manufacturing has been slower than in all other sectors since 2010 (see Regional and Sub-regional Economy subsection).

- Since 2010, the Region has become more diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, there was a decline in the population that self-identifies as “white-only.” The population of all other racial groups increased by 51% over the same period (21,398 persons in 2010 to 32,251 persons in 2020).

- Several outstanding economic development-related planning efforts have been completed in Vermont in the last several years (e.g. 2021 CreateVT – Action Plan for Vermont’s Creative Sector, 2021-2030 Vermont Agricultural and Food Systems Strategic Plan (Vermont Farm to Plate)) that specifically outline actions that support the creative economy and the agricultural economy. These plans shall guide the work of partners in the West Central Vermont region in

support of the Region's rural economy. CEDS partner organizations may incorporate specific actions in the from the CreateVT – Action Plan and Farm to Plate Strategic Plan within their own plans at a sub-Regional (West Central Vermont) level.

- The West Central Vermont Region is not immune to economic inequity that exists in the rest of Vermont and the country:

    - The wage gap between men and women workers still exists within the Region (see Wages subsection). Gains made in closing the gap over the past decade are threatened by the pandemic and lack of access to child care. Women workers are more likely than men to leave their careers if they are unable to find adequate child care.

    - Gaps between White residents and BIPoC residents in education attainment, income, and homeownership rates all exceed national averages (see Education, Income, and Housing subsections).

    - Focus groups held by the Vermont Professionals of Color Network reported several challenges identified by the BIPoC community including:

        - A lack of access to capital;
        - Inaccessibility to business support resources and "business basics" trainings; and
        - the overall difficulty overcoming systemic inequities within Vermont's governmental and business systems (see Appendix F - VT Professionals of Color Network – BIPoC Workforce and Small Business Environment Qualitative Assessment – Final Report).

    - Holes exist in the workforce development and high school-to-work pipeline. Those individuals not pursuing a post-secondary education may not receive adequate training and may miss opportunities to enter high-skilled and high-paying occupations despite local demand. This poses a challenge to ensure that the future workforce is well-trained and able to meet the needs of existing employers (see Summary of Public Process – Appendix A and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

- The Region has a housing shortage and housing prices are skyrocketing. Limited housing supply is impacting all demographic categories and is inhibiting economic development by restricting workers ability to moving within the Region to be closer to their employment. The Region must support efforts to develop housing in areas planned for growth with a particular focus on developing perpetually affordable housing, workforce housing, and housing for agricultural workers.

- Investing in infrastructure in areas planned for growth is a regional priority. West Central Vermont must complete public investments, ideally funded through unprecedented funding available to through Federal assistance to the State government, to help set the foundation for appropriate levels of development in order to help solve the housing crisis and create economic

growth that benefits the entire community (see Summary of Public Process – Appendix A and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

- Increasing access to broadband is essential to making the Region competitive in the modern economy. Per the Vermont Department of Public Service, 15% of West Central Vermont buildings do not have access to high-speed internet. The number of buildings is even greater in Addison County (38%). Overall, Vermont ranks 48th in the nation for broadband access according to Speedtest.net.

- The urban areas in the vicinity of Chittenden County have grown, both in population and number of jobs, over the last several decades. The rural areas of the Region have seen stagnant or declining population growth and jobs over the same period. This dynamic between "rural" economies and "urban" economies reflects national trends and has had very real impact on both demographic and business migration affecting the Region and State.

The West Central Vermont CEDS also contains several appendices. See the Table of Contents for more information.

Abbreviation List

ACEDC – Addison County Economic Development Corporation
ACRPC – Addison County Regional Planning Commission
ACS – American Community Survey
ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act
BIPoC – Black, Indigenous, and people of color
CARES – Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
CEDRR – Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region
CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CCRPC – Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
CCV – Community College of Vermont
CTE – Career and Technical Education Centers
CVOEO – Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
CVEDC – Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
CVRPC – Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
EDA – Economic Development Administration
EDD – Economic Development District
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
EV – Electric Vehicle
GBIC – Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
LNA – Licensed Nurses Assistant
LQ – Location Quotient
NAICS – North American Industrial Classification System
NBRC – Northern Borders Regional Commission
PER – Preliminary Engineering Report
RDC – Regional Development Corporation
RLF – Revolving Loan Fund
RPC – Regional Planning Commission
RRPC – Rutland Regional Planning Commission
SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SOAR – Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TIF – Tax Increment Financing
TMDL – Total Maximum Daily Load
USDA-RD – United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
UVM – University of Vermont
VELCO – Vermont Electric Power Company
VOREC – Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative
VT – Vermont
VTC – Vermont Technical College

I. Introduction to West Central Vermont

What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy?

According to the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a "strategy-driven plan for regional economic development" that "is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region" and is a "a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity (through hard and soft infrastructure) that contributes to individual, firm, and community success." [1] The following document is the CEDS for the West Central Vermont Region. The primary purpose of this CEDS is to improve the economic wealth and well-being of all the Region's residents.

West Central Vermont – Geography and Partnership

The West Central Vermont Region (the "Region") is composed of 91 municipalities located in Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, Orange, and Washington counties. The four largest municipalities in the State (Burlington, South Burlington, Colchester, Rutland City), the State's capitol (Montpelier), and several regionally significant municipalities (Barre City, Essex Junction, Middlebury, Northfield, Waterbury, and Williston) are located within the Region. The Region contains 67 State-designated Downtowns and Village Centers which are historic settlements that are traditional centers of civic and commercial activity. Several of the State's largest employers, including Global Foundries and the University of Vermont Medical Center, are based in the Region. So too are the State's largest educational institutions, including the University of Vermont, Middlebury College, Norwich University and St. Michael's College. The area has diverse physical geography framed by Lake Champlain in the west and the Green Mountain range to the east, with flat, primarily agricultural land of the Champlain Valley in between.

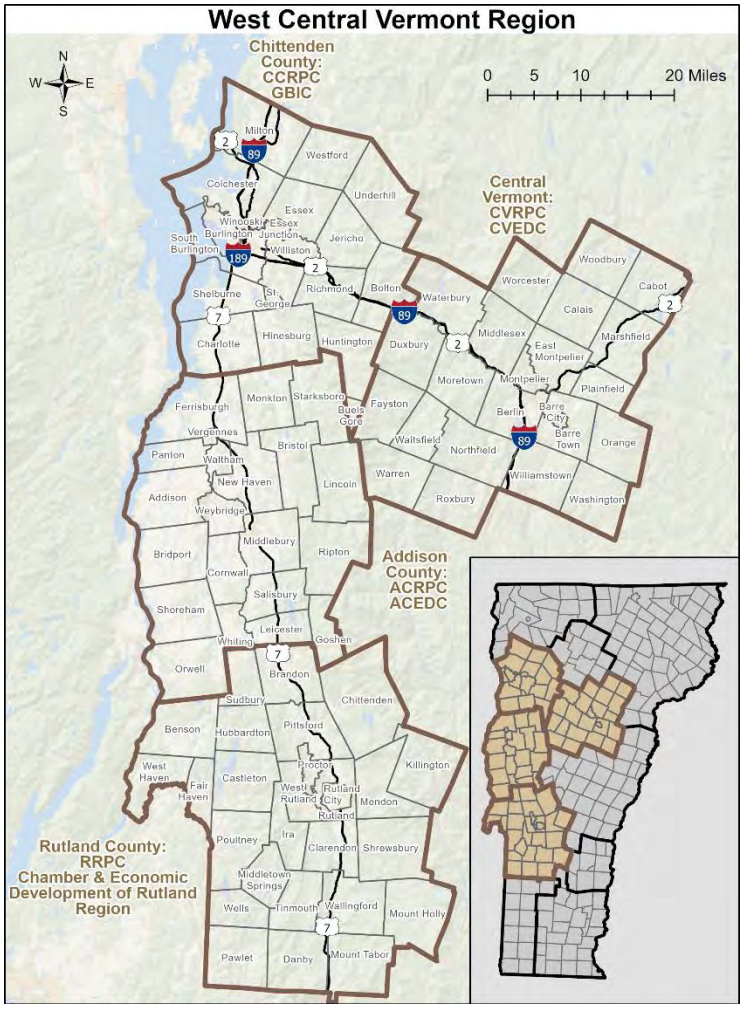


Figure 1 - West Central Vermont Region

The West Central Vermont CEDS is the result of a partnership between the

[1] US Department of Commerce, EDA, "CEDS Content Guidelines – Overview," May 18, 2022 https://www.eda.gov/ceds/.

Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) and the Regional Planning Commission (RPCs) serving Addison County, Chittenden County, Rutland County and Central Vermont (Washington and Orange Counties).

RDCs are private, non-profit organizations that are key players in driving economic growth by improving the economy, the standard of living, and the quality of life. RPCs are political subdivisions of the State created by their member municipalities (24 VSA §4341) and provide a variety of statutorily required functions. This includes providing technical assistance to municipalities on a variety of planning-related issues (e.g., land use, transportation, housing, etc.) and completing comprehensive regional economic development planning.

The RDCs and RPCs serving West Central Vermont decided to pursue a CEDS in the summer of 2020 during the initial economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national conflict related to racial and economic inequity. These two principal topics are a key focus and a driving force behind the creation of the West Central Vermont CEDS.

The West Central Vermont CEDS also provides an opportunity for the organizations serving this specific geographic region to align economic initiatives more closely and to potentially create an Economic Development District (EDD). EDDs are "multi-jurisdictional entities, commonly composed of multiple counties" that "help lead the locally-based, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration."[2] Creation of an EDD may allow West Central Vermont CEDS partners to access additional funds from EDA, or other funding sources, to support the implementation of local projects identified in the CEDS.

The RDCs and RPCs in West Central Vermont formed a Strategy Committee in October 2020 to guide the development of the CEDS. West Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee member organizations include:

- Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC)
- Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC)
- Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC)
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)
- Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR)
- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)
- Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC)
- Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)

Existing CEDS

A Chittenden County CEDS has historically been adopted by Chittenden County partners (GBIC and CCRPC) since the early 2000s. The latest Chittenden County CEDS is included in the ECOS Plan, a comprehensive regional plan developed by CCRPC. This CEDS, adopted by both CCRPC and GBIC in 2018, is replaced by the West Central Vermont CEDS.

[2] US Department of Commerce, EDA, "Programs, Economic Development Districts," May 18, 2022, https://eda.gov/edd/.

Development of CEDS and Public Process

Regional partners received a Planning and Technical Assistance Grant from EDA to develop the West Central Vermont CEDS in September 2020. The West Central Vermont CEDS is designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency with a particular focus on recovery, equity, and opportunities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The West Central Vermont CEDS is intended to reflect the voices of the hundreds of business leaders and community members that provided guidance on how our region can best utilize our resources to create economic conditions that benefit all members of our community. Between May 2021 and September 2022, regional partners conducted several rounds of public engagement. This includes working with the Vermont Professionals of Color Network to specifically conduct outreach to groups historically underrepresented in economic development planning efforts, including members of the BIPoC community (see Appendix F). A full summary of the public engagement process, including a review of key findings, is in Appendix A.

Figure 2 – A festival in Montpelier – Source: CVEDC

CEDS Components

The West Central Vermont CEDS is intended to meet EDA CEDS content guidelines. The West Central Vermont CEDS is composed for four main sections:

- Economic Profile: This section reviews existing demographic and economic conditions in the Region with a specific focus on resilience within the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This section also explores the qualitative factors that make West Central Vermont unique and competitive within the national and global economy via a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)/Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) analysis.
- Key Findings: This section explains key concepts and findings about the state of the West Central Vermont economy.
- Strategic Direction, Action Plan, and Evaluation Framework: This section synthetizes our SWOT/SOAR analysis and economic profile with input and direction received during our public engagement process to define clear goals and associated actions that can be accomplished by regional partners to implement the CEDS. This section also establishes data indicators that will allow West Central Vermont CEDS partners to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS over the long-term.

The West Central Vermont CEDS also contains several appendices. See the Table of Contents for more information.

It is the intent of the West Central Vermont CEDS to facilitate equitable economic development planning, benefitting all businesses and employees, and which focuses on increasing economic opportunity and advancement for historically under-served populations that have been traditionally underrepresented and undervalued in the regional economy. To achieve this aim, the Economic Profile includes information about the differences in wealth and education between white and non-white residents and a specific goal and actions in the Strategic Direction and Action Plan have been written to achieve economic equity.

II. Economic Profile

Introduction

This section summarizes key regional economic data essential to understanding the West Central Vermont Region. This section provides particularly important data points that highlight the economic strengths, weaknesses, and resiliency of the West Central Vermont Region.

The complete Economic Profile for the Region, including information about data methodology and data sources, is in Appendix C. Sub-regional profiles, which summarize basic economic data for each sub-region are in Appendix E. Data sources that are not included in the Economic Profile are cited via footnote.

To ensure standardized data across a variety of topics, county-level data has been obtained for Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington counties. While county lines do not necessarily line up with service areas, they present a standard starting point to compare data. Select data points have only been analyzed at the State level due to availability of data.

Much of the data in this section pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. The CEDS assesses the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Resilience subsection below. The full picture of how the pandemic has changed the demographic and economic landscape of the West Central Vermont Region will take years to fully understand and should be addressed in future West Central Vermont CEDS updates.

Demographics and Workforce

Population

- The West Central Vermont Region total population is 326,065 per the 2020 Census. The Regional population accounts for 50.7% of Vermont's population.

- Population growth in the Chittenden County sub-region was 7.4% between 2010 and 2020. The remainder of the Region generally did not see any substantial population growth between the 2010 Census and 2020 Census. The population in Rutland County decreased by 1,014 people between 2010 and 2020 (-1.6% growth).

Aging

- Each County within the Region, except for Chittenden County (36.5 years), is older than the United States (38.1. years) and Vermont (42.9 years). The highest median age in the region is in Rutland County (46.5 years).

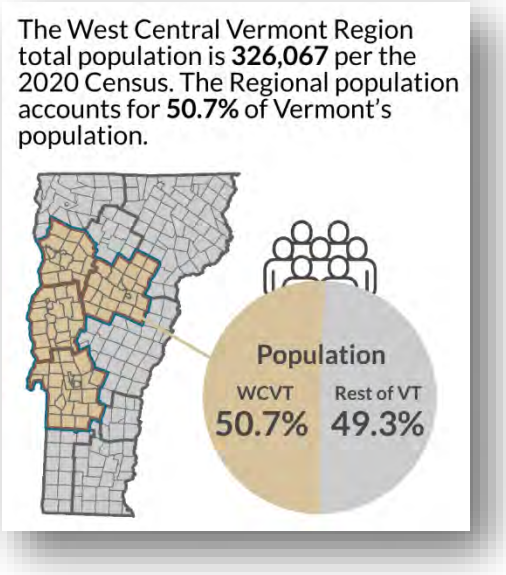


Figure 3 - WCVT Population - Source: US Census

- There has been a 31% increase in the population over age 60, and a 52.9% increase in the population between 70 to 79, within the Region between 2010 to 2019.

Race

- Per the 2020 Census, West Central Vermont's population is 87.4% White alone. This is much higher than the national average (58.4%).

- Racial demographics in the Region changed significantly in the past 10 years. The White alone population within the Region decreased 2.8% from 2010 to 2020. During the same period, the Black and African American (12.8%), Asian (54.4%), Two or More Races (78.3%) and Hispanic (66.7%) populations grew considerably as a percentage of their 2010 population.

- The population of all racial groups, besides White alone, increased by 51% between 2010 and 2020 (21,398 persons in 2010 to 32,251 persons in 2020).

- The Region is home to 68.7% of all Vermonters that identify as Black and African American, 77% of Vermonters that identify as Asian, and 56.1% of Vermonters that identify as Hispanic.

- This increase in racial diversity is distributed throughout all areas within the Region, with the gross changes being most significant in Chittenden County, particularly among people identifying as Asian (4,368 persons in 2010 to 7,203 persons in 2020) and identifying as Two or More Races (4,641 persons in 2010 to 8,392 persons in 2020).

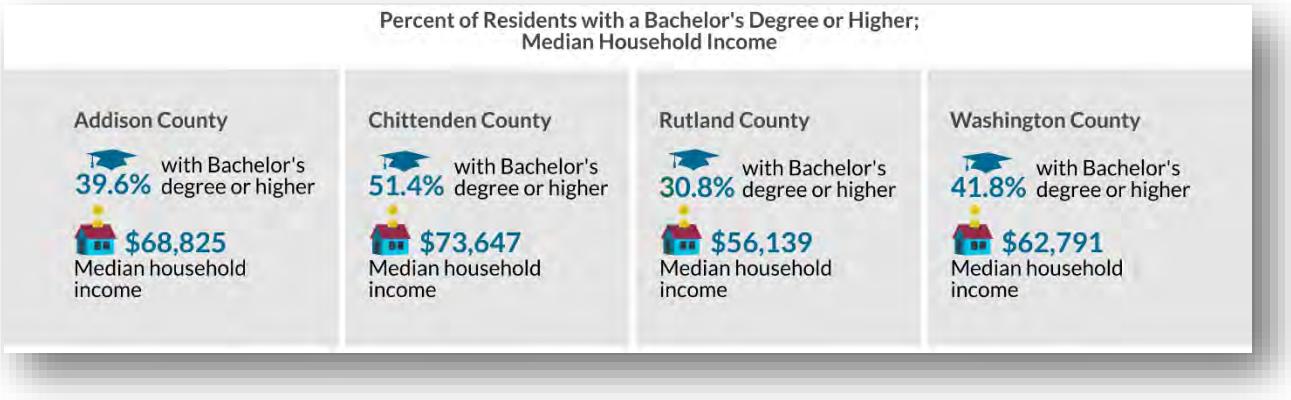


Figure 4 – College Degree and Median Household Income by County – Source: ACS

Education

- The Regional population is highly educated. Rutland County, with the lowest high school graduation rates in the Region at 92.6%, still exceeds the US average of 88%.

- 44% of the Regional population holds a bachelor's or higher degree. Chittenden County has the highest percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher (51.1%) while Rutland County has the lowest percentage within the Region (30.8%).
- Standardized test scores in K-12 education show that "historically marginalized students," such as BIPoC students, students with disabilities, English language learners and students in poverty

in Vermont are not attaining language arts, math, and science proficiency at the same level as non-marginalized students.[3]

Income

- Median household income has been increasing in the US, State and Region since 2010. Annual income in the US, Vermont and Washington County are similar – around $62,000 in 2019. The median household income is higher in Chittenden and Addison Counties at $73,647 and $68,825, respectively. Median household income is lower in Rutland County at $56,139.

- Twenty municipalities within the Region have median household incomes 80% or lower than the State median household income. This includes two municipalities that contain Opportunity Zones: Barre City (62%) and Rutland City (78%). The other municipalities are Poultney (80%), Cabot (74%), and Castleton (71%).

- Conversely, five municipalities in the Region have a median household income that exceed 130% of State median household income. All five of these municipalities are located in rural/suburban Chittenden County. The ten municipalities in the Region with the highest median household incomes are all located in rural/suburban Chittenden (8) and Addison (2) Counties.

Poverty, Homelessness, and Substance Misuse

- The family poverty rate in the Region was 5.9% in 2019. This is lower than the national average of 9.5%. The Region does contain several concentrated areas with high poverty rates that are discussed in the Opportunity Zone sub-section below.

- According to 2014-2019 ACS data, 30% of families in the Region earn a livable or lesser wage and 16.3% of households with children in the Region received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (national average is 18.9%).[4]

- While a small percentage (5.9%) of the Region's families live under the poverty level, a larger percent (29.5%) of families live under 300% of the poverty level (which is roughly estimated by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office to be a livable income).

- The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness conducts an annual point-in-time count of Vermont's homeless population:

    - In January 2021, there were 1,488 homeless persons counted within the Region. The Region accounted for 57% of homeless individuals in Vermont. Chittenden (700 persons), Rutland (344 persons), and Washington (327 persons) counties had the three highest amounts of homeless persons within Vermont. The 2021 count represented an

[3] Vermont Agency of Education, "FACT SHEET: Vermont Agency of Education Releases 2021 Statewide Assessment Results," November 8, 2021, https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-fact-sheet-smarter-balanced-results-2021.pdf.

[4] Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, "Vermont Basic Needs Budgets And Livable Wage," January 15, 2021, https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Subjects/Basic-Needs-Budgets/1defd5222f/2021-Basic-Needs-Budget-and-Livable-Wage-report-FINAL-1-16-2021.pdf.

increase of 135% (856 persons) from the January 2020 count. This dramatic increase is especially distressing because in 2021 the count did not include a count of unsheltered due to COVID-19 (in addition, the "Adverse Weather Conditions" eligibility for emergency motel stays was not a factor in 2021).

- According to the data, a disproportionate amount of people counted in 2021 "identified as Black or African American" at 6.9% or 179 persons compared to Black or African Americans accounting for only 1% of the state population.

- Substance misuse increased in Vermont during the COVID-19 pandemic.[5] The issue remains a challenge many individuals, families and businesses in the Region struggle to overcome.[6] Substance misuse has considerable negative impacts on both personal health and the community at-large. This includes direct economic impacts related to loss of productivity due to turnover and absenteeism, poor school performance, and increased costs related to public assistance and criminal justice.[7]

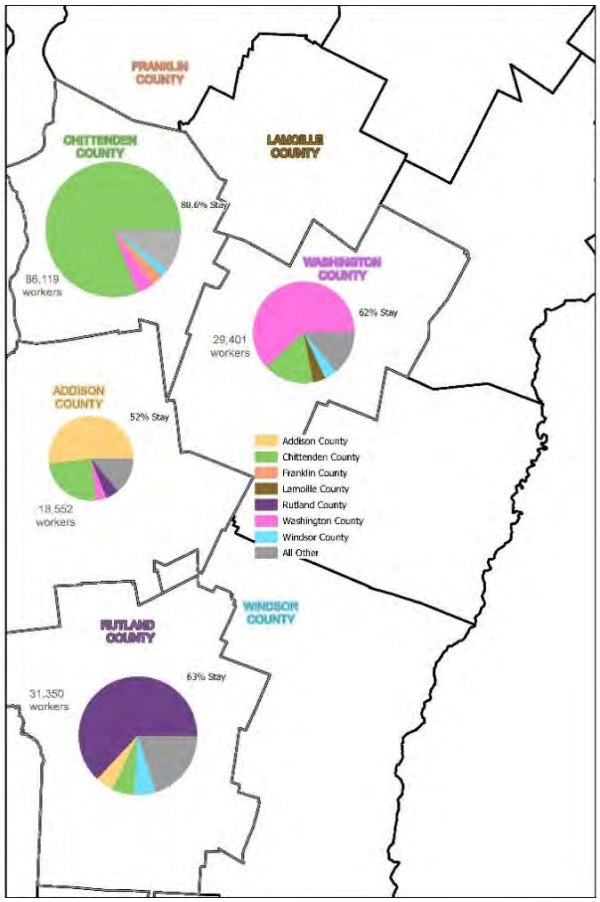


Figure 5 – Regional Commuting Patterns – Source: US Census On the Map Tool – 2019

Disabled Population

- The percentage of persons with disabilities in the Region (13.4%) exceeds the national rate (12.6%) but is lower than the state rate (14.5%).

- The percentage of persons with disabilities grew in each sub-region by over 1% between 2015 and 2019. This increase may be linked to the Region's aging population.

[5] Peachin, Nora. "Vermont Substance Use Drug Overdoses Increased During Pandemic," Burlington Free Press, July 23, 2021, https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2021/07/23/vermont-substance-use-drug-overdoses-increased-during-pandemic/8067326002/.
[6] Vermont Department of Health. "ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE PROGRAMS DATA AND REPORTS," September 15, 2022, https://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/reports/data-and-reports.
[7] Recovery Centers of America. "Economic cost of substance abuse disorder in the United States, 2019," September 15, 2022, https://recoverycentersofamerica.com/resource/economic-cost-of-substance-abuse-disorder-in-united-states-2019/.

Commuting Patterns

Figure 5 displays Regional commuting patterns. Over one-third of workers in Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties commute to another county for work. While this does display the interconnectedness of the Region it also means higher living expenses given the high price of gasoline, increased amount of time spent commuting to work, decreased air quality, and increased amount of time spent idle which contributes to higher incidences of obesity and chronic disease.

Regional and Sub-regional Economy

Gross Domestic Product

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is "a comprehensive measure of US economic activity. GDP measures the value of the final goods and services produced in the United States (without double counting the intermediate goods and services used up to produce them)." [8]

- The Region accounts for 59% of the State's GDP according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. Chittenden County produces the most GDP of the four counties in the Region and accounts for 35% of the state's GDP.

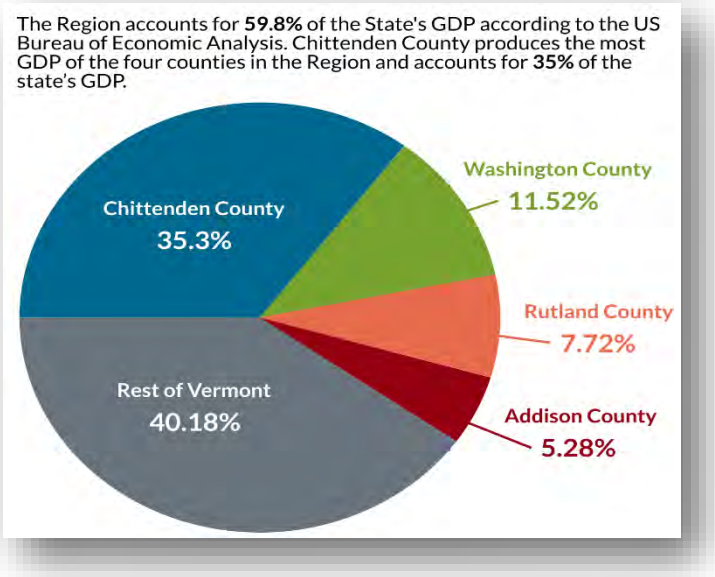


Figure 6 - Vermont GDP - Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Employment by Supersector

- Education and Health Services incorporates the greatest number of jobs in the Region as divided by NAICS Code supersector (50,165 jobs). The same is true for each individual sub-region. The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities supersector ranks second regionally (32,872 jobs) and in each sub-region. These two supersectors account for 46.6% of all regional jobs.

- Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, and Leisure and Hospitality supersectors are mixed to fill in the next top sectors in all sub-regions.

- The Public Administration supersector, which includes a substantial number of governmental jobs, ranks 3rd in Washington County.

[8] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Gross Domestic Product," May 18, 2022, https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gross-domestic-product.

- The Construction supersector ranks as the 5th highest supersector in Addison County.

- The data shows a relatively small number of total jobs in the Natural Resources and Mining Supersector (1653 jobs or 0.9% of regional jobs). This supersector accounts for jobs in agriculture, forestry, and quarrying. Jobs in these industries are notoriously hard to track and capture within State and Federal employment datasets. It is likely that the number of jobs in this supersector is higher than reported in the data set released by the Vermont Department of Labor. These jobs also remain essential to regional identity given the historical importance to the regional economies and impact on the maintenance of the working landscape.

Figure 7 – Largest Regional Economic Supersectors – Source: ACS

- These categories include both private and public sector data covered employment. Government jobs are not separated into their own supersector category, yet account for 16.9% of all jobs in the Region across all supersectors. This percentage is higher in Washington County (22.8% of all jobs), the seat of the state capitol and multiple state agencies, than in other sub-regions.

- Jobs at non-profit organizations are also not separated into their own supersector category. Common Good Vermont, a statewide organization that provides education and support to non-profits, estimates that 1 in 7 jobs (14%) in Vermont is at a non-profit organization.

- Jobs in the creative economy (arts, culture, media, design, artisan crafts and food) also do not fully align with a NAICS supersector. Research by the Vermont Creative Network indicates that as of 2018 a total of 9.3% of all jobs in Vermont are in the creative economy. As of 2018, 9.7% of jobs in Chittenden County and 8.4% of jobs in Addison and Rutland Counties were in the creative

economy (Washington County specific data is unavailable). Jobs in the creative economy in Addison and Rutland Counties grew by 11% between 2010 and 2018 with most growth in the Artisan Foods (47% increase) and Performing Arts (24% increase) segments of the creative economy.[9]

Changes in Employment by Supersector

Employment by supersector since 2000 has changed considerably within the Region:

- The Education and Health Services supersector grew by 27.6% (10,838 jobs) between 2000 and 2019.

- Similar gains in Professional and Business services supersector (38% or 5,620 jobs) and Leisure and Hospitality supersectors (21.5% growth or 3,555 jobs) have also been considerable since 2000.

Example Occupations per Select Supersector

Education and Health Services: Hospitals, social assistance, K-12 education, and higher education

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities: Wholesales, retail, airports, trucking, and postal service

Leisure and Hospitality: Performing arts, museums, recreation, accommodations, and restaurants

Natural Resources and Mining: agriculture, forestry, supporting activities for agriculture and forestry, and quarries

Construction: Trades and civil/structural engineering

Figure 8 – Examples of Occupations per NAICS Code Supersectors

- Conversely, job losses have been considerable in two supersectors since 2000: Manufacturing and Information. Since 2000, the regional Manufacturing supersector has lost 10,204 jobs (-37.6% growth) and Information has lost 1,103 jobs (-27.3% growth). The Information supersector includes jobs in publishing, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data processing.

- The Financial Activities supersector has also lost jobs since 2000 (851 jobs, -9.7% growth).

Annual employment data for 2021 was released by the Vermont Department of Labor in May 2022. To better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, annual employment data from 2019 and 2021 were compared. This comparison highlights a few notable trends:

- Total employment in Addison County has rebounded better than other parts of the Region. Annually, employment is still down 4%, but 4th quarter employment in 2021 equaled 4th quarter employment in 2019.

- Chittenden County total employment is trending positively too. Annual average employment is still down 4%. However, total employment in 4th quarter of 2021 was only down 2% from 2019.

[9] Vermont Arts Council. "Assessing Vermont's Creative Economy." December 2019. https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/uploads/media/documents/Assessing%20Vermont's%20Creative%20Economy%202019.pdf.

- Rutland and Washington Counties are still struggling to get back to pre-COVID-19 employment levels. Annual average employment is still down 8% in Rutland County and 6% in Washington County. More concerning is that month-to-month total employment did not improve in either county between May 2021 and December 2021.

- Annual average employment in Leisure and Hospitality supersector within the Region decreased by 23% between 2019 and 2021. However, it is encouraging that month-by-month data showed this decreased employment steadily improving between January (-38%) and December (-16%).

- Regionally, annual average employment in the Manufacturing supersector also decreased by 7% and the Retail sector (part of Trade, Transportation and Utilities Supersector) by 6%. The decrease in employment in these sectors did not improve over the course of year.

- The Natural Resources and Mining supersector (2%) and the Professional and Business Services supersector (3%) both had average annual employment grow between 2019 and 2021.

More detailed information about supersector level employment information is available in the full Regional Economic Profile in Appendix E.

Location Quotient

Employment can be further broken down from the supersector level (2-digit NAICS Code) into more refined data about specific industries (4-digit NAICS code). This 4-digit NAICS code data is particularly useful when it is organized by Location Quotient (LQ).

Table 1 is a list of the top 25 industries, with 100 or more workers, in the West Central Vermont Region organized by LQ compared to the national average. The Region has remarkably high LQ scores for several categories of specialty manufacturing and several working lands-related industries. The Region should continue to capitalize on the strengths of existing industry clusters and pursue any competitive advantage the Region may have within these specific industries.

Location Quotients

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, location quotients "are ratios that allow an area's distribution of employment by industry, ownership, and size class" to be compared to another area. An LQ equal to 1 means that the local industry "has the same share of its employment as it does in the nation." A LQ greater than 1 means that an industry has "a greater share of local area employment than is the case nationwide." The opposite is true for an industry with a LQ less than 1.

Figure 9 - Location Quotients

Table 1 – 4 Digit NAICS Industries with Top 25 Location Quotients – Source: UVM Office of Engagement, via Chmura's JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight, 2022.

NAICS	Industry	Workers	Avg Ann Wages	LQ
3151	Apparel Knitting Mills	252	$27,381	24.59
3159	Apparel Accessories and Other Apparel Manufacturing	122	$34,937	7.58
3279	Other Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	632	$61,748	6.53
3351	Electric Lighting Equipment Manufacturing	300	$51,888	5.86
3344	Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing	2,545	$120,674	5.63
3256	Soap, Cleaning Compound, and Toilet Preparation Manufacturing	659	$54,465	4.49
3115	Dairy Product Manufacturing	765	$57,402	4.02
2123	Nonmetallic Mineral Mining and Quarrying	444	$64,247	3.72
1121	Cattle Ranching and Farming	724	$39,227	3.66
3332	Industrial Machinery Manufacturing	534	$90,241	3.64
4248	Beer, Wine, and Alcoholic Beverage Wholesalers (not manufacturing)	703	$57,808	2.88
6114	Business Schools and Computer and Management Training	326	$54,002	2.62
8133	Social Advocacy Organizations	746	$54,049	2.55
3345	Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing	1,303	$94,863	2.54
6113	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	9,119	$60,841	2.52
9251	Administration of Housing Programs, Urban Planning, and Community Development	301	$54,461	2.48
1133	Logging	189	$34,576	2.33
7212	RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Recreational Camps	195	$47,758	2.32
3119	Other Food Manufacturing	683	$40,543	2.29
3364	Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing	1,325	$73,973	2.22
3118	Bakeries and Tortilla Manufacturing	862	$37,049	2.22
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	2,884	$48,325	2.21
3113	Sugar and Confectionery Product Manufacturing	210	$32,191	2.20
4884	Support Activities for Road Transportation	368	$56,310	2.16
5611	Office Administrative Services	1,632	$85,852	2.05

Unemployment Rate

Up-to-date unemployment rate are not included in the Economic Profile. Unemployment rates as of July 2022 are exceptionally low within the Region:

- Addison County: 1.7%
- Chittenden County: 1.7%
- Rutland County: 2.8%

- Washington County: 1.9%

The unemployment rate only considers individuals "unemployed" if they are not actively seeking work within the labor market. A low unemployment rate is not necessarily a positive circumstance in the Region given the current labor force shortage in Vermont.

Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate is the number of people in the labor force, as a percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population, that is either working or actively looking for work. Labor force participation rate is not available on a County-level and therefore is not included in the Economic Profile. However, statewide data is available from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and is likely representative of labor force participation rate within the Region.

- Vermont's labor force participation rate since the beginning of the pandemic has been at its lowest point since the late 1970s.

- The labor force participation rate in April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, was 68.1%. Since that time, the labor force participation rate has steadily declined. In February 2022, the labor force participation rate in Vermont was 60.9%. The reason for this declining rate is discussed more in the Resiliency subsection.[10]

Wages

Wages vary considerably by employment sector within the Region. According to the US Census Bureau, the highest paying sectors in 2019 within the Region include Utilities; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Finance and Insurance; and Wholesale Trade (with average monthly earnings over $6,000 in most counties). All wage information is gross wages.

- Average monthly earnings in the Region have been trending positively in all sectors since 2001 (Table 2).

- Wages have grown more in some sectors (Professional Services, Real Estate, Finance) than other sectors (Information, Retail Trade, and Construction).

- Manufacturing monthly earnings have not increased at a rate comparable to other sectors. In 2000, Manufacturing was the 2nd highest paying sector. By 2019 it was the 5th highest paying sector in the Region.

- In 2019, average monthly wages (all sectors combined) were highest in Chittenden County ($4,771), followed by Washington County ($4,370), Rutland County ($3,997) and Addison County ($3,971).

[10] US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject," May 17, 2022, https://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet.

Table 2 – Full Employment; Average Monthly Earning by NAICS Sector – Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, US Census Bureau, 2019 – 4th Quarter

	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Orange County	Rutland County	Washington County
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	$3,177	$3,491	$3,741	$3,275	$2,664	$2,244
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	$5,382	$4,355	$5,587	$5,263	$5,521	$5,215
Utilities	$8,637	$7,584	$9,600	-	$9,229	$7,249
Construction	$4,881	$4,256	$5,589	$5,905	$4,580	$4,512
Manufacturing	$5,062	$5,595	$5,720	$3,517	$5,636	$4,693
Wholesale Trade	$5,768	$5,491	$6,312	$4,594	$5,582	$5,032
Retail Trade	$2,957	$2,869	$3,080	$2,335	$2,888	$2,885
Transportation and Warehousing	$3,920	$3,660	$3,957	$3,366	$3,513	$4,667
Information	$5,001	$3,513	$5,357	$3,462	$4,029	$4,247
Finance and Insurance	$6,882	$6,447	$8,117	$4,964	$5,254	$6,476
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$4,108	$3,192	$4,876	$3,309	$3,407	$3,572
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	$7,858	$5,991	$8,562	$6,925	$6,659	$7,375
Management of Companies and Enterprises	$6,310	$11,306	$7,831	$6,373	$5,144	$4,916
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	$3,571	$4,953	$3,772	$3,340	$3,244	$3,370
Educational Services	$3,918	$4,699	$3,940	$3,959	$2,859	$3,794
Health Care and Social Assistance	$4,255	$3,775	$4,939	$3,734	$5,015	$4,226
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	$2,208	$2,101	$2,305	$1,359	$1,666	$2,028
Accommodation and Food Services	$2,113	$2,104	$2,099	$2,376	$2,094	$1,843
Other Services (except Public Administration)	$3,261	$3,118	$3,434	$3,117	$2,723	$4,010

- According to data released by VT Department of Labor in May 2022, average annual wages within the Region increased by 11% between 2019 and 2021. Most notable average annual wage increases occurred within:

    - Leisure and Hospitality (19%)
    - Trade, Transportation and Utilities (17%)
    - Local Government (12%)
    - Construction (10%)

- The lowest average annual wage increases between 2019 and 2021 were in Manufacturing (4%) and Education and Health Services (6%).

- A gender gap in wages exists nationally, statewide, and regionally. Figure 11 shows the percentage gap between average wages for men and average wages for women.

- Washington County is closest to closing the gender wage gap within the Region with women making 8% less than men. All parts of the Region have begun to close the wage gap since 2000, yet a gender wage gap of over 20% still exists for all parts of Region outside Washington County. It is unclear why the gender wage gap is significantly smaller in Washington County compared to the rest of the Region.

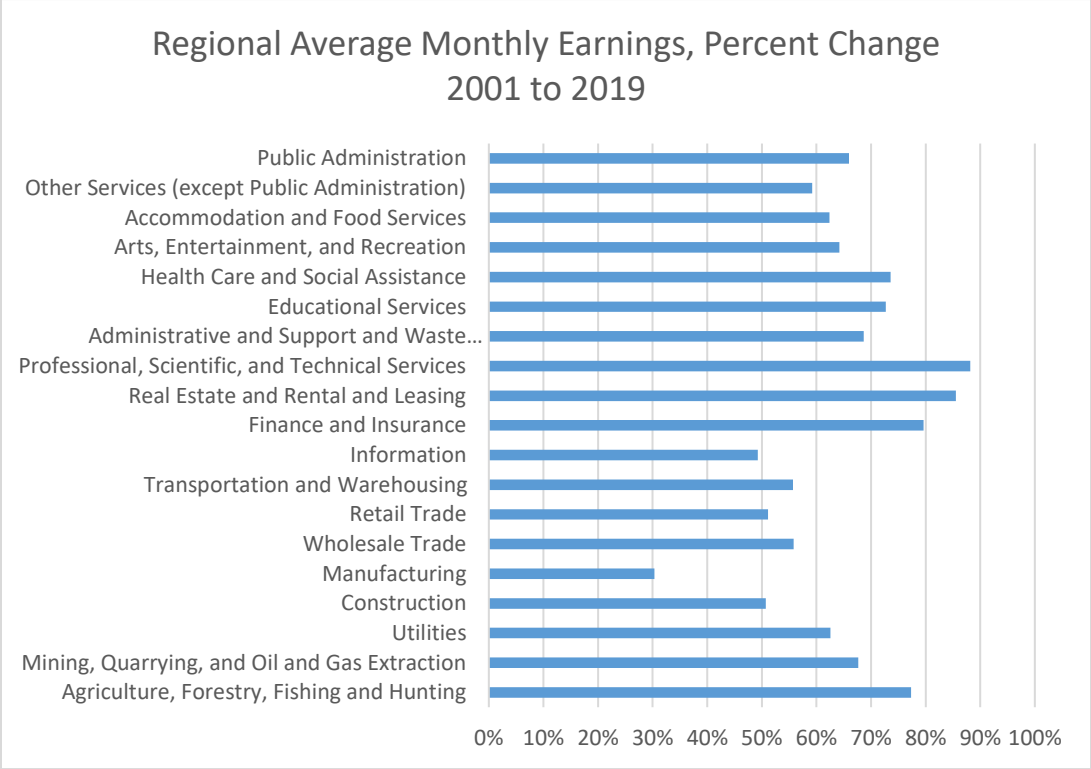


Figure 10 – Regional Monthly Earning by NAICS Sector, Percent Change 2001 to 2019 – Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, US Census Bureau

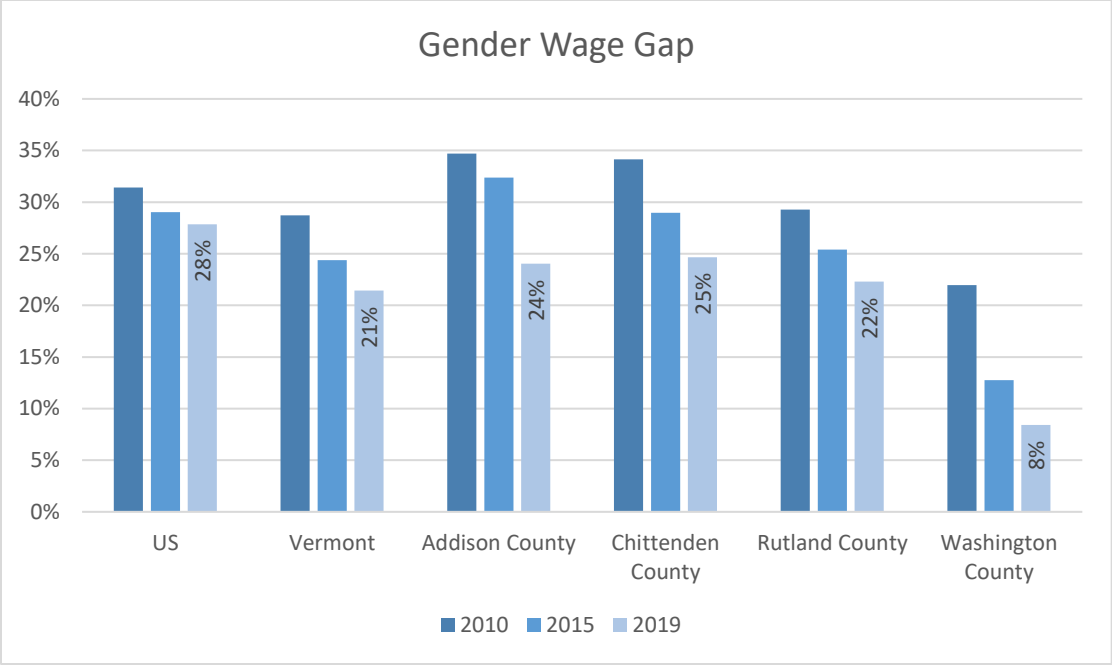


Figure 11 – Gender Wage Gap – Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S2001

- Income and wages also vary considerably based on race both regionally and nationally. Figure 12 shows per capita mean income based on race per the 2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

- Regionally, all non-White alone racial groups identified by the US Census have a considerably lower per capita mean income than individuals that identify as "white."[11] Per capita mean income for black or African Americans individuals ($17,134) in the Region is only 45% of that of white individuals ($37,708). This exceeds the income disparity between these two groups nationally (Figure 12).

- Nationally, per capita mean income for Asian individuals is comparable to white individuals, yet regionally a gap of 22% exists.

[11] Note: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander is an exception – but there are under 200 individuals in the Region that identify in this category and the data margin of error is exceptionally large.

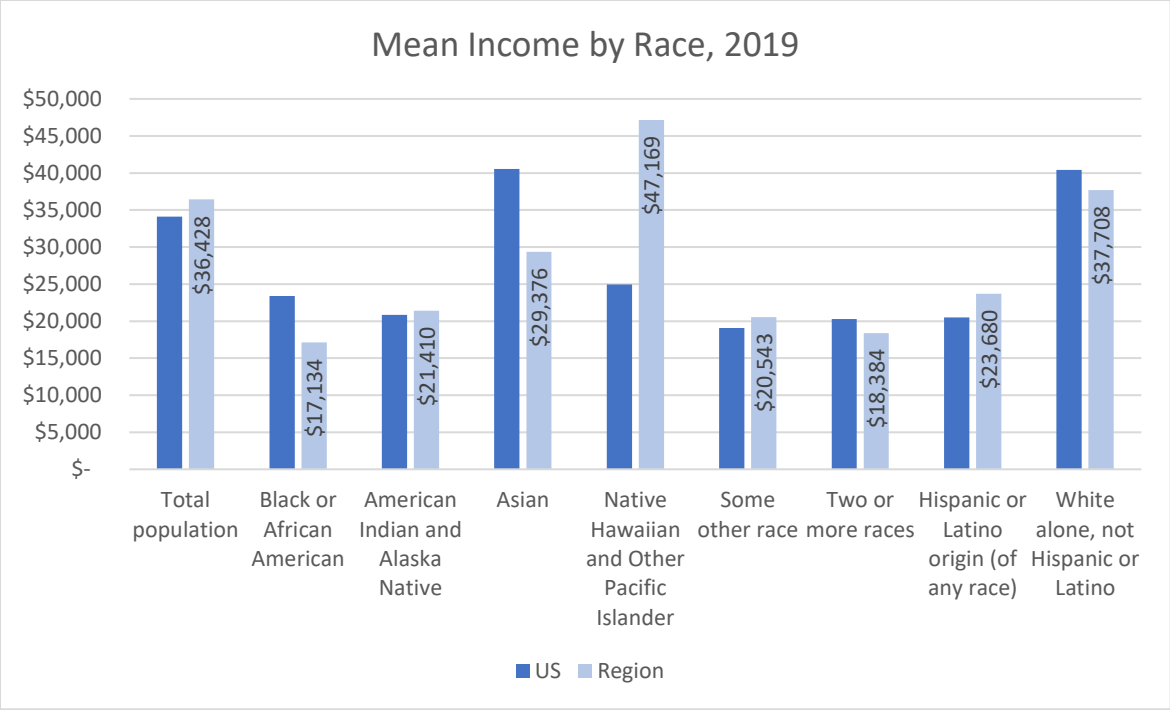


Figure 12 – Per Capita Mean Income by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin (in dollars), 2019 – Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1902

Exports

Data for Exports is only available at the State level from the US Census of Foreign Trade. No Regional data exists. Vermont's top five exports in 2019 can be seen in Table 3 and represent a total value of $1,932,720,000.

Table 3 – Vermont Top US Exports (Origin of Movement) – Source: US Census of Foreign Trade

Export	2019 Value (millions of dollars)	2019 Percentage Share	Percent Change, 2018 – 2019
Processors And Controllers, Electronic Integrated	$940.11	31.12%	-14.27%
Electronic Integrated Circuits, Nesoi	$754.69	24.98%	40.30%
Articles And Equipment For General Physical Exercise	$87.04	2.88%	10.16%
Civilian Aircraft, Engines, And Parts	$78.1	2.59%	36.24%
Amplifiers, Electronic Integrated Circuits	$72.78	2.41%	18.56%

Electronically integrated processors/controllers and Electronic Integrated Circuits make up 56.1% of all the State's exports. It is assumed that Global Foundries in Essex accounts for the majority of the processors, controllers, and electronic integrated circuits that are exported.

Canada is the largest market for Vermont exports ($826 million in 2021). Vermont sells more goods to Canada than its next three largest foreign markets combined (Taiwan, China, and South Korea)

according to Canada's Trade Commissioner Service.[12] Expanding exports to Canada is a key strategy to support continued economic development of the Region.

Tax Receipts

- According to the VT Department of Taxes, in 2020 the Region contributed 38% of the total State sales and use tax receipts. This includes "other" sales – likely online sales – which also accounts for 38% of sales and use tax revenue in the State. If online sales are excluded, the Region accounts for 60% of the State's sales and use tax receipts.

- Chittenden County alone accounts for 36% of the State's sales and use tax receipts excluding online sales. Rutland County (11%) is the only other County in the State that accounts for more than 10% of sales and use tax receipts.

- Between 2010 and 2020, sales tax receipts in Rutland County declined by 1.5%. Gross sales tax receipts grew by over 20% in both Addison (26%) and Chittenden (22%) Counties over the same period.

- The Region generated 54% of the State's meal tax receipts, 23% of room tax receipts, and 50% of alcohol tax receipts in 2020.

- The difference in room tax receipts is particularly notable. This data includes "other" sales – likely Airbnb, VRBOs, and other non-traditional accommodations – which also accounts for 58% of rooms tax revenue in the State in 2020. If "other" sales are excluded, the Region accounts for 40% of the State's rooms tax receipts.

Opportunity Zones

Each county in the Region is home to at least one Opportunity Zone:

- Addison County: Vergennes
- Chittenden County: Burlington, South Burlington, and Winooski
- Rutland County: Rutland City
- Washington County: Barre City

Each municipality with an Opportunity Zone is a center of regional employment and contains infrastructure that enables future economic growth (e.g., water, sewer, broadband). To date, no investors have invested in any Opportunity Zone projects located within the Region.

Infrastructure

Transportation

- The Region contains 30% of Vermont's State Highways, which facilitate commercial travel and tourism. Interstate 89 serves both Chittenden County and Washington County. Interstate 89 connects the Region to Quebec, Canada, and to Boston via New Hampshire. Three US Highways, US Route 2, US Route 4, and US Route 7, connect the Region. US Route 2 is an east-west route

[12] Government of Canada – Trade Commissioner. "State trade fact sheets – Vermont," August, 18, 2022, https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/united-states-of-america-etats-unis-amerique/vermont.aspx?lang=eng.

connecting Chittenden and Washington to New Hampshire and New York. US Route 4 is also an east-west route connecting New Hampshire and New York through Rutland County. US Route 7 runs the length of Vermont between Massachusetts and Quebec connecting Rutland, Addison, and Chittenden Counties.

- The Region is home to 186 publicly accessible EV charging stations (Level 2 and DC Fast Chargers).

Figure 13 – Amtrak Station in Vergennes – Source: Clover Ridge Media

- Three public transit authorities primarily service the Region: Green Mountain Transit (Central Vermont and Chittenden), Tri-Valley Transit (Addison), and Marble Valley Regional Transit District (Rutland). Level of service varies considerably by municipality. The Region's larger municipalities are connected via commuter bus services. All public transit authorities in the Region have experienced reduced ridership and revenue loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Several rail lines traverse the Region. Rutland County is well connected directly to New York State and points south via several rail lines (Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad, Green Mountain Railroad, and the Vermont Railway). Vermont Railway connects Rutland, Addison, and Chittenden Counties. The New England Central Railroad Inc. serves Washington County and Chittenden County and connects the Region directly to Quebec, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The Washington County Railroad connects the cities of Montpelier and Barre.

- Amtrak provides passenger service connecting Rutland to New York City via the Ethan Allen Express route. In July 2022, the Ethan Allen Express was extended to provide service to Middlebury, Vergennes, and Burlington. The extension marks the first time in over 50 years that Burlington and Rutland are connected via passenger rail. The Amtrak Vermonter line also connects the Region to New York City with stops in Montpelier, Waterbury, and Essex.

- The Region has two airports that provide passenger and freight service: Burlington International Airport and Rutland-Southern Vermont Regional Airport. There are two other State airports located in the Region located in Berlin and Middlebury. Private airstrips also exist in Cornwall, Ferrisburgh, Shelburne, and Vergennes.

- Three ferry crossings across Lake Champlain connect the Region to New York State in Burlington, Charlotte, and Shoreham.

Housing

Housing prices have skyrocketed during the pandemic due to a multitude of factors that have increased demand (e.g., low interest rates, low housing supply, decreasing household size, increased in-migration).

- Per 2021 data from the VT Department of Taxes, the median value of a owner-occupied home in Rutland County ($200,000) is considerably more affordable than the median value of an owner-occupied home in Addison ($290,000), Chittenden ($385,000), and Washington ($260,000) counties. The values in Addison and Chittenden Counties exceed the State ($270,000) median values for an owner-occupied home.

- Sale prices have gone up considerably across the Region. Between 2017 and 2021, median sale prices for a home have increased by:
    - Vermont – 28.6%
    - Addison County – 21.6%
    - Chittenden County – 32%
    - Rutland County – 33.3%
    - Washington County – 34%

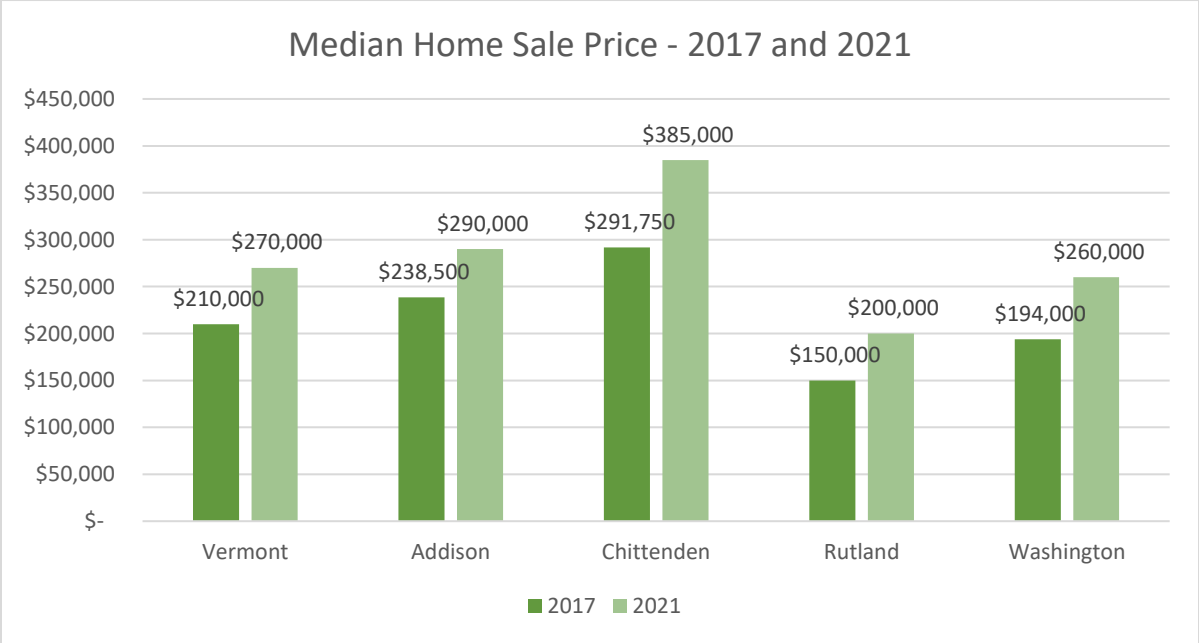


Figure 14 – Median Home Sale Price – Source: VT Department of Taxes

- In general, Vermont has a much older housing stock than the United States. The West Central Vermont Region is no exception. Nearly 30% of homes in the Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties were built prior to 1939. The age of housing stock in Chittenden County is most comparable to that of the national housing stock.

- The pace of residential development was higher between 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in Vermont and the Region but has slowed over the past two decades (which has resulted in a shortage of housing supply):

Table 4 - Age of Housing Stock - Source: ACS

Age of Housing Stock									
	1939 or earlier	1940 - 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1969	1970 - 1979	1980 - 1989	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - 2019
Vermont	26%	3%	6%	8%	16%	16%	11%	11%	4%
Addison County	27%	2%	5%	8%	14%	14%	13%	13%	5%
Chittenden County	18%	3%	7%	9%	15%	17%	12%	13%	6%
Rutland County	31%	4%	5%	10%	17%	18%	8%	6%	2%
Washington County	30%	3%	5%	10%	18%	13%	9%	10%	3%

- Older homes tend to be less energy efficient and more expensive to heat and cool during the year. State energy policy in Vermont has set ambitious home weatherization goals (90,000 homes by 2030) yet has struggled to develop a workforce large enough to realistically meet this target. The Energy Action Network estimates that 5,000 additional workers will be needed statewide by the mid-2020's to achieve the state weatherization targets.

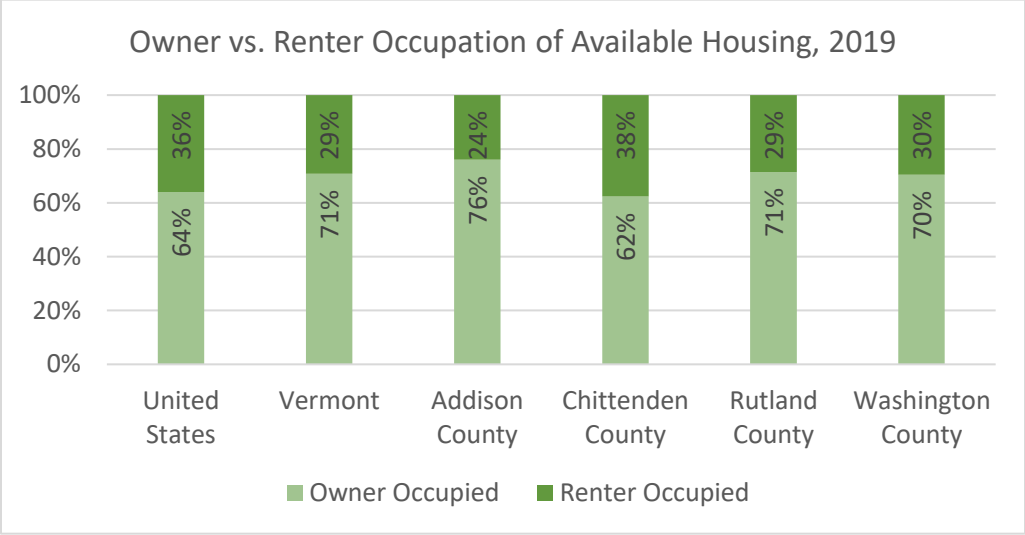


Figure 15 – Occupancy Status – Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019

- Home ownership is a crucial tool in creating generational wealth through equity. By percentage, Vermont households tend to own homes at higher rates (71%) than the national average (64%).

- Addison (76%), Rutland (71%), and Washington (70%) Counties all have high homeownership rates. The exception within the Region is Chittenden County (62%) which more closely resembles the national rate.

- Homeownership rates among BIPoC residents within the Region is considerably lower than white residents. ACS data for BIPoC homeownership has a high margin of error for most of the Region. ACS data is most dependable in Chittenden County due to larger sample size. Per 2019 ACS data, only 17% of Black/African American households and 47% of Asian households in Chittenden County own their own home.

- Housing expenditures that exceed 30 percent of household income have historically been viewed as unaffordable. Per 2019 ACS data, both owners and renters are slightly more cost-burdened in the Region compared to State and national averages. A quarter of all homeowners in the Region (25%) are cost burdened. Rates of cost burdened households is even higher for renters (52%) in the Region. Rental cost burdened household impact Rutland (50%) and Chittenden (55%) Counties most acutely.

Broadband and Telecommunications

High-speed internet is critical to the operation of all businesses, especially home-based businesses, and is critical to the expansion of remote work, tele-education, and tele-medicine. Increasing access to broadband is essential to making the Region competitive in the modern economy. Per the Vermont Department of Public Service:

- 15% of West Central Vermont buildings do not have access to high-speed internet. In Addison County municipalities, this rate is higher (38%).

- The fastest internet speeds in the Region are found in Chittenden and Rutland Counties. Approximately 22% of Rutland County and 26% of Chittenden County structures have access to fiber-optic internet speeds. Overall, Vermont ranks 48th in the nation for broadband access according to Speedtest.net.

- Mobile phone coverage remains a challenge within some parts of the Region. The Vermont Department of Public Service is conducting mobile wireless drive tests during the summer of 2022 to determine “dead spots” along major State roads. The work will inform future legislative action on the topic.

Municipal Water and Wastewater Treatment

Wastewater treatment capacity and distribution systems are essential to support infill development, to lower the cost of entry to open small businesses, and to support most types of industrial users.

- West Central Vermont contains 62% of the wastewater treatment capacity in Vermont with Chittenden County accounting for half of this capacity.

- The Region has several wastewater systems that are nearing capacity, require separation from stormwater systems, or have issues with compliance with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Phosphorus set for Lake Champlain, and may require investment in the near future (e.g. Essex Junction, Bolton Valley Resort, Rutland City, Plainfield, Vergennes, Bristol, Waitsfield). The Region also has several existing village centers that are unable to support substantial economic activity, or housing, due to the lack of a wastewater treatment system (e.g., Huntington, Westford, Belmont, Killington, Berlin).

- Similar concerns about system capacity also exist for municipal water systems within the Region (e.g., Rutland Town, West Pawlet, Airport Business Park in Clarendon, Hinesburg). Other water systems have sections of their systems that have reached the end of their useful life and require replacement (e.g., Middlebury, Bristol).

Investment in water and wastewater systems, in areas planned for growth as designated by Regional Plans and Municipal Plans, is a CEDS priority.

Electricity

The Region's electricity system is composed of generation, transmission, and distribution. Regional electricity generation has increased substantially in the recent decade due to the growth in renewable electricity generation (e.g., solar, wind), predominately by private merchant utilities. This growth in renewable electricity generation has been driven by a series of State policies requiring distribution utilities to transition to renewable electricity sources. The increase in regional generation has added local jobs related to electricity production and construction, and increased electricity security within the Region, yet this has created challenges on the regional electric grid:

- The Vermont Electricity Power Company (VELCO) is Vermont's electricity transmission utility. VELCO's 2021 Long-range Transmission Plan notes that the regional transmission system serving West Central Vermont adequately serves current needs, yet may require substantial upgrades in future years, particularly in Chittenden and Rutland Counties, as the more local electricity generation occurs.

- Several of the principal electricity distribution utilities serving the Region, including Burlington Electric, Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Coop, and Vermont Electric Coop, all have areas with significant system constraints where future system upgrades may be needed. Areas of Addison County and Rutland County are the most acutely impacted. Future transmission and distribution upgrades will likely be paid for by ratepayers.

Electricity prices are impossible to break down on a regional level due to distribution utility service territory and can only be analyzed on a Statewide level:

- Statewide average electric prices in Vermont are high ($0.1695 per kWh) compared to the national average ($0.1134 per kWh) according to the US Energy Information administration (EIA).[13]

[13] US Energy Information Administration, "FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS), May 16, 2022, https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=507&t=3.

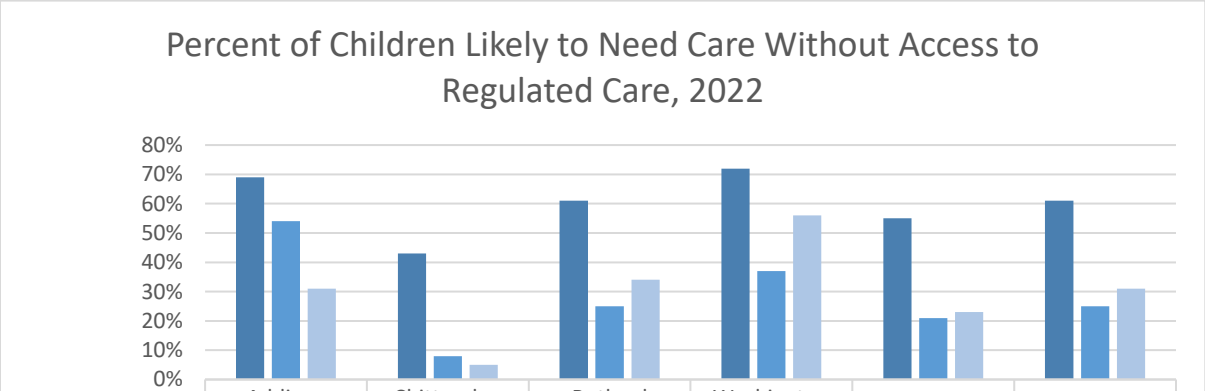
- Within New England ($0.1998 per kWh), Vermont's electricity prices compare more favorably. Vermont has the second lowest average kWh per hour electric prices out of the six New England states. Electricity prices that are relatively high compared to the national average is an obstacle to economic development, particularly for electricity intensive industries.

Childcare

Early childhood education is a key determinant of future economic earning potential as well as general health and well-being. Childcare is a critical service for supporting the Region's workforce. Let's Grow Kids, a Statewide child-advocacy group, estimated in 2022 that:

- 55% of infants, 21% of toddlers, and 23% of preschoolers in the Region do not have access to regulated childcare. These percentages are higher in Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties where there is less availability of child care than Chittenden County.

It is assumed that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated the lack of childcare access in the Region, especially in more rural areas, since the release of the Let's Grow Kids report. The challenges facing the child care industry are discussed in greater detail under the Resilience subheading below.



	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County	Region	Vermont
Infants	69%	43%	61%	72%	55%	61%
Toddlers	54%	8%	25%	37%	21%	25%
Preschoolers	31%	5%	34%	56%	23%	31%

Figure 16 – Percent of Children Likely to Need Care Without Access to Regulated Care – Source: Let's Grow Kids Stalled at the Start Report, 2022

Working Lands and Outdoor Recreation

Most traditional economic development occurs in areas planned for growth: places that are actively planned for development due to their access to infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, natural gas, highways, public transit, etc.), labor, and proximity to our traditional centers of development (e.g. downtowns, village centers). Working lands, the areas outside of our areas planned for growth that are dedicated to agriculture, forestry, and recreation, also remain important to the economy and the identity of West Central Vermont. These two ways that our land is utilized must be well managed, and balanced, to ensure continued protection of landscape that contributes so significantly to our high quality of life.

- Addison County is considered the top agricultural county in the State by some measures. Approximately 36% of the land in Addison County is used for agriculture. This far exceeds the other counties within the Region, which all have less than 20% of their land dedicated to agriculture.

- The number of farm operations in Addison (-12%) and Rutland Counties (-4%) declined between 2012 and 2017 according to the US Agricultural Census. Across the Region, the percentage of acres used for agriculture is also declining.

- Per the US Agricultural Census, between 2012 and 2017, 18% of land in farms in Addison County, 13% of land in farms in Chittenden County, was converted to another use or was no longer in production. This is significantly faster than Vermont (-5%) and National (-2%). Rutland and Washington Counties also lost farmland during this period. It is unclear whether this lost farmland has been developed or is currently vacant.

The State of Vermont operates the Use Value Appraisal, or Current Use, program which allows landowners with large forested or agricultural parcels to access reduced property tax rates in exchange for keeping their land "in use." A considerable amount of land in the Region is enrolled in the Current Use program:

- In Washington County, 43% of land is enrolled in Current Use (38% for forestry and 5% for agriculture). Enrollment in Current Use is even higher in Addison County at 47% of land (27% for agriculture and 20% for forestry). Enrollment in the Current Use program in Chittenden (31%) and Rutland Counties (33%) is below the Statewide percentage (45%).

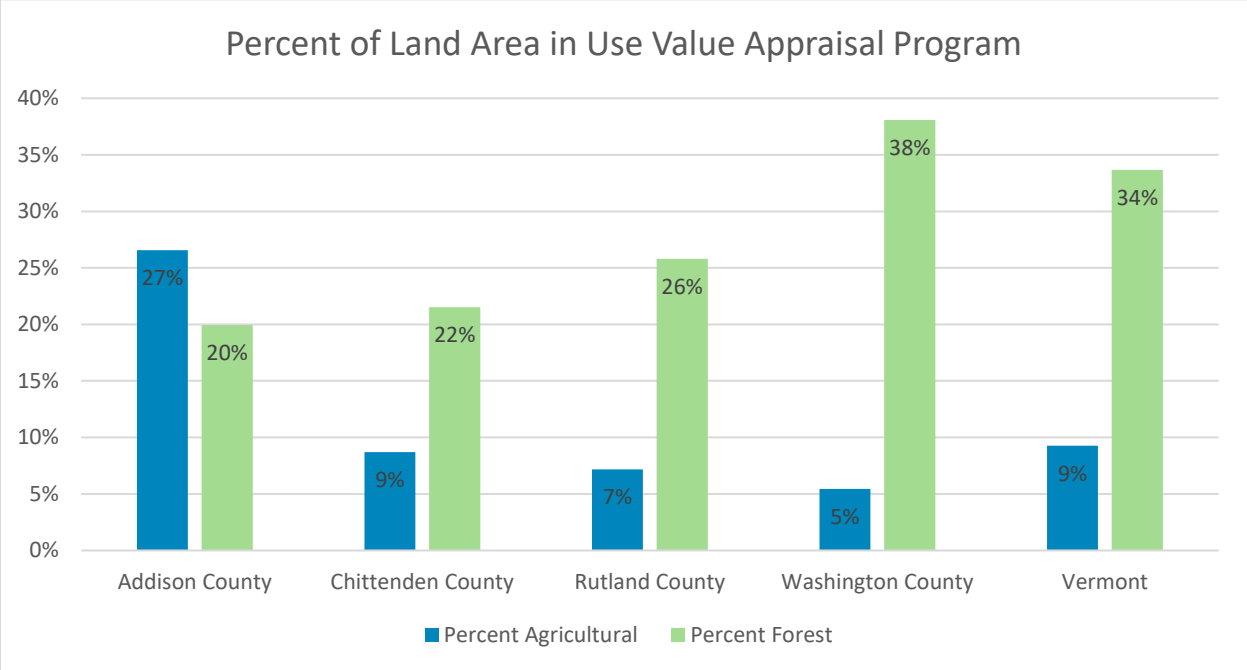


Figure 17 – Percent of Total Land in Current Use – Source: Vermont Property Valuation & Review, 2020

A substantial amount of agricultural and forestry-related planning in Vermont and the Region is conducted by partners within the Vermont Farm to Plate network. The Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021-2030 (the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan), administered by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, is an in-depth document that provides specific guidance about achieving agriculture-related economic development goals in Vermont. The plan even has specific sections ("issue briefs") for agricultural products, agricultural markets, and agriculture-related public policy. The Region should consult this plan when conducting any implementation related to agriculture and working lands.

Annual wood harvest reports are available by sub-region from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). These reports indicated that:

- Chittenden County has the greatest amount of wood harvesting used for heating fuel in the State.
- The Region is of minimal importance for saw logs/veneer logs compared to other parts of the State.
- Rutland County remains an important part of the state for pulpwood production (#3 county in the State).

The annual wood harvest reports do not have any information regarding jobs, sales revenue, or tax revenue. In 2020, ANR and the National Forest Service collaborated on the Forest & Wood Product Industries' Economic Contributions: Vermont. This report does contain economic information about the forestry industry, but only on a State level.

Outdoor recreation is an economic driver in West Central Vermont and a valued part of our working lands. Our world-class skiing, biking, and hiking attract tourists from across the world to the Region. Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) was created by the Governor's Executive Order in 2017 to promote stewardship of State recreation assets and to market the outdoor recreation values and attributes of Vermont to effectively foster economic growth. The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee should collaborate with VOREC to further the economic interests of the outdoor recreation economy within the Region.

Brownfields

The remediation of contaminated sites in the Region accomplishes positive environmental and human health impacts while advancing sound land-use practices. Reuse of historically productive properties supports infill development and promotes community and economic growth.

Each sub-region operates its own brownfield program through its respective regional planning commission. Each brownfield program operates using grant funds obtained from the US EPA or State and currently each sub-region program has money available for assessment related work only. Assessment means any work related to identifying recognized environmental conditions (RECs) on-site. Funds for "remediation" of RECs are available from State and Federal sources, but not directly from sub-regional sources at present. Brownfield remediation increases supply of development-ready parcels of land and could improve local health outcomes by reducing potential environmental hazards caused by land contaminants.

Within the Region there are 90 active brownfield sites that have undergone some level of assessment. An additional 70 brownfield sites in the Region have been cleaned up.

Resilience

COVID-19

The economic challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic led to numerous questions about the resiliency of the State and Regional economy. The University of Vermont's Office for Engagement and Center for Rural Studies released a report in August 2021, *Amplifying Vermont's Economic Resilience*, that keys into resilience not just being about recovery, but about using "the crisis to recover to a stronger position."[14] The West Central Vermont Region aims to emerge from the years-long pandemic economically stronger and more resilient than pre-pandemic.

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee consulted with Ken Jones, an Economic Research Analyst at the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, to better understand pre-pandemic economic conditions and to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Vermont and the West Central Vermont Region.

Statewide Impact

To assess the impact of COVID-19 statewide, the Strategy Committee analyzed four key economic impacts:

- **Production** – Prior to COVID-19, Vermont enjoyed GDP gains on an annual basis of between 2% and 4%. In 2020, State GDP declined by $0.7 billion (2%). If the prior pace of growth were assumed, then GDP reduction is even greater: $1.8 billion or 5%. This loss occurred even with several government programs in place (e.g., PPP program, etc.). Without Federal intervention, the GDP impact could have been even more considerable. GDP losses were most considerable in the economic sectors related to education, leisure and hospitality, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

  In 2021, GDP recovered and increased by more than $3.5 billion. This recovery gets the State almost back to the cumulative growth that would have been expected even without the impacts of the pandemic.

- **Workforce** – Impacts on workforce were assessed by Strategy Committee through analyzing workforce participation data from the Vermont Department of Labor. In the years prior to COVID-19, Vermont maintained a workforce of around 310,000 workers. In April 2020, the workforce dropped by 19.3% to 250,000 workers.

  The recovery from this job loss is not yet completed. The workforce steadily added more jobs monthly through December 2020 when total workforce equaled approximately 290,000 workers. However, since that time the workforce size has stagnated. In 2021, the Department of Labor reports an annual average of employment of 295,000, almost 5% lower (15,000) than pre-pandemic levels.

[14] UVM Office of Engagement and Center for Rural Studies, "Amplifying Vermont's Economic Resilience," August 2021, https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Office-of-Engagement/Roundtable_Report_3.pdf).

There are many reasons why the workforce has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. Early retirements, lack of accessible childcare, risk of COVID-19 exposure, and increased rates of substance abuse are among the dozens of reasons that contributed to the demograpic drought in Vermont and nationwide.[15]

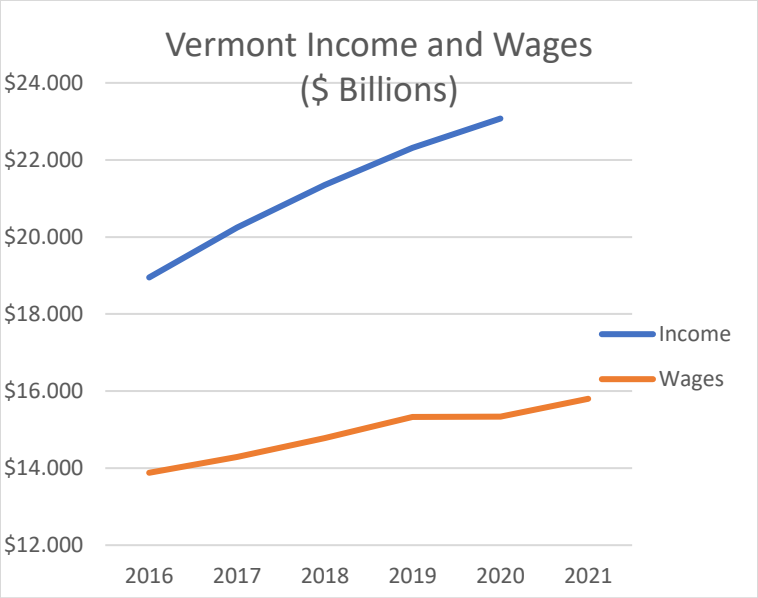


Figure 18 - Vermont Income and Wages 2016 to 2021 - Source: VT Department of Labor

- **Income** – While the state and Region saw significant job losses in 2020, Regional income did not experience a similar outcome. Personal income tax receipts for both 2020 and 2021 exceed average tax receipts received during 2018 and 2019. The reasons for this positive outcome may be due to several factors including Federal stimulus payments to individuals in response to the pandemic, enhanced unemployment benefits, and a bull stock market. According to the VT Department of Labor, average annual wages within the Region increased by 11% between 2019 and 2021.

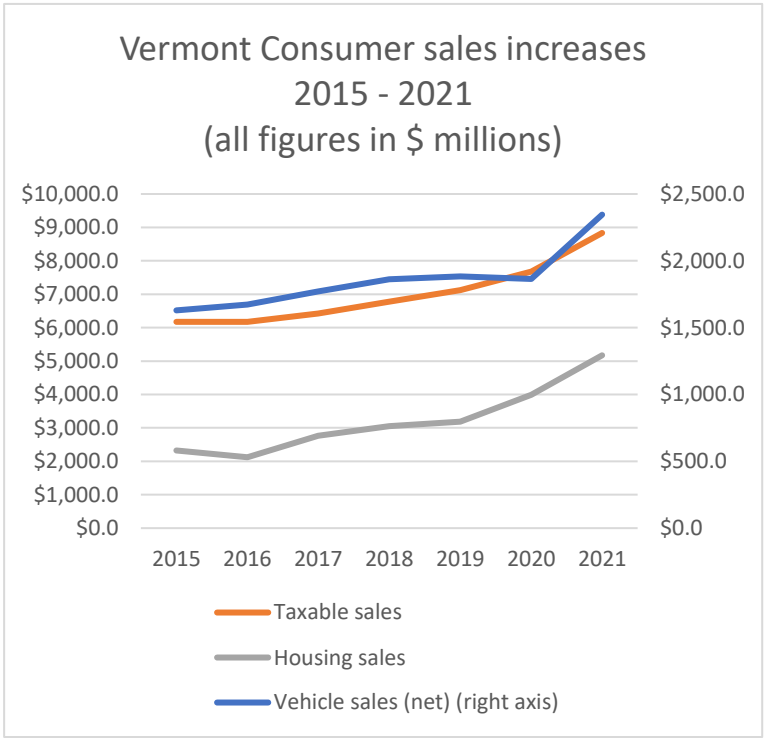


Figure 19 - VT Consumer Sales 2015-2021 - Source: VT Department of Taxes

- **Consumption** – Related to the continuing growth of income while some aspects of the economy slowed: several categories of consumption

[15] EMSI. "The Demograhic Drought." 2021. https://fs.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/4906807/Demographic%20Drought%20V18.pdf.

showed rapid growth during the pandemic. For example, large purchases of costly items, like cars and homes, showed record levels of growth, in terms of total sales, during this period.

The total value of houses sold in Vermont has more than doubled in the past five years. There is a relationship between housing sales and the sales of taxable items, which includes appliances and furniture, which had sales increased sales by more than $1.6 billion dollars between 2019 and 2021.

While the dollar amounts for car sales are less, the numbers in Figure 19 only represent net sales (meaning that only the difference between the purchased car and the traded in car is included in the value). The substantial increase in 2021 is partly the result of the decline in 2020 (catching up), but the overall story remains that consumer sales increased during the pandemic.

The pandemic has caused the greatest disruption of the US and Vermont economy of any event since World War II. Greater than the Great Recession (2008-2009) and the era of stagflation in the 1978-1982 period.

In assessing statewide impacts of COVID-19, the distribution of impacts among workers and economic sectors varies considerably. Businesses related to hospitality and leisure remain very affected by the pandemic even in 2022. According to the Brookings Institute, "the creative economy is one of the sectors most at risk from the COVID-19 crisis" and that state that "any lasting damage to the creative sector will drastically undercut our culture, well-being, and quality of life."[16]

Low-income households that do not participate in the "regular" economy (as opposed to the "gig" economy) and therefore may not have had access to unemployment benefits during the pandemic and may still be struggling. The statewide labor shortage appears to be impacting nearly all industries based on the gross number of job advertisements within the Region and local press coverage about the issue (teachers,[17] police officers,[18] mental health workers,[19] etc.).

Other impacts of the pandemic, like potential population gains due to out-of-staters moving to Vermont to escape the pandemic in more urban areas of the country, are still impossible to truly understand and account for in the CEDS despite additional anecdotal evidence indicating an influx of new remote workers to the state and the corresponding rise in real estate prices since 2020 (see Housing subsection above).

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[16] Florida, Richard and Michael Seman. "Lost art: Measuring COVID-19's devastating impact on America's creative economy." August 11, 2020. https://www.brookings.edu/research/lost-art-measuring-covid-19s-devastating-impact-on-americas-creative-economy/.

[17] D'Auria, Peter. "Vermont's teacher shortage has schools scrambling to fill positions," VT Digger. August, 16, 2022. https://vtdigger.org/2022/08/16/vermonts-teacher-shortage-has-schools-scrambling-to-fill-positions/

[18] Ruehsen, Ella. "Vermont police agencies are struggling to deal with severe staffing shortages," VT Digger. June 12, 2022. https://vtdigger.org/2022/06/12/vermont-police-agencies-are-struggling-to-deal-with-severe-staffing-shortages/#:~:text=Vermont's%20approach%20to%20law%20enforcement,of%20333%20total%20sworn%20positions.

[19] Engel-Smith, Liora. "Department of Mental Health asks for nearly $2 million to staff psychiatric facilities," VT Digger. January 7, 2022. https://vtdigger.org/2022/01/07/department-of-mental-health-asks-for-nearly-2-million-to-staff-psychiatric-facilities/.

The specific economic impact of the pandemic on BIPoC Vermonters is also unknown. This is despite understanding that BIPoC Vermonters are particularly vulnerable to infection due to being "disproportionately represented in essential frontline jobs that cannot be done at home."[20] This is most clearly demonstrated in COVID-19 infection rates among BIPoC individuals early in the pandemic when 18% of cases in Vermont were BIPoC individuals despite those individuals composing only 6% of the population. The vaccination rate for BIPoC individuals lagged behind white residents in early 2021 when vaccinations first became available. It took nearly a year to close the "vaccination gap."[21]

In totality, the State has weathered the worst impacts of the pandemic well. Many sectors, and many households, saw significant improvements in their budgets. Federal assistance throughout the pandemic made this possible. The State government received an unprecedented $5.1 billion in direct Federal grants.[22] This includes:

- $1.25 billion in aid from the Federal government via the CARES Act[23]
- $2.7 billion via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)[24]

This amount does not include an additional $2.2 billion allocated to the State from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.[25]

Vermont also received $6.2 billion in non-grant funding from the Federal government. This includes:

- Economic Stimulus Payments directly to households - $577.3 million (round one), $291.1 million (round two), and $774.7 million (round three).
- The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provided $1.76 billion in loans to Vermont businesses to keep Vermonters employed during the pandemic.
- Over $1 billion in increased unemployment compensations funds

Some of the grant money received by the State government has been allocated by the Vermont legislature to support specific state programs focused on infrastructure investment (including broadband expansion, wastewater, municipal building energy upgrades, and child care), workforce development, and economic development. Yet much of this money has yet to be actually spent.

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[20] Vermont Department of Health, "COVID-19 among Vermonters who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)," December 2020, https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-among-BIPOC-Data-Brief.pdf

[21] Vermont Department of Health, "Vermont COVID-19 Vaccination Rates by Race and Ethnicity," December 17, 2021, https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Vermont-COVID-19-Vaccination-Rates-by-Race-and-Ethnicity-20211217.pdf

[22] Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, "Combined Federal Stimulus Funding Packages, 2020-2022," March 22, 2022, https://ljfo.vermont.gov/subjects/covid-19-documents/combined-federal-stimulus-related-to-covid-19/filter/subject/covid-19-documents.

[23] Office of Senator Patrick Leahy, "Coronavirus Emergency Relief Bill Will Bring More Than $1 Billion to Vermont," March 25, 2020, https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/leahy-coronavirus-emergency-relief-bill_will-bring-more-than-1-billion-to-vermont.

[24] Office of Governor Phil Scott, "Governor Scott's Transformational Investments for American Rescue Plan Funds," May 27, 2022, https://governor.vermont.gov

[25] Vermont Business Magazine, "Vermont to Receive at least $2.2 billion from infrastructure bill," November 6, 2021, https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/november/06/vermont-receive-least-22-billion-infrastructure-bill.

Despite this monumental amount of direct Federal aid, the State and Region still face dire economic challenges. Most pressingly, the State and Region now face a severe workforce shortage. The reasons for the workforce shortage are varied: early retirements, an aging workforce, lack of adequate child care, lack of housing, etc. This impact warrants further study both regionally and statewide.

Regional Impact

The Strategy Committee also analyzed regional employment data from the Vermont Department of Labor to provide context to how the pandemic has impacted the West Central Vermont Region.

The four counties in the West Central CEDS Region show similar trends in employment pre- and post-pandemic with Rutland County maintaining the greatest losses (7.9% net loss 2019 to 2021) and Addison County accomplishing almost complete recovery (1.9% net loss).

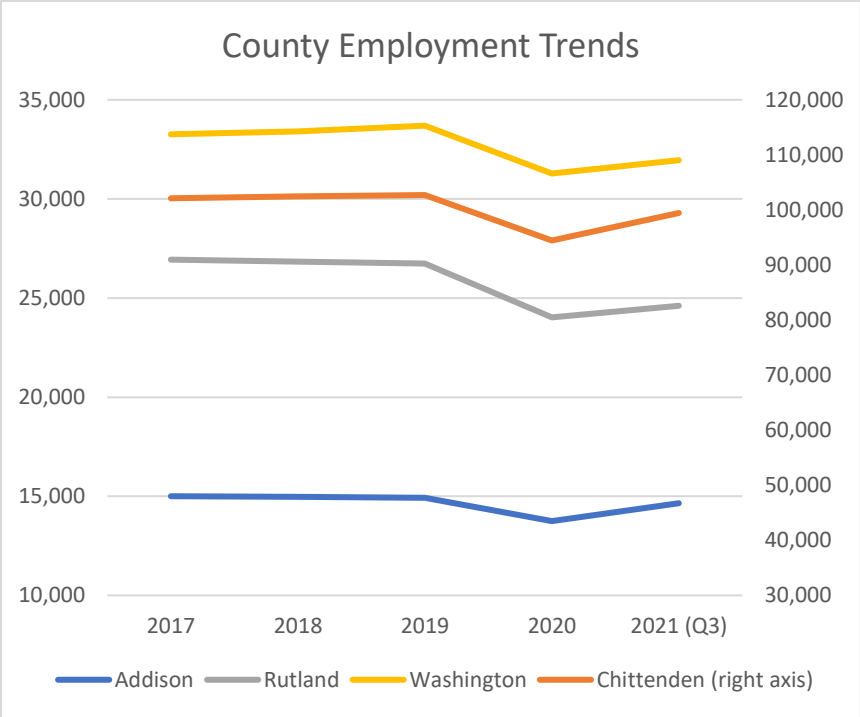

Figure 20 - County Employment Trends 2017 to 2021 - Source: VT Department of Labor

Vermont and the Region showed high resilience in response to COVID-19. Trust in, and leadership from, State and local governments related to public health mandates and vaccination kept the health care system from collapsing and reduced the prevalence of death and illness compared to other parts of the country. Essential functions continued to operate. Federal programs provided economic stability to most households and businesses.

Still, resiliency to withstand future pandemics, and the lasting societal and economic impacts of COVID-19, can certainly be improved within the Region. The Region's lack of broadband access, particularly in rural areas, inhibits virtual learning for children attending school remotely and may make the Region less attractive to remote workers looking to relocate. Attracting new workers to the Region to help close the employment gap is needed, particularly within specific industries (e.g. nursing, childcare). As is the need to find housing for these new workers to live and child care access to support working families.

West Central Vermont, and municipalities within the Region, need to make efficient use of remaining Federal and State financial resources available in response to the pandemic to help address our future gaps in resiliency.

Flood Resiliency

Economic resiliency directly tied to minimizing the impacts of flooding has been the focus of local, regional, and state policy in Vermont since the devastating impact of the Lake Champlain flooding and

Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. The impact of these flood events significantly damaged regional economic infrastructure, particularly roads and bridges, for significant periods of time in West Central Vermont. Climate change increases the number of extreme weather events which increases rates of storm surges and flooding.

According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 5% of all structures in Vermont are in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). These are areas where flooding is expected, and Federal floodplain regulations apply (along with the mandatory purchase of flood insurance). One percent of structures in Chittenden County are in the SFHA, followed by Rutland County (3.8%), Addison County (4%) and Washington County (5.5% of structures). Much of the existing development in the SFHA is historic. This includes several important centers of economic activity in Central Vermont (Barre City, Montpelier, Waterbury), along the shores of Lake Champlain in Burlington, and within dozens of smaller historic villages throughout the Region. Future economic growth in our historic village centers and cities is important, but must be done in a manner that is resilient. Some cities, like Montpelier, have adopted floodplain regulations that far exceed the minimum standards set by the Federal government in order to ensure that future development is resilient against future flood events. Land conservation around floodplains can be one effective means of improving flood resiliency.

Opportunities to Strengthen Regional Economic Resilience

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the West Central Vermont Strategy Committee worked with the UVM Office for Engagement to identify several specific occupations that our regional economy is reliant upon that should be the focus of CEDS implementation projects. For some occupations, focus may be needed because the occupation suffers from workforce shortages that threaten economic resilience. For other occupations, focus may be needed because the Region is well positioned to further capitalize on past success within that particular occupation or industry.

Health Care/Nursing

The State and Region are facing a workforce shortage within the health care field. The shortage is most substantial in nursing.

The Vermont Talent Pipeline conducted a Healthcare Hiring Needs Assessment in the fall of 2021. The assessment was based on survey data collected from all Vermont hospitals, 80% of visiting nurses organizations, and 19% of long-term care facilities. The Needs Assessment found that:

- 6,244 job vacancies are forecasted in the State within nursing between September 2021 and September 2023. The majority of these vacancies are located within the West Central Vermont Region.
- 30% of these new jobs are new positions
- 24% of the jobs are for licensed nurse assistant (LNA) positions
- 42% of the jobs are for highly trained registered nurses[26]

[26] Vermont Talent Pipeline, "VTPM Heathcare Hiring Needs Assessment Summary (2021-23)," December 23, 2021, https://www.vermonttpm.org/_files/ugd/e92786_0446b68c1c854d21ae0390ebe7b843d5.pdf.

Job posting data available from JobsEQ, available via partnership with the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity, identified Registered Nurses as the occupation with the second highest job advertisements within the Region in April 2020 (10,118 job postings – second only to retail salespersons at 10,310).[27]

The lack of health care workers at all levels threatens local economic resilience on multiple levels. Decreased access to health care negatively impacts regional quality of life and can directly impact health care outcomes.[28]

The lack of workforce in health care related to mental health and substance use disorder, which includes both clinical and non-clinical positions, has received specific local press attention in recent months. A Vermont Public Radio story from December 2021 stated that "of the 5,000 positions at Vermont's 16 nonprofit, publicly-funded community mental health organizations, 970 are now vacant, according to officials tracking the issue."[29] The lack of workforce available to assist those with mental health and substance use challenges can put additional strain on our primary care physicians in the State.[30]

The US Surgeon General issued a statement in August 2022 highlighting health care worker burnout and resignation during the last several years.[31] Stressful patient loads, concerns about lack of compensation and workplace safety, have contributed to burnout. Addressing root causes of turnover and improving retention in the health care field could not only save employers money, but would better set the region up for future emergency responses.

Recent local press coverage has indicated an increased reliance on expensive traveling nurses at local hospitals.[32] Increased reliance on traveling nurses increases the cost of health care. The largest hospital in the State, UVM Medical Center in Burlington, has identified housing as a substantial barrier to attracting new staff and is developing their own housing for their workforce in South Burlington.[33]

It is unclear how this substantial workforce demand will be met in the short-term. The Healthcare Hiring Needs Assessment does not include implementation strategies about how to meet demand. Some programs have been implemented recently to begin to address existing problems. Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin has developed a LNA pathway program in cooperation with Community College

[27] UVM Office of Engagement, via Chmura's JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight, 2022.
[28] Liora Engel-Smith, "State Study Confirms Long Wait Times for Medical Appointments," VT Digger, February 16, 2022, https://vtdigger.org/2022/02/16/state-study-confirms-long-wait-times-for-medical-appointments/.
[29] Peter Hirschfeld, "Vermont's mental health agencies worry staffing shortages are reaching 'point of no return'," Vermont Public Radio, December 6, 2021, https://www.vpr.org/vpr-news/2021-12-06/vermonts-mental-health-agencies-worry-staffing-shortages-are-reaching-point-of-no-return.
[30] Dr. Ashley Miller, "Mental health crisis is overwhelming our primary care system," VT Digger, March 21, 2022, https://vtdigger.org/2022/03/21/dr-ashley-miller-mental-health-crisis-is-overwhelming-our-primary-care-system/.
[31] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "New Surgeon General Advisory Sounds Alarm on Health Worker Burnout and Resignation," May 23, 2022, https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/05/23/new-surgeon-general-advisory-sounds-alarm-on-health-worker-burnout-and-resignation.html.
[32] Christina Guessferd, "The move for more money: VT struggles to address nursing crisis," WCAX, January 20, 2022, https://www.wcax.com/2022/01/20/vermont-works-address-nursing-crisis/.
[33] Colin Flanders, "UVM Medical Center to Help Build Apartment Complex for Employees," Seven Days, March 9, 2022, https://www.sevendaysvt.com/OffMessage/archives/2022/03/09/uvm-medical-center-to-help-build-apartment-complex-for-employees.

of Vermont and Vermont Technical College.[34] UVM Medical Center has also started a new program with its Central Sterile Reprocessing team that helps non-native language speakers with language and skills training while on-the-job.

The Green Mountain Care Board, a Governor-appointed Board with a mission is to improve the health of Vermonters, did release the *Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan* in October 2021. The plan is comprehensive and recommends a wide-array of strategies to increase the health care workforce in the mid to long term. The West Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee needs to work with health care partners within the Region to implement relevant sections of this plan such as recommendations specific to workforce development, post-secondary education, marketing, and housing.

Child Care

Childcare costs and access are significant challenges in the West Central Vermont Region. This statement is based both on survey responses to our regional Employer Survey (Appendix B) and based on data available from Let's Grow Kids, a statewide non-profit focused on improving child care quality and access in Vermont.

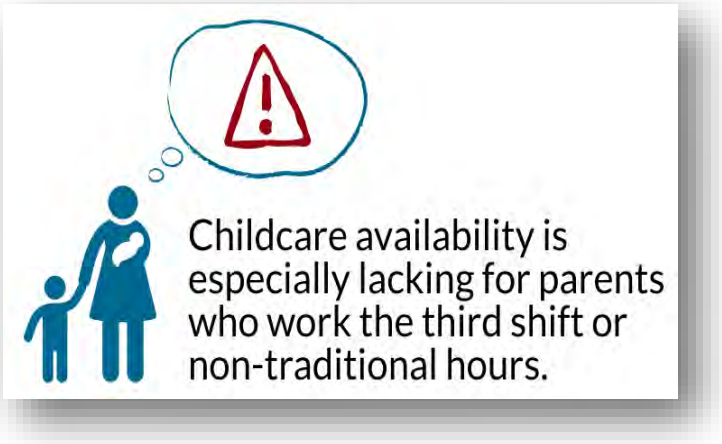

Figure 21 - Child Availability - Source: Let's Grow Kids.

Availability of childcare for infants is insufficient within the Region. Though improved since 2018, approximately 43% of infants in Chittenden County do not have access to child care services according to Let's Grow Kids' *Stalled at the Start – 2022 Report*.[35] Access to child care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in other parts of the Region (Addison, Central Vermont, and Rutland) is even lower. Childcare availability is especially lacking for parents that work the third shift or non-traditional hours. Let's Grow Kids estimates that statewide almost 9,000 children do not have access to child care and that there is a need for an additional 2,500 early childhood educators.[36]

The US Agency of Health and Human Services' Department for Children and Families recommends childcare costs be no more than 7% of annual income (total). However, in Chittenden County full time licensed child care for one child equals approximately 20% of median household income ($15,000/year). The cost of child care is too high.

[34] The University of Vermont Health Network – Central Vermont Medical Center, "LNA Pathway Program," June 13, 2022, https://www.cvmc.org/about-cvmc/careers/career-pathway-programs.
[35] Let's Grow Kids, "Stalled at the Start, Vermont's Child Care Challenge," February 2022, https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf.
[36] Let's Grow Kids, "Child Care is Everyone's Business – Annual Economic Impact of Comprehensive Child Care System for Vermont," April 2022, https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/2022EconomicImpactReport.pdf.

Conversely, salaries for early childhood education teachers is too low. Let's Grow Kids' *Stalled at the Start – 2022 Report* describes that early childhood educators are generally expected to have a post-secondary education and be trained and licensed; yet the average annual salary for an early childhood teacher is $38,870. This is much lower than the average annual salary for a kindergarten teacher in Vermont ($55,580). This low salary keeps some educators from taking a job in early childhood education.

The VT Agency of Human Services continues to study how to finance high quality child care that remains affordable to working families. West Central Vermont CEDS partners must work with Let's Grow Kids and State agencies to determine affordable ways to expand access to high-quality child care within the Region.

Construction and Trades

The construction and trades sector has seen strong demand for the past several years due to the expanding economy and need for new housing. During the pandemic there was an additional increase in demand due to the influx of "new" Vermonters purchasing and "upgrading" homes. Currently there is a statewide backlog of work for this sector as well as the engineering services to support this work.

Currently the biggest challenge for this sector is lack of access to materials due to supply chain issues and the related increases in costs for materials. While this may be a temporary issue, it continues to be a significant problem. Contractors interviewed for this report stated that the Federal requirement for sourcing materials from domestic suppliers has led to significant shortages of concrete and plywood, as well as a variety of other materials.

As with most sectors in this Region, the aging workforce creates challenges. The state-wide average age of this workforce in Vermont is 45, and many of the highest skilled employees are nearing retirement age.[37] Two areas that have been successfully supporting this sector have been the Career and Technical Education Centers (CTEs). With increased participation in the construction and trades programs, the National Guard's Learn to Earn program of training has provided a new pool of skilled labor for this sector. This industry has not been able to utilize effectively the guest worker programs due to the limited quotas allowed by the Federal government, but this is viewed as an opportunity to expand this workforce by industry leaders.

Table 5 – Construction Sector – Source: Vermont Department of Labor – Economic Profile Series 2021

	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington	Region
Employers	207	623	278	256	1,364
Employees	895	4,754	1,387	1,197	8,223
% of Covered Employment	6.5%	5%	5.8%	3.8%	
Average Wage	$50,004	$62,740	$49,801	$52,787	$53,833

Increased demand for weatherization services is needed within the Region over the short and long-term. The State of Vermont's ambitious home weatherization goals (148,000 homes by 2030) means that the

[37] Vermont Talent Pipeline Management, "Construction Talent Shortage," May 13, 2022, https://www.vermonttpm.org/progress.

State will need a five-fold increase in its weatherization workforce according to the *Weatherization Workforce Plan* developed by Efficiency Vermont in October 2021.[38] The plan details several specific strategies to expand the weatherization workforce. The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee should work collaboratively with Efficiency Vermont and other partners to implement the recommendations of this report.

Manufacturing

The Region is home to a wide variety of manufacturing. Specialty food producers to aerospace industry leaders provide above average wage and benefits packages, particularly when compared to other non-government sectors. Additionally, this sector has a much broader impact on the economy due to the supply chain procurement and services they purchase from the local region. This sector continues to provide critical middle-class jobs for Vermonters without requiring a college degree.

In all four sub-regions of the West Central Vermont there is at least one major manufacturing employer that plays a dominant role. In a competitive national and international economy, this is currently an asset to have manufacturing as a part of the regional economy. Manufacturing results in an influx of dollars to the Region due to the fact that the production of manufactured goods in Vermont are mostly exported. For the overall Vermont and Regional economy to flourish, Vermonters need the cash from exports to allow for the purchase of goods and services not produced in Vermont. Conversely, reliance on manufacturing can also be perceived as a potential threat due to the significant negative impact that would occur if any of these industries left Vermont.

As in all sectors, the average age of the workforce is a challenge, with most of our most highly skilled workforce reaching retirement age in the next 10 years, and with retirement packages that allow them to leave the workforce. While this is a challenge for the employers, it is also a significant opportunity for young adults entering this sector of the workforce. It is strongly anticipated that there will be a need to train and upskill younger workers to fill the positions vacated by retirees.

With a tight labor market, manufacturers continue to invest in automation. As a result, many of our key employers in this sector have seen a decline in workforce over the past decade while increasing production capacity. All indicators point to this trend continuing and accelerating as technologies are developed. This will result in the next workforce needing skills in advanced manufacturing and the concurrent need to develop training systems to meet the need.

Table 6 – Manufacturing Sector – Source: Vermont Department of Labor – Economic Profile Series 2021

	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington	Region
Employers	71	260	106	127	564
Employees	1,922	8,804	2,825	2,238	15,789
% of Covered Employment	14%	9.3%	11.8%	7.2%	
Average Wage	$68,021	$72,742	$60,427	$56,362	$64,388

[38] Efficiency Vermont, "Weatherization Workforce Plan," October 2021, https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/Media/Default/docs/white-papers/Weatherization-Workforce-Plan.pdf.

SWOT and SOAR

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee conducted both a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) exercise to guide the development of the CEDS. The SOAR was completed with the specific intention to identify results. The results in the SOAR were invaluable to the Strategy Committee when developing CEDS indicators (e.g. evaluation framework).

The process to develop a SWOT was first conducted internally within each sub-region in the spring of 2021. RDC and RPC partners within each sub-region developed their own SWOT analysis specific to their sub-region (see Appendix C). These sub-regional SWOTs were then synthesized by the West Central Vermont Strategy Committee into the West Central Vermont SWOT.

The West Central Vermont SWOT was shared with stakeholders during our initial outreach event in the spring of 2021 and during one-on-one outreach during the summer and fall of 2020. The SWOT was used as a basis of conversation to develop a SOAR collaboratively with stakeholders for each sub-region. Each sub-regional SOAR was then synthesized by the West Central Vermont Strategy Committee into the West Central Vermont SOAR.

III. Key Findings

Figure 22 – Rock of Ages Quarry in Barre – Source: CVEDC

The intent of this section is to synthesize the Economic Profile, SWOT/SOAR exercises (Appendix C), the Employer Survey (Appendix B), and the substantial amount of public input received during the development of the CEDS (Appendix A).

- West Central Vermont is the most economically impactful region of Vermont. The Region's geographic size, population, diverse economic base, GDP, personal income, level of education, and infrastructure set it apart from the rest of the State.

- State and Federal response to the pandemic has provided unprecedented levels of funding to offset financial losses to households and businesses resulting from COVID-19 and to rebuild specific economic sectors and needed infrastructure (see Resilience subsection). Vermont received a grand total of $11.3 billion in Federal assistance. This includes $5.1 billion in grant payments (most to the State government and other institutions) and $6.2 billion in non-grant payments (e.g. direct stimulus payments to individuals, Paycheck Protection Program loans, Electronic Benefit Transfer funding, unemployment benefits). This total does not include $2.2 billion coming to VT via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- Economic stability and long-term growth are challenged due to a shortage of available labor. The labor force participation rate in Vermont (60.9%) is at its lowest point in over 40 years. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused significant dislocation of employment. There are several contributing factors to the labor shortage:

    - Some workers that left the workforce during COVID-19 are unable to return to the workforce due to the lack of access to childcare and/or affordable childcare (see Infrastructure and Resiliency subsections) .

    - An aging population, and the risks of COVID-19, may have led to a substantial amount of worker retirements during the pandemic which exacerbated the labor shortage (see Aging subsection).

    - Both the lack of housing stock and the cost of housing are limiting the ability for local employers to attract new workers to the Region (see Housing subsection and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

- The pandemic has had the most severe, direct, and lasting impact on the Leisure and Hospitality supersector of the economy. Total employment in the supersector remained down 16% in December 2021 compared to December 2019. However, month-to-month gains in total employment show that this supersector is slowly improving.

- Total employment in the Retail sector remains down 6% and the Manufacturing supersector remains down 7%. Total employment in theses economic sectors did not improve on a month-to-month basis in 2021.

- Despite the labor shortage, the Region has generally emerged from the pandemic in a strong economic position. Personal income is up, wages have increased, consumption is strong, and job opportunities are plentiful (see Resilience subsection).

Figure 23 – VYCC Barn in Richmond – Source: CCRPC

- The Region has high location quotient values for niche manufacturing and value-added agricultural products – but the manufacturing sector has generally not added jobs at the same rate as other sectors and wage growth in manufacturing has been slower than in all other sectors since 2010 (see Regional and Sub-regional Economy subsection).

- Several outstanding economic development-related planning efforts have been completed in Vermont in the last several years (e.g. 2021 CreateVT – Action Plan for Vermont's Creative Sector, 2021-2030 Vermont Agricultural and Food Systems Strategic Plan (Vermont Farm to Plate)) that specifically outline actions that support the creative economy and the agricultural economy. These plans shall guide the work of partners in the West Central Vermont region in support of the Region's rural economy. CEDS partner organizations may incorporate specific actions in the from the CreateVT – Action Plan and Farm to Plate Strategic Plan within their own plans at a sub-Regional (West Central Vermont) level.

- Since 2010, the Region has become more diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, the White alone population declined. The population of all other racial groups increased by 51% over the same period (21,398 persons in 2010 to 32,251 persons in 2020).

- The West Central Vermont Region is not immune to economic inequity that exists in the rest of Vermont and the country:

    - The wage gap between men and women workers still exists within the Region (see Wages subsection). Gains made in closing the gap over the past decade are threatened by the pandemic and lack of access to child care. Women workers are more likely than men to leave their careers if they are unable to find adequate child care.

    - Gaps between White residents and BIPoC residents in education attainment, income, and homeownership rates all exceed national averages (see Education, Income, and Housing subsections).

    - Focus groups held by the Vermont Professionals of Color Network reported several challenges identified by the BIPoC community including:

        - A lack of access to capital;
        - Inaccessibility to business support resources and "business basics" trainings; and
        - the overall difficulty overcoming systemic inequities within Vermont's governmental and business systems (see Appendix F - VT Professionals of Color Network – BIPoC Workforce and Small Business Environment Qualitative Assessment – Final Report).

    - Holes exist in the workforce development and high school-to-work pipeline. Those individuals not pursuing a post-secondary education may not receive adequate training and may miss opportunities to enter high-skilled and high-paying occupations despite local demand. This poses a challenge to ensure that the future workforce is well-trained and able to meet the needs of existing employers (see Summary of Public Process – Appendix A and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

Figure 24 – A festival in Rutland City – Source: RRPC

- The Region has a housing shortage and housing prices are skyrocketing. Limited housing supply is impacting all demographic categories and is inhibiting economic development by restricting workers ability to moving within the Region to be closer to their employment. The Region must support efforts to develop housing in areas planned for growth with a particular focus on developing perpetually affordable housing, workforce housing, and housing for agricultural workers.

- Investing in infrastructure in areas planned for growth is a regional priority. West Central Vermont must complete public investments, ideally funded through unprecedented funding available through Federal assistance to the State government, to help set the foundation for appropriate levels of development in order to help solve the housing crisis and create economic growth that benefits the entire community (see Summary of Public Process – Appendix A and Executive Summary of Employer Survey – Appendix B).

- Increasing access to broadband is essential to making the Region competitive in the modern economy. Per the Vermont Department of Public Service, 15% of West Central Vermont buildings do not have access to high-speed internet. The number of buildings is even greater in Addison County (38%). Overall, Vermont ranks 48th in the nation for broadband access according to Speedtest.net.

- The urban areas in the vicinity of Chittenden County have grown, both in population and number of jobs, over the last several decades. The rural areas of the Region have seen stagnant or declining population growth and jobs over the same time period. This dynamic between rural economies and urban economies reflects national trends and has had very real impact on both demographic and business migration affecting the Region and State.

IV. Strategic Direction, Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

This section distills data from the Economic Profile, the West Central Vermont SWOT/SOAR exercises, and our community engagement into a singular Vision for West Central Vermont and six Goals, and associated actions, to implement that vision. Indicators, the data measures used to measure progress toward the implementation of our Vision and Goals, have also been selected.

Vision

The West Central Vermont CEDS is intended to reflect the voices of the hundreds of business leaders and community members that provided guidance on how our Region can best utilize our resources to create economic conditions that benefit all members of our community.

Figure 25 – The HUB Co-Working Space in Rutland – Source: CEDRR

Goal #1: Attract New Workers and Expand Labor Force

Attract new workers of all skills sets, training, and expertise to the Region, and remove existing barriers to workforce participation for existing residents, to combat the state-wide labor shortage due to the impacts of COVID-19, an aging population, and other structural barriers to labor participation.

Actions

1. **Housing.** Implement actions in partner regional plans that support increases in housing supply through the development of perpetually affordable, workforce, and market rate housing in geographic areas designated for growth and located near public transit. This includes working with municipalities to implement practices in the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods Guide to incrementally remove zoning barriers to housing development in areas planned for growth. Also address the need to plan for and develop housing specifically for agricultural workers.
2. **Child Care**. Work with stakeholders in the child care field (e.g. Building Bright Futures, existing childcare providers, school districts) and potential funders (e.g. Vermont Community Development Program, Northern Borders Regional Commission, Economic Development Administration) to identify existing sites that could support child care facilities (particularly for infant care) and assist with accessing grant/loan funds for costs associated with business start-up, associated workforce development, and construction. Improve access and funding for pre-kindergarten programs so that children are ready to learn by the time they begin kindergarten and support the ability of early care and education providers to develop the skills and knowledge needed to care for and educate children. Support increased public investment in child care and programs designed to provide childcare for students enrolled in post-secondary education (e.g. Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program).
3. **Marketing and Support.** Seek grant funding to support on-going marketing efforts by project partners and local employers to attract new workers to the West Central Vermont Region. Work collaboratively with the Stay to Stay network, a group that connects potential Vermont residents to local employers, realtors, and community leaders, in an effort to attract new residents and ease their transition to the state. Work with partners to better understand how to specifically market to BIPoC workers.
4. **New American/Refugee Programs.** Aid municipalities, and associated non-profits, seeking to establish designated refugee resettlement community programs within the Region. These programs provide refugees with direct assistance with securing housing, employment, education/training, and other essential support, like translation, to overcome social, cultural, and economic barriers.
5. **Partner Inclusion Program.** Create a Partner Inclusion Program (e.g. accompanying partner integration), to serve the Region, or specific Regional Development Corporation territories, based on an existing program at Middlebury College. The program should aim to assist with establishing employment for spouses and helping new Vermonters understand local resources and opportunities available to them.
6. **Returnship Programs.** Work with the Vermont Returnship Program, created by the VT Department of Labor and administered by Associates for Training & Development, to strengthen and expand existing programs that help experienced workers transition to new careers that maximize their existing knowledge, transferable skills, and job goals.

Indicators

1. Labor Force Participation, Percent of Population over 16 in the Labor Force (US, VT, County): (Source: Federal Reserve of St. Louis). Desired Trend: Up.
2. Capacity of Regulated Early Care and Education Programs in Vermont by age category (Source: Let's Grow Kids – Stalled at the Start and/or Building Bright Futures – The State of Vermont's Children 2022). Desired Trend: Up.
3. Households spending 30% or more on housing (Source: ACS 5-year estimates – Table CP04). Desired Trend: Down.

Figure 26 – Vermont State House in Montpelier – Source: CVEDC and VT Digger/Glenn Russell

Goal #2: Equity

Facilitate equitable economic development planning, and the delivery of services and programs, that advance opportunities and education for the traditionally underrepresented populations in the regional economy.

Actions

1. **Continued Engagement and Intentionally Connecting.** Future applications for EDA Planning and Technical Assistance grants will request funding to ensure engagement with the BIPoC community and other underrepresented segments (refugees and immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, Veterans, people living with handicaps, women, and rural/micro enterprises) of West Central Vermont's population. This engagement may be general in nature or may be focused on a particular CEDS implementation project. Engagement may occur in coordination with organizational partners focused on entrepreneurship and the professional development of underrepresented communities. Engagement efforts will strive to reach underrepresented folks in their communities and will address barriers that prevent some community members from actively participating in outreach efforts.
2. **Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)**. Organizations participating on any future West Central Vermont Economic Development District (EDD) Board of Directors must intentionally address bias and inequality by actively implementing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging policies, training, and awareness for both leadership, staff members, and board

members to ensure organization-wide understanding of systemic inequities faced by BIPoC individuals and business owners. Training should be included in both the employee onboarding and board of director training. Trainings should provide touchpoints to critique, evaluate, and implement new processes to dismantle system in equalities and uplift historically underserved individuals, community members, and businesses. EDD partners will incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging goals in their operations, programs, and services.

3. **Rules and Practices Restricting Access to Capital**. CEDS partners will advocate on behalf of underserved populations with Federal and State funders to provide flexibility when financing and making grants to underserved business and individuals in our community based on insight gained as a part of the Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP). Similarly, CEDS partners will advocate for change among financial institutions and equity investor lending and investment to better serve socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (SEDI) and businesses. There are several programs currently available or coming available soon that are focused on providing assistance to the BIPoC community. These programs are summarized in the text box below.
4. **BIPoC Business Basics**. Work with partners to develop a "business basics" course specifically for BIPoC small business owners in the "start-up" or early stages of developing their business. Work with State partners to develop a step-by step guide and a directory of programs, services, and technical assistance and make it available to everyone.
5. **BIPoC Business Support.** Create better awareness of availability of existing programs (regional development corporations, Small Business Administration, VT Professionals of Color Network, VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development) that support small businesses and connect BIPoC businesses to the West Central Vermont economy. Capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit of folks relocating to Vermont and ensure that they are a cornerstone of economic development policy and actions. Through education and resources, expand employee ownership opportunities for underserved populations.
6. **Hiring, Workforce Development and Retention.** Work with partners to create and/or support trainings to help employers better understand the needs of immigrant and refugee communities and BIPoC workers. Build relationships with employees from underrepresented communities to better understand how to develop ways to meet workforce development needs and retention strategies. Determine ways to remove language barriers to workforce entry.
7. **Women-Owned Business.** Collaborate with the Vermont Women's Fund and other partners to implement projects that address the specific needs of women-owned businesses as identified in the This Way Up! campaign. Potential projects may include assisting with the development of mentorship programs or utilizing the philanthropic power of women business owners to assist other women business owners.
8. **Just Transitions.** Work with the Vermont Climate Council to develop public policy and business actions that will ensure that the impacts of Vermont's transition into a low or zero greenhouse gas emitting economy will benefit and support all residents of the State of Vermont fairly and equitably.
9. **Funding.** CEDS partners will prioritize seeking grant funding and technical assistance to support the needs of BIPoC and women-owned businesses, and other under-served populations.
10. **Data**. Ensure that all data collection conducted by a future WCVT EDD includes information about race and gender to more accurately understand and report on economic development efforts and populations served/impacted. Seek funding to assist with partners efforts to track identified indicators.

Indicators

1. Number of BIPoC owned businesses (Source: VT PoC Network – this data is best available data and may not be a comprehensive list). Desired Trend: Up.
2. Number of women owned businesses (Source: This Way Up! – this data is best available data and may not be a comprehensive list). Desired Trend: Up.
3. Median household income by race and ethnicity (Source: ACS 5-year estimates). Desired Trend: Up.
4. Unemployment by race and ethnicity (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics). Desired Trend: Down.

Existing and Planned Programs to Assist BIPoC Business Community in Vermont

1. **Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP)**: This is a Small Business Administration (SBA)-funded business technical assistance program focused on assisting underserved populations, coordinated by the VT Small Business Center with eight "spokes" delivering various services, including:
    i. RDCs of Vermont
    ii. Vermont Professionals of Color Network
    iii. Center for Women & Enterprise
    iv. Vermont Principals' Association
    v. Vermont Law School
    vi. Vermont Main Street Alliance
    vii. Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
    viii. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
2. The State of Vermont received $58 million for the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), a multi-year Federal program administered by the US Treasury, providing a combination of credit and investment programs for existing small businesses and start-ups, as well as technical assistance for small businesses applying for SSBCI funding and other government programs. The program is aimed at providing expanded access to capital for small businesses, not for profit, and agricultural enterprises emerging from the pandemic, building ecosystems of opportunity and entrepreneurship, and creating high-quality jobs. Separate allocations have been established by Treasury for Very Small Businesses (under 10 employees) and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals (SEDI), including BIPoC-owned businesses.
3. Vermont Department of Economic Development, through a statewide contract, will deliver business coaching and other forms of training to BIPoC business owners, including networking, and special convenings. They will also deliver career fairs, workshops, paid internships, and career guidance for BIPoC workers. See Act 183, Section 4).
4. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) certifies Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and provides technical assistance and training on business development and government contracting topics.

Figure 27 – Rutland Beer Works – Source: CEDRR

Goal #3: Business Development and Job Creation

Support job retention and growth at existing high wage employers, , attract new high wage employers to the region, expand economic diversification, and create a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurs to create and grow their business within the Region.

Actions

1. **High Wage Employers.** To add high wage employment, attract businesses with high location quotients (see Figure 9) and encourage the growth of those already here, including:
    a. Information Technology
    b. Communications and Media (including Information Technology, E-Commerce, and Digital Media)
    c. Advanced Manufacturing
    d. Higher Education
    e. Clean Tech/Green Tech
    f. Health Care and Wellness.

2. **Economic Gardening.**[39] Practice economic gardening as the primary method of economic development. Create jobs by supporting local entrepreneurs and existing companies, especially those with local ownership, including employee ownership, and other connections to the community. Actions may include:
    a. Seek resources, make referrals to resources, and provide technical assistance to small- and medium-size businesses in the region.
    b. Strengthen business networking and communication networks in the region, especially between sectors.
    c. Seek resources and provide assistance to small operations important to the vitality of rural villages and towns, such as general stores, independently-owned grocery stores, farm stands, food hubs, etc., to keep them vibrant and locally-owned.
    d. Assist fossil-fuel based businesses (e.g. fuel dealers) develop plans and strategies to transition into the clean-energy economy while retaining and creating jobs (see also Goal #4, Action #12).
    e. Work with statewide partners to expand efforts to support ownership of local businesses.

3. **Access to Capital.** Work with partners to develop and administer programs that provide low-barrier access to capital for start-up small businesses, particularly BIPoC and women-owned small businesses. This may include grants with low match, or no match, requirements. This may also include exploration of a shared-equity program for commercial properties similar to existing residential shared-equity programs in the region.
4. **Innovation and Entrepreneurial Development**. Promote and expand support systems for entrepreneurs from every sector, including the creation of a system of resources that is easily navigable at all stages of the innovation and entrepreneurial continuum, including the following:
    a. Engage business leaders and entrepreneurs to understand business needs, including an assessment of regional needs to attract, support, and expand businesses.
    b. Fund, aggregate, and make referrals for services such as capital, financial literacy, mentorship, prototyping, business incubation, and commercialization.
    c. Ensure services are available to entrepreneurs as appropriate for each stage of growth.
    d. Develop co-working spaces, shared office spaces, incubators, business accelerators, and support maker spaces in cooperation with municipalities or other partners.
5. **Entrepreneurship Ecosystems.** Work with partners to seek funding to establish, support, and expand entrepreneurship ecosystems in each sub-region. Entrepreneurship ecosystems should be of appropriate scale to the sub-region and ideally located in locations with access to sufficient infrastructure (e.g. high-speed broadband, water, sewer).
6. **Canadian Exports.** Strengthen partnerships with the US International Trade Administration and Vermont's Trade and Investment Representative to Canada with the intent to support the

[39] "Economic gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within. Its premise is that local entrepreneurs create the companies that bring new wealth and economic growth to a region in the form of jobs, increased revenues, and a vibrant local business sector. Economic gardening seeks to focus on growing and nurturing local businesses rather than hunting for "big game" outside the area." (Source: Hamilton-Pennell, Christina, "Seven Steps to Developing an Economic Gardening Implementation Strategy," ICMA, September 16, 2010, https://icma.org/articles/article/seven-steps-developing-economic-gardening-implementation-strategy).

Vermont State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) and to develop other specific programs to support the expansion of regional exports to Canada.

Indicators

1. Gross Domestic Product (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis). Desired Trend: Up.
2. Job Creation Rates – VT vs US (Source: US Census Bureau – Business Dynamics Series- Firm Size by State). Desired Trend: Up.
3. Median Household Income, (US, VT, County) (Source: ACS 5-year estimates). Desired Trend: Up.
4. Number of employee-owned businesses (Source: Vermont Employee Ownership Center). Desired Trend: Up.

Figure 28 – Community College of Vermont in Winooski – Source: CCRPC

Goal #4: Workforce Development and Employee Retention

Facilitate connection-building across public and private labor force stakeholders to improve workforce training and education alignment, collaboration, insights, and strategies on the regional level. Provide regional coordination among stakeholders to deliver effective workforce training and education to new and existing workforce.

Actions

1. **Improve Short-term and Long-term Business Recruitment and Retention Practices.** Seek funding to provide assistance to businesses to take short-term steps and develop long-term strategies to improve their chances of finding and retaining talent.
2. **Develop Partnerships that Build Pathways to Promising Careers**. Facilitate connection-building across public and private labor force stakeholders to improve workforce training (including agricultural workforce training) and education alignment, and collaboration at the regional level.
    a. Coordinate among regional stakeholders to ensure new, existing, and future members of the labor force are aware of workforce training and education resources;
    b. Ensure connections are made between employers and middle schools, high schools, career and technical centers, and others;
    c. Arrange employer visits to schools;
    d. Coordinate internships, job shadowing, coop experiences; and
    e. Facilitate employer participation on career center boards.

Example Short-term and Long-term Business Recruitment and Retention Practices

Short-term:

1. Pursue talent from previously untapped pools such as retired, Veterans, historically underserved populations, and justice-involved or previously justice-involved individuals;
2. Adjust wages and benefits and offering non-wage incentives;
3. Onboard and train new employees quickly;
4. Build-in flexibility with scheduling while ensuring adequate hours;
5. Work with service providers (like Vermont Department of Health and the United Way of Northwest Vermont) that can provide wrap-around services and wellness programs, for employees;
6. Provide employee training to increase the understanding of generational differences; and
7. Provide quality, ongoing employee bias training.

Long-term:

1. Develop strategies to keep employees, such as staging rewards;
2. Make workforce planning a higher priority and an executive conversation;
3. Identify best workers quickly and have career paths ready for them; and
4. Invest in industry job engineering.

"Justice-involved individuals" means those individuals that have been incarcerated or have had contact with the criminal justice system.

3. **Improve Career Center Education.** Increase the percentage of students entering Career Technical Education (CTE) and the trades by:
    a. Encouraging high school guidance counselors and parents to include CTE education when considering their students' career pathway;
    b. Advocate for more funding for CTE facilities and for changes to the CTE funding system to encourage higher attendance at CTE centers; and
    c. Advocate for permanent funding for adult education programs and staffing at CTE Centers.
4. **Emerging Workforce Needs.** Seek funding in cooperation with Community College of Vermont (CCV), and other partners, to support CCV's work to develop courses/curriculum to address emerging workforce needs in the West Central Vermont Region.
5. **Non-profit Sector Support.** In cooperation with Common Good Vermont, seek funding to support workforce development efforts, business planning, and training specifically targeted to the needs of the non-profit sector.
6. **Weatherization.** Collaborate with existing Weatherization Assistance programs that serve the Region (e.g. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, BROC Community Action, Capstone Community Action) in their efforts to expand and retain their workforce and to implement recommendations of the Weatherization Workforce Plan developed by Efficiency Vermont in October 2021. Support the development of an in-state weatherization training center based on the ReSource model.

7. **Nursing and Health Care.** Work with regional partners, including local hospitals and universities, to implement the recommendations of the Green Mountain Care Board's Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan to close the workforce needs identified by the Vermont Talent Pipeline in the Health Hiring Needs Assessment.
8. **Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services**. Assist regional non-profits and governmental entities that seek to fund programs that provide mental health support and substance misuse-related services to regional workers to support employee retention and positive economic outcomes for all parties.
9. **Worker Reentry Support.** Support partner efforts to provide training and support for people who are leaving incarceration and reentering the workforce. This includes programs at Vermont Works for Women, Working Fields, and local community justice centers.
10. **Employer of Choice Program.** Develop regional programs that recognize employers who tailor their work requirements, conditions, and expectations to attract the work force of today and the future.
11. **Learn as You Earn Programs.** Support partners efforts to create "learn as you earn" programs where workers receive ongoing training leading to certifications and credentials that are pathways to well-paying jobs and essential jobs.
12. **Reskill Workers in Fossil-Fuel Based Industries.** Work with the Vermont Climate Council, Community College of Vermont (CCV), and other partners to assist workers in fossil-fuel based industries obtain the skills and job training needed for better-paying employment in low or zero greenhouse gas emitting sectors.

Indicators

1. Number of Vermont high school students enrolled in technical programs (Source: US Department of Education). Desired Trend: Up.

Figure 29 – Downtown Barre – Source: CVEDC

Goal #5: Infrastructure and Resilience

Actively participate in the planning, funding, and construction of infrastructure projects needed to strengthen the regional economy and that support equity, smart growth principals, and economic resilience in response to climate change and other disasters.

Actions

1. **RDC Priority Project List**. Annually update Regional Priority Project Lists (See Appendix D) and seek funding to plan and implement identified projects. All projects identified on Regional Priority Project Lists, as most recently amended, are hereby adopted as a part of the CEDS.
2. **Tax-Increment Financing**. Support the creation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts within the Region and legislation that would enable the development of project-specific TIFs.
3. **Water and Wastewater Planning.** Work with municipalities, VT ANR, NBRC, and USDA-RD to plan for future water supply, wastewater, and stormwater needs and to complete preliminary engineering reports (PER) which are necessary to make informed decisions regarding project affordability, effective impact on climate change resilience, and whether the project meets requirements to access State and federal funding.
4. **Water and Wastewater Funding.** Advocate for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund Intended Use Plans, and RDC Priority Project Lists, to provide greater priority to projects focused on economic development and community development. This includes projects located in smart growth locations, areas with unmet housing need, and areas where housing costs are misaligned with area median income.

5. **Electric Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure.** Work with VELCO and distribution utilities to plan, and seek grant funding, for upgrades to the electric transmission and distribution system (including electric storage) to ensure a resilient, renewable, and low-carbon electric grid that supports a vibrant renewable energy-related economy and low electricity costs.
6. **Renewable Transportation Fuels.** Work with municipalities and relevant stakeholders to plan for local renewable transportation refueling networks and infrastructure, such as Level 2 and Level 3 EV recharging and hydrogen refueling, ensure that they support regional destinations (e.g. downtowns, villages, resorts, tourist sites, transportation hubs, major employers), and that they are planned along major regional transportation route per the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan.
7. **Broadband**. Assist Communication Union Districts and existing service providers in accomplishing universal broadband access within the Region (including rural areas) and plans to implement high-speed broadband service expansion in areas planned for growth.
8. **Streets**. Cooperate with municipalities, VTrans and other stakeholders to plan, engineer, fund, and construct walkable/multi-modal transportation improvements ("Complete Streets") in areas planned for growth that can enable economic development, housing development, and access for all residents (including those that lack access to a vehicle) to a range of safe and affordable transportation modes when commuting to work.
9. **Roads and Bridges.** Cooperate with municipalities, VTrans, and other stakeholders to plan, engineer, fund, and perform the repair or reconstruction of roads and bridges integral to supporting and growing the Region's economy.
10. **Rail**. Cooperate with municipalities, VTrans, and other stakeholder to plan, engineer, fund, and construct appropriate rail infrastructure that support commercial and industrial development.
11. **Brownfields**. Seek funding from the EPA to continue funding assessment and site planning and to establish a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to specifically serve brownfield cleanup in the West Central Vermont Region.
12. **Underutilized Sites**. Support partner efforts to develop master redevelopment plans for currently underutilized sites within the Region, particularly closed college campuses and public schools, that could be used to support housing, commercial development, municipal uses, or community uses.
13. **Investment in Historic Structures**. Support partner efforts to secure funding to rehabilitate and reuse historic structures in our regional downtowns and villages.
14. **Permit Reform.** Advocate for less duplicative and overlapping federal, state and local permitting processes.
15. **Data.** Cooperate with the University of Vermont Office of Engagement, and other statewide and regional economic development organizations, to develop an Integrated Data and Research Infrastructure to create the "capacity for the state of Vermont to have extensive access to data across scales and sectors."[40]
16. **Funding.** Investigate ways that a future Economic Development District (EDD) could access grant funding, and/or develop funding programs, to assist with the planning, engineering, and construction of infrastructure projects that support economic development within the Region.

[40] UVM Office of Engagement and Center for Rural Studies, "Amplifying Vermont's Economic Resilience," August 2021, https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Office-of-Engagement/Roundtable_Report_3.pdf), p.53.

Work with municipalities interested in leveraging local ARPA funds to invest in economic development.

Indicators

1. Broadband Access (25/3 mbps) (Source: State of VT Dept of Public Service.). Desired Trend: Up.
2. Number of publicly available electric vehicle charging stations (Source: VTrans). Desired Trend: Up.

Figure 30 – Rural Addison County – Source: Clover Ridge Media

Goal #6: Quality of Life

Balance economic development goals and growth with the importance of retaining key elements of our high quality of life in West Central Vermont (e.g. ample access to outdoor recreation, arts and culture, high quality K-12 public schools, and compact settlement surrounded by rural countryside).

Actions

1. **Land Use.** Implement the land use goals and policies from partner regional plans that plan for housing and economic development in our areas planned for growth and for conservation of our working lands for use in agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation.
2. **Community Facilities.** Cooperate with municipalities and stakeholders to support the maintenance and improvement of community facilities (e.g. libraries, senior centers, community centers) that are vital to regional quality of life in both urban and rural places.
3. **Farm to Plate.** Cooperate with stakeholders to implement projects identified in the 2021-2030 Vermont Agricultural and Food Systems Strategic Plan (Vermont Farm to Plate), or other regional projects intended to support local agriculture and value-added food product sales, that will support continued growth of the local farm, food system, and forestry economy within the Region.
4. **Outdoor Recreation.** Collaborate with Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, and regional recreation collaboratives led by the regional planning commissions, to further the economic interests of the outdoor recreation economy within the Region.
5. **Forest Economy.** Cooperate with stakeholders to implement projects and actions intended to strengthen the Region's Forest Economy as identified in the 2017 Vermont Forest Action Plan and the Vermont Forest Sector Systems Analysis.

6. **Creative Economy and the Arts**. Continue to strengthen the recognition of the economic impact of, and support for, the creative economy. Cooperate with stakeholders to implement projects identified in the 2021 CreateVT – Action Plan for Vermont's Creative Sector. This portion of the economy is fundamentally unique in that it is a significant contributor to the culture in our Region.
7. **Tourism.** Cooperate with partners, including the VT Convention Bureau, local Chambers of Commerce and Downtown Organizations, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative and Lake Champlain Byway, to support growth of the tourism industry in the Region.

Indicators

1. Percentage of new housing in areas planned for growth as defined in each regional comprehensive plan (Source: RPCs). Desired Trend: Up.

Appendix A – Summary of Public Process

West Central Vermont CEDS Website

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee created a website specifically for the CEDS in early 2021. The website (https://www.westcentralvt.org/) contains an explanation of the project, contact information for project partners and the CEDS Dashboard. During the public outreach process, the website contained information about meetings and how to submit comments regarding the project. If an Economic Development District (EDD) is created, the website could easily transition into the EDD website.

Figure 31 - A Public Meeting in Pawlet, VT - Source: RRPC

Workshop #1

The West Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee held 4 workshops in early 2021. This workshop was primarily used to inform stakeholders about the West Central Vermont CEDS project and the requirements of a CEDS. The workshop was also used to conduct a SOAR exercise with attendees. The results of these exercises are included in the respective sub-regional SOARs located in Appendix C. All workshops were held digitally via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Workshops were held on the following dates:

- June 3, 2021 – Rutland County (RRPC and CEDRR)
- June 10, 2021 – Addison County (ACRPC and ACEDC)
- June 17, 2021 – Chittenden County (CCRPC and GBIC)
- June 24, 2021 – Central Vermont (CVRPC and CVEDC)

Employer Survey

The West Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee conducted a survey of employers between August and October 2021. The brief survey asked questions about workforce development, infrastructure, and contained a SWOT exercise. An Executive Summary of the Employer Survey results is in Appendix B.

Future iterations of the Employer Survey shall include additional questions about location of business (by county) and will ask employers if they are located in a "rural" or "urban" area.

Figure 32 - Champlain Bridge in Addison - Source: Clover Ridge Media

Focus Groups

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee held six focus groups to engage underrepresented communities in the development of the CEDS. The intent of the focus groups was to better understand individuals' experience living and working in West Central Vermont. Focus groups were also used as an opportunity to inform underrepresented communities about the CEDS and potential benefits for the Region.

Focus groups were developed in cooperation with partner organizations.

BIPoC Business Owners

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee hired Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VT POC) in the spring of 2022 to conduct outreach with underrepresented communities. VT POC's focus was to

connect with BIPoC business owners through a series of 12 focus groups in each sub-region in West Central Vermont. The Final Report, including methodology, summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations is included in Appendix F. The following is a direct excerpt from the Executive Summary of the Final Report the identifies the biggest challenges and needs of focus group participants:

- ***Access to capital*** *- participants found difficulty in accessing capital, whether for personal or business activities, from traditional institutions.*
    - *Recommendation: Financial institutions, whether public or private, must steer away from traditional "one size fits" approach and seek alternatives that meet the needs of the BIPoC community.*

- ***Accessibility of resources*** *- while participants acknowledged the existence of resources across the state, most participants did not access because they did not know where to start, had a negative past experience with similar resource providers, or experienced inconsistent quality from resource providers.*
    - *Recommendation: State entities and human services organizations must ensure that BIPoC community members are receiving equal access to resources across the state and ensure that the quality of service is consistent, if not at a higher level, to white counterparts.*

- ***Business basics*** *- BIPoC business owners felt disconnected from resources that allow for a strong foundation when starting and running a business, such as access to capital or a Business Start-Up Checklist. Additionally, BIPoC business owners called for Vermont's antiquated processes to be reviewed and upgraded.*
    - *Recommendation: Continued efforts towards making Vermont a more digitally capable state. Additionally, development of a business basics workshop series by a BIPoC-led organization specifically for the BIPoC business community to help inform and guide business owners through the various stages of development can help mitigate issues of trust and accessibility.*

- ***Systemic inequities*** *- participants felt the weight of Vermont's "insider mentality", which results in many BIPoC leaving the state.*
    - *Recommendation: Consistent and on-going budget funding for bias training by both public and private employers will ensure that system inequities are incorporated into organizational culture and are addressed regularly by all levels of employment.*

- ***Why Vermont?*** *- Despite the challenges, participants noted the desire to stay in Vermont. Many felt that Vermont has much to offer and, if challenges can be overcome, many see a future for themselves in the state.*
    - *Recommendation: Efforts to retain BIPoC Vermonters must be made at the state level, with support from employers must go beyond current actions.*

College Students and High School Seniors and Career Technical Program Seniors

Outreach was made in all four sub-regions to bring three groups of students together. These were High School seniors in traditional programs, Career Technical School students, and College students. Despite

significant outreach we had limited success due to scheduling conflicts and a general lack of interest in economic development planning within this cohort. Significant points identified by those students that did participate:

1. The college cohort cited cost of living as a barrier to staying in Vermont upon graduation.
2. A connection to the environment is a driver for many of those choosing to stay in Vermont, as well as policies that protected the environment and Vermont's response to climate change.
3. College cohort was looking for employment where they had progressive benefit packages and flexibility in the work schedule.
4. CTE students felt that the opportunity for "hands-on" learning was key to their decision.

In summary, the students discussed things that had a direct personal impact on them. The outdoor environment and family ties were the primary drivers for staying in Vermont, while cost of living, lack of options of activities, and winter months were primary negatives.

Disability-related NGOs

The West Central Vermont Strategy Committee will hold focus groups with disability-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the summer of 2022. The results of this outreach will inform the final draft CEDS in September 2022.

Community Actions Agencies

Community Actions Agencies in Vermont help lower-income Vermonters to meet their basic needs and become self-sufficient. Members of West Central Vermont Strategy Committee met with leadership at the three community action agencies that serve the Region during the winter of 2021-2022 to better understand the present and anticipated future needs of low and moderate income Vermonters in regard to economic development, employment, and related support:

- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- Capstone Community Action (CCA)
- BROC Community Action (BROC)

Meeting with these organizations highlighted several key topics that the Strategy Committee strived to address in the CEDS:

1. Transportation – Matching public transportation options with workplace needs for employees is essential for low-income individuals that do not otherwise have access to reliable transportation.
2. Affordable Housing and Code Enforcement – There is a lack of affordable housing stock across the Region. Low/Mod income people cannot afford "affordable housing," even when subsidized in some circumstances. In addition, lack of Code Enforcement in some communities leads to a poor quality housing for lower income households.
3. Affordable, quality day-care – There is not enough affordable, safe childcare for children age birth to kindergarten particularly in the more rural areas of the state. There is also a need for child care to be available during work hours beyond the traditional school schedule (e.g. third-shift). Better childcare for children with disabilities was also cited as a high need.

4. Livable Wage – Ensuring that Regional jobs pay a wage which is sufficient enough to cover the basic costs people need to live is essential. Addressing the benefits cliff to ensure that families can transition gradually off of benefit programs is needed.
5. Financial Literacy – Training on budgeting and financial literacy is a continued need
6. Language Education – Better English language courses are needed so that Immigrants and refugees can become skilled enough at communicating in English so that they can apply the skills and professions they had before they came to America. Many are highly educated but are forced to take entry-level jobs because they do not speak English fluently. Expanded opportunities for migrants to get the necessary certifications to work in the fields they had previously trained for in their home country would help with the local lack of workforce.
7. Broadband – The need for accessible, affordable, and reliable broadband is essential for all households to thrive.
8. Career and Technical Education (CTE) expansion – There is a need to expand programming through the CTEs in the Region to address adult ed and student preparation for available jobs. This includes workforce training to support elder care to create better quality options for serving low and moderate income elders.
9. Mental Health – There is a need for an expanded mental health system to address current unmet needs.
10. Fuel Alternatives – Most low income Vermonters, particularly in rural areas, rely on fossil fuels to heat their homes and to commute to their job. Assist all Vermonters to convert to fuel alternatives (e.g. electric vehicles and other heating sources) will positively impact our climate and assist with long-term affordability.
11. Entrepreneurial Support – Access to technical assistance, financial training, and funding capital for start-ups is needed for low and moderate income entrepreneurs. For New American entrepreneurs, expanded English learning programs, entrepreneurial support for migrant families (e.g. financial planning, mentoring, etc.…) is needed.

One-on-One Engagement

West Central Vermont Strategy Committee members conducted extensive one-on-one engagement with community partners between July 2021 and January 2022. This engagement occurred before the draft CEDS was released. Therefore, this engagement was focused on educating community partners about the West Central Vermont Region, explaining the CEDS project (and the benefits of a CEDS), reviewing the draft Regional SWOT, and having informal discussion about the regional economy and potential economic development projects that could benefit West Central Vermont. Employers were also directed to take the Employer Survey.

During the seven months of one-on-one engagement, the CEDS Strategy Committee met over 100 stakeholders representing both statewide and sub-regional organizations. Summarizing the outcome of this engagement is difficult, but is reflected in both the SOAR exercise and the below summary:

Assets:

1. Diverse regional economy
2. Extensive recreational opportunities (i.e., shore to mountains across all seasons) and access Vermont's natural resources

3. Schools/ Education (K thru college). Established and growing higher education sector (e.g. UVM, Middlebury, Champlain College, Norwich University, St. Michael's College, Castleton University, Vermont Tech, and CCV)
4. Culture of Vermont/Brand/Sense of community
5. Strong Entrepreneurial sector supported by our incubators
6. Extensive and well-established local food systems
7. Transportation networks and easy access to air, rail, and interstate highways.
8. Rural Identity that affords lifestyle options and supports a diversity of land and natural resource-based economic sectors (e.g. agriculture, quarrying, renewable energy)

Opportunities:

1. Reinvest in built environment and infrastructure to support our existing centers. Revitalize existing housing stock. Establish an entrepreneurial environment (Innovation Hub) that supports business creation, specialized educational opportunities, and workforce development
2. Expand childcare (especially for children under 3 years old) and pre-K access
3. Permitting/ Act 250 (refining the inconsistencies)
4. Leverage growing outdoor recreational economy) and continue marketing initiative to attract new, permanent residents to the Region. Embrace opportunities related to changing demographics of the existing workforce versus the influx of immigrants and refugees, new residents, and remote workers
5. Expand digital economy: (e.g., strengthen marketing of Vermont 'brand' and online sales infrastructure for all economic sectors in the Region) and increase telework capacity: (e.g., increase physical infrastructure, co-working spaces, and foster a culture that supports remote work for people within and outside the Region)

Priority Projects:

1. Invest in childcare and early childhood education.
2. Create affordable and accessible housing.
3. Buildout high speed internet (not just Broadband which is 25/3).
4. Invest in all infrastructure (e.g. public transportation, municipal water, storm, sewer, etc.) necessary to support compact development in our historic centers.
5. Reform Act 250 to remove overlapping jurisdictional issues and ease permitting in areas planned for growth.
6. Support projects that combat population decline, assist with solving the labor shortage and bolster workforce development efforts.

Figure 33 - Snake Mountain in Addison - Source: Clover Ridge Media

Review of Other Statewide Planning Efforts

The intent of this activity to efficiently utilize recent engagement efforts conducted by other state, regional and non-governmental partners on similar projects focused on economic development or specific industries. The Strategy Committee's goals were to reduce duplication of efforts and minimize stakeholder fatigue. The following is a comprehensive list of other statewide planning efforts reviewed during the development of the 2022 West Central Vermont CEDS:

- 2017 Vermont Forest Action Plan
- 2020 Annual Report, Vermont Council on Rural Development
- 2021 Annual Energy Report, A summary of progress made toward the goals of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan (VT DPS)
- 2021 – 2030 Vermont Agriculture and Food Systems Strategic Plan, Farm to Plate
- 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan
- Amplifying Vermont's Economic Resilience, A Community Economic Development Roundtables Report, 2021.
- Brownfields Revitalization Fund - (https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/brownfields-initiative)
- BROC Community Action in Southwestern Vermont, Bennington County, Rutland County Community Assessment ,2017
- Burlington's Racial Equity Strategic Roadmap, Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, City of Burlington, VT, 2021
- Burlington Young Professionals. State of the Greater Burlington Young Professional Community. 2019 Survey Results

- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO), Community Needs Assessment, FY 2019
- Capstone Community Action, 2019 Needs Assessment
- Child Care is Everyone's Business – Annual Economic Impact of Comprehensive Child Care System for Vermont, April 2022
- Government Restructuring and Operations Review Commission Final Report, 2016
- Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future. Final Report of the Council on the Future of Vermont Spring, 2009 (VCRD)
- Legislative Report on Future of Public Higher Education in VT (Revised 2021)
- Report of the 2019 Vermont Community Leadership Summit, 2019 (VCRD)
- Report of the Executive Director of Racial Equity 2021.
- State of Vermont HUD Consolidated Plan, For Housing and Community Development Programs 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, and 2020 Action Plan (ACCD).
- State Workforce Development System Report of Findings & Recommendations (S 135 Report 2018)
- This Way Up! – There's Power in Our Numbers.
- VCRD – The Vermont Proposition
- Vermont Clean Energy Industry Report, 2021
- Vermont Climate Council, Climate Action Plan, 2021
- Vermont 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Vermont Forest Sector Systems Analysis
- Vermont Housing Needs Assessment 2020-2024, Completed for the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development – with appendices
- Vermont Department of Labor Report, Annual Workforce Development Report, 2020
- The Vermont Futures Project. A Vision for Vermont's Economy (Final Report)
- Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity. BIPOC Employer Survey Report 2020
- Vermont Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019 – 2023
- Vermont Health Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan, Green Mountain Care Board, 2021
- Weatherization Workforce Report, Efficiency Vermont, 2021

Appendix B – Executive Summary of Employer Survey

There were 132 responses to the Employer Survey sent out to Chittenden, Addison, Washington, and Rutland counties. Candidly, the responses were quite similar to those given by the business community in years past including concerns over lack of workforce, permitting, taxes, and workforce training. The only exception was that Broadband/Cell service and Childcare were far more prominent, most likely spurred by the Covid pandemic. All four sub-regions reported that the primary reason their businesses were in Vermont was because the business was founded here or the owners/CEOs grew up or chose to live in Vermont. A majority of Chittenden County respondents stated that they felt positive about the economy in their sub-region. The other three regions gave mixed or negative descriptions regarding the economy in their sub-regions.

Following are the summaries for each question that was asked.

Questions 1-3:

1. **In which municipality is your business located?**

2. **Why are you located in Vermont?**

3. **What one word or phrase best describes the economy in your region?**

The most responses were from Chittenden County, then Addison, Washington, and Rutland counties. The majority of responses stated that their businesses are located in Vermont because, 'I live here'. The second highest category was because the business was founded in Vermont and the third reason was because Vermont is where 'I grew up.' When asked to give a one word description of the economy in their region the responses from Addison, Washington and Rutland counties led with 'median or mixed comments, followed by negative descriptions then positive words. However, Chittenden County saw the majority of responses in the positive category then negative and then median or mixed.

Question 4:

4. **Are any of the following skills missing in your workforce pool?**

A. Written communication: yes___ no___ somewhat___
B. Reading comprehension: yes___ no ___ somewhat ___
C. Math: yes ___ no ___ somewhat ___
D. Thinking and Judgement/Problem solving: yes ___ no ___ somewhat __
E. Verbal communication/ Comprehension: yes ___ no ___ somewhat ___
F. Team and Cooperative skills: yes ___ no ___ somewhat ___
Other: _____

When all regions are aggregated the most common answer to each question is: no, the workforce is not missing those skills. Overall, the employers in the survey evaluated the workforce as performing the most strongly in reading comprehension, and the most poorly in thinking & judgement. In the section

where employers can write-in an answer the major themes that show up across the region are lack of workforce and needing more people in the trades/manufacturing/programming fields.
When Chittenden County is excluded from the results the employers in the other 3 counties rated the workforce as somewhat lacking in thinking and judgement, math, and written communication.

Question 5:

5. **Please evaluate the following from a business perspective.**
   Place an 'S' by the topics you think are a strength for your region.
   Place a 'W' by the topics you think are a weakness for your region.
   Place an 'O' by the topics you think are an opportunity for your region.
   Place a 'T' by the topics you think are a threat for your region.

   - Workers Compensation costs ___
   - Unemployment insurance costs ___
   - State and/or educational training programs ___
   - Healthcare costs ___
   - Roadway infrastructure ___
   - Water/Wastewater Infrastructure ___
   - Overall cost of doing business ___
   - State taxes ___
   - Construction related permit costs ___
   - Quality of Life ___
   - Quality of public education ___
   - Availability of childcare services ___
   - Availability of land and/or facilities for business growth ___
   - Telecommunications/Broadband/Cell infrastructure ___
   - Cultural opportunities ___
   - Ethnic diversity in workforce ___
   - Workforce housing availability ___
   - Utility costs ___
   - Other (Comments): _____

The data included rankings on the following issues: 1) Roadway Infrastructure; 2) Water / Wastewater; 3) Cost of Doing Business; and 4) State Taxes. Not surprisingly, results from Chittenden County businesses affirm its contrasts with less populated, more rural counties. In fact, rankings on all issues were relatively homogenous among the more rural counties. The relevant trends by region include Chittenden County businesses considering roadway infrastructure to be a far greater weakness than businesses in other counties. Chittenden County businesses also find more roadway opportunities coming to the region. With its public water and wastewater infrastructure, Chittenden County businesses find this issue to be a far greater strength than other counties. Although almost as many businesses in the county, presumably responding from rural towns, find it to be a weakness. Few businesses in any of the counties find the cost of doing businesses to be a weakness, although Chittenden departed by finding it to be a threat. This finding from the counties was the same on the issue of state taxes, with Chittenden businesses strongly departing, finding it to be a threat. With all the counties taken together, most businesses find the roadway infrastructure, water / wastewater issue to be weaknesses, while most find the cost of doing business and state taxes issues to be threats.

Question 6:

6. **Please rank the following 1-5 (1= poor, 5= excellent)**

Business Environment ___
Entrepreneurial Opportunity ___
Regulatory environment ___
Quality of public education ____
Access to natural resources for recreational opportunities ___
Availability of affordable housing ___
Availability of childcare services ___
Healthcare services ____
Safety from crime ____
Traffic/road congestion _____
Cultural opportunities ____
Access to Capital ___

Other _____

The most responses were from Chittenden County, then Addison, Washington, and Rutland counties.

The categories polled for were: business environment, entrepreneurial opportunity, regulatory environment, quality of public education, access to natural resources for recreational opportunities, availability of affordable housing, availability of childcare services, healthcare services, safety from crime, traffic/road congestion, cultural opportunities, access to capital, and an open-ended field for other.

When averaged, the highest-ranked category was access to recreation. This category received an average ranking of 5/5 in Rutland and Washington county and an average ranking of 4/5 in Addison and Chittenden county, with an overall 5/5 average ranking when all data was considered. Safety from crime was another high-ranking category, receiving an average ranking of 4 (Chittenden, Rutland) and 5 (Washington, Addison) and 4 overall.

The lowest categories overall were affordable housing and childcare. Availability of affordable housing was the lowest-ranking answer of the survey, averaging a 1/5, or poor, rating. Addison and Chittenden county had the lowest results with a strong 1/5 average, while Washington county had an average of 2/5 and Rutland 3/5. Childcare was the next lowest-ranking category, averaging 2/5 with Addison county ranking childcare 1/5, Chittenden and Washington 2/5 and Rutland 3/5.

When all data was considered by county (an average of all responses to all questions by county) every single county, and the data overall, saw an averaged response of 3 to all questions.

Most outlier data came from Rutland county, in the following questions: regulatory environment polled average 2 while other counties polled 3; affordable housing, childcare, and healthcare all polled one point higher in Rutland than in other counties (3 vs. 2 on housing and childcare and 4 vs an average of 3 on healthcare). Chittenden county also had a few outlier responses: both business environment and entrepreneurial opportunities polled one point higher in Chittenden than other counties, both scoring an average of 4 for Chittenden and 3 in all other counties. Traffic polled lower in Chittenden than in

other counties—other counties scored an average of 4, Chittenden scored 3. The number of Chittenden scores for 3 were so numerous that it pulled the average score for the poll down to 3.

Cultural opportunities scored higher in Chittenden and Addison county (4) than Rutland and Washington County (3) and Capital Access averaged 3 in all counties.

Respondents also had an opportunity to give an open-ended "other" in this category. 17 respondents wrote in here. Two respondents wrote in to describe perceived problems with the educational systems. There was one write-in in favor of Chittenden county and one write-in criticizing the attention received by Chittenden county. Two respondents described difficulty reaching either their local politicians or their local revolving loan fund (via a specific municipality). Healthcare was the most-addressed concern, with four responses. Childcare was written in once. One respondent wrote in to praise VEDA and one respondent wrote in to suggest more apprenticing programs.

Question 7:

7. **Please list up to three types of infrastructure in which you think we should invest in order of priority.**

116 respondents answered this question. 16 from Addison County, 76 from Chittenden County, 10 from Rutland County and 14 from Washington County.

When considered by county, roads were the top concern in Addison and Chittenden county, followed in both places by housing. Access to broadband/high-speed internet were the top concerns in Rutland and Washington county, followed by roads. Concerns of traffic, pollution, tourism, and support of the community were isolated to Chittenden county.

A large number of respondents did not follow the instructions to rank 3 infrastructure concerns in priority order so the data is presented as analysis of an open-ended question.

The responses to this question included:

- Roads – 43, or 37%
- Broadband or high-speed internet – 40, or 34%
- Housing – 35, or 30%
- Education – 24, or 21%
- Wastewater – 19, or 16%
- Access to alternative commuting options, such as bike and walking paths – 14, or 12%
- Bridges – 13, or 11%
- Childcare – 12, or 10%
- Cell coverage – 12, or 10%
- Renewable Energy – 9, or 7%
- Traffic – 8, or 7%
- Healthcare – 6, or 5%
- Pollution (particularly in Lake Champlain) – 6, or 5%
- Commercial real estate – 6, or 5%
- Reduction of business tax – 4, or 3%
- Access to rail travel – 4, or 3%

- Funding – 4, or 3%
- Access to air travel – 3, or 2%
- Stormwater – 3, or 2%
- Tourism support – 3, or 2%
- Utility costs – 3, or 2%
- Community support (activities or spaces that draw the community to businesses) – 3, or 2%
- Parking – 2, or 2%
- Business Education – 2, or 2%
- Workforce (not having workers) – 2, or 2%

A few special categories included support for climbers, indoor recreation, support for young professionals, STEM education, coding and programming, public safety, the proximity of social services to businesses (viewed by the respondent as a negative), and a desire to remove all of the paths and dog parks. Each of these received only one vote.

Question 8:

8. **As a Vermont business, what do you most need to thrive and grow in Vermont?**

124 respondents answered this question, with 8 skipping this question, with the following regional breakdown:

Addison County: 17 respondents
Chittenden County: 76 respondents
Rutland County: 11 respondents
Washington County: 18 respondents
Multiple Locations: 1 respondent
Statewide: 1 respondent

When answering this question, the majority of respondents (75) honed in on a singular topic: more people. Most as it relates to workforce, although two responses specifically referenced "customers." But 60% of the responses related in some way to stoking population growth. This need was represented rather evenly throughout every region with the exception of Rutland County, where slightly less than half of respondents identified population growth as a need.

Of those focused on employees, 45 answered simply "more staff," "more qualified employees," "reliable employees," or a variation on the wording. Respondents mentioned affordable housing (13), childcare (7), transportation (2), and healthcare options (2) as needs as it relates to the ability to attract and retain employees. Respondents mentioned a need for more workforce training opportunities (4), lower taxes/regulation (2), and the development of a "workforce pipeline" (1). Fifteen respondents focused on the need for more people as it relates to general community economic vibrancy.

Of the responses not related to population, 20 touched on the need for lower taxes and less regulation; 7 referenced access to capital; 2 referenced environmentally sustainable planning; 4 referenced infrastructure (roads, internet, general "infrastructure"); 2 referenced marketing support; 1 referenced technical assistance; 4 said they need very little.

Question 9:

9. How will we know we are succeeding? Please list specific outcomes and measures.

112 respondents answered this question, with 20 skipping this question, with the following regional breakdown:

Addison County: 18 respondents
Chittenden County: 69 respondents
Rutland County: 8 respondents
Washington County: 15 respondents
Multiple Locations: 1 respondent
Statewide: 1 respondent

The responses were varied for this question, but the majority of the responses fell into two main categories.

The first of these categories, with 51 responses, is a perceivable positive change in statistical and demographic reporting, with 20 respondents referencing an increase in tax receipts, registered businesses, median income, student enrollment, and a decrease in unemployment, broken down by region:

- Addison- 3
- Chittenden- 13
- Rutland- 0
- Washington- 4

32 respondents referenced an increase in population specifically, broken down by region:

- Addison- 11
- Chittenden- 14
- Rutland- 3
- Washington- 4

A second major category could be defined as “economic stability,” with 38 responses, and is led by a feeling or a perception and is hard to measure. Statements like “economic security for all families,” “more affordability,” “chronic health issues decline,” “quality of life,” “better wealth distribution,” “elimination of gender wage gap,” etc. Issues of equity and inclusion, although loosely referenced in the responses, are touched upon here. Regional breakdown for this category:

- Addison- 2
- Chittenden- 27
- Rutland- 4
- Washington- 4
- Statewide- 1

17 responses referenced an increase in housing stock and access to housing, with the regional break down:

- Addison- 2
- Chittenden- 12

- Rutland- 1
- Washington- 2

Other categories:

- A perceivable loosening of the regulatory environment (2 responses from Chittenden)
- When we have affordable childcare (1 response from Chittenden)
- A reduction in CO2 and other pollution measurables (1 Chittenden, 1 Addison)
- Perceivable infrastructure improvements (less traffic, faster internet) (2 Chittenden, 1 Addison)
- “When Vermonters stop dying from opioids.” (1 Chittenden)

Appendix C – SWOT and SOAR Analysis

West Central Vermont SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Workforce & Education			
Diverse educational systems: primary education, college, universities, tech centers.	Lacking available and affordable housing	Welcoming New Americans (immigrants/refugee populations)	Opioid Epidemic
	Lacking affordable and available childcare	Creating intentional and welcoming infrastructure for BBIPOC populations	Generational Transition (businesses, social infrastructure, employee basis- 'graying of the workforce')
	Insufficient workforce	Increasing availability of jobs	Increasingly specific skillsets needed to full impending job opportunities
	Skill shortages	Creating effective talent/job pipeline systems	Decrease in labor force participation in younger groups (16-20s)
		Retain individuals that choose to come here for higher education	VT has seen the greatest exodus of women leaving the workforce (in New England, during the Pandemic) (?)
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Diverse economy (type, scale)	Tourism hit by COVID	New entrepreneurs/ entrepreneurial support system	
		Proximity to Montreal and Boston	
		Growth of digital economy and remote working	
Infrastructure			
Regionally unique transportation assets (int'l airport, regional airports, train stations).	Rural Mobility	Expand transportation services to support increased rural mobility (last mile connections)	Incoming funds for infrastructure need to be well managed
Quality of Life			
Health care systems/resources, major healthcare institutions (UVM, RRMC, Porter, CV Medical); community health systems	Lack of diversity (homogenous communities compared to the rest of the US)	New low income housing	
	Housing affordability	Create better awareness of current and historical BBIPOC community	
	Regional housing insecurity (in every area outside of luxury housing: to include transitional housing, workers housing)	Connect with the current and historical BBIPOC community to identify needs	
	Regional income disparities associated with race		
Civic & Governance Systems			
	Small tax base and low density of the built environment in areas planned for development	increase regionalization of services	Decreasing tax base (decreasing population)
		Increase permitting efficiencies	Difficulty retaining qualified municipal staff (due to pay rates and age)
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Access to natural resources (mineral resources, water resources and quality)	Rural development patterns, forest fragmentation	Resiliency due to renewable energy production (?)	

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Workforce & Education			
Diverse and quality educational systems: primary education, colleges, universities, technical centers.	Welcoming New Americans (immigrants/refugee populations)	A diverse workforce, inclusive of all races, ages, economic status, and sexual orientation. Encourage and accommodate all members of the community. Address the disparities for folks with disabilities. And make accommodations for those with mental illnesses that are often overlooked. Aspire to offer resources and support for those with all forms of disabilities.	Median wages and household incomes that are more comparable to similar geographic areas/cities within New England. Increases in wages across the board, not just in mainstream high paying jobs. Payroll data shows increases in wages/employment.
Access to Higher Education	Creating intentional and welcoming infrastructure for BBIPOC populations	Affordable and accessible high speed internet infrastructure is built out/accessible, especially in rural areas	A greater number of high school students accessing career centers/technical programs.
	Increasing availability of jobs		Decrease in the % of families looking for or in need of childcare.
	Creating effective talent/job pipeline systems such as providing more apprenticeship programs, especially post-secondary, or veteran talent-employer pipeline. Need to provide greater access and visibility to these programs to attract BIPOC residents (particularly in youth). Additionally, several segments of the population may be open to retraining/learning new job skills: folks coming out of prison, folks that may need a bit more assistance due to mental health challenges, older folks. Job sharing/parttime work may also be appropriate.		Higher labor participation rate
	Retain individuals that choose to come here for higher education. Retain the talent and reduce the brain drain.		
	Increase childcare resources (availability to and affordability of)		
	Better coordination needed between both K-12 and adult education.		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Diverse economy (type, scale)	Establish new entrepreneur support systems (such as replicating the VT Small Business Dev Corp. entrepreneurship course in secondary schools, or creating an entrepreneur/manufacturing resource sharing platform that mirrors intermunicipal agreements), grow existing support systems, and increase mentorship opportunities between new entrepreneurs and experienced and/or retired workers. Increase knowledge/awareness building of resources available to support business/entrepreneurship. Specific Opportunity: Pandemic and global warming have shown VT leadership in renewables, water, outdoor assets (ex: real estate) and there is strong market for assets available here.	Accessible resources for those looking to start a business (ie: Greater/easier access to land and capital for entrepreneurship (especially for BIPOC population; increased access to capital and technical assistance for startups, women-owned businesses, and small businesses; more public-private partnerships to assist innovation and entrepreneurship; and venture capital). Ensure that those looking to start businesses are aware of the resources available to them.	Business friendly ecosystem

Local environment that is active in innovation and has an entrepreneurship spirit. Many entrepreneurial resources are available through local and State organizations and there are strong connections between partner and/or affiliate organizations.	Proximity to Montreal and Boston can be further leveraged/built off of (ie., the physical infrastructure exists, and would be a strategic move for Canadian companies in need of a US based satellite office)	Robust outdoor recreation economy	
There is high social and community capital, it's easy to network and a community atmosphere exists.	Promote growth of digital economy and remote working and digital jobs economy. Provide greater support for remote workers (ie: Ensure that high speed internet is widely accessible and meets promise of service delivery speed).	Greater entrepreneurship and small business ownership opportunities for youth (particularly youth of color).	
Proximity to larger markets such as Montreal and Boston	Support regional marketing initiatives in order to retain existing workforce and attract new ones.		
Infrastructure			
Regionally unique transportation assets (international airport, regional airports, train stations, bus systems, and interstate access).	Expand transportation services to support increased rural mobility (last mile connections)	Universal broadband access. Job creation to expand broadband infrastructure.	
Energy assets - renewable energy portfolio supports resiliency. Utilities are good at planning for climate related issues.	Repurpose or renovate community buildings that are no longer being fully utilized (ie: Redevelop Amtrak Station in Rutland to make it a welcoming/aesthetically appealing; Burlington High School/Tech Center reconstruction.	Childcare and social infrastructure cannot be overlooked and should be a funding priority . Aspire to have more families filling out our schools and access to high quality, affordable childcare.	
Geographic position on main transit corridor between Montreal and Boston	Create more diverse housing to accommodate various populations (ie: appropriate for the aging population – one floor, smaller footprint; improved, additional and more diverse options for elder housing, assisted living and/or retiree communities; starter homes to attract families and workers; and affordable housing *(Specific opportunity: Redevelop aging housing stock)*		
	General support for preparing/dealing with climate change and changing transportation options (increasing biking access/parking/ walkability of towns and villages/promote use and additional buildout of railways (ie: expansion of railways), etc.		
	Provide ubiquitous high-speed broadband . Increase broadband access to all homes within the county		
Quality of Life			
High quality healthcare institutions (UVM Medical Center, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Porter Hospital, Central Vermont Medical Center)	Demand for housing is high and could be met by high-quality, energy efficient housing. Multiple opportunities exist around new construction (housing starts, low-income housing) and revitalization of existing housing (especially as it supports residential life in downtowns and villages). Housing opportunities should ensure access to transitional and rental housing and be set up for diverse populations.	Let's be more welcoming, supportive and promote diversity in our communities. Engagement should take place across all groups, communities, and abilities.	People have different definitions of quality of life. We need data tools and to look at the data more deeply as to how it affects marginalized communities (ie: increased wages for low income earners). Create an economic summary that uses metrics (use Economic Profile for CEDS) to establish progress in 5 years.
Area offers access and availability a diversity of health care needs (including primary care, substance abuse and recovery, mental health care, and specialized care (ie: pediatric dentistry)	Create better awareness of, and connect with, current and historical BBIPOC community and identify needs specific to these populations. Establish ways to increase socio-economic diversity and improve inclusion.	Create Prosperity in the Region. We want everyone to have a little extra money in their pocket and to raise the quality of life for lower income. Economic gains and quality of life is achievable for everyone. (Ie: help low-income residents address the hidden costs to life in Vermont, (heating costs, snow tires, etc.)	Increased retail sales due to tourism and new businesses.

There is a strong network of nonprofits in health and human services that support health care institutions.	Increase awareness of and establish general public support for projects/programs that address quality of life concerns. Ensure regulations promote our aspirations and change things for the better without spoiling our communities. (Ie: Slow traffic, speed control, improve safety relative to walkability in neighborhoods)		
In each region, there are connected and supportive communities with strong organizational resources and volunteer networks that focus on community spirit and partnership. Neighbors know each other and are creating vibrant places to live.			
Proximity to cities such as New York, Boston, and Montreal (within a day's drive).			
Civic & Governance Systems			
Accessible scale of government. It is a small state and the legislature is very reachable. Access to local officials is also a positive and knowing your local representatives allows good communication. The government is "open" to the public and people can speak about issues from behind the rail or just listen in on the issues at hand which fosters involvement and discussion.	increase regionalization of services	Greater civic education/education on how to engage with local/regional/state government. Engagement will be across all groups, communities, abilities and bring a diversity of voices to civic engagement. Encourage conversations between younger people, those with new ideas, and voices of experience.	More diverse participation in government (particularly higher youth participation and intergenerational conversations and projects).
	Increase permitting efficiencies		
	Engage youth voice in civic government. Encourage engagement with youth groups and promote curriculum that bring in young voices.		
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Access to natural resources (mineral resources, water resources and quality)	Resiliency due to renewable energy production (?)	Continue to enhance access to public lands	
Regulatory systems and access to tools that protect and preserve lands (ie: Land stewardship aspect of Act 250, Numerous parks, and conserved lands/areas (i.e: Green Mountain National Forest, Moosalamoo))	Enhancing trail networks for multi-use	Support forest products, recreational resources, and agricultural resources. Look to sustainability grow these industries (silviculture, ag, outdoor rec)	
Numerous natural amenities (Lake Champlain, Green Mountains, etc.) make the region a desirable place to live. Recreational assets such as lakes, trails, skiing, hiking, snowmobile, parks, conserved lands are accessible, new destinations are being created, and existing destinations are well cared-for.	Enhance, support, and leverage appeal of concentrated village centers. Opportunity for redevelopment	Address waste water issues for village areas	
Concentrated village centers/historical settlement patterns have curb appeal			
Concentrated village centers/historical settlement patterns have potential for higher tax revenue per acre and potentially lower costs associated with infrastructure			
Existence of water/waste water infrastructure in urban centers			

Addison County Sub-Region SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Workforce & Education			
• Highly educated	• Social infrastructure: available and affordable early childhood education, affordable housing/ available housing, opportunities for working partners	• Pandemic-related immigration (due to low COVID numbers)	• Demographics (losing population), Opioid epidemic
• Strong educational system	• Assisted living or retiree communities	• Retraining workers	• Generational transition (keeping businesses going as generations retire out of market)
	• Becoming more accepting community		
	• Student career pathway limitations		
	• Matching unemployed to job opportunities and matching skills to employer needs		
	• Personal/business financial literacy (need well trained bookkeepers and accountants)		
	• Insufficient workforce (aging workforce a significant issue). Lacking multigenerational workforce		
	• Quality and expense of childcare		
	• Reliance on external contractors (ie. Always a need for engineers)		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
• Diverse economy (type, scale)	• Availability of affordable retail, numerous boutique stores	• Retirement demographic = growth industry	• Online retail
• Easy to network	• Small, isolated market. Businesses need external markets to grow (i.e. Bees Wrap, Maple Landmark sell online)	• New entrepreneurs/ entrepreneurial support system	• Negative perception of private enterprise
• Entrepreneurial spirit	• Entrepreneurial support system	• Remote working, Digital jobs/economy	• Public Perception as better off than it really is
	• If Middlebury suffered economically, the region would suffer (not collapse, but adversely affect)	• Local food system, Specialty food & beverage industry	• Ongoing pandemic (or future ones)
		• Partnering with Middlebury College and alumni	• Loss of processing capacity for agricultural goods
		• College spinoff (students and alumni)	• Recession (dairy collapse is one sector)
Infrastructure			
• Renewable energy generation	• Lack of physical infrastructure: water, sewer, wastewater, broadband (predominantly outside the villages), power	• Renewable energy generation	
• Iconic villages (including village greens) and village centers	• Major highway access, creates an isolated market	• Improved, additional and more diverse options for elder housing, assisted living and/or retiree communities	
• Anchor Institutions (Major private university; hospital; CCV; etc)		• Ubiquitous high-speed broadband	
• Rail, air access		• Redevelopment of aging housing stock	
		• Amtrak to Middlebury /Vergennes	
Quality of Life			

• Health care systems/resources	• Income disparity	• Support residential life in downtowns, create housing, set up opportunities for diverse populations (include military retirees and retired professors, Middlebury alumni)	
• Porter Hospital	• Homogenous community. Residents can feel threatened by newcomers.		
• Area offers quality healthcare overall (including mental health resources) and specialized care (i.e pediatric dentistry)			
• Healthy Place to Start/Raise a Family			
• Connected and supportive community			
• Village fabric is intact (especially in small villages)			
Civic & Governance Systems			
• New community outreach/communication between law enforcement and community			• Obstacles to redevelopment (reg, cost)
Land Use and Natural Resources			
• Recreation: lakes, trails, skiing, hiking, snowmobile, parks, conserved land (State, Federal, and Private)	• Limited public access to lake front (Lake Champlain, especially near DAR State Park, Chimney Point area)		• Climate change
• Numerous parks and conserved lands/areas (I.e: Green Mountain National Forest, Moosalamoo)			
• Local food system: dairy farms, farm stands (people buying directly from the farm); value-added ag; vertical markets; farmer markets and the CoOp)			
• Sense of place (phys attributes; respect for environment)			
• Climate resilience (natural resources); could also benefit from population migration related to CC			

Addison County Sub-Region SOAR

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Workforce & Education			
Highly educated workforce.	Immigration during COVID. Accommodated new residents.	A diverse workforce, inclusive of all races, ages, economic status, and sexual orientation. Encourage and accommodate all members of the community.	Numbers of locally owned business vs out of state owners. What are the trends?
Strong, all round educational system with multiple resources for technical education, such as Hannaford technical center and Northland Jobs center.	The ability to retain workers with a range of employment opportunities and affordable housing options.	The development of broadband throughout the county. Support remote employment and education.	See the length of time to fill a job drop.
Middlebury College attracts students, families, academics, visitors further reinforcing the value of higher ed.	To be a 'welcoming' community. Provide accessible housing and employment opportunities to all.	Vibrant downtowns and villages, where people can live, work, and walk or take public transit to work. Centers with a variety of social and service amenities.	
A collaborative community. Organizations, residents work together and support each other on important issues and in difficult times. This has been very evident during the pandemic. People take of each other /People feel safe here	Create opportunities for more housing.	Support the health of our citizens.	Are our storefronts full?
Strong social services.	Create more public transportation options/ time of day options.		See an increase in the diversity of jobs (salary and type) in the region. The % of families looking for childcare drops.
A strong sense of county (regional) identity. It is common for people to identify with being from Addison County, not just their specific town.	Create more opportunities for childcare.		
Quality of Life.	Opportunities to take advantage of the changing demographic. Investigate repurposing of underused public buildings. Repurpose.		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Diverse economy (type, scale)	Regional Marketing. Increased digital presence for the region.	Maintain a diverse economy	Per capita income increased
Easy to network	Grow supportive systems for entrepreneurs	Enable greater subject options	Businesses can find local, capable employees
Entrepreneurial spirit	Partnering with Middlebury College and alumni & College spinoff (students and alumni)	Greater diversity of small business owners. Strong entrepreneurial ecosystem	Growth in middle class income.
ACEDC- to support business with resources and expertise	Lots of Federal funding!	Affordable / adequate housing available for anyone	Greater number of small businesses
Job Markets is very diverse in terms of entry/mid and upper level positions	Retirement demographic = growth industry	Alternative transportation availability, greater diversity of transportation options. Adaptable transportation infrastructure	Increased number of visitors / increased tourism revenue
The Makery	New entrepreneurs/ entrepreneurial support system	Adequate housing	Increased commercial loan demand
Steady economy with little fluctuation that deviates from national trends (ie. VT goes in to recession later and doesn't go as deep)	Remote working, Digital jobs/economy	Adequate number of trained workforce	Appropriate available housing stock
Regional marketing initiatives	Local food system, Specialty food & beverage industry	Less regulation / regulatory framework that supports small business	
Local bank/ engaged lending	Natural setting and recreation opportunities for tourism and local enjoyment	Venture capital	
Proximity to large markets (Boston, NYC) - tourism and business sales	Pandemic and global warming have shown VT leadership in renewables, water, outdoor assets (ex: real estate) there is strong market for assets available here		
	Potential of hydrogen fuels could reduce demands on electric grid, mining, and costs to consumers		

Infrastructure			
Renewable energy generation	Renewable energy generation	Villages surrounded by agriculture and forests - requires more dense development of those villages (e.g. St. Mary's School area)	Increase in school age population
Iconic villages (including village greens) and village centers	Improved, additional and more diverse options for elder housing, assisted living and/or retiree communities	Universal broadband access	Stable tax rate
Anchor Institutions (Major private university; hospital; CCV; etc.)	Ubiquitous high-speed broadband	Vergennes Economic Corridor - create development opportunity and further invigorate the downtown	No empty storefronts in downtowns
Rail, air access	Redevelopment of aging housing stock	Leverage funds from outside sources to improve infrastructure while minimizing burden to residents	Full utilization of empty buildings
Our infrastructure better than the state on average (at least in M'bury)	Amtrak to Middlebury /Vergennes	More families filling our schools	Full access to train stations
Public transit	Development of more housing stock - particularly starter homes to attract families and workers		
Recreational amenities	Repurpose community buildings that are no longer being fully utilized		
Community sense & support	Better utilization of migrant community and development of their potential		
Strong civic organizations			
Effectively maintaining what we have			
Quality of Life			
Health care systems/resources	Support residential life in downtowns, create housing, set up opportunities for diverse populations (include military retirees and retired professors, Middlebury alumni)	Engagement across all groups, communities, abilities, and welcoming engagement	Increasing birth rate, immigration
Porter Hospital	Consolidated Farmer's markets, CSA's	Multiple options for safe places to walk, interact	
Area offers quality healthcare overall (including mental health resources) and specialized care (i.e pediatric dentistry)	Family events, outdoor venues	Tourist and community gathering locations, people coming here via the train	Increased retail sales due to tourism, new businesses, tour operators
Healthy Place to Start/Raise a Family	Slow traffic, speed control, improve safety	Multiple options for safe places to walk, interact	Fewer complaint calls to municipal officials
Connected and supportive community	Improve inclusion, engage with existing communities	Engagement across all groups, communities, abilities, and welcoming engagement	Multiple events on the same day!
Village fabric is intact (especially in small villages)	More ways to meet, interact with neighbors		
Cultural Events- e.g. Midd College, Town Hall Theater,			
Network of nonprofits- health and human services			
Restaurants and access to healthy, local food			
Soundscapes/Tranquility			
Civic & Governance Systems			
New community outreach/communication between law enforcement and community	Zoom and remote technologies, training more people, providing access to more people	Conversations between younger people, new ideas, and voices of experience	Intergenerational conversations, projects
Easy to be engaged, participate in town committees, organizations	Reaching out to and Bringing in new (and old) participants	Engagement across all groups, communities, abilities	Town meeting turnout, higher voter numbers, expand volunteer base so people don't get burned out

Welcoming, Bringing new residents into local government	Newsletters, mailings and outreach to folks that don't use/have access to digital resources, build on AC Mutual Aid groups		Changing make up of boards
Accessibility- Knowing your local representatives, Good communication	Youth groups and curriculum to bring in voices		
Engaged Youth			
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Recreation: lakes, trails, skiing, hiking, snowmobile, parks, conserved land (State, Federal, and Private)	Limited public access to lakefront (Lake Champlain, especially near DAR State Park, Chimney Point area), expanding walking trails, biking trails, Catamount ski	Local Recreation opportunities	Loop/Tour trails, places to stop on rides
Numerous parks and conserved lands/areas (i.e: Green Mountain National Forest, Moosalamoo)	Private lands and scenic views/recreation sites	Make land and recreation accessible to everyone	Zoning and more private landowners/entrepreneurs provide food and services to congregating visitors seasonally
Local food system: dairy farms, farm stands (people buying directly from the farm); value-added ag; vertical markets; farmer markets and the CoOp)	More ways to access local food producers	Micro-local food systems	Hydro/Aqua-ponics!
Sense of place (phys attributes; respect for environment)	Finding marketable, practical use for wood material from street/municipal trees (e.g. Ash)	Drinkable, swimmable water	
Climate resilience (natural resources); could also benefit from population migration related to CC	Access to healthy, safe areas		
Community tree resources			
Beautiful Lakes, rivers, ponds			

Central Vermont Sub-Region SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Workforce & Education			
• Numerous and varied educational institutions	• Declining Workforce Numbers- specifically a lack of beginning level and qualified workforce	• Support relocation of immigration into region	• Chittenden County Exchange: Wages are higher in Chittenden County but cost of living is not necessarily lower.
• Multi-sector workforce development	• Declining Population		
• Productive workforce. Higher costs for labor can be offset by productivity.	• Lack of childcare	.	
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
• Diverse business base (insurance industry, manufacturing (high-quality value added food products; Cabot and associated companies, adult beverage industry)	• Unspoken ethic about outdoor recreation industry. Assets and opportunities are unknown. Information providing informally.	• Local employers being open, willing, and enthusiastic about bringing in and hiring immigrants	• Corporate culture is coming in with growth (can have impacts on quintessential VT Village feel)
		• Support growing 'outdoor' economies (outfitters)	
• Spectrum of job opportunities (blue to white collar, intro to experienced)		• Diversification of economy	
• Community involved and invested businesses. Corporate culture promotes strong communities			
• Legacy industries, strong employers in granite industry, great wages and supported by unions			
• High concentration of B Corps and companies that act like B Corps			
• Creative partners			
• Savvy entrepreneurs are repurposing and growing businesses (Keurig, Darn Tough)			
Infrastructure			
• Diverse Housing Stock	• Internet Infrastructure	• Alternate housing for seniors (ie, apartments, residences, assisted living, ADUs)	• Climate Change (need of resources to prepare for CC, specifically bridges and culverts)
• Transportation network (I-89 bisects the region)	• High cost of power	• Focus on village centers, public gathering spaces, village greens	
• Rail corridor + passenger train service (Amtrak Stop)	• Old or unaffordable housing stock. Development came in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Built as workforce housing.		
• Regional Airport	• Water/waste water infrastructure is lacking in many villages		
• Affordable housing stock	• Declining workforce housing due to influx of pandemic city 'refugees'		
• Accessible size city with access to amenities, lack of sprawl	• Increasingly rural as you move away from I-89 corridor and thus declining road quality		
	• Workforce Housing is being wiped out by new owners buying property and not occupying year-round		
	• Aging population can't afford to keep their homes		
Quality of Life			
• Centralized health services	• Lack diverse population		• Cost of living is rising (in part by second homeowners)

• Active and involved communities			
Civic & Governance Systems			
• Seat of State Government (largest number of workers employed by government)	• Increasing property tax rate due to declining tax base (declining population)	• Amending/updating zoning to allow for multi-family living in single residences	
• Multiple downtowns	• Potentially overly restrictive zoning (eg. limited ADUs)		
Land Use and Natural Resources			
• Large percent of conserved (forest) land and lands in Current Use	• Outdoor recreation opportunities are 'unspoken' (ie: not known to newcomers)	• Ensure hazard mitigation is sufficiently addressed and planned for.	• 1980s mind frame regarding development (e.g., cheap, and easy development is eating up developable lands)
• Abundant natural resources (granite quarry, flood storage - protected flood plains and wetlands, sugarbush in Mad River Valley)			• Emerald Ash Borer. Region has the highest number of Ash in the state. Contending with dead or dying trees will have an economic cost and impacts to tourism.
• Rural lands contribute to beauty of area			• Changing attitudes, people coming here have different ideas about property uses.
• Numerous outdoor recreation resources (Mad River Valley, skiing, hiking, outdoor spaces)			

Central Vermont Sub-Region SOAR

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Workforce & Education			
Numerous and varied educational institutions	Support relocation of immigration into region		
Multi-sector workforce development			
Productive workforce. Higher costs for labor can be offset by productivity.			
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Spectrum of job opportunities (blue to white collar, intro to experienced)	Local employers being open, willing, and enthusiastic about bringing in and hiring immigrants		
Community involved and invested businesses. Corporate culture promotes strong communities	Support growing 'outdoor' economies (outfitters)		
Diverse business base (insurance industry, manufacturing (high-quality value added food products; Cabot and associated companies, adult beverage industry)	Diversification of economy		
Legacy industries, strong employers in granite industry, great wages and supported by unions			
Creative partners			
Savvy entrepreneurs are repurposing and growing businesses (Keurig, Darn Tough)			
Infrastructure			
Diverse Housing Stock	Alternate housing for seniors (ie, apartments, residences, assisted living, ADUs)		
Transportation network (I-89 bisects the region)	Focus on village centers, public gathering spaces, village greens		
Rail corridor + passenger train service (Amtrak Stop)			
Regional Airport			
Affordable housing stock			
Accessible size city with access to amenities, lack of sprawl			
Quality of Life			
Centralized health services			
Active and involved communities			
Civic & Governance Systems			
Seat of State Government (largest number of workers employed by government)			
Multiple downtowns			
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Large percent of conserved (forest) land and lands in Current Use	Ensure hazard mitigation is sufficiently addressed and planned for.		
Abundant natural resources (granite quarry, flood storage - protected flood plains and wetlands, sugarbush in Mad River Valley)			

Rural lands contribute to beauty of area			
Numerous outdoor recreation resources (Mad River Valley, skiing, hiking, outdoor spaces)			

Chittenden County Sub-Region SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Workforce & Education			
• High concentration of a young and educated population in comparison to the rest of Vermont	• Labor constraints and skill shortages	• Increasing involvement of University of Vermont, Champlain College, and St. Michaels in economic development	• Declining workforce participation
• Diversified base economic sectors in comparison to the rest of Vermont	• A perception of limited career opportunities and negative business climate	• Improving structured employer engagement in K-16 education curricula and State training programs	• Declining K-12 population
• High labor quality	• Aging workforce, and a decline in workers aged 35 to 59 (note – need to check the more recent data to see if this is still true).	• Promoting vocational and technical education programs as essential programs for workforce and career development	• Labor/skills needs negatively impacting employers' growth, investment, and location decisions
• High concentration of well-regarded institutions such as Champlain College, Community College of Vermont, St. Michael's College, the University of Vermont, and Vermont Technical College.	• Declining labor force participation	• Strengthening and aligning workforce training programs in Vermont	• Increasing population of economically disconnected young adults in Vermont who do not seek job training and/or post-secondary education and therefore have limited opportunities
• High quality of public K-12 education	• Uneven quality of public K-12 schools throughout the county	• Expanding access to career, vocational and technical education in K-12 and to adult Vermonters	
	• Lack of access to high-quality childcare	• Engaging and supporting recent graduates and young professionals	
	• Lack of connection between educational outcomes and employer needs	• Engaging a highly skilled and trainable retirement age population	
	• Lack of career fairs and career planning		
	• Slow population growth		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
• Vermont brand, and increasing recognition of local brands and accomplishments	• Reliance on business/tourism from Canada negatively impacted during pandemic (global impacts of pandemic)	• Nurturing entrepreneurial environment and support systems	• Some large employers are vulnerable to external impacts and if something happened to them it would directly impact the workforce landscape & municipalities/county
• Well positioned geographically - close proximity to Montreal (and Canada more generally), Boston and NYC)	• Highly valued markets/draws such as arts/creative economy hit hard by pandemic (example, see numbers at Essex Fairground)	• Creating more dynamic economic development programs and services	• Cost of materials for manufacturing or doing business in general (cost exacerbated by pandemic)
• Thriving locally-owned businesses		• Promoting telecommuting and remote workforce based upon our regional assets	• Other States' business tax policies and economic development policies and programs (namely predictability)
• Strong creative economy		• Capacity in existing Champlain Valley Technology and Innovation Park (Global Foundries campus) – where it's the waste treatment plant is specialized for industrial processes	
• Concentration of high net worth individuals		• Increasing regionalization of the economy	
• Highly networked non-profit and service provider sector		• Court Canadian companies (if you can't do business over the border, move over the border to operate)	
• UVM and other major employers, pandemic resilient (able to continue operating or flourish)			
Infrastructure			
• High quality airport	• Lack of land transportation and commuter mass transit infrastructure	• Improving parking management in downtown Burlington	• Aging transportation, water, and wastewater infrastructure, and limited maintenance funds

• Access to high quality infrastructure - natural gas (though non-renewable), interstate, high speed broadband	• Ability of grid to grow/adapt with increasing amount of renewable energy generated and fed into grid	• Expanding coverage of and increasing access to high-speed broadband internet service to narrow the "Digital Divide" and increase economic opportunity	• Cost of electricity and increasing demand
	• Lack of municipal water/waste water infrastructure in some village areas and municipal water/wastewater capacity in more urban areas	• Increased commuter options with imminent NYC Vermonter Amtrac line.	• Upgrades electrical grid in northern VT likely needed in mid-term
		• Increasing utilization of the region's rail network to transport freight	
		• Continue to concentrate growth in downtowns and village areas.	
Quality of Life			
• More diverse population than the rest of Vermont	• Rising income inequality	• Engaging and supporting a growing New American population	• Increasing rate of population aging and increase in needed services
• University of Vermont Medical Center	• Lack of high quality child care options for working families, especially affordable child care	• Increasing regionalization of services, such as regional dispatch	• Lack of rental and owner-occupied housing that is affordable
• Access to and number of recreational, entertainment, and cultural opportunities, leading to a strong tourism economy	• Lack of housing stock	• Improved outdoor recreation systems (Richmond Trails and others, greenbelt opportunities that double as multimodal transit, etc.)	Pandemic environment diminishes the vitality of the downtown environment
	• Housing affordability		
	• Wages not keeping pace with high cost of living		
	• Lack of racial and ethnic diversity compared to the rest of the US		
Civic & Governance Systems			
• Qualified, professional staff in larger municipalities	• Tax burden on residents/businesses	• Continuing to concentrate investment in our downtowns and village centers	• Permitting costs, redundancies, delays, and appeals in the construction process
	• Reliance on sales tax receipts (which were negatively impacted during pandemic)	• Coordinating and increasing efficacy and efficiency of state and local permitting processes	• Perception that Chittenden County does not need as much help from state government as other areas in the state.
	• Ineligibility of municipalities for grants to upgrade/update systems (as grants are dependent on unemployment/income eligibility criteria)	• Landbanking by municipalities to guide future housing and business development opportunities	• Difficulty retaining qualified municipal staff in more rural municipalities
Land Use and Natural Resources			
• Access to important natural resources such as readily available clean drinking water	• Limited developable site inventory	• Increasing policy focus and investment in renewable energy and clean water	• High levels of pollution in surface waters, especially phosphorous in Lake Champlain
	• Restrictive land-use controls / overly restrictive zoning (particularly in urban areas)	• Climate change may lead to an increase in population	• Climate change's impact on natural resources

Chittenden County Sub-Region SOAR

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Workforce & Education			
Numerous and varied educational institutions	Support relocation of immigration into region		
Multi-sector workforce development			
Productive workforce. Higher costs for labor can be offset by productivity.			
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Spectrum of job opportunities (blue to white collar, intro to experienced)	Local employers being open, willing, and enthusiastic about bringing in and hiring immigrants		
Community involved and invested businesses. Corporate culture promotes strong communities	Support growing 'outdoor' economies (outfitters)		
Diverse business base (insurance industry, manufacturing (high-quality value added food products; Cabot and associated companies, adult beverage industry)	Diversification of economy		
Legacy industries, strong employers in granite industry, great wages and supported by unions			
Creative partners			
Savvy entrepreneurs are repurposing and growing businesses (Keurig, Darn Tough)			
Infrastructure			
Diverse Housing Stock	Alternate housing for seniors (ie, apartments, residences, assisted living, ADUs)		
Transportation network (I-89 bisects the region)	Focus on village centers, public gathering spaces, village greens		
Rail corridor + passenger train service (Amtrak Stop)			
Regional Airport			
Affordable housing stock			
Accessible size city with access to amenities, lack of sprawl			
Quality of Life			
Centralized health services			
Active and involved communities			
Civic & Governance Systems			
Seat of State Government (largest number of workers employed by government)			
Multiple downtowns			
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Large percent of conserved (forest) land and lands in Current Use	Ensure hazard mitigation is sufficiently addressed and planned for.		
Abundant natural resources (granite quarry, flood storage - protected flood plains and wetlands, sugarbush in Mad River Valley)			
Rural lands contribute to beauty of area			

Numerous outdoor recreation resources (Mad River Valley, skiing, hiking, outdoor spaces)			

Rutland County Sub-Region SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Workforce & Education			
• Access to Higher Education	• Lack of some professions, i.e.: Limited number of engineers, architects, private planning firms, IT, technology	• Diversity Training	• Aging workforce
• Castleton University	• State University System	• Veteran talent-employer pipeline	• Declining population (and thus declining workforce)
• Tech Center	• Workforce Development efforts are a little disjointed.	• Educational opportunity: Create or bolster identity of the region.	
	• Lack of childcare	• Welcoming immigrant populations and their talents/skillsets	
	• Lack of veteran talent-employer pipeline		
	• Lack of affordable housing for workers		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
• Strong connections between partner and/or affiliate organizations: CEDRR, RRPC, DOL, Downtown Partnership	• Partner/affiliate organizations tend to work within their own silos and/or use internal benchmarks.	• Regional Marketing. Increased digital presence for region. • Grow supportive systems for entrepreneurs	• Unpredictable weather patterns that disrupt resort/recreational operations. (Flooding)
• Killington/Pico	• Ie: Difficult to get return visits (i.e.: Proctor. Visits to the Marble Museum are a one-time trip.)		• Continued work in isolation
• Renewable Energy - Solar City	• Losing $ to outside contractors - out of state purchasing		
• Slate/Earth Extraction	• Minimal online presence.		
• Manufacturing			
• Job Markets is very diverse in terms of entry/mid and upper level positions			
• MINT - Makerspace			
• Steady economy with little fluctuation that deviates from national trends (ie. VT goes in to recession later and doesn't go as deep)			
• Regional marketing initiatives			
Infrastructure			
• Walkable downtowns	• Rutland's gateways are not attractive. Gritty City. Loss of retail outlets on Main Sts.	• Focus on beautification of Rutland's gateways. Make downtowns a destination (without over reliance on retail).	
• Beautiful structures, historic buildings	• Lingering perception that the region is negatively impacted by not having a bypass.	• Airport is untapped asset.	
• Historic places	• Aging housing stock	• Improving rail access/use in Rutland City	
• The Bus	• Physical identity of the region can be improved upon.		
• Rutland Southern VT Regional Airport	• Need more expansive public transportation network		
• Two major thoroughfares (Rte. 7 &4),			
• Railroad			
• Lower frequency of extreme climate events (compared to other areas in the US). Utilities here are good at planning for climate.			
Quality of Life			
• Low Housing Costs	• Reputation/public perception as an unsafe place with issues relative to racism and addiction		• Reputation/public perception as an unsafe place with issues relative to racism and addiction

• Costs of utilities are less than other locales and more predictable	• Isolationism, Old vs. New, Toxic Nostalgia		
• More direct access to whole foods/food sources, area not as impacted by prepared foods taxes	• Lack of diversity		
• Good potential ROI for property owners			
• Healthcare, RRMC			
• Lifestyle Options: there are many different types of lifestyles available here			
• New Populations			
• A Safe Place			
Civic & Governance Systems			
• Designated Economic Development Zones (Opportunity Zone, Enterprise Zone, New Market Tax Credits)		• Strengthen connections with Designated Downtowns, Village Center, EDOs and regional Economic Development Steering Committees/Task Forces. These downtowns and villages serve as 'Engines of the Region'.	
Land Use and Natural Resources			
• Agriculture (History of Farming & Local Foods)			
• New recreation destinations: ie: Brandon -Gateways to the Outdoors, Poultney - Southwest Kingdom			
• Rutland County has a lot of water. Top of the watershed.			
• Conserved Lands			
• Numerous parks & greenspaces			

Rutland County Sub-Region SOAR

Strengths	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Workforce & Education			
Access to Higher Education	Diversity Training	Clearer delineation between regional organizations	Payroll data shows increase in wages/employment (ie., regional payroll / # of employees)
Castleton University	Veteran talent-employer pipeline	Better documentation/storytelling of solutions identified or of what's happening	Increased number of childcare facilities or increased capacity AND affordability
Tech Center	Educational opportunity: Create or bolster identity of the region.	Measurable connections	
Community College of Vermont	Welcoming immigrant populations and their talents/skillsets	A diverse workforce.	
Killington-Castleton Uni partnership	Market the Killington-CU program & partnership	High speed internet access for all who want it.	
	Make info/resources easier to use and navigate for businesses (business navigator tool)		
	Increase access to – as well as affordable – childcare (potentially also look at hours of operation)		
	Retain students who study here.		
	Increase of quality housing stock		
Business Climate / Innovation / Entrepreneurship			
Strong connections between partner and/or affiliate organizations: CEDRR, RRPC, DOL, Downtown Partnership	Regional Marketing. Increased digital presence for region.	Keep the region's rural identity while providing 21st century infrastructure – such as reliable high speed internet - and business amenities	Continue to use existing metrics to track successes
Killington/Pico	Grow supportive systems for entrepreneurs	Keep the region's rural identity while supporting renewable energy generation without every scenic farm turning into a solar field	Number of connected trail systems
Renewable Energy - Solar City	Redevelop/enhance the rural areas of the Region	That those looking to start businesses are aware of the resources available to them.	Number of trail builders
Slate/Earth Extraction	Ensure that high speed internet is widely accessible and meets promise of service delivery speed	Have both numeric metrics and storytelling to track work (successes and others)	People know Rutland County as "Where you come to grow your small business"
Manufacturing	Knowledge/awareness building of resources available to support business/entrepreneurship		The region is identified as being more than just Killington
Job Markets is very diverse in terms of entry/mid and upper level positions	Better market various seasonal attractions and opportunities (ie, summer activities need marketing as much as winter skiing)		
MINT - Makerspace	Support/work on creative seasonal draws- parklets downtown		
Steady economy with little fluctuation that deviates from national trends (ie. VT goes in to recession later and doesn't go as deep)	Create entrepreneur/manufacturing resource sharing platform that mirrors intermunicipal agreements		
Regional marketing initiatives			
Location- center of state and encompass Rt 4 (main vein into/out of VT from NY)			
Small community atmosphere			
Entrepreneurial resources available through local and State organizations			

Infrastructure			
Walkable downtowns	Focus on beautification of Rutland's gateways.	Walkable downtowns	Average age has gone down
Beautiful structures, historic buildings	Airport is untapped asset.	Readily used and easily accessed information (that's also useful)	If investing in large infrastructure projects, is revenue generated elsewhere
Historic places	Make downtowns a destination (without over reliance on retail).	Increased housing resources for elderly	New construction is seen
The Bus	Enhance walkability of towns	High speed internet accessibly by all who want it (and the network to support it)	Those that need it most, have access to quality affordable house
Rutland Southern VT Regional Airport	Enhance roadway signage (wayfinding)		Have a means to show that there has been equitable benefit throughout the region (those that need most, are benefiting from programs/work)
Two major thoroughfares (Rte. 7 &4),	Redevelop Amtrak Station to make it a welcoming/aesthetically appealing		Train is more widely used and provides for greater range of travel
Railroad	Affordable housing		
Lower frequency of extreme climate events (compared to other areas in the US).	Repurposing and rehabbing unused or dilapidated building stock		
Utilities are good at planning for climate related issues.			
Renewable energy generation			
Quality of Life			
Low Housing Costs	Revitalize existing housing stock	More diverse economy (healthcare is playing too large a role).	A good return on investment (ROI).
Costs of utilities are less than other locales and more predictable	New construction of housing (housing starts). Ensure access to transitional and rental housing.	Create Prosperity in the Region. We want everyone to have a little extra $ in their pocket.	An economic summary that uses metrics (use Economic Profile for CEDS) to establish our progress in 5 years.
More direct access to whole foods/food sources, area not as impacted by prepared foods taxes	Improve access to childcare	Let's be more welcoming, supportive and promote diversity in our communities.	
Good potential ROI for property owners	In-migration from second- home owners.		
Healthcare (RRMC). Access and availability to a diversity of health care needs (including primary care, substance abuse and recovery and mental health care)	Region is seeing specialized labor/talent/expertise 'show up on our doorstep' as a result of Covid.		
Lifestyle Options: there are many different types of lifestyles available here	Support business growth in hospitality, value-added products, and light manufacturing.		
New Populations	Change things for the better without spoiling our communities.		
A Safe Place	Ensure regulations promote our aspirations.		
Community. Neighbors know each other and are creating vibrant places to live.	Increase socio-economic diversity.		
Strong organizational connections and volunteer networks that focus on community spirit and partnership. Community-driven Arts and Events (Sculpture Trail, Come Alive Outside, etc)	Seek to create change that is respectful of and honors the sense of place and community-oriented environments that exist in the region.		
Land Use and Natural Resources			
Agriculture (History of Farming & Local Foods)	Leverage the proximity to Green Mountains and Lake Champlain	Walkable and Bikable	Number of connected trails
New recreation destinations: ie: Brandon -Gateways to the Outdoors, Poultney - Southwest Kingdom	Integrate more bike friendly infrastructure into land use planning	Rutland Region becomes VT innovation hub (maybe specialized in entrepreneurship)	Number of trail builders

Rutland County has a lot of water. Top of the watershed.	Repurpose old buildings rather than building new	More incubator spaces built out and made available for new/developing businesses	
Conserved Lands	Create a farmer focused agreement that reflects intermunicipal agreements for resource sharing	Small businesses have a link with the recreation-focused natural resources available... need to be more than just Killington	
Numerous parks & greenspaces			
Condensed downtowns			
Limited sprawl			
Proximity between developed areas and outdoor recreation			
Good integration of solar fields and land use			
Good balance of business expansion and land conservation (not excessive subdividing happening)			

Appendix D – Regional Priority Project Lists

Goal: Each sub-region will produce a list of high priority economic and community development projects that meet certain eligibility requirements (see below). These Regional Priority Project Lists are considered living, dynamic documents that are continually updated and edited. The lists will be used by federal, state, regional and local organizations to understand the funding needs of the region and allow regional economic and community development staff help match federal and state funding announcements to projects.

The Regional Priority Project Lists express the highest priority projects for each region and the top ten projects from each region will be included in a consolidated statewide list submitted to the Agency of Commerce, who will share it with other funders, to be used by state and federal funders when making funding decisions.

Process: The Regional Priority Project process consists of three major steps to be implemented on an annual basis:

1. Regional solicitation and input.
2. Regional scoring and prioritization.
3. Consolidation of top ten regional projects into a statewide priority list to be submitted to the Agency of Commerce.

Eligibility and Scoring Criteria: Projects should address the following criteria to be included on the Regional Priority Project list. These are the criteria that will be used to score and prioritize each project. Scoring and prioritization is conducted on a continuum for each criterion regarding the degree to which the project meets each criterion. For example, a project that is truly "shovel-ready" (no obstacles to implement except the funding gap) will score higher than one that requires permitting or the project managers do not have site control. A second example is a project that creates 20 new, high-paying jobs will score higher than a project that retains a few jobs. Projects that meet the criteria to a higher degree will score higher and be placed in a higher priority. Because the lists are living and dynamic, projects can be added to the list each year and move up in priority as the project is more fully developed and more fully meets criteria. Projects should, at a minimum be able to address the following on the Project Information Form:

- **Project Purpose and Benefits to the Region:** The project should build capacity in the region for improved economic and community development. Projects that advance economic and community development, especially in areas such as workforce development, developing entrepreneurial ecosystems, and enhancing business clusters, will score highest.

- **Project Timeline, Milestones, and Status:** The project should be prepared to get underway if funded, including factors such as site control, engineering, and design, permitting, and funding identification and commitment. Project should also have identified milestones measurable outcomes. Projects that are considered "shovel-ready;" that is, the project is underway, ready to implement or close to ready, and identifies milestones and outcomes, will score higher.

- **Project Principal Experience:** The project should involve an entity that has successfully executed similar projects, managed federal or state grants, and/or successfully developed similar business models, or involve a partnership or collaboration that provides adequate experience. Projects showing experienced project managers or a collaboration/partnership that provides experience, will score higher.

- **Project Support and Regional Need:** The project should address and advance local and regional economic and community development goals and objectives, as identified by the regional plan and/or other studies and reports, and have community support and engagement. The project should not be redundant or duplicate ongoing projects or programs in the region unless there remains a need, such as with housing or childcare ; rather, projects should fill a need in the region. Projects that address a regional goal as expressed in the regional plan and are not duplicative, will score higher.

- **Project Cost, Identified and Committed Funding/Financing, and a Funding Gap:** The project should have a budget developed that includes total project cost, identified sources, and uses, and a clearly identified funding gap. The project description should state the funding sources the project is pursuing, the status of those funding/financing sources and, if not secured, identify when the sources are expected to be committed. Also, identify the type of resource (cash, grant, loan, sponsor in-kind, third party in-kind, etc.) and describe which resources can serve as a match, noting that, for example, some grant sources do not allow matching federal funding with other federal funds. Projects that include a budget, all funding information, have an identified gap, and have funding commitments and a match, will score higher.

- **Job Creation and Retention:** The project should create or retain jobs. The project description should state the number and type of jobs to be retained and/or created, including the period of time over which the jobs will be created, the average wage of the jobs, and the benefits expected to be offered. Projects that create new, high-paying jobs with good benefits, will score higher.

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT LIST 2023

	Project name:	Addison County Community Child Care Expansion	Champlain Valley Food Hub	Dubois Dairy	Ilsley Public Library Renovation & Expansion	Town of Middlebury- Charles/Monroe St Intersection	Town of Middlebury- Chipman Hill Water Tower	Town of Middlebury- Wastewater Treament Facility Upgrade	Town of Monkton- Community Center	Town Hall Theater Performing Arts Expansion Project	Vergennes Opera House	Vermont Livestock Slaughter & Processing- Modernization and Revitalization	Summit Property Housing- Middlebury
2.0	Type of Project:	Infrastructure: Public Facility Workforce Development Other: Child Care expansion	Infrastructure: Food System General Development: Commercial Business Development	Infrastructure: Railroad Spur General Development: Industrial Site/Facility Development for Specific Business Workforce Development Business Development Business Development	Infrastructure: Public Facility	Infrastructure: Transportation	Infrastructure: Water	Infrastructure: Wastewater	Infrastructure- Public Facility	Infrastructure: Public Facility General Development: Commercial Site/Facility Development for Specific Business Workforce Development Business Development	Other: ADA accessibility	Site/Facility Development for Specific Business Workforce Development	Infrastructure-Water/wastewater General Development- Residential Housing
3.0	Project Sponsor:	Otter Creek Child Care Center, Inc. 150 Weybridge St Middlebury, VT 05753 jeffs@ottercreekcc.org	ACORN Network PO Box 404, Bristol, VT 05443 info@acornvt.org 802-382-0401	Dubois Dairy Group 303 Racquet Club Road, Suite 312 Weston, FL 33326	Kathleen Ramsey, Town Manager Town of Middlebury 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753	Town of Middlebury 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753 kramsey@townofmiddlebury.org	Town of Middlebury 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753	Town of Middlebury 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753	Town of Monkton PO Box 12 Monkton, VT 05469	Town Hall Theater P.O. Box 128 Middlebury, VT 05753 lisa@townhalltheater.org	Friends of the Vergennes Opera House PO Box 88 Vergennes, VT 05491 info@vergennesoperahouse.org	Vermont Livestock Slaughter & Processing 76 Depot Rd vermontmeat@gmail.com 802.873.3431 bdavisson@summitpmg.com	Summit Properties 7 Aspen Drive, Suite 1 South Burlington, VT 05403 bdavisson@summitpmg.com
4.0	Project Principals:	Linda Janicary Executive Director 150 Weybridge St Middlebury, VT 05753 linda@ottercreekcc.org 802-382-0401	Lindsey Bark Executive Director 8 Rossiter St, Brandon, VT 05733 lindsey@acornvt.org 802-382-0401	George Clair, President & CEO Dubois Dairy Group 303 Racquet Club Road, Suite 312 Weston, FL 33326 georgeclair@duboisdairy.com 954-717-7766	Dana Hart Library Director 75 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753 dana.hart@ilsleypubliclibrary.org 8023188,4098	Emalee Cherington DPW Director of Planning 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753 echerington@townofmiddlebury.org 8023188,4046	Emalee Cherington DPW Director of Planning 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753 echerington@townofmiddlebury.org 8023188,4046	Emalee Cherington DPW Director of Planning 77 Main St Middlebury, VT 05753 echerington@townofmiddlebury.org 8023188,4046	Stan Wilbur, Town Administrator PO Box 12 Monkton, VT 05469 townadministator@monktonvt.com (802)453-3828	Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director Town Hall Theater P.O. Box 128 Middlebury, VT 05753 lisa@townhalltheater.org 8023388,4401	Susan Schaefer, Treasurer PO Box 88 Vergennes, VT 05491 sus.schaefer@me.com (802)877-3609	Sarah Wilson, Project Development Assistant Biological Capital 3264 Larimer St, Unit D Dorner, CO 80205 swilson@biologicalcapital.com (307) 365-7150	Jake Davisson, COO Summit Properties 7 Aspen Drive, Suite 1 South Burlington, VT 05403 bdavisson@summitpmg.com 802.846.4434
5.0	Project Description:	The Community Child Care Expansion Project is a cooperative effort of families, Otter Creek Child Center, College Street Children's Center, Middlebury College, the Early Care and Learning Partnership, Champlain Valley Early Head Start, Let's Grow Kids, Building Bright Futures, area employers, educational institutions, and towns. It is a response to a decade-long concern by families and employers about the lack of high-quality affordable care. This project addresses an urgent need for infant and preschool-age childcare in our community and will provide an important boost to the local economy.	ACORN plans build a zero-carbon food hub in Middlebury, the seat of the Champlain Valley's robust agricultural region. The Champlain Valley Food Hub will be a centralized digital and physical space that facilitates the sales, aggregation, and distribution of locally produced food products to local wholesale markets and metropolitan markets. The Food Hub will have cold and dry storage capacity, serve as an address for freight deliveries for remote farms, and serve as a distribution space for ACORN's Farmacy Food is Medicine program as well as create other aggregated CSA opportunities. The Food Hub may also include space for a commercial kitchen for new and emerging food businesses.	Dubois Dairy Products (DDP) is engaged in assembling the assets needed to develop a successful dairy processing plant for specialty milk products such as conventional and organic cow milk, goat, and sheep milk into high-grade milk powders. DDP is in negotiation with farmers, investors, engineering experts and strategic partners to build a state-of-the-art facility and a dairy company with exports of 20,000 metric tons of milk powder-based products per annum. The total capital investment in the project is estimated to be $125 million for the development of phase one. Phase two and three expansion stages are forecasted at $30 million, which will include capacity increases and UHT production capabilities.	Ilsley Public Library is an essential public facility, providing people with free access to diverse informational and recreational books and media, high-speed internet, community gathering spaces, and other crucial resources The Library also often serves as a safe and welcoming lifeline for underserved populations in both Middlebury and surrounding towns. Unfortunately, the Library's facilities are in a state of serious disrepair and in desperate need of renovation and expansion. The current building is unsafe and inaccessible and has multiple failing mechanical systems. The plans for addressing the Library's facilities needs include adding 6,000 square feet, doubling the space for children in the library and allowing for new spaces designed to meet our community's current demands: conference room, community living room, specifically-designed for children's programming space, and a family restroom. Quiet study and co-working spaces will be expanded, staff and storage spaces will be expanded and reconfigured, and a new shelving plan for the collection will increase accessibility. Efficient HVAC systems will reduce the town's reliance on fossil fuels. Most importantly, the building will be safe, welcoming, and flexible enough to accommodate shifting programmatic needs in the future.	The Town of Middlebury is proposing to make improvements to the intersection of Court Street (TH #1), Monroe Street (TH #21) and Charles Avenue (TH #46). The improvements involve the re-alignment of the Charles Avenue approach to Court Street to create a new four-way signalized intersection with Monroe Street. The new configuration would better support pedestrians and bicyclists and improve traffic flow.	The Middlebury Water Department Water System (WSID 5004) is supplied by three wells located about 3 miles east of the Town center. Water storage is currently provided by a two-cell 1.5-million-gallon (mg) storage tank on Chipman Hill, constructed in 1978. The system serves a year-round population of approximately 6000 with an additional 2500 college students during the school year. The Town maintains 2300 water service connections- both residential and commercial. Water customers are a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial types. The system's largest user is Agri-mark- the Northeast's premier dairy farmer cooperative. Middlebury College is also a large user, with 156 accounts utilizing approximately. A hydraulic study that was performed in 2018, determined that the storage available for the Town water supply was inadequate to support the growing population and fire flow capabilities. The report provided recommendations to increase storage to better serve the community. The proposed concrete water storage tank would be located adjacent to the existing storage on Chipman Hill. It would consist of a 1.3 mg pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete water tank. The proposed storage tank would allow for increased fire flow capabilities in addition to future average daily demands, better serving the population.	The Middlebury Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) was built in 1999 as a new Type-A Greek Revival style building, constructed in 1859. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. For many years it was the community's governmental center, and the site of town meetings, it has been many things to the community including a library and town hall, and is now used by the Monkton Museum and Historical Society. The Town was going to sell the building, but voters decided to delay the sale and allow the Monkton Museum & Historical Society (MMHS) time to generate a rehabilitation proposal. A community discussion was held and a Preservation Trust of VT grant funded an architectural assessment. The Town owns the building and the MMHS will partner with the Select Board to develop uses, restoration strategies and pursue funding opportunities.	The Old Monkton Town Hall located at 280 Monkton Ridge, VT is a Greek Revival style building, constructed in 1859. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. For many years it was the community's governmental center, and the site of town meetings, it has been many things to the community including a library and town hall, and is now used by the Monkton Museum and Historical Society. The Town was going to sell the building, but voters decided to delay the sale and allow the Monkton Museum & Historical Society (MMHS) time to generate a rehabilitation proposal. A community discussion was held and a Preservation Trust of VT grant funded an architectural assessment. The Town owns the building and the MMHS will partner with the Select Board to develop uses, restoration strategies and pursue funding opportunities.	Town Hall Theater is a non-profit multi-disciplinary theater and historic landmark in Middlebury, Vermont. Our mission is to contribute to a thriving community in Addison County by presenting a diverse array of high-quality arts programming that educates, entertains, and inspires. As a regional home for the arts, THT presents more than 165 events per year, plus all-ages education offerings. THT utilizes its 232-seat theater and main stage, gallery, and studio space to the fullest extent possible – but expansion is long overdue. As early as summer of 2015, THT will break ground to create a new three-story wing – transforming our theater into a thriving, downtown performing arts and community center. This project solves the need for essential spaces and aligns with Middlebury's downtown master plan to further develop an arts and culture hub. It multiplies THT's community and economic impact, as well as ensures our non-profit organization's long-term sustainability.	The Friends of the Vergennes Opera House (FVOH) is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. An all-volunteer Board of Directors manages the Opera House located on the second floor of the city hall building owned by the city of Vergennes. The Vergennes Opera House was built in 1897 as a city hall (first floor) and performance and community gathering space (second floor). By the late 1960s, the second-floor community space was suffering from neglect and by 1974, it was shuttered and ignored. For close to 25 years, serious deterioration continued, leaving the space unsafe and unusable. The All-Access project contemplates the creation of an ADA compliant elevator tower to service both the lower level of the City Hall as well as the second story Opera House space. The project also includes necessary landscape improvements to create public access to the elevator tower from Main St, within the existing alleyway between City Hall and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Additionally, the project will include a phase of improvements to make the stage and green room levels ADA compliant, providing respectful and convenient access for performers as well as attendees to all areas of the building.	With 50 years in business, Vermont Livestock Slaughter & Processing (VLSP) connects hundreds of farmers in Vermont and the Northeast with the individuals, families, schools, and businesses they supply. Demand for high-quality, sustainably, humanely-raised meat rises year over year, but regional processing continues to bottleneck the agricultural economy. While demand for our services rises, we are limited by aging equipment and facilities. Meanwhile, new equipment and processing tools enable small- and medium-sized processors to operate more safely, efficiently, and humanely – increasing throughput and quality substantially.	The Summit Middlebury development is a 200+ unit new construction, mixed-income, highly energy efficient community in Middlebury, Vermont. The community will have mixed housing types, including subsidized for sale condos/townhomes, modest market rate for sale condos/townhomes, rental units offered at modest market rates, rental units targeting low-income families earning less than 60% of area median income (AMI), and rental units targeting very low-income families earning less than 30% of AMI and homeless and at-risk families and individuals. The development represents an innovative partnership between Summit Properties, a leading affordable housing developer and manager in Vermont, and Middlebury College, the largest employer in Addison County. In collaboration with Summit Properties, Middlebury College purchased the site in the spring of 2022 and immediately entered an Option Agreement with Summit, the terms of which subsidize the development of affordable and workforce housing through a reduced per lot acquisition price. Middlebury College does not retain any right to place any units directly with its employees; the intent of the agreement is instead to increase the housing stock in the Town of Middlebury at all affordability levels. The community will include numerous amenities, including community gardens, ample green space and pocket parks, a village green, a playground, a dog park, and nature paths within the community with connectivity to Middlebury's iconic recreational trail networks. The surrounding wetlands and buffers provide a unique natural setting with ample opportunity for conservation. The community is targeted to accomplish the Town of Middlebury's housing goals as stated in the 2017 Town Plan, namely: (i) encourage a variety of housing opportunities, (ii) utilize smart growth principles, (iii) encourage modestly priced, well-built, sustainable housing that is affordable for moderate-income buyers, and (iv) make housing more sustainable, healthy, and efficient.
6.0	PROJECT PURPOSE AND BENEFITS:	5	5	5	3.5	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	5
7.0	PROJECT TIMELINE, MILESTONES, AND STATUS:	4	4.5	3	2.75	4	3	4	3	5	4.5	4	4
8.0	PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE:	5	4.5	5	3.5	5	5	5	4	4	4.25	5	5
9.0	PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED:	5	4.25	4	4.75	4	5	4	4	5	4.75	4	5
10.0	PROJECT COST, IDENTIFIED AND COMMITED FUNDS/FINANCING, AND FUNDING GAP:	5	4.75	4	4	2	3	3	5	4	4.75	5	4
		5	4.75	5	3.75	3	3	4	3	4	3.75	5	5
11.0	JOB CREATION:	4	2.75	5	2.75	2	2	2	1	4	2.25	4	4
		4	2.75	4	3	2	4	4	1	4	2.5	4	4
		2	1.75	4	2.5	2	3	4	1	4	2.5	4	4
	TOTAL SCORE	38.75	35	38.5	30.5	26.5	30.5	33.75	24	38	33.25	37	38
	PRIORITY	2	7	3	9	11	10	8	12	5	6	4	1

Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR)

Line Number:				The Vermont Farmers Food Center Heart of Vermont Agriculture Produce Packing Center and Commercial Kitchen Center Systems	Rutland City Berwick Site	Setting the Stage for the Future: The Renovation and Restoration of Rutland's Historic Paramount Theatre	Town of Killington Municipal Water System and Killington Road Renovation	Wallingford Block	Proctor Marble Museum Building	Regenerative Land Holdings (Bhakta Spirits)	Misty Acres Childcare Center & Preschool	Airport Business Park Phase II	Horizons Early Learning Center-Allen Street Expansion
2.0	**Type of Project:**		Type and subtype from the Project Information From	Other: Agricultural Infrastructure	General Development	Arts; Historical Renovation	Infrastructure	Infrastructure	Infrastructure	Site Development	Childcare	Site Development	Site/Facility Development for Specific Business
3.0	**Project Sponsor:**		Name Address Contact of person submitting project information	Heidi Lynch, VT Farm & Food Center	Justin Belden, Belden Company	Eric Mallete, Paramount Theatre	Chet Hagenbarth, Town of Killington	Michelle Kenny	Travis Samuels, Zion Growers	Daniel Norwood	Tearsa Brannock	David Loseby	Jody Smith, Horizons Early Learning Center
4.0	**Project Principals:**		Name, Address, Contact Info	PO Box 1008, 251 West Street, Rutland VT 05701 hlynch@vermontfarmersfoodcenter.org 802-342-4219	15 Belden Road, Rutland, VT 05701 justin@beldencompany.com 8027739004	30 Center Street, Rutland VT 05701 eric@paramountvt.org (802) 775-0570	2706 River Road, Killington, VT manager@killingtontown.com (802) 422-3241	15 South Main Street, Wallingford, Vermont mkenny@kennygatos.com 802-855-8940	52 Main Street, Proctor, VT ziongrowers@gmail.com	1 Brennan Cir, Poultney, VT 05764 dan@bhaktaspirits.com (802) 557-1488	abcearlyeduvt@aol.com (802) 265-4130	364 Innovation Drive, North Clarendon, VT dloseby@tuttlepublishing.com 802.773.8930	117 West Street, Rutland, VT 05701 jody@horizonselc.com 802-773-5300
5.0	**Project Description:**	**For Information Only - Not Scored**	Description	The Vermont Farmers Food Center's (VFFC) shovel-ready project is the construction of the Heart of Vermont Agriculture (HoVA) Produce Packing Center and Commercial Kitchen Center at a former industrial site at 251 West Street in Rutland. These two facilities will form the HoVA Food Hub. By repurposing an existing structure on VFFC's property into the 5400 square foot Produce Packing Center, the project will revitalize an urban industrial site and provide local specialty crop producers the much-needed infrastructure for aggregation, packing, processing, storage, and delivery to expand their markets to wholesale produce buyers in the region and beyond. Through the adaptive reuse of one of the former Lincoln Iron Works structures, VFFC will transform the 4400 square foot building into the Commercial Kitchen Center. The building will house a commercial product development and production kitchen, a meat cutting, packing, and curing room, and a second kitchen specifically for culinary jobs training. The commercial product development kitchen and meat cutting-packing room will have space, equipment, and storage for rent to value-added food entrepreneurs. The culinary training kitchen will hold cooking, nutrition, and food safety classes to prepare people for jobs in the foodservice industry.	The Berwick Site is a vacant commercial property located in the heart of Rutland's downtown. This location had been under contract for a prospective hotel development project which pulled out due to COVID-19 economic impacts. The Beldens are the current owners and would like to remediate existing brownfield conditions and develop the site into a hotel as was previously proposed.	Renovations and restorations of Rutland's Paramount Theatre retain our historical elements, complementing the previous work on the historic auditorium, and creates world-class patron experiences that will include energy-efficient HVAC upgrades, ADA-accessibility, and creation of two new 3,000 square foot multi-use venues. These flexible spaces, identified as a critical community need, are intended for community-wide use, will host meetings, workforce development trainings, performances, and civic engagement events, bringing thousands of additional patrons through our doors, greatly enhancing current programming that brings live performances, and a diverse variety of programming to over 60,000 patrons each year. This project positions the Theatre for continued success and future growth and expands services and employment. This project is fully designed, and in the final engineering phase, and has a total budget of $6M. A multi-phased two-year construction schedule is intended to start in early 2023. Total Capital Funds on hand total $3.4M. The Paramount is a powerful economic engine for the Downtown, City, and Region that has and will continue to inspire additional economic development initiatives as it continues to play a vital role in support of Rutland County's growth and redevelopment.	At present time, Killington does not have municipal water. Multiple properties along the Killington Road are presently experiencing significant water quality issues, including the presence of PFOAs, along with unsatisfactory fire suppression flows. With a municipal water system and an updated Killington Road design, a new Resort Village can be developed which will benefit Vermont. The developer of the proposed Resort Village at the Killington Ski Area is willing to enter into a public/private agreement whereby the developer contributes its fully approved Valley Well Water system to the Town of Killington. The Town will upsize the system to include distribution of potable water down the Killington Road. This Valley Well Water system has been designed. Source and construction permits have been received. After the system is upsized to meet the needs of the Town and amended permits are received, this water system project is shovel ready. The proposed water system will be designed in a way that users will pay a use fee, similar to the public sewer system and fee schedule already in place in Killington. The Killington Road, the main artery in town leading from Route 4 to the largest ski area on the East Coast, requires a redesign after 40 years to better support new infrastructure, growth and pedestrian and bus use. With a municipal water system, coupled with a redesigned Killington Road, the community will see growth and the development of a Resort Village at the base of the ski area will bring economic development to the entire Central Vermont region. The Town of Killington is located in the	"The Wallingford Block" is a historic 1824 building at the only 4-corner intersection in Wallingford, Vermont, in a designated historic village on Route 7. When purchased in 2018, it was in terrible disrepair, with structural defects and in a condition that was dire. Since that time, I have renovated it one section at a time, as follows (non-exhaustive list): - Structural improvement with new footings and steel support beams to restabilize the building; - Restore original widow sashes with preservationist; - Repair/replace rotten exterior cornerstones, blockings and siding; - Paint the original Block; - Restore basement and old thrift shop to a new bakery and coffee shop; - Completely renovate the 2nd story and install all infrastructure (heating/plumbing/electrical/ insulation/sheetock/fire systems) as well as re-level the floors; - Create four business spaces; - Open 3 new businesses in the 2nd story with two bathrooms The goal now is to complete the 3rd story, return it to the Community Center it once was, install an elevator and a kitchen, so it is a fully functional community event space.	Zion Growers has puchased the Vermont Marble Museum building from the Vermont Preservation Trust in 2022 to open a hemp processing facilitythe aim at opening a hemp processing facility while keeping the museum in operation. This facility will benefit hemp producers throughout the region and revitalize a stalled industrial asset in the heart of the Proctor community.	Green Mountain College closed its doors in 2019. It was purchased at auction in September 2020 and is owned by RLH. This is a town and surrounding area whose lifeblood was this college. When the student population of 700 (20% of Poultney) disintegrated, it cratered the commerce and energetic livelihood of the surrounding area. The goal for what was Green Mountain College, is to develop the campus into a transformational hub of economic activity and education that has an outsized, stimulative impact on the region. The campus will become a destination for locals and out of towners from far and wide. RLH is going to turn the 155 acre campus into a community complex that unites an array of experiences in hospitality, entertainment, culinary art, and recreation. This will combine outdoor and indoor activities that should at least include a garden, farm, trail network, gym, pool, equestrian center, hotel, spa, restaurant, brewery, roastery, marketplace, brand experience museum, residences, grade school, Masters-level program in food and beverage education, and start-up incubator for young and aspiring talent. In order to achieve this type of expansion it is core to the	Funding is needed to fill the financing gap in construction and renovation to build a much-needed childcare center in Fair Haven, which will serve families of all incomes throughout the county.	Funding was identified in 2022 to extend the water infrastructure from Phase I of the Airport Business Park to Phase II. Phase I is almost entirely developed and, in order to meet the demands for manufacturing and warehouse space in Rutland County, Phase II is primed and ready for development pending the extension of the water line. Further funding is needed to overcome the gap in construction costs to make development feasible for interested developers, creating an opportunity to develop a modern, dynamic commercial business zone that meets the needs of growing area businesses.	We purchased a building in 2020 (closed on it in 2021) to expand our program. In the new building we will be able to provide care for infants thru after school. We are currently housed in a rental space in the lower level of a church. This has proven to be a great location for our preschool program, however because the space is "below grade" and there are only 2 toilets our growth potential is limited, as we are not permitted to have infants or toddlers. The new location is perfect, but the building needs extensive renovation to meet Licensing criteria and to create a high quality early learning center for infants through preschool. Some of the renovations are complete, but we have met with many delays and construction "surprises," as well as increases in supplies due to COVID (and inflation).
6.0	**PROJECT PURPOSE AND BENEFITS:**		The degree to which the project builds capacity within the region for improved regional development/economic development/community development, including: advancing workforce development; expanding entrepreneurship efforts; supporting or enhancing existing business clusters within the region. (Other economic/community development project types are welcome, but these will score the highest for this criteria.)	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
7.0	**PROJECT TIMELINE, MILESTONES, AND STATUS:**		The degree to which the project is prepared to get underway, including factors such as site control, engineering and design; permitting, and funding identification and commitment.	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	3	5
8.0	**PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE:**		The degree to which project principals have successfully executed previous projects, managed grant funds or developed successful business models.	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	5	4
9.0	**PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED:**		The degree to which the project is consistent with identified goals and strategies in local and regional plans, advances regional needs identified in reports, plans and public forums, and has community support and engagement.	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
10.0	**PROJECT COST, IDENTIFIED AND COMMITED FUNDS/FINANCING, AND FUNDING GAP:**		Degree to which information includes total project cost, a simple sources and uses chart, description of the amount of funds/financing that have been identified and a clear status of the funds (Received, committed, applied for, identified, etc.), the dates of receipt, commitment, application, expected distribution, etc, and clearly identifies any funding gap.	5	3	5	4	5	3	4	5	3	5
			The degree to which the project is compatible with the requirements and goals of available funding sources (NBRC, EDA, CDBG, USDA etc.)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
11.0	**JOB CREATION:**	Scoring: 5: 51+ 4: 21-50 3: 11-20 2: 1-10 1: <1	Number of full time jobs directly created or retained by project.	2	4	2	5	2	5	5	3	5	3
		Scoring: 1-5 with 5 being best	Quality of benefits and overall benefits package to accompany jobs to be created/retained	3	3	3	3	2	4	5	3	5	3
		Scoring: 5: 11% or more above median wage for the region 4: Between 0-10% above median wage for the region 3: At median wage for the region 2: Between 0-10% below median wage for the region 1. 11% or more below median wage for the region	Wages compared to region	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	3	5	4
	TOTAL SCORE			37	37	38	40	34	40	41	36	41	39
	PRIORITY RANKING			4	3	2	1	6	9	8	7	5	10

Score 1-5, with 5 being best

Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC)

	New School	Neck of Woods	Scott Hill Loop	Test Kitchen	Prospect Hts	Stone Arts	Habitat Human	Curtis Dam	VCFA	Montessori
Project	4	4.6	3.6	3	4.75	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.5	3.8
Timeline	2.75	4.2	3.8	3.2	3.75	3.6	2.2	4	3.25	4
Principals	3.25	4.2	3.8	2.8	4	3.8	3.2	3	3.75	3.8
Regional Need	4.25	4.8	4	3.6	4.75	4.2	4	4	4	4.2
Budget	2.75	4	3.4	3	3	3	2.6	3.2	2.75	1.4
Match to Funds	3	3.8	3.4	3	3.25	3	2.8	2.8	2.75	1.5
Job Creation	4	2.2	3.4	2	1	2.4	2.6	1	2	3.2
Job Benefits	4	2	3	3.4	1	1	1.4	1	1	1
Wage Rate	4	2	3	3.4	1	1	1.4	1	1	1
TOTAL	**32**	**31.8**	**31.4**	**27.4**	**26.5**	**26.4**	**24.6**	**24.4**	**24**	**23.9**

Prioritization	
1	New School
2	Neck of the Woods
3	Scott Hill Loop
4	Test Kitchen
5	Prospect Heights
6	Stone Arts
7	Habitat Humanity Housing
8	Curtis Dam
9	Vermont College of Fine Arts
10	Central Vermont Montessori

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC)

	Line Number:				Winooski Main St.	Hinesburg Water Supply	Trader Lane	BTV South End transit center, parking garage, housing, and child care	Municipal parking component of a hotel and residential condominium project	Railyard Enterprise Project	Bolton Valley CWS	Essex Train Station	Community Sewage Disposal System	Community Sailing Center Improvements	VFW Redevelopment - Champlain Housing Trust
	2.0	**Type of Project:**	**For Information Only - Not Scored**	Type and subtype from the Project Information From	infrastructure: transportation	Infratructure: Water	Infrastructure: Transportation	infrastructure: parking garage and transit center	Infrastructure: Public Facility	Infrastructure: Transportation	Infrastructure: Water and Sewer	infrastructure: Transportation	Infrastructure: Sewer	Infrastructure	General Development: Mixed Use
	3.0	**Project Sponsor:**		Name Address Contact of person submitting project information	City of Winooski	Town of Hinesburg	Town of Williston	City of Burlington	City of Winooski	City of Burlington	Bolton Valley Resort	City of Essex Junction	Town of Westford	Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center	Champlain Housing Trust
	4.0	**Project Principals:**		Name, Address, Contact Info	Jon Rauscher, Director of Public Works, 655-6410, jrauscher@winooskivt.org	Todd Odit, Town Administrator, 482-2281 ext.222 rmarshall@hinesburg.org	Erik Wells, Town Manager 878-0919, ewells@willistontown.com	Samantha Dunn, CEDO - Assistant Director for Community Works, (802) 829-6385, sdunn@burlingtonvt.gov	Jon Rauscher, Director of Public Works, 655-6410, jrauscher@winooskivt.org	Chapin Spencer, Public Works Director, 802-863-9094, cspencer@burlingtonvt.gov	Leanne Deschenes, Admin Assistant, Bolton Valley Community Water and Sewer, LLC, leanne@boltonvalley.com, (802) 434-6855	Regina Mahony, City Manager, 802-878-6944 x 1602, rmahony@essexjunction.org	Nanette Rogers, Town Administrator, 878-4587, selectboard@westfordvt.us	Owen Milne, Executive Director LCCSC	Miranda Lescaze, Director of Real Estate Development, Champlain Housing Trust, 88 King Street, Burlington, VT 05401, miranda.lescaze@champlainhousingtrust.org, (802) 861-7376.
	5.0	**Project Description:**		Description	reconstruct Main St to become more walkable	Increase in capacity of municipal water system	Trader Lane construction of grid street in Tafts Corners area	Housing and parking garage with transit center, daycare, and other uses to support Hula jobs	Municipal parking component of a hotel and residential condominium project	New street to connect Pine St to Battery St		New train station for Amtrak service	Construction of a large scale community wastewater system	protected boat launch with two hoists, an ADA compliant dock connection, fifty-foot-wide boat launch ramp, viewing pier, expanded mooring field and wave attenuator.	Mixed-use building. 2 non-profit commercial spaces and 38 residential units w/focus on homeless veterans.
Score 1-5, with 5 being best	6.0	**PROJECT PURPOSE AND BENEFITS:**		The degree to which the project builds capacity within the region for improved regional development/economic development/community development, including: advancing workforce development; expanding entrepreneurship efforts; supporting or enhancing existing business clusters within the region. (Other economic/community development project types are welcome, but these will score the highest for this criteria.)	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	2
	7.0	**PROJECT TIMELINE, MILESTONES, AND STATUS:**		The degree to which the project is prepared to get underway, including factors such as site control, engineering and design; permitting, and funding identification and commitment.	5	4	3	1	4	2	4	2	4	5	3
	8.0	**PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE:**		The degree to which project principals have successfully executed previous projects, managed grant funds or developed successful business models.	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	5
	9.0	**PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED:**		The degree to which the project is consistent with identified goals and strategies in local and regional plans, advances regional needs identified in reports, plans and public forums, and has community support and engagement.	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	3	5
	10.0	**PROJECT COST, IDENTIFIED AND COMMITED FUNDS/FINANCING, AND FUNDING GAP:**		Degree to which information includes total project cost, a simple sources and uses chart, description of the amount of funds/financing that have been identified and a clear status of the funds (Received, committed, applied for, identified, etc.), the dates of receipt, commitment, application, expected distribution, etc, and clearly identifies any funding gap.	4	5	3	2	4	4	5	3	4	5	5
				The degree to which the project is compatible with the requirements and goals of available funding sources (NBRC, EDA, CDBG, USDA etc.)	5	4	4	5	3	4	2	3	4	2	3
	11.0	**JOB CREATION:**	Scoring: 5: 51+ 4: 21-50 3: 11-20 2: 1-10 1: <1	Number of full time jobs directly created or retained by project.	3	3	4	5	4	2	2	3	2	2	3
			Scoring: 1-5 with 5 being best	Quality of benefits and overall benefits package to accompany jobs to be created/retained	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2
			Scoring: 5: 11% or more above median wage for the region 4: Between 0-10% above median wage for the region 3: At median wage for the region 2: Between 0-10% below median wage for the region 1. 11% or more below median wage for the region	Wages compared to region	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2
TOTAL SCORE					**38**	**36**	**35**	**34**	**33**	**33**	**33**	**32**	**31**	**30**	**30**
PRIORITY					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10

Appendix E – Economic Profile

West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Regional Economic Profile

Prepared by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Executive Summary

People & Populations

The West Central Vermont Region consists of 21 municipalities in Addison County, 23 municipalities of Central Vermont in Washington and Orange County, 18 municipalities in Chittenden County, and 27 municipalities in Rutland County. The population of the West Central Vermont Region in 2020 is estimated at 317,224, consisting of 50.8% of the State's population.[1] The Region is generally maintaining this population with some growth occurring in Chittenden County. The Region is older than the United States and Vermont average, with the exception of Chittenden County. There has been a 31% increase in the population over age 60 from 2010 to 2019.[2] West Central Vermont is 91% White, more so than the US (60%). The demographics are changing – a 2% decrease in the White alone population from 2010 to 2019 and significant growth of the Black and African American (+25%), Asian (56%), Two or More Races (25%) and Hispanic population (32%).

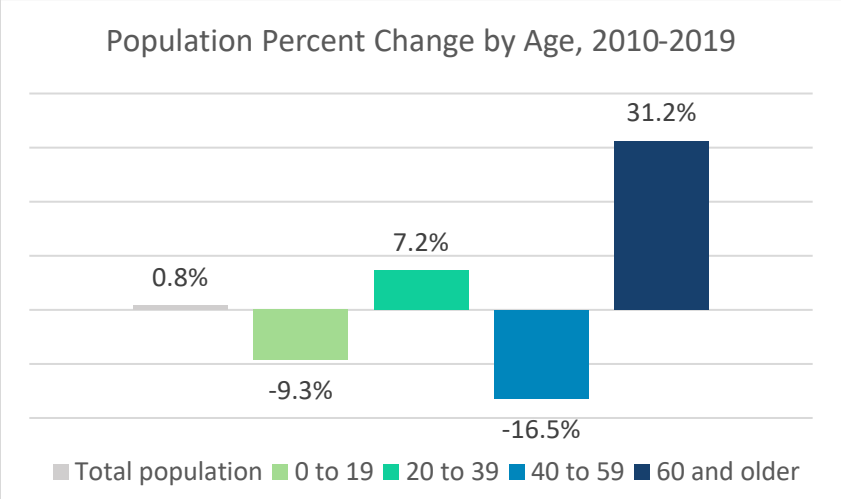

Figure 1 US Census Population Estimates 2010-2019

The Regional population is more highly-educated than the US population. Rutland County having the lowest of the four in high school graduation rates at 92.6% which is still higher than the US average of 88%. 44% of the population holds a bachelor's degree or higher degree. Educational attainment has a correlates with median income.

The poverty rate for families in the Region was 5.9% in 2019, compared to a national average of 9.5%. 30% of families in the Region earn a livable wage or a lower wage[3]. In 2019, 16.3% of households with children in the Region received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, close to the national average of 18.9%.

[1] This estimate is based on the sum of the 89 municipalities in the full West Central Vermont Region.
[2] This and following estimates are based on the sum or average of the 4 major Counties of West Central Vermont: Addison, Chittenden, Rutland and Washington Counties.
[3] Liveable Wage is estimated to fall around or above the 300% of the poverty line by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office.

Local and Regional Economy

The State of Vermont's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represents 0.16% of national GDP. Comparatively, Vermont's population represents 0.19% of the US population. In 2019, GDP per capita in Chittenden and Washington counties was greater than Vermont's GDP per capita, but between 2010 and 2019, GDP per capita has grown fastest in Addison (13.2%) and Washington (11.7%) counties.

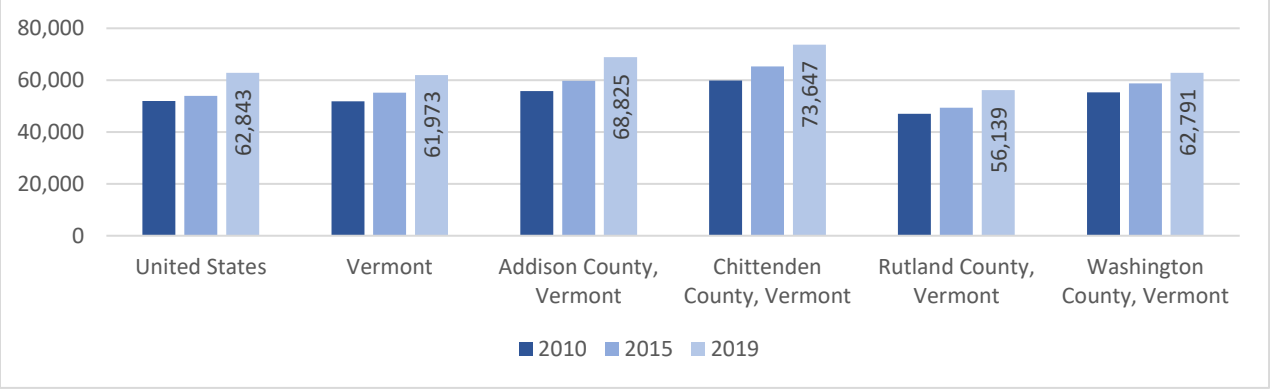

Figure 2: Median Household Income - U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey

Median household income by county varies between $56,139 and $73,647 across the Region. The majority of household income comes from wages or salary income in the Region. However, Social Security (Rutland County); Interest Dividends, or Rental Income (Chittenden County); and Self Employment also supplement this income in the Region. Most workers are employed in the private sector, though Washington County has a higher rate of government workers (18.19%). Addison County has the highest rate of self-employed people (10.01%).

The unemployment rate in the Region has followed the State trends closely with Rutland County (at 2.8% in 2019 being continuously higher than the State average (2.4% in 2019) and Chittenden County being continuously lower (1.8% in 2019). Since 2009, the unemployment rate in the Region has declined, but with substantial increases in 2020 due to the recession.

Since 2000, there has been fewer number of people over 16 in the labor force. This trend may be partially attributed to the aging population and stagnant population growth. Additionally in 2019, 20.3% of 20-24 year-olds in Rutland County did not work in the past 12 months. This is similar to the national average, but is over double the rates in Chittenden County (7.38%) and Addison County (9.67%).

Total covered employment has increased over the past decade in Addison, Chittenden and Washington Counties, but Rutland County saw a slight decrease of -2.57% in employment. Education and Health Services are the two largest employment sectors in all counties in the

Region, followed by trade, transportation and utilities.

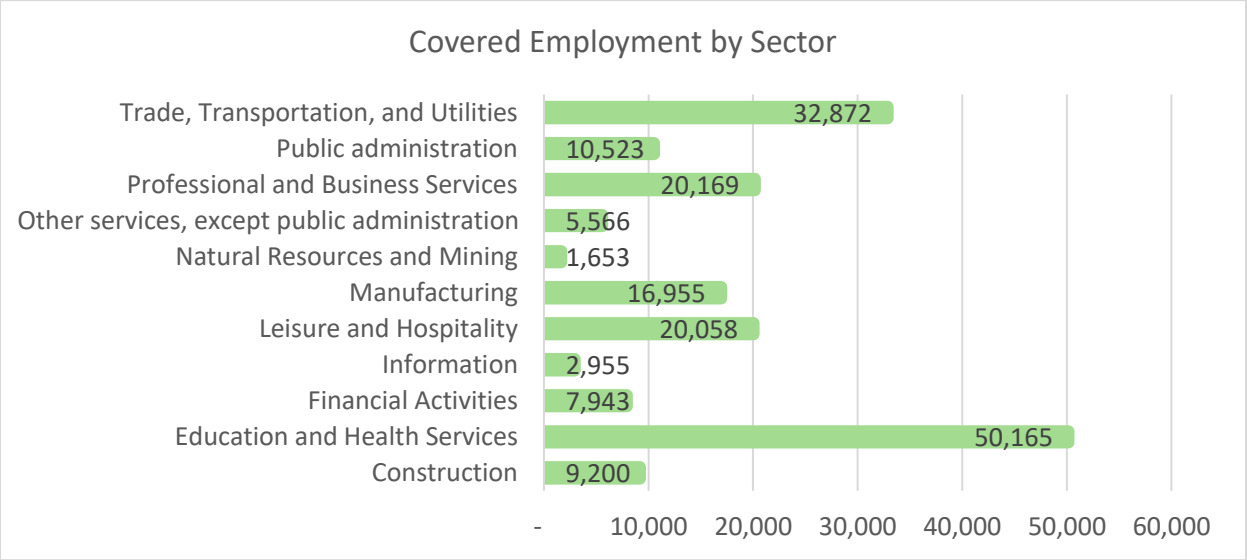

Figure 3 Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date 2019

The Working Landscape includes forestry and agricultural businesses that shape the landscape and contribute to Vermont's aesthetic and economic history. However, the Region has seen a 13% decrease in acres operated from 2012-2017, with 21% of the land area used for agriculture – less than the United States at 37%. Within the Region, Addison County goes beyond the statewide percentage, with 35% of land in agricultural use. Notably, 38% of land in Washington County is conserved in Current Use as forested land.

There are considerable income disparities across employment sectors of the Regional economy. The sectors of Utilities; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Finance and Insurance; and Management of Companies and Enterprises tend to pay better with average monthly earnings above $6,000 in the Region. Comparatively, the average monthly earnings in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Accommodation and Food service is around $2,000 a month. The higher wage sectors also experienced generally higher rates of growth in monthly earnings in the past decade. All sectors have been increasing in average monthly earnings from 2001-2019. The growth in earnings has been lowest in Manufacturing, which dropped from the 2nd highest paying sector regionally in 2001, to the 5th highest in 2019.

Income disparities are impacted by race. Within the Region, the white alone population has an average income of $42,754 which is more than double the mean income of the Black or African American alone ($18,826), and Two or more races ($20,674) population of the region. Mean incomes for the Hispanic or Latino origin ($27,151), some other Race ($25,363), Asian Alone ($31,911), American Indian and Alaska Native populations are all below the Regional average income. The difference in mean income between Black and White individuals in the Region ($20,363) is greater than the national trend (with a $13,943 gap).

Across the Region the gap between male and female earnings has begun closing, with Washington County leading the way with a wage gap of 6%. There is still a gap of 25% in Chittenden County, which mirrors State and National data.

The overall index of inequality, summarized with the Gini coefficient, shows less income inequality in the Region (around 0.44) than the US (higher, or more unequal at 0.48 on a scale from 0 to 1). However, the income inequality coefficient has increased between 2010 and 2019, except in Addison County.

Infrastructure and Services

Childcare is a critical service for supporting the Region's workforce. Let's Grow Kids estimates that 57% of infants, 25% of toddlers, and 22% of preschoolers in the Region do not have access to regulated childcare.

The median value of owner-occupied homes in the Region range are generally higher than the State ($227,700) and US ($217,500) and range from $177,400 in Rutland County to $297,900 in Chittenden County. Over 50% of Renters in Rutland and Chittenden counties spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This metric is defined as an indicator of housing affordability.

Most residents of Chittenden (91%), Rutland (85) and Washington (81%) counties work in their county of residence. Addison County is the only county where fewer of residents (71%) work in the county of residence than the national average of 76%. The Region contains 30% of Vermont's State Highways, which facilitate commercial travel and tourism.

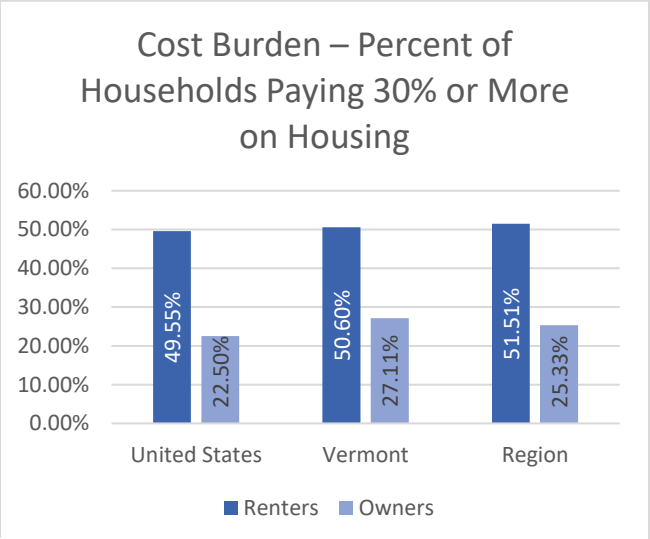

Figure 4 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2019

High-speed internet is critical in providing economic opportunities, including working remotely and operating home-based businesses. 15% of West Central Vermont buildings do not have access to high speed internet, and in Addison County this rate is as high as 38%. The fastest internet speeds in the Region are found in Chittenden and Rutland Counties, with 22-26% of buildings having access to fiber-optic internet speeds. Overall, Vermont ranks 48th in the nation for broadband access.

Water and Wastewater capacity is vital for infill development and lowering the cost of entry to open small businesses. The Region includes 62% of the water and wastewater capacity in the entire State of Vermont. Chittenden County provides half (31%) of this capacity.

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Purpose and Methodology

Purpose

The Regional Economic Profile was created to be included as an appendix for the West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The purpose of this document is to inform the Strategy Committee about the demographic, economic, natural and physical landscape of the West Central Vermont Region.

Geographic Scope

The West Central Vermont Region is made up of the 91 municipalities in Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, Orange, and Washington counties. The West Central Vermont Region follows the boundaries of Addison County Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; Rutland Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation.

In order to ensure standardized data across a variety of topics, county-level data has been obtained for Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington counties. While county lines do not line up with service areas, they present a standard starting point to compare data. Select data points have only been analyzed at the State level due to availability of data. Key data topics were extracted at town and city level to identify specific differences between municipalities in the region and full represent the 91 municipalities of the West Central Vermont Region.

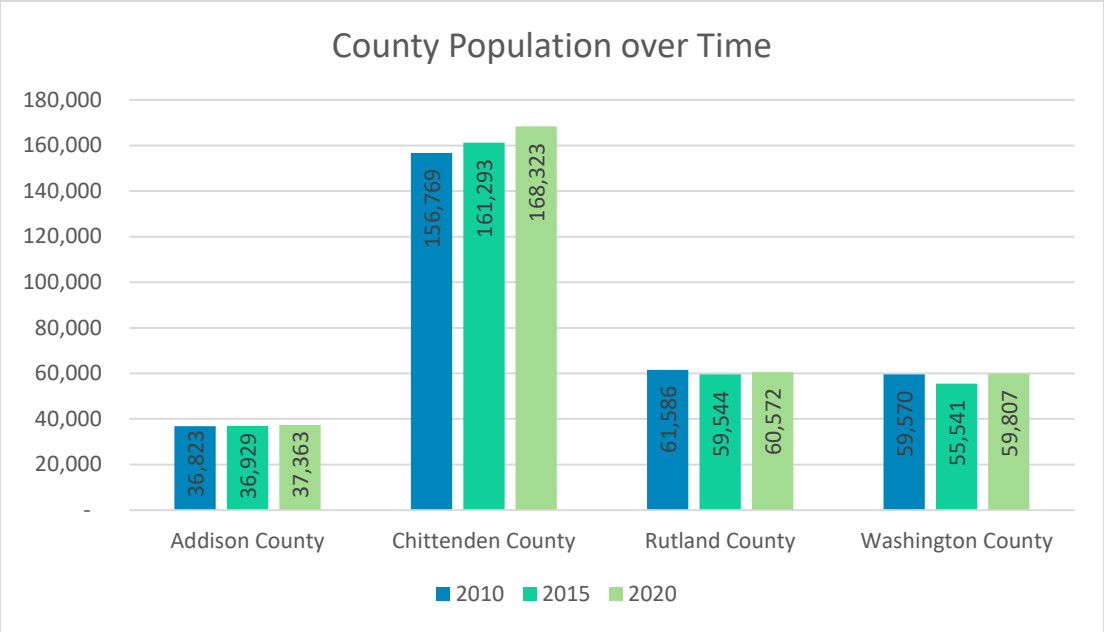
Data Sources

Sources for data rely primarily on the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, Decennial Census, and Quarterly Workforce Indicators. Other sources include the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), and the Vermont Department of Labor. Other sources are included but may be data-point specific and are specified under each title. Data sources have been prioritized to ensure ease of data updates for in the future.

People and Populations

Population Change over Time

Source: 4/25/2022 - 2020 U.S. Dicentennial Census



The population of the West Central Vermont Region major counties is 326,065, which is 50.7% of Vermont's total population of 643,077. Chittenden County represents 51.6% of the West Central Vermont Region. Since 2010, Chittenden County is the only county in the Region experiencing consistent growth. However, Addison, Rutland, and Washington counties are experiencing small increases in population in more recent years.

Population by Town

Source: 7/1/2019 County Characteristics Resident Population Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Municipality	County	Region	2010	2015	2019
Addison town	Addison County	Addison County	1,374	1,357	1,322
Bridport town	Addison County	Addison County	1,219	1,213	1,178
Bristol town	Addison County	Addison County	3,906	3,939	3,842
Cornwall town	Addison County	Addison County	1,186	1,184	1,192
Ferrisburgh town	Addison County	Addison County	2,776	2,757	2,690
Goshen town	Addison County	Addison County	164	162	163
Leicester town	Addison County	Addison County	1,097	1,106	1,086
Lincoln town	Addison County	Addison County	1,270	1,265	1,241
Middlebury town	Addison County	Addison County	8,493	8,527	8,780
Monkton town	Addison County	Addison County	1,972	2,056	2,090
New Haven town	Addison County	Addison County	1,718	1,731	1,705
Orwell town	Addison County	Addison County	1,244	1,241	1,215
Panton town	Addison County	Addison County	678	684	707
Ripton town	Addison County	Addison County	587	590	569
Salisbury town	Addison County	Addison County	1,138	1,129	1,107
Shoreham town	Addison County	Addison County	1,266	1,263	1,229
Starksboro town	Addison County	Addison County	1,775	1,775	1,744
Vergennes city	Addison County	Addison County	2,639	2,626	2,583
Waltham town	Addison County	Addison County	448	443	463
Weybridge town	Addison County	Addison County	832	827	821
Whiting town	Addison County	Addison County	417	417	411
Total		Addison County RPC/EDC	36,199	36,292	36,138
Orange town	Orange County	Central Vermont	1,076	1,088	1,113
Washington town	Orange County	Central Vermont	1,037	1,024	1,010
Williamstown town	Orange County	Central Vermont	3,396	3,446	3,530
Barre city	Washington County	Central Vermont	9,055	8,760	8,528
Barre town	Washington County	Central Vermont	7,925	7,787	7,720
Berlin town	Washington County	Central Vermont	2,882	2,815	2,781
Cabot town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,425	1,432	1,433
Calais town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,610	1,594	1,604
Duxbury town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,337	1,335	1,305
East Montpelier town	Washington County	Central Vermont	2,591	2,603	2,551
Fayston town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,355	1,333	1,330
Marshfield town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,584	1,525	1,473
Middlesex town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,729	1,747	1,724
Montpelier city	Washington County	Central Vermont	7,850	7,600	7,372

Moretown town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,657	1,656	1,665
Northfield town	Washington County	Central Vermont	6,212	6,082	6,522
Plainfield town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,249	1,257	1,262
Roxbury town	Washington County	Central Vermont	695	701	709
Waitsfield town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,722	1,712	1,693
Warren town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,705	1,684	1,671
Waterbury town	Washington County	Central Vermont	5,075	5,120	5,155
Woodbury town	Washington County	Central Vermont	906	892	883
Worcester town	Washington County	Central Vermont	1,006	1,017	1,028
Total		Central Vermont RPC/EDC	65,079	64,210	64,062
Bolton town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	1,182	1,186	1,180
Buels gore	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	30	32	31
Burlington city	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	42,436	42,519	42,819
Charlotte town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	3,759	3,849	3,785
Colchester town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	17,115	17,378	17,127
Essex town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	19,638	20,874	21,890
Hinesburg town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	4,395	4,499	4,525
Huntington town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	1,935	1,991	1,972
Jericho town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	5,005	5,070	4,994
Milton town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	10,371	10,853	10,829
Richmond town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	4,086	4,129	4,119
St. George town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	702	714	731
Shelburne town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	7,146	7,725	7,647
South Burlington city	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	17,952	18,737	19,509
Underhill town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	3,028	3,067	3,086
Westford town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	2,024	2,083	2,116
Williston town	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	8,703	9,380	10,081
Winooski city	Chittenden County	Chittenden County	7,262	7,207	7,333
Total		Chittenden County RPC/EDC	156,769	161,293	163,774
Benson town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,057	1,030	1,002
Brandon town	Rutland County	Rutland	3,966	3,804	3,735
Castleton town	Rutland County	Rutland	4,712	4,564	4,512
Chittenden town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,256	1,218	1,181
Clarendon town	Rutland County	Rutland	2,569	2,472	2,413
Danby town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,309	1,300	1,312
Fair Haven town	Rutland County	Rutland	2,732	2,630	2,555
Hubbardton town	Rutland County	Rutland	705	683	665
Ira town	Rutland County	Rutland	433	430	433
Killington town	Rutland County	Rutland	809	778	756
Mendon town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,059	1,021	1,011
Middletown Springs town	Rutland County	Rutland	746	742	748

Mount Holly town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,239	1,232	1,244
Mount Tabor town	Rutland County	Rutland	256	255	258
Pawlet town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,478	1,418	1,371
Pittsford town	Rutland County	Rutland	2,984	2,866	2,787
Poultney town	Rutland County	Rutland	3,431	3,353	3,253
Proctor town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,737	1,650	1,595
Rutland city	Rutland County	Rutland	16,434	15,697	15,074
Rutland town	Rutland County	Rutland	4,085	4,068	4,114
Shrewsbury town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,053	1,012	983
Sudbury town	Rutland County	Rutland	560	549	540
Tinmouth town	Rutland County	Rutland	616	609	594
Wallingford town	Rutland County	Rutland	2,076	2,009	1,951
Wells town	Rutland County	Rutland	1,149	1,143	1,154
West Haven town	Rutland County	Rutland	263	251	247
West Rutland town	Rutland County	Rutland	2,321	2,213	2,150
Total		Rutland RPC/EDC	61,035	58,997	57,638
Total		West Central Vermont Region	319,082	320,792	321,612

The West Central Vermont Region is defined by the boundaries of Addison County Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; Rutland Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation; and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Economic Development Corporation.[4]

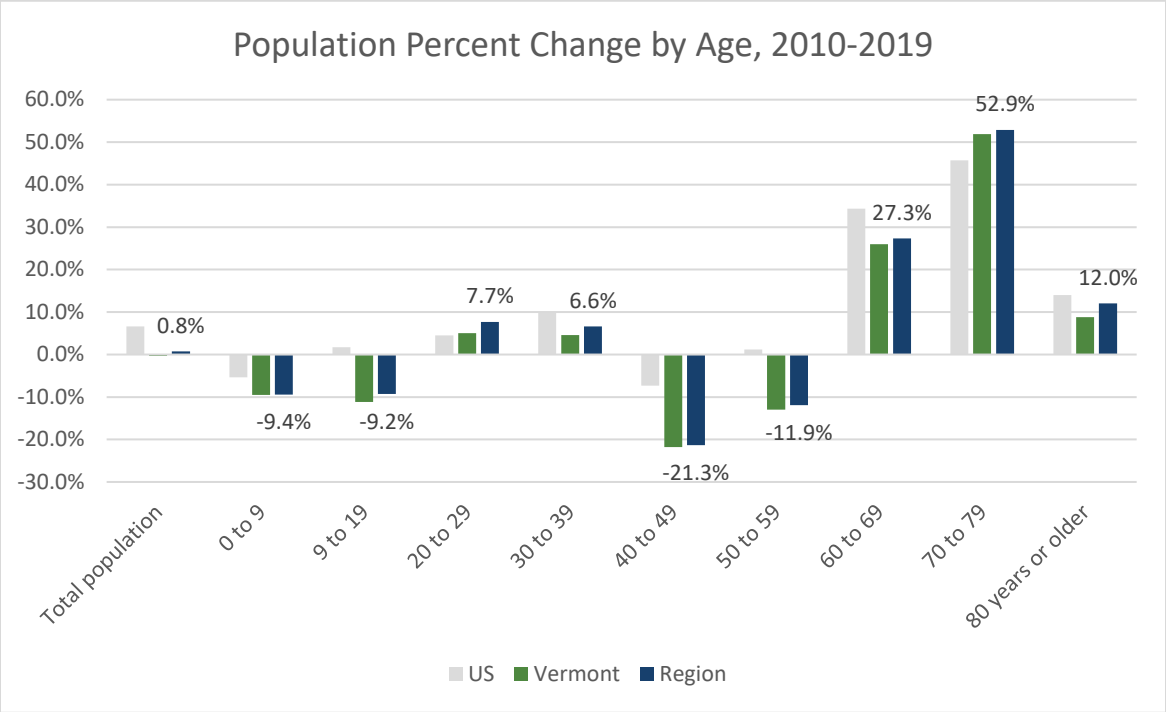
This comes to a total of 91 municipalities, including all towns except Granville and Hancock in Addison County, all municipalities in Chittenden County, all municipalities except Pittsfield in Rutland County, all municipalities in Washington County, and Orange, Washington and Williamstown Towns in Orange County.

These municipalities range from the largest being Burlington City in Chittenden County with an estimated 2019 population of 42,819 people to the smallest being Buels gore in Chittenden County with an estimated 2019 population of 31 residents.

[4] Population totals in this table are calculated by Regional Planning Commission/Economic Development Corporation boundaries rather than County boundaries. This changes the total estimated population from 317,151 (calculated as the sum of 4 County estimates) to 321,612 (calculated as the sum of each Town in the region, and the more accurate total of the population represented by the West Central Vermont CEDS).

Regional Population Percent Change by Age Group

Source: 7/1/2019 County Characteristics Resident Population Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division



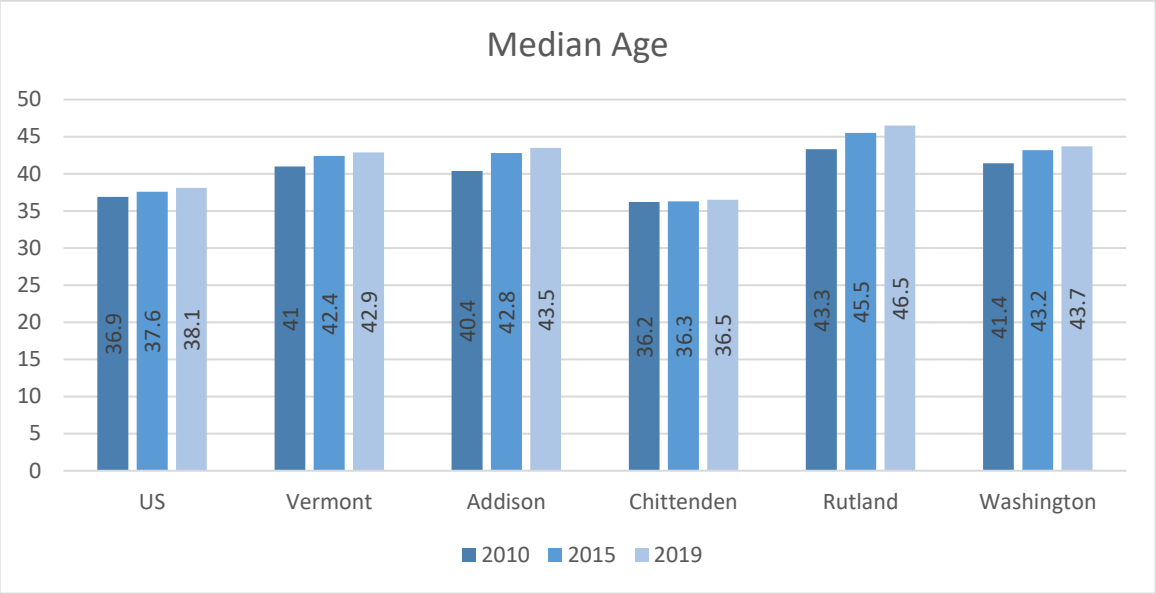
The West Central Vermont Region is experiencing a similar demographic trend to the United States: people are getting older. The Region is seeing a 21.3% decrease in residents ages 40-49, and a 52.9% increase in residents ages 70 to 79. The total population of the United States is growing much faster than the Region.

The Normal Retirement Age varies between 65 and 67 in the United States, meaning that an increase in the older population in the Region means that the labor force may be shrinking faster than the national averages.

Age

Median Age Over Time by Geographic Area

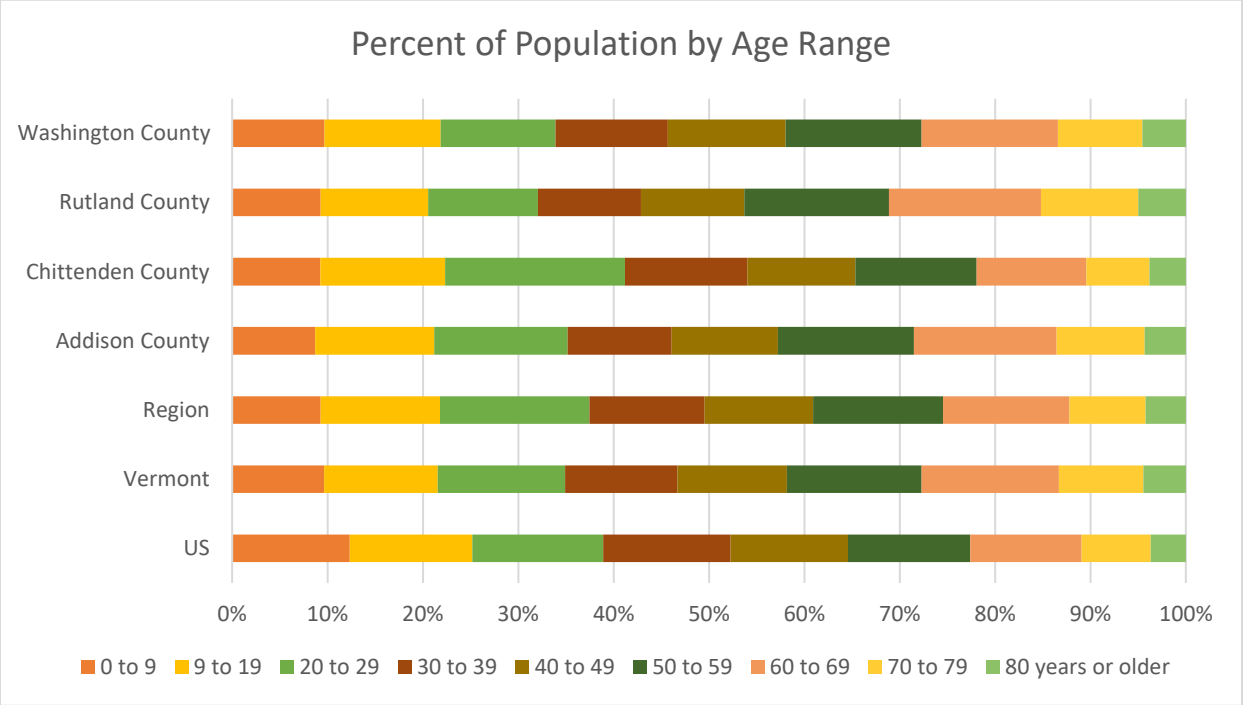
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP05



The median age in the US, State, and each county in the Region has gone up since 2010. With the exception of Chittenden County, the West Central Vermont Region and Vermont are 5 – 8 years older than the national median age. Rutland County residents are estimated to be older than the Vermont median, with Washington and Addison County residents estimated to be on par with the Vermont median age. Chittenden County's population best matches the national average and has stayed more consistent between 2010 and 2019 than the rest of the Region.

Population by Age Range, 2019

Source: 7/1/2019 County Characteristics Resident Population Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

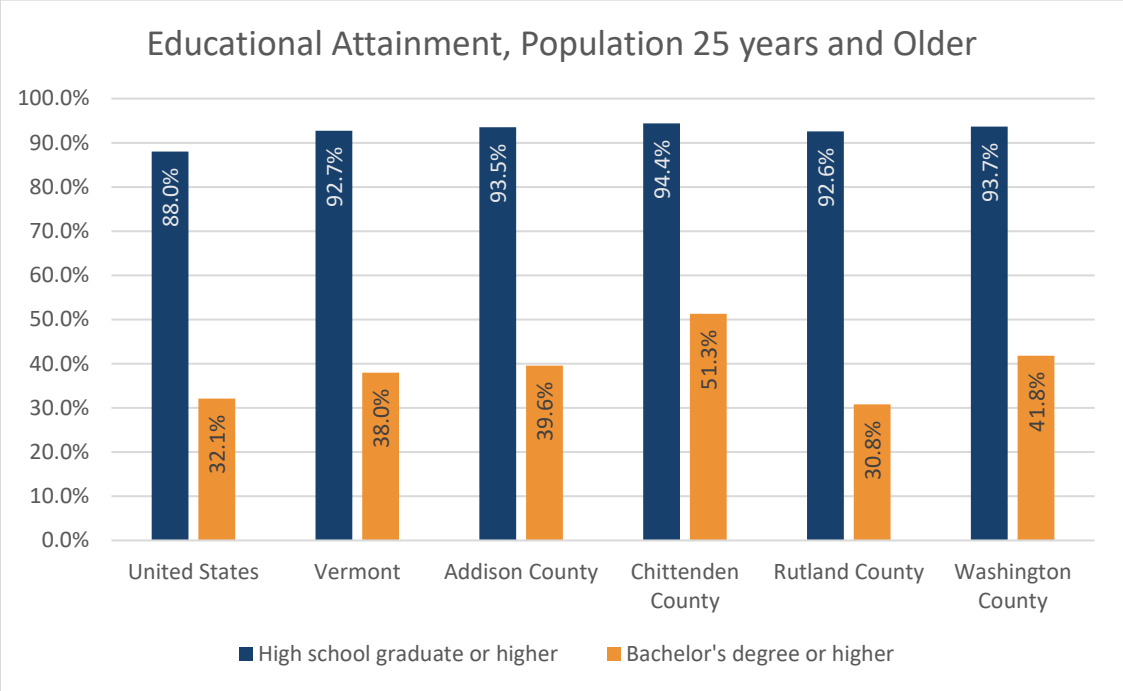


There is a higher percentage of 15-24 year olds in Chittenden County than other parts of the Region. Part of this is likely due to the higher number of higher education institutions in Chittenden County compared to the rest of the Region. All of Vermont, including the Region, has a lower percentage people under 14 years old than nationally. The Region, other than Chittenden County, has a higher percentage of older people than the US.

Education

Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over, 2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP02



Vermont and most of the Region have a higher percentage of people with high school degrees or higher (92.7% for the state) than the US (88%). However, Rutland County has a lower percentage of people with bachelor's degree or higher (30.8%) than either state (38%) or national (32.1%) rates. Chittenden County has a higher percentage of people with bachelor's degree or higher (51.3%). Washington County also has high rates of graduate and professional degrees.

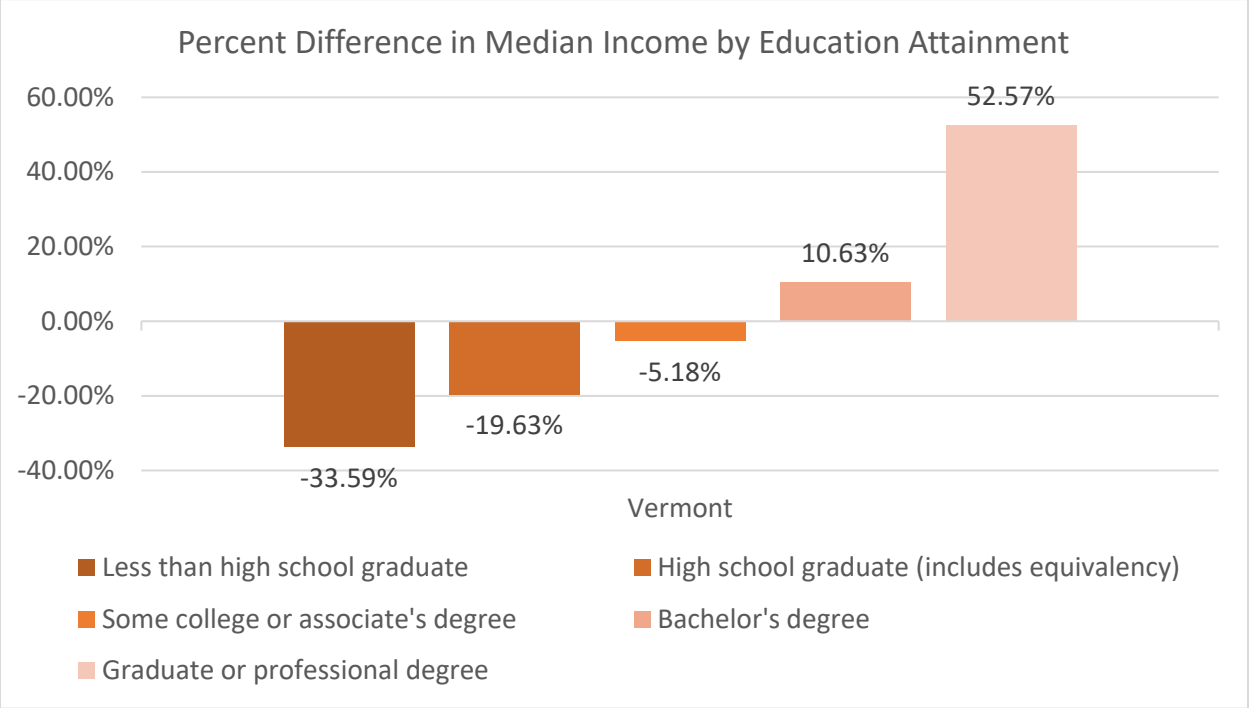
Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over, 2019 (Table)

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP02

	United States	Vermont	Region	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
Less than 9th grade	5.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.4%	1.6%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.9%	5.1%	4.1%	4.3%	3.5%	5.0%	4.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.0%	28.8%	24.7%	29.1%	19.0%	34.4%	26.9%
Some college, no degree	20.4%	17.1%	16.5%	16.2%	15.5%	18.7%	17.1%
Associate's degree	8.5%	8.7%	8.4%	8.6%	8.5%	8.6%	7.8%
Bachelor's degree	19.8%	22.5%	26.1%	23.6%	30.4%	19.4%	23.5%
Graduate or professional degree	12.4%	15.5%	18.0%	16.0%	21.0%	11.4%	18.3%

Percent Difference in Median Income by Educational Attainment

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2019, S1501

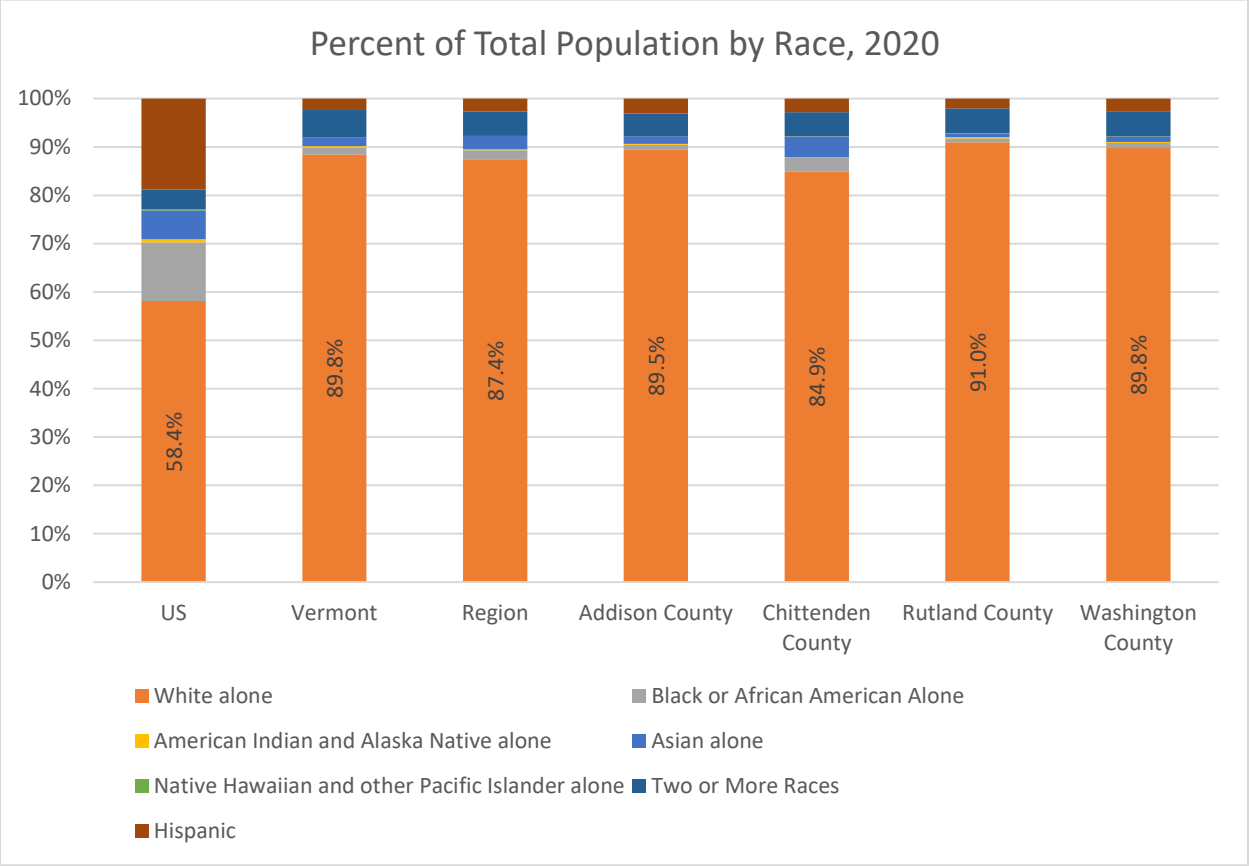


Across the state, educational attainment greatly impacts median incomes. Those with less than a high school degree make 34% less than the average median income. Individuals with high school degrees and “some college or associates degree” generally have a median income lower than the median income of the general population. Individuals with graduate or professional degrees in Vermont have incomes 53% greater than the median income of the general populations.

Race

Percent of Population by Race and Hispanic Origin

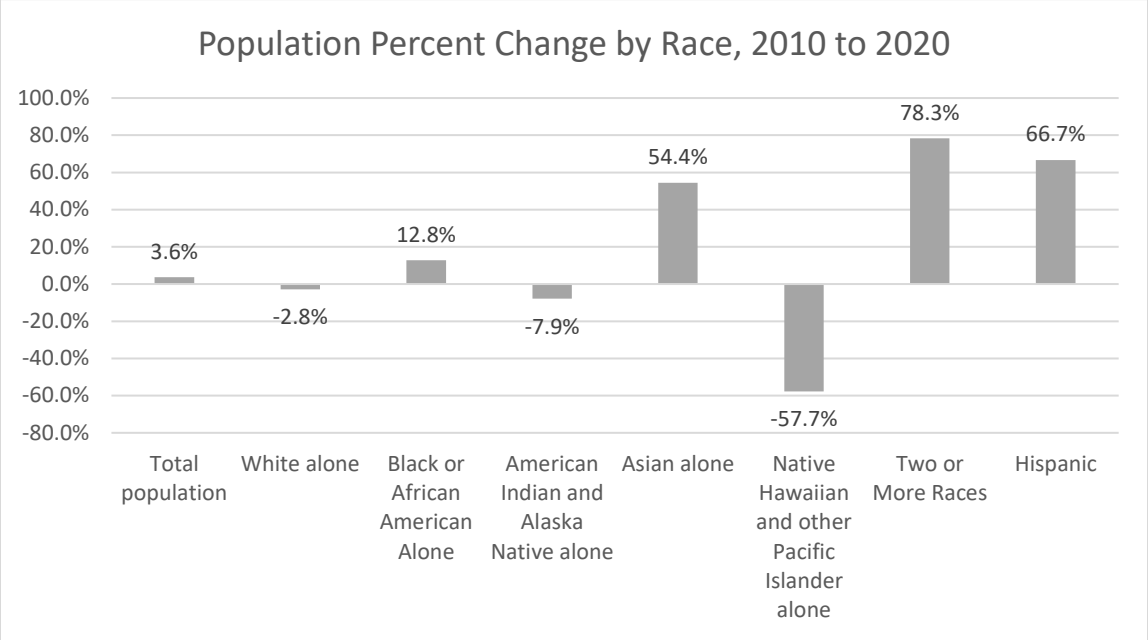
Source: U.S. Census Decennial Census 2010 and 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)



Vermont, and the West Central Vermont Region is predominantly white, compared to the US.

Population Percent Change by Race

Source: U.S. Census Decennial Census 2010 and 2020 DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

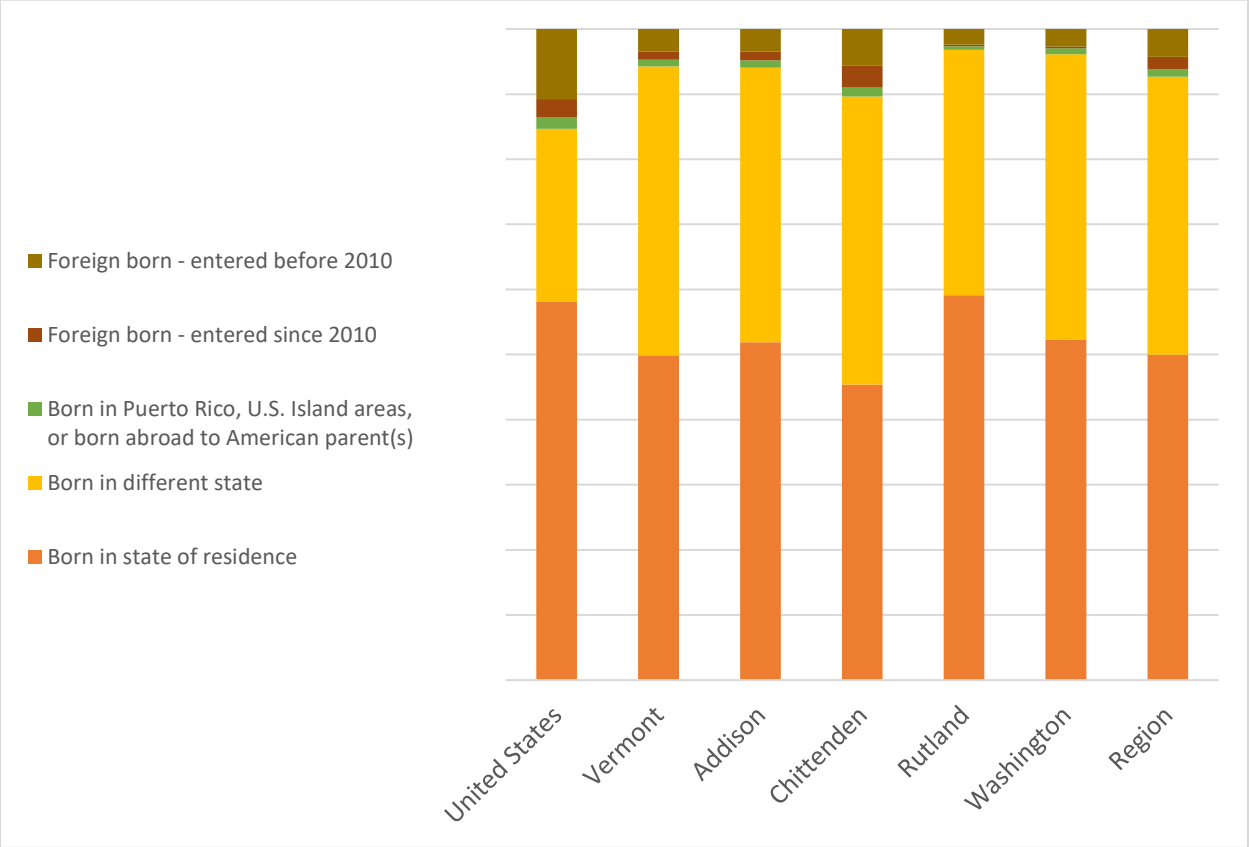


The West Central Vermont Region is becoming more racially diverse, with a significant growth in the Black or African-American, Asian, Two or More Races and Hispanic population over the past decade.

Migration and New Americans

Percent of Population Born In-State, Out of State, or Foreign-Born, 2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP02



The majority of the population currently residing in the Region was born in Vermont. All counties have higher percentages of people born in a different state now living in them than the US average. Rutland County has the highest percentage of people who were born in state at 59% and Chittenden the lowest percentage at 45%. There are fewer people who were born abroad in the Region than the US. However, Chittenden County has a higher percentage of people who are foreign born who have moved to the county since 2010 (3.3%) than the national average (2.79%).

Population Estimates by Place of Birth, 2019

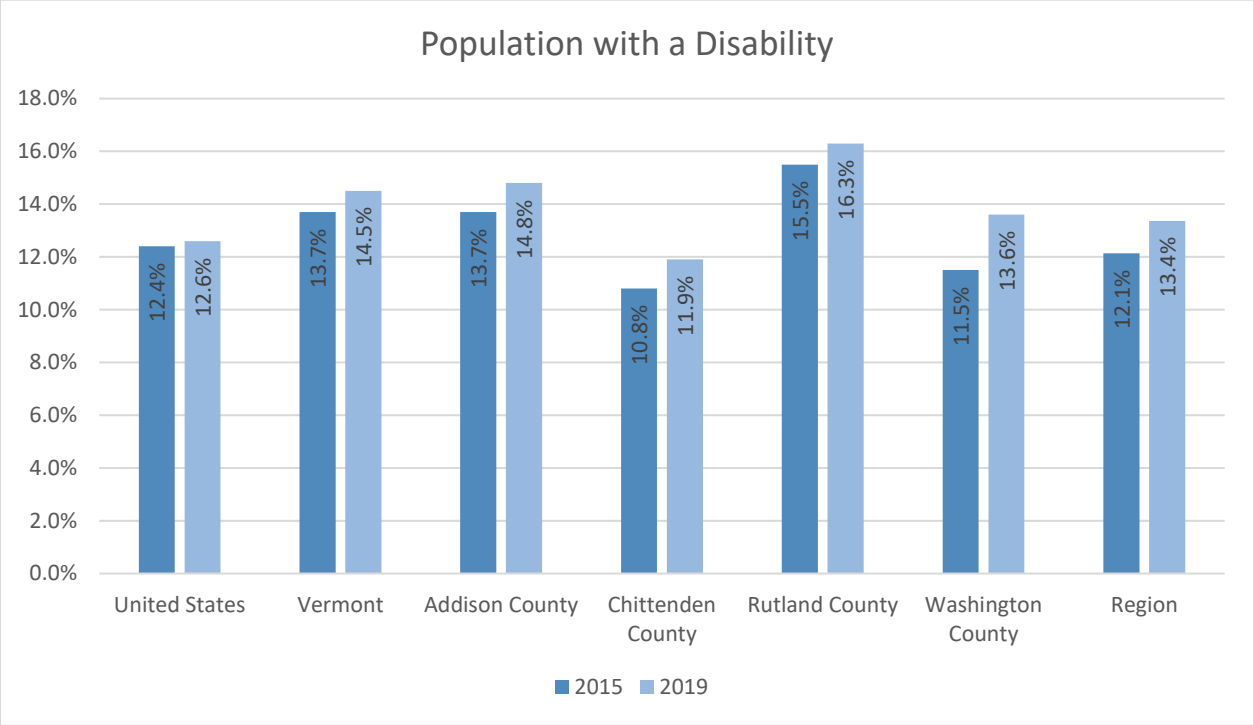
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2019, DP02

	United States	Vermont	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington	Region
Born in state of residence	189,033,094	311,637	19,151	73,964	34,831	30,521	158,467
Born in different state	86,504,176	277,168	15,557	72,013	22,184	25,568	135,322
Born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Island areas, or born abroad to American parent(s)	5,148,655	6,180	393	2,059	311	536	3,299
Foreign born - entered since 2010	9,068,929	8,004	503	5,375	156	148	6,182
Foreign born - entered before 2010	34,942,941	21,324	1,278	9,235	1,410	1,577	13,500

Select Demographic Characteristics

Percent of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population with a Disability

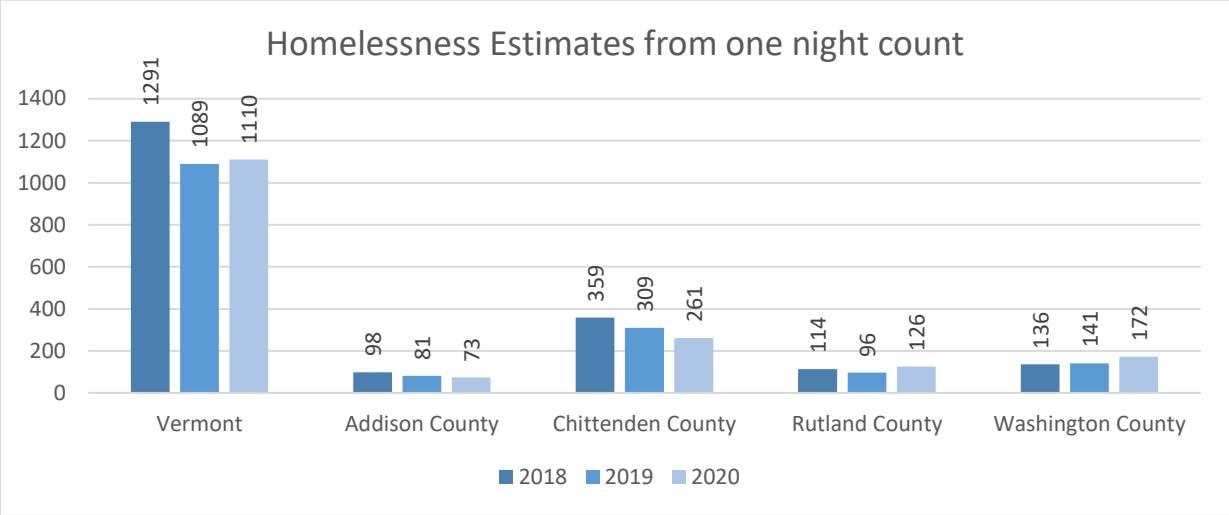
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, S1810



In the West Central Vermont Region more than 13.36% of the total population has a disability. Rutland County has a higher percentage of total population with a disability at 16.3% and Chittenden County a lower rate at 11.9%

Homelessness Estimates

Source: Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and the Institute for Community Alliances Annual Point in Time Count



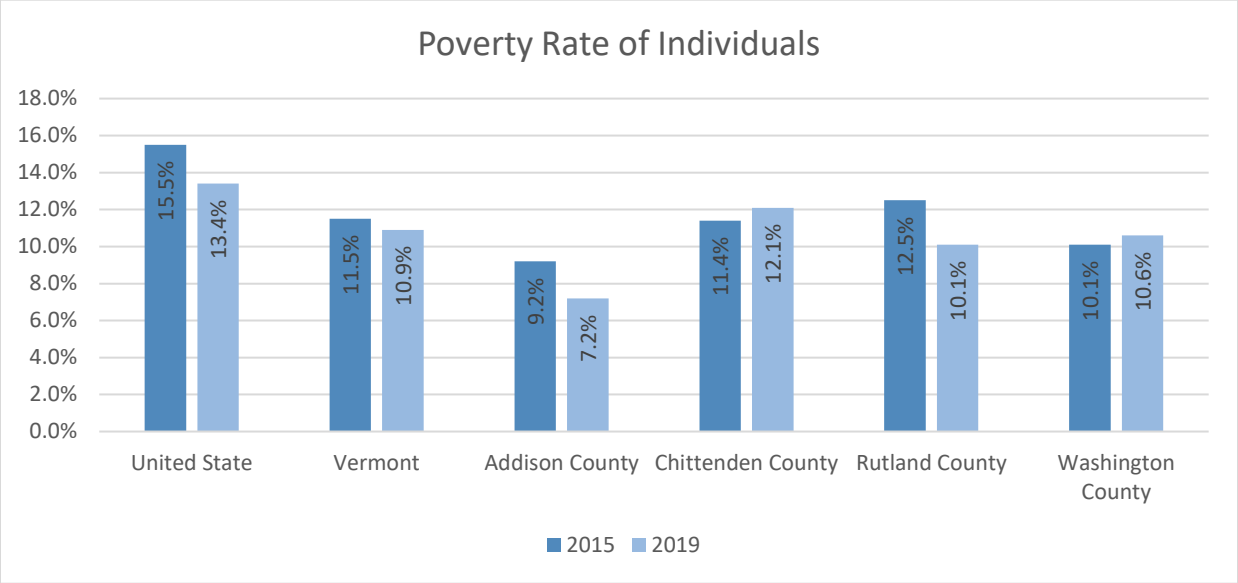
	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County	Region
2018	1291	98	359	114	136	707
2019	1089	81	309	96	141	627
2020	1110	73	261	126	172	632

In January 2020, the Region had 632 people in shelters, transitional housing, hotel rooms purchased through public funding, or living outdoors. This makes up 57% of the total Statewide amount. Most of this population is located in Chittenden County. While counts of people experiencing homelessness have decreased across the Region, counts in Washington and Rutland County have increased over the past several years.

Poverty

Poverty Rate of Individuals, 2015 and 2019

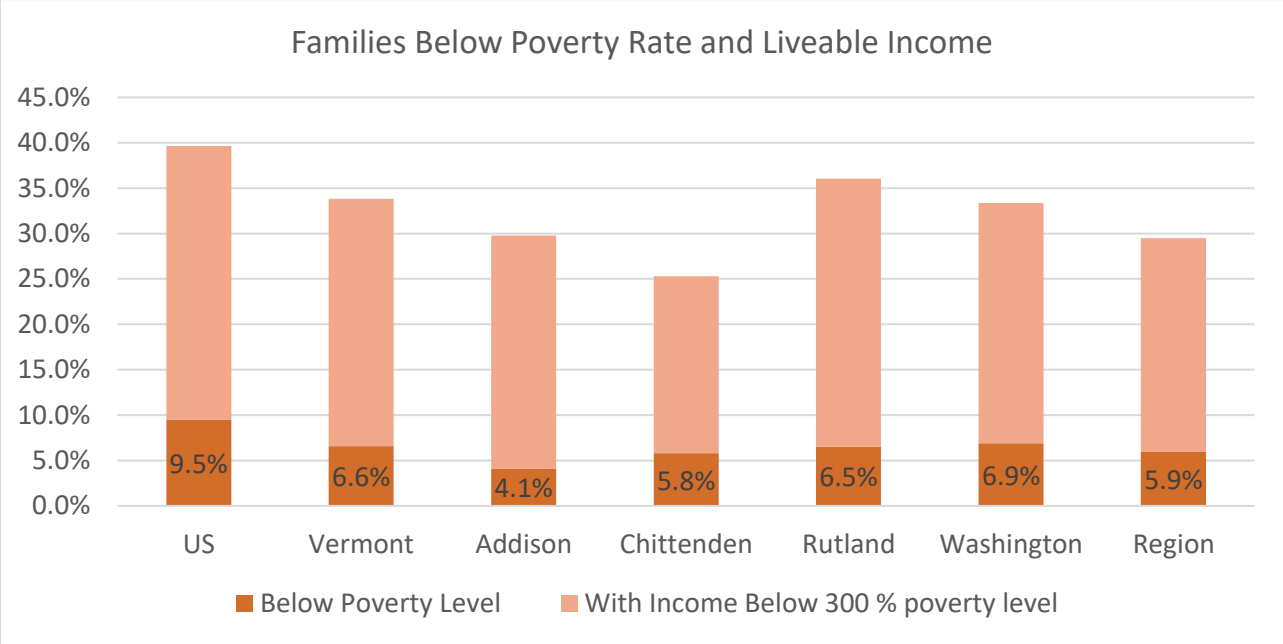
Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Summary Tables S1701



The Region and State individual poverty rates were below the US average of 13.4% in 2019. The poverty rate is lowest in Addison County (7.2%). Chittenden County has a higher median income than the other counties in 2019 (12.1%).

Families Below Poverty Rate and Liveable Income

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Summary Tables S1702, 2019

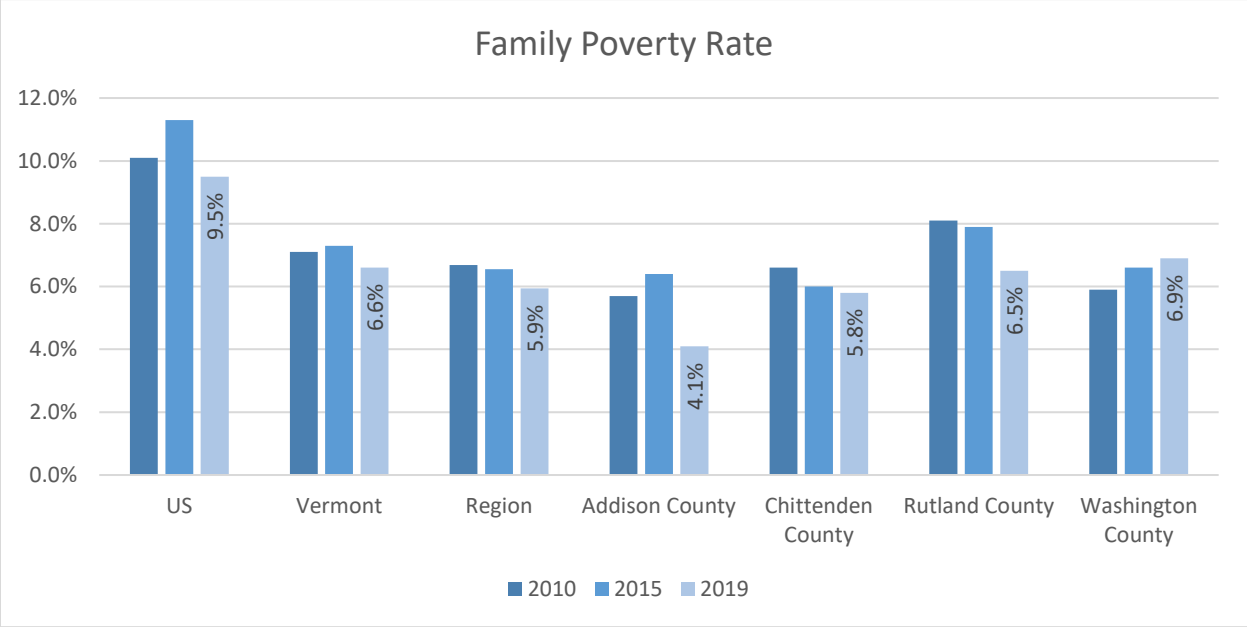


While a small percentage (5.9%) of the Region's families live under the poverty level, a larger percent (29.5%) of families live under 300% of the poverty level (which is roughly estimated by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office to be a liveable income).

	United State	**Vermont**	**Addison County**	**Chittenden County**	**Rutland County**	**Washington County**	**Region**
Below Poverty Level	9.5%	6.6%	4.1%	5.8%	6.5%	6.9%	5.9%
With Income Below 300 % poverty level	39.6%	33.8%	29.8%	25.3%	36.0%	33.4%	29.5%

Families Below Poverty Rate - Trends

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Summary Tables S1702



While the poverty rate is lower across all counties in the Region and in Vermont than the National percentage, there are higher poverty rates in Rutland County, and the rate is increasing over time in Washington County.

Food insecurity

Percent Households and Households with Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2019, S2201

	US	Vermont	Region	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
% households receiving SNAP	11.7%	11.3%	9.3%	8.4%	8.5%	10.1%	11.4%
% households with children receiving SNAP	19.0%	16.3%	16.3%	14.1%	12.4%	14.0%	17.4%

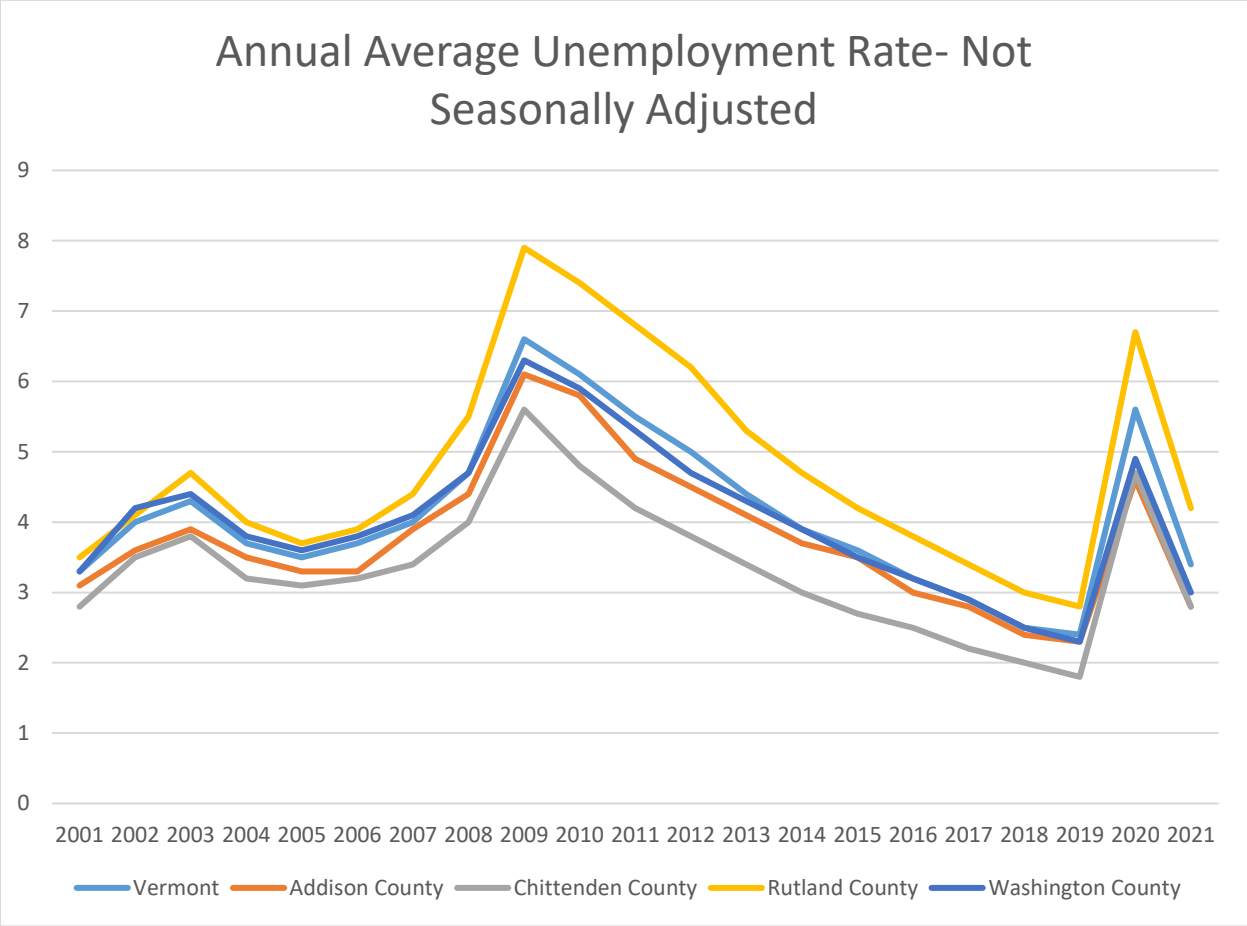
In the West Central Vermont Region, 9% of households receive SNAP benefits. 16.3% of households with children receive SNAP benefits. Washington County has the highest rate of enrollment in SNAP for households and households with children within the Region.

Employment Data

Employment

Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted)[5]

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021 Benchmark



Year	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County	Vermont
2000	2.6	2.3	3.2	2.7	2.8
2005	3.3	3.1	3.7	3.6	3.5
2010	5.8	4.8	7.4	5.9	6.1
2015	3.5	2.7	4.2	3.5	3.6
2020	4.6	4.7	6.7	4.9	5.6

[5] Unemployment rate is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics definition of the official unemployment rate (U-3). It is the total number of unemployed people, expressed as a percentage of the civilian labor force. More information can be found here: https://www.bls.gov/cps/definitions.htm

Unemployment rates were lower in 2019 than in 2010 or 2015. While Vermont and the Counties in the Region have unemployment rates lower than the national rate (5.3% in 2019, seasonally adjusted), Rutland County's unemployment rates have been consistently higher (2.8% in 2019) than the other county and State rates (2.4%). Chittenden County had the lowest unemployment rate in 2019 (1.8%).

Unemployment Rate By Town

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020 Benchmark [6]

Municipalities with highest increase in unemployment rate, 2015-2020			
Municipality	**County**	**2020**	**Percent Change 2015-2020**
Fayston town	Washington County	6.7	72%
Panton town	Addison County	7.9	65%
West Haven town	Rutland County	6.1	64%
Goshen town	Addison County	5.1	61%
Waltham town	Addison County	4.7	60%
Killington town	Rutland County	22.2	59%
Mendon town	Rutland County	5.8	59%
Weybridge town	Addison County	3.4	56%
Danby town	Rutland County	7.1	55%
Winooski city	Chittenden County	6.8	53%

Municipalities with highest unemployment rate, 2020			
Municipality	**County**	**2020**	**Percent Change 2015-2020**
Killington town	Rutland County	22.2	59%
Fair Haven town	Rutland County	8.2	41%
West Rutland town	Rutland County	8	51%
Panton town	Addison County	7.9	65%
Rutland city	Rutland County	7.9	41%
Wells town	Rutland County	7.5	20%
Brandon town	Rutland County	7.4	45%
Pawlet town	Rutland County	7.3	26%

[6] Data is Not Seasonally adjusted, and represents annual averages

Washington town	Orange County	7.2	40%
Danby town	Rutland County	7.1	55%

Municipalities with lowest unemployment rate, 2020*			
Municipality	**County**	**2020**	**Percent Change 2015-2020**
Ripton town	Addison County	2.9	0%
Ira town	Rutland County	3.2	-153%
Middlesex town	Washington County	3.3	27%
Waitsfield town	Washington County	3.3	-21%
Weybridge town	Addison County	3.4	56%
Moretown town	Washington County	3.4	32%
Monkton town	Addison County	3.4	15%
Cornwall town	Addison County	3.5	40%
Jericho town	Chittenden County	3.5	34%
Westford town	Chittenden County	3.6	28%
*Excluding Buels Gore due to lack of data			

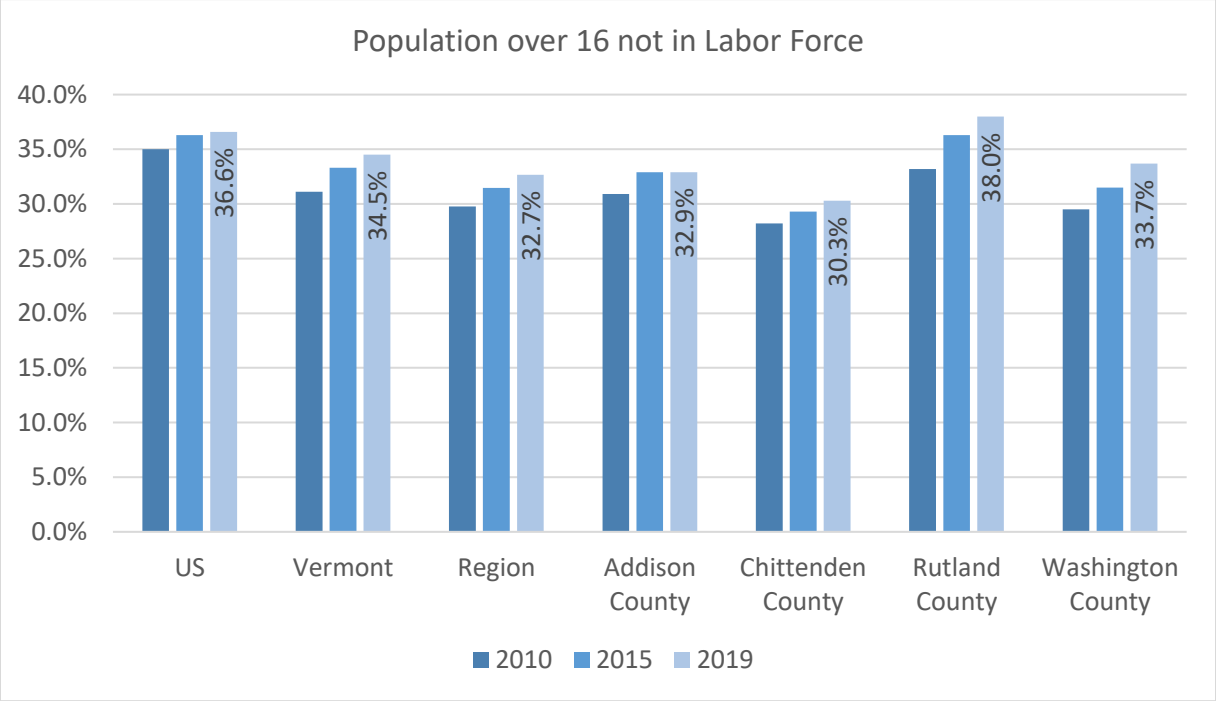
Municipalities with highest unemployment rate, 2019		
Municipality	**County**	**2019**
Killington town	Rutland County	6.5
Washington town	Orange County	3.6
Poultney town	Rutland County	3.6
Panton town	Addison County	3.5
Wells town	Rutland County	3.4
West Rutland town	Rutland County	3.3
Brandon town	Rutland County	3
Pawlet town	Rutland County	3

West Haven town	Rutland County	3
Wallingford town	Rutland County	3

The unemployment rate in the Region is generally low, and in 2019 only the Killington Town in Rutland County had an annual average rate above 4%. However the COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on unemployment, with unemployment rates more than doubling from 2015 to 2020 in many towns. 69 out of 88 municipalities in the region had annual average unemployment rates above 4% in 2020. The long term impact of the 2020 recession on unemployment is yet to be seen as it impacts municipalities in West Central Vermont.

Percent of Population Over 16 Not in Labor Force

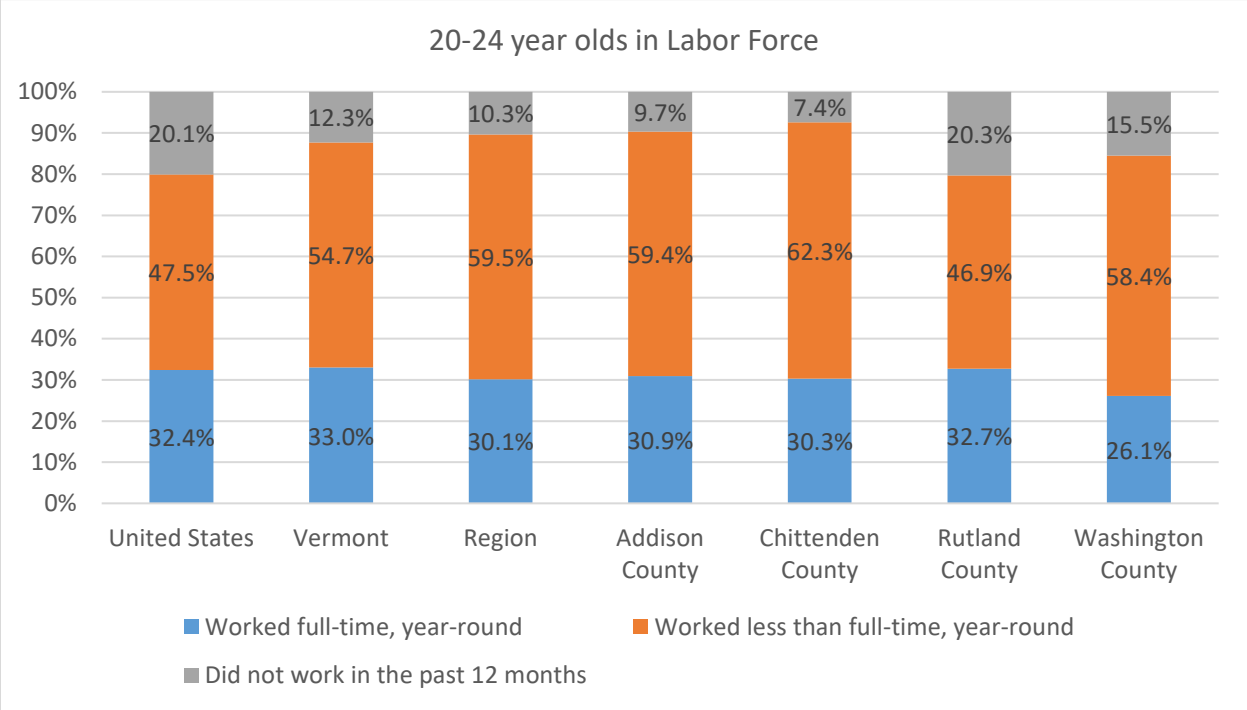
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP03



West Central Vermont, with the exception of Rutland County, have higher rates of labor force participation than the State and national rates. Chittenden County has the highest labor force participation rate. This is likely due in part to the lower median age in Chittenden County. The number of individuals over 16 that are not participating in the labor force has risen in all jurisdictions since 2010.

Percentage of 20-24 Year Olds in Labor force, 2019

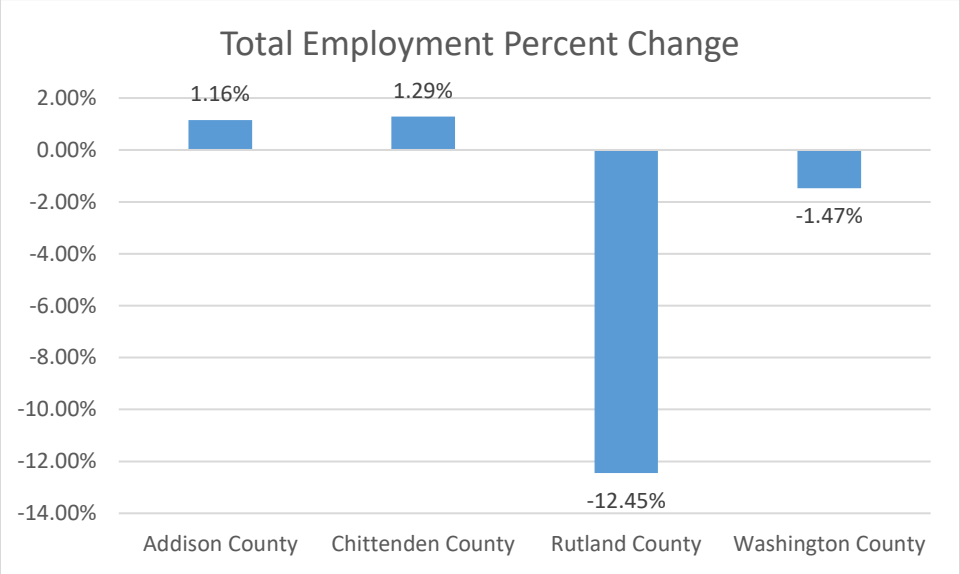
Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables B23027



In Rutland County, 20.3% of 20-24 year olds did not work in the past 12 months (as of 2019). This is similar to the national rate of 20.11%, but is over double the rates in Chittenden County (7.38%) and Addison County (9.67%). In 2019, Washington, Chittenden and Addison Counties had lower rates of 20-24 year olds with full-time, year-round work than the national average of 32.38%.

Total Covered Employment Percent Change 2010 to 2020

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date



Total Covered Employment, 1995-2020 (Table)

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date

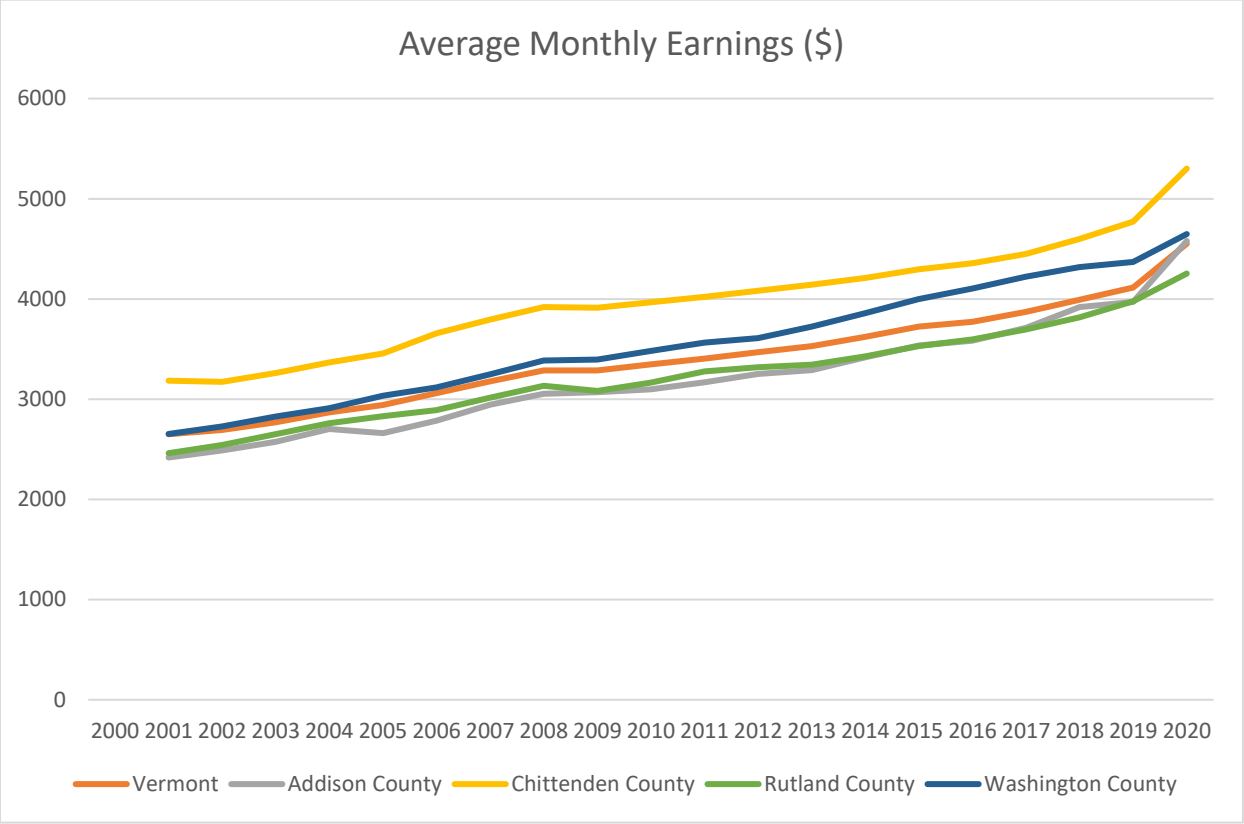
	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
1995	11,492	82,617	27,566	28,493
2000	13,730	95,354	28,930	32,079
2005	14,071	94,799	29,693	32,643
39932010	13,591	93,253	27,441	31,750
2015	14,539	101,260	27,492	32,911
2020	13,748	94,456	24,025	31,282

Total covered employment has increased in all counties in the Region since 1995 except for Rutland County.

Wage and Earnings

Full Quarter Employment (Stable); Average Monthly Earnings over Time

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau



Average monthly earnings are increasing over time. In recent years, Washington County has had an increase in average earnings above the state average, with an average monthly wage of $4,648. In 2020, Chittenden County's average monthly earnings of $5,302 are well above the Vermont average wage of $4,552. The wages in 2020 for Rutland falls slightly below the state average at $4,254, while Addison County's is slightly above at $4,579.

Full Quarter Employment (Stable); Average Monthly Earnings by NAICS sector

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 – 1st Quarter

	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Orange County	Rutland County	Washington County
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2966	3063	3103	3088	2494	2607
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4894	4286	5124	4649	5353	4749
Utilities	8677	7678	8832	685	9891	6536
Construction	4047	3783	4637	4105	3952	4127
Manufacturing	5347	5061	6659	3609	4521	4757
Wholesale Trade	5959	5096	6719	4428	5138	4758
Retail Trade	2882	3002	3041	2412	2779	2695
Transportation and Warehousing	3750	3359	3682	2486	3537	4804
Information	5626	3998	6272	4163	4823	5112
Finance and Insurance	8758	6482	9935	4660	7094	9897
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3915	5874	4233	3157	3437	3356
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7461	6595	8516	5655	5128	6305
Management of Companies and Enterprises	8060	13560	6683	8649	10129	8723
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3835	3794	4084	3856	3582	3810
Educational Services	3361	3528	2782	5079	2668	3627
Health Care and Social Assistance	4299	3948	5220	4366	4864	3843
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2316	2192	2393	1503	1866	2202
Accommodation and Food Services	1994	1909	1946	2896	1950	1856
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3382	3409	3585	3299	2620	4254

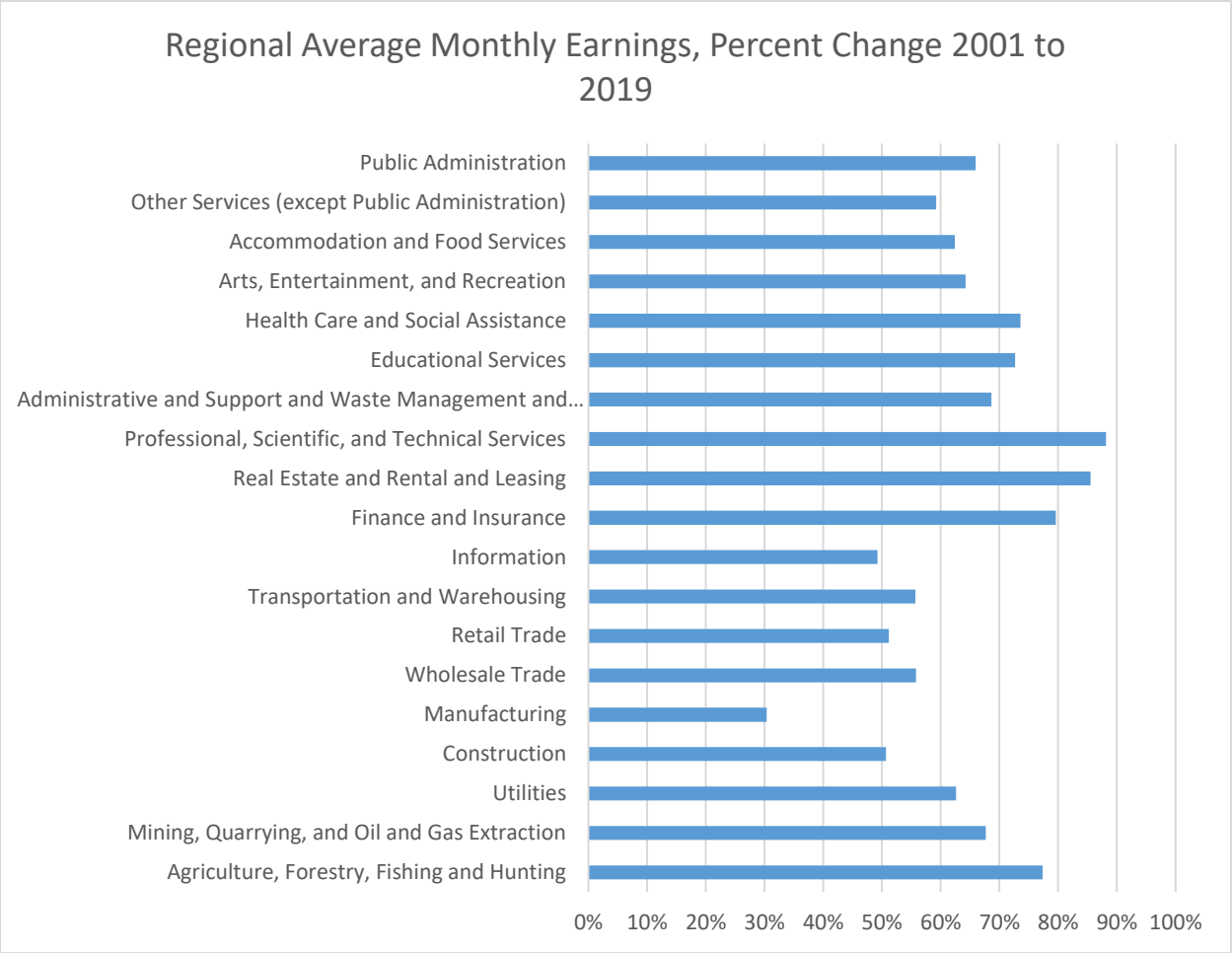
Wages vary by employment sector, and by County. Highest paying sectors include Utilities; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Finance and Insurance; and Wholesale Trade (with average monthly earnings over $6,000 in most Counties).

The 2020 Vermont Livable Wage is $13.39 per hour, which translates to around $2,142 (The Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office Vermont Basic Needs Budgets and Liveable Wage, January 2021). Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Accommodation and Food Services wages in the region are on

average below the Vermont Liveable Wage in the Counties in the Region. Note that this data is an average of hourly, salaried, part-time and full-time employees, and that employment tracks jobs, not workers.

Regional Average Monthly Earnings by NAICS sector, Percent Change 2001 to 2019

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau



Average monthly earnings in the Region have been trending upwards in all sectors since 2001. However, wage have grown more in certain sectors – Professional Services, Real Estate, Finance – than others sectors – Information, Retail Trade, and Construction.

The one sector showing a significantly different trend is in Manufacturing where monthly earnings have not increased at a rate comparable to other sectors. In 2000, Manufacturing was the 2nd highest paying sector, yet by 2019 it was the 5th highest paying sector in the Region.

Note: here is a data error with Management of Companies and Enterprises wages.

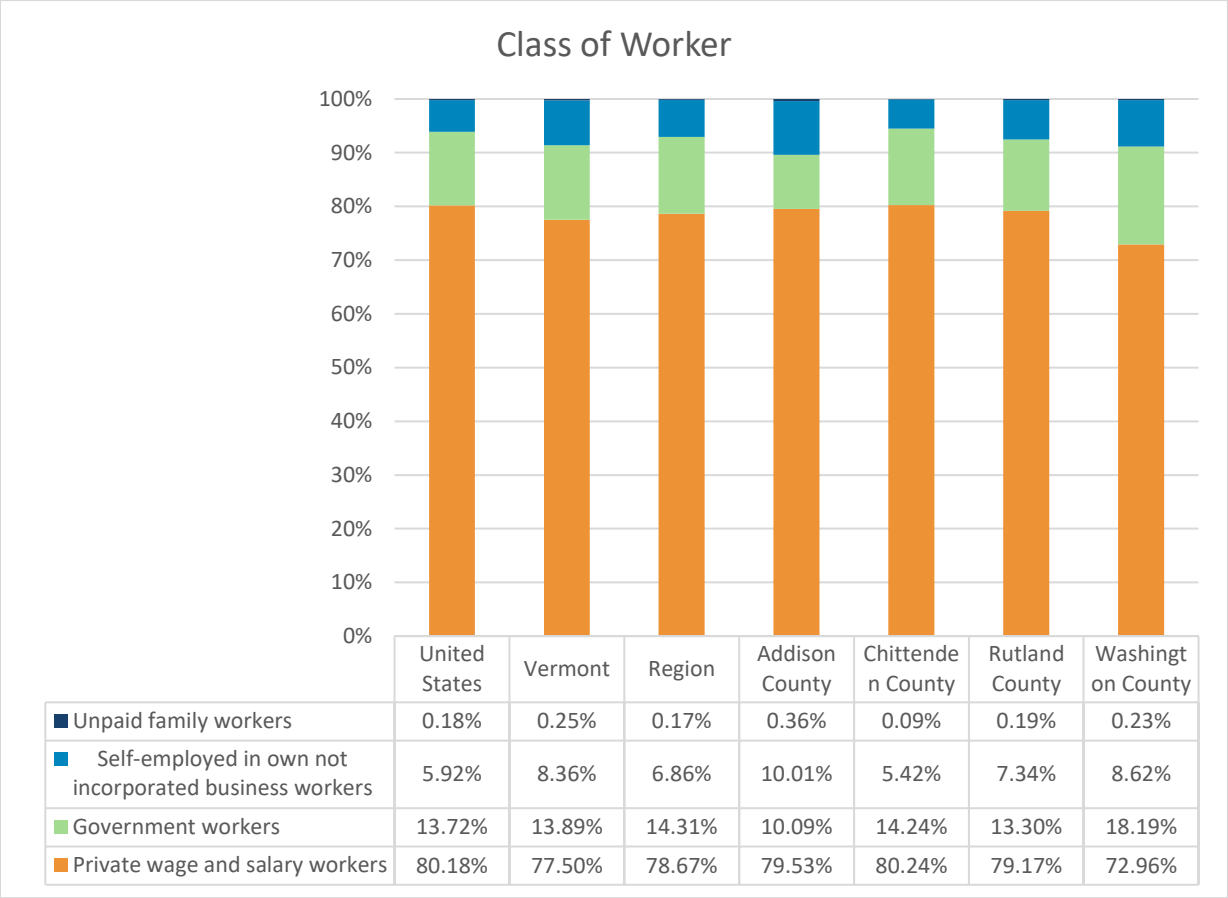
Regional Average Monthly Earnings in Dollars ($) by NAICS Sector 2001 to 2019

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001-2009

NAICS Sector	2001	2005	2010	2015	2019
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1752	2032	2369	2714	3107
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2990	3525	4394		5013
Utilities	4729	5905	6676	6928	7689
Construction	3112	3370	3854	4204	4690
Manufacturing	4316	4677	5465	5312	5626
Wholesale Trade	3636	4374	4432	5117	5665
Retail Trade	1875	2053	2206	2519	2834
Transportation and Warehousing	2487	2736	3086	3502	3872
Information	3379	3485	3924	4617	5043
Finance and Insurance	3913	4808	5468	6401	7028
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2157	2466	2920	3454	4002
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3901	4644	5552	6346	7340
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3942	-	4780	-	-
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2192	2498	2664	3235	3697
Educational Services	2523	2757	3594	3977	4357
Health Care and Social Assistance	2654	3113	3721	4168	4607
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1453	1650	2034	2154	2386
Accommodation and Food Services	1223	1365	1518	1752	1986
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2079	2344	2559	2933	3310
Public Administration	3131	3684	4139	4748	5196

Class of Worker, 2019

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables DP03, 2019



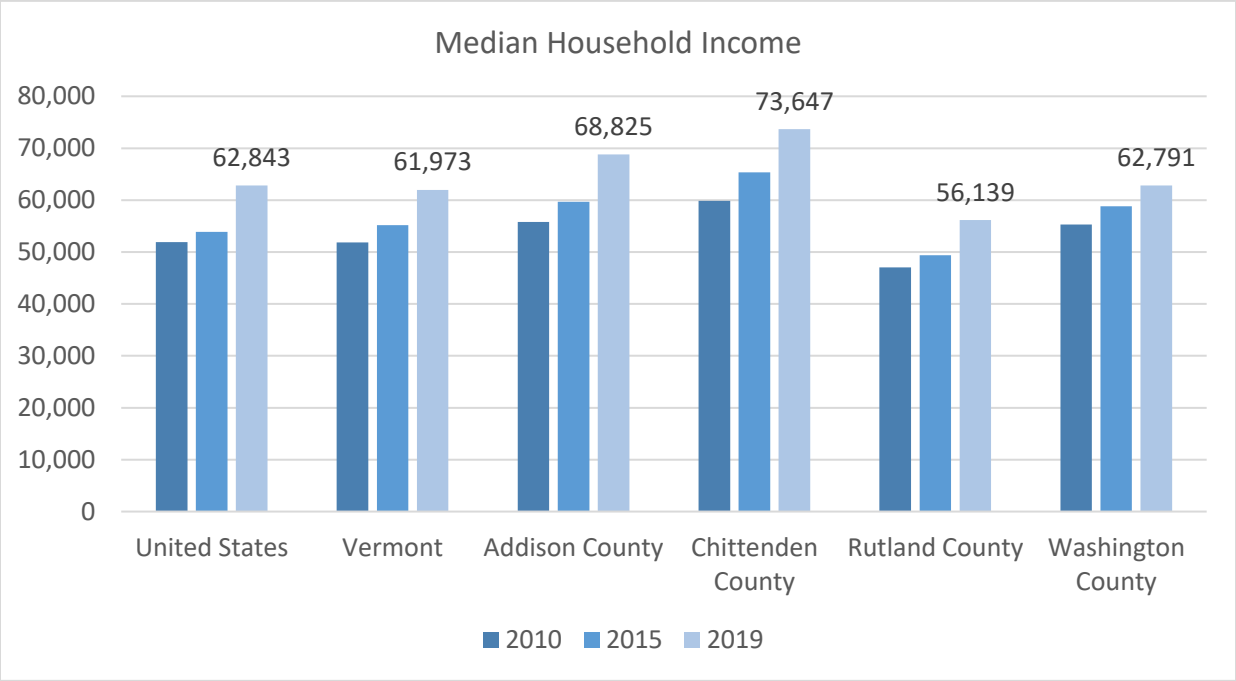
	United States	Vermont	Region	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
Unpaid family workers	0.18%	0.25%	0.17%	0.36%	0.09%	0.19%	0.23%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	5.92%	8.36%	6.86%	10.01%	5.42%	7.34%	8.62%
Government workers	13.72%	13.89%	14.31%	10.09%	14.24%	13.30%	18.19%
Private wage and salary workers	80.18%	77.50%	78.67%	79.53%	80.24%	79.17%	72.96%

In the country and Region, most workers are private wage and salary workers. Washington County has the most people working in government with 18.19% of workers, and Washington and Addison Counties have a higher percent of self-employed people with 8.62% and 10.01%, compared to the national rate (5.92%). With the largest agricultural economy, Addison County has the highest percent of unpaid family workers, yet this it is only a small part of the county workforce (0.36%).

Income

Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2019 Inflation adjusted dollars)

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1901



Median household income has been increasing in the US, State and Region since 2010. Annual income in the US, Vermont and Washington County are similar – around $62,000 in 2019. The median household income is higher in Chittenden and Addison Counties at $73,647 and $68,825 respectively. Median household income is lower in Rutland County at $56.139.

Towns with Median Household Income below State MHI

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1901, 2019

Municipality	County	Median Household Income (dollars)	Percent of State MHI
Barre city	Washington County	$ 38,142	62%
Castleton town	Rutland County	$ 44,180	71%
Cabot town	Washington County	$ 46,031	74%
Rutland city	Rutland County	$ 48,212	78%
Poultney town	Rutland County	$ 49,693	80%
Plainfield town	Washington County	$ 50,000	81%
Pittsfield town	Rutland County	$ 50,781	82%
Burlington city	Chittenden County	$ 51,394	83%
Winooski city	Chittenden County	$ 51,728	83%
Mount Tabor town	Rutland County	$ 51,875	84%
West Rutland town	Rutland County	$ 52,276	84%
Hancock town	Addison County	$ 53,750	87%
Pittsford town	Rutland County	$ 53,977	87%
Fair Haven town	Rutland County	$ 54,250	88%
Whiting town	Addison County	$ 54,583	88%
Buels gore	Chittenden County	$ 54,688	88%
Pawlet town	Rutland County	$ 55,114	89%
Tinmouth town	Rutland County	$ 55,156	89%
Danby town	Rutland County	$ 57,083	92%
Benson town	Rutland County	$ 57,692	93%
Shoreham town	Addison County	$ 58,894	95%
Middlebury town	Addison County	$ 58,953	95%
Orwell town	Addison County	$ 60,375	97%
Worcester town	Washington County	$ 60,769	98%
Brandon town	Rutland County	$ 60,813	98%
Middletown Springs town	Rutland County	$ 60,938	98%
Rutland town	Rutland County	$ 61,025	98%
Leicester town	Addison County	$ 61,625	99%
	Vermont	$ 61,973	100%

While the West Central Vermont Region overall has a higher Median Household Income than the State, several towns in each county have Median Household Income (MHI)s below the state average, including 5 towns in Rutland and Washington Counties with MHIs at or below 80% of the State MHI.

Towns with Highest Median Household Income

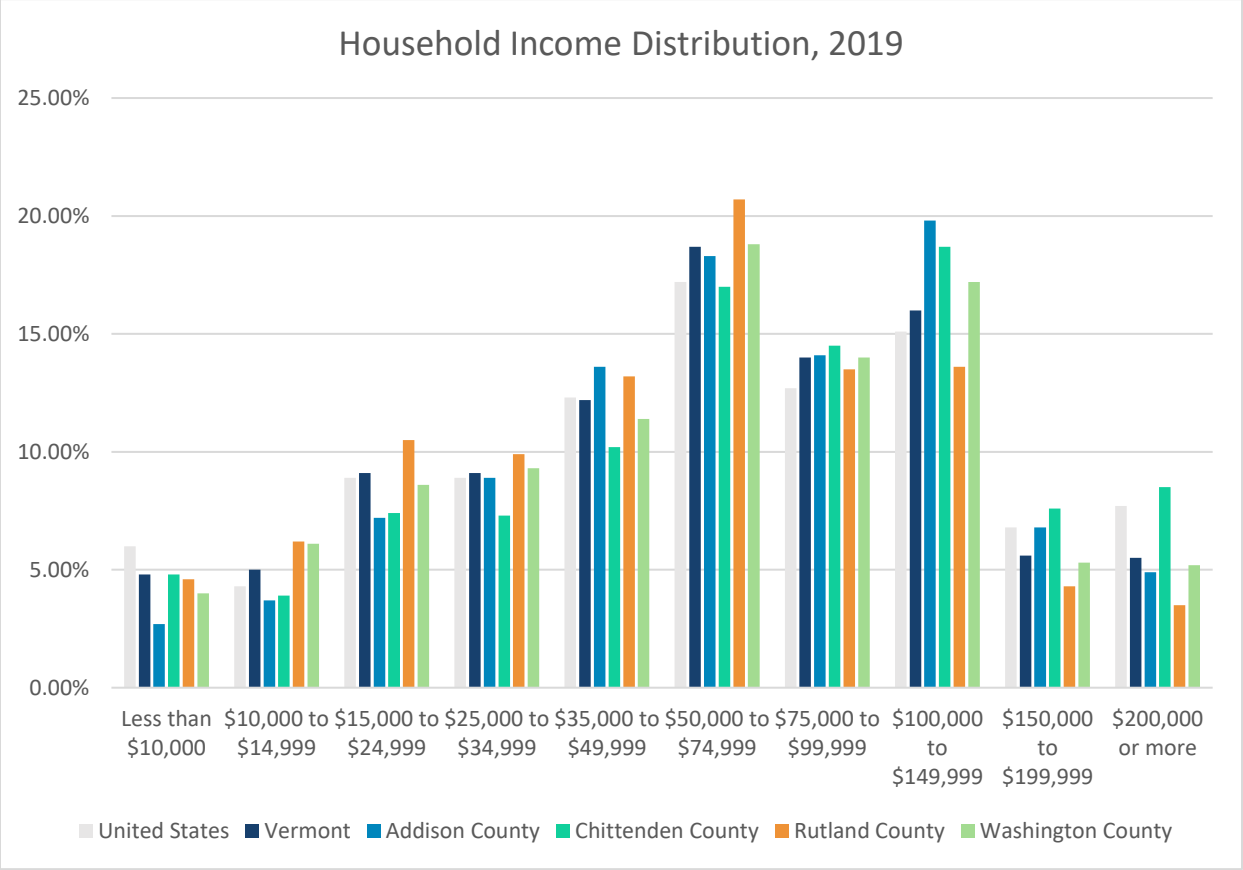
Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1901, 2019

Rank	Municipality	County	Median Household Income (dollars)	Percent of State MHI
1	Charlotte town	Chittenden County	$ 108,611	147%
2	Underhill town	Chittenden County	$ 102,783	140%
3	Richmond town	Chittenden County	$ 100,637	137%
4	Jericho town	Chittenden County	$ 100,110	136%
5	Shelburne town	Chittenden County	$ 96,165	131%
6	Williston town	Chittenden County	$ 94,727	129%
7	Monkton town	Addison County	$ 92,642	126%
8	Westford town	Chittenden County	$ 91,875	125%
9	Weybridge town	Addison County	$ 89,286	121%
10	Huntington town	Chittenden County	$ 87,390	119%

The towns in West Central Vermont Region with the highest Median Household Income are for the most part located in Chittenden County.

Household Earnings Distribution, 2019

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP03



Household income is divided into income brackets in the above figure. The Region (and Vermont) has a higher percentage of households making between $35,000 and $64,999 than the United States. The United States has a higher percentage of households making $15,000 to $24,999 and $100,000 or more than the State and Region.

Household Income Sources, Percent Distribution, 2019 (Table)

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1902

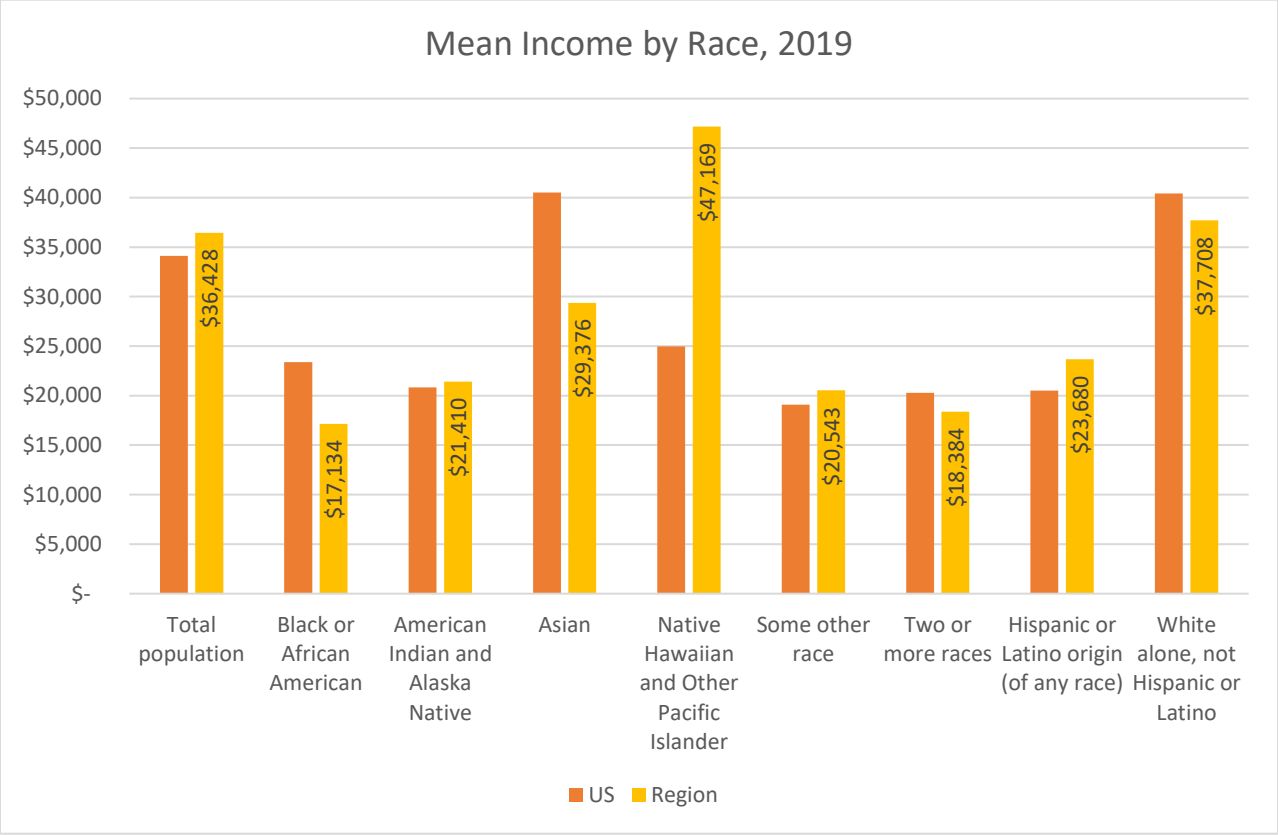
	US	Vermont	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington
With earnings	77.60%	77.00%	80.90%	81.70%	73.10%	76.70%
With wages or salary income	74.80%	72.90%	75.60%	79.00%	69.60%	71.80%
With self-employment income	10.80%	15.40%	18.20%	13.80%	12.20%	16.50%
With interest, dividends, or net rental income	20.90%	28.50%	32.30%	29.30%	25.90%	31.60%
With Social Security income	31.20%	35.30%	35.90%	27.60%	39.30%	34.20%
With Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	5.30%	5.80%	4.60%	5.00%	6.70%	6.50%
With cash public assistance income or Food Stamps/SNAP	12.40%	12.20%	8.80%	9.20%	11.60%	12.10%
With cash public assistance	2.40%	3.30%	2.10%	3.10%	3.90%	2.90%
With retirement income	19.90%	19.90%	19.70%	17.90%	21.70%	20.80%
With other types of income	10.30%	10.40%	10.40%	7.90%	9.70%	13.40%

The majority of households in the Region have income from wages or salary. Social security has the second most likely income source for households in the Region (except in Chittenden County). Approximately 39.3% of households had income from Social Security in Rutland County. Within each Regional County, around 20% of households have some retirement income, similar to the State and US.

Income and Employment Disparities

Per Capita Mean Income by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin (in dollars), 2019[7]

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S1902



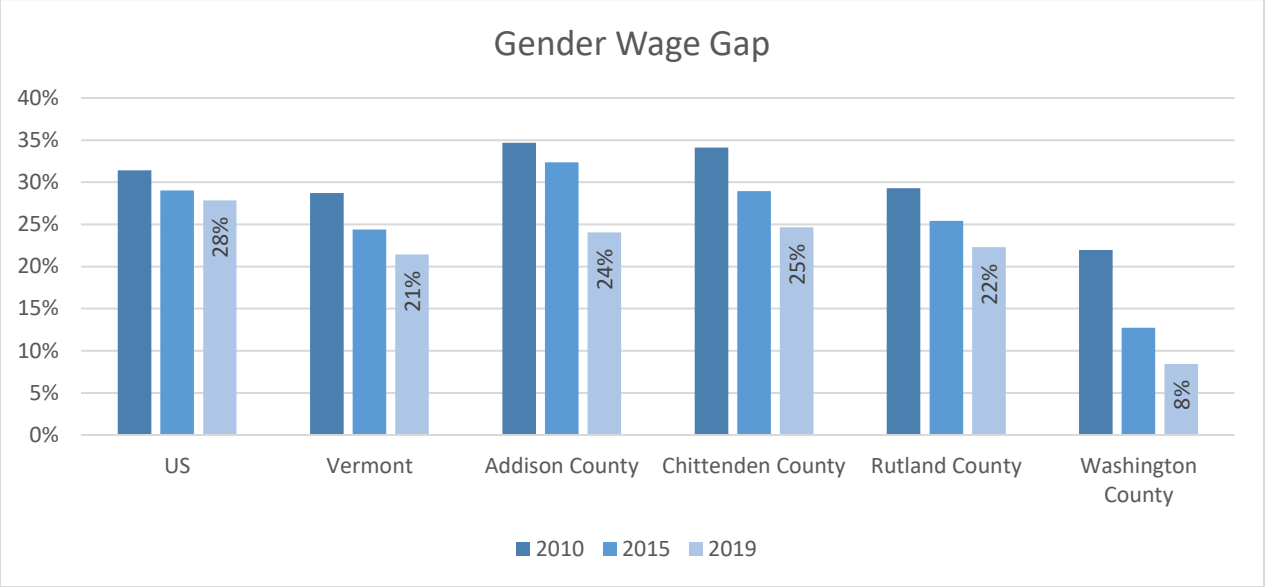
In 2019, people of all racial and ethnic groups, other than White alone and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, had mean incomes below the average in the Region. In some cases, such as between Black and White people in the West Central Vermont Region, these disparities in mean income are greater than across the US.

*Note – margin of error for the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population in the Region is high and should not be considered reliable.

[7] The regional average is calculated based on the mean per capita income in each county, averaged by population.

Gender Wage Gap[8]

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S2001

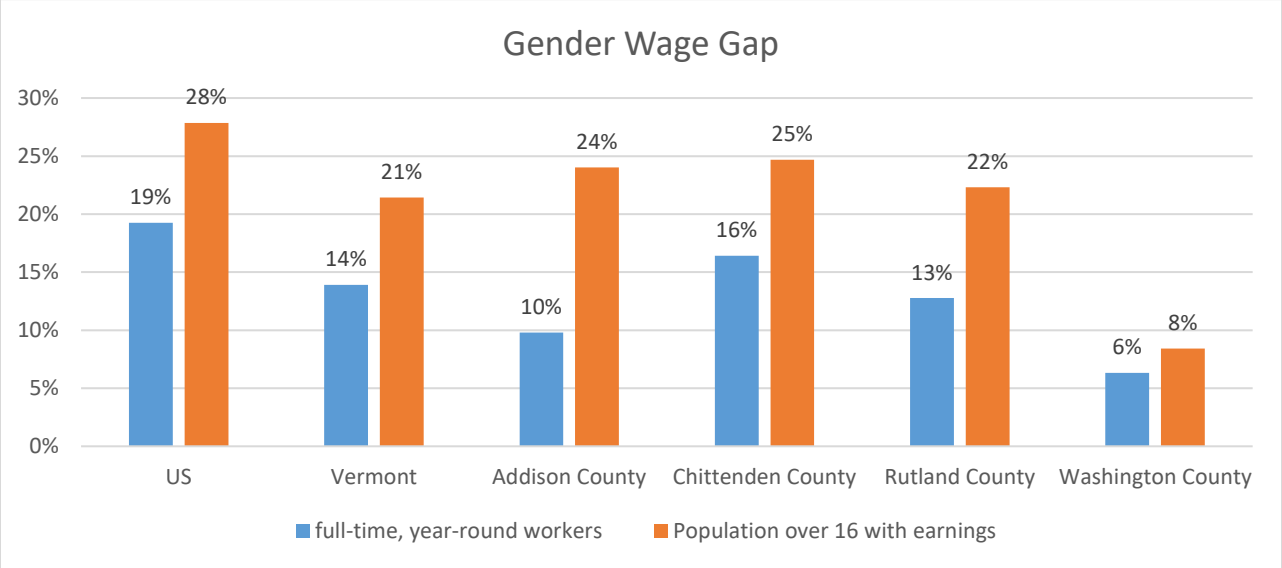


Similar to the racial wealth gap, there is a gender gap in earnings nationally, statewide, and regionally. Washington County is closest to closing that gap with women making 8% less than men for the population over 16 with earnings. All areas are improving in reducing the disparity, though the Gender Wage Gap is 21% statewide in 2019, and slightly higher than that in the other 3 counties in West Central Vermont. The statewide gap of 21% in 2019 can be understood that women earn 21 cents less on every dollar made by a man.

[8] Comparisons of women's and men's earnings can be reported as the actual gap between women and men's median earnings, calculated as the percent difference. (Change the Story: Women, Work and Wages in Vermont).

Gender Wage Gap for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers[9]

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S2001



The gender wage gap closes slightly when looking at full-time, year round workers, compared to all men and women over 16 with earnings. However there is still a noticeable disparity.

Median Earnings by Gender for Population Over 16 years with Earnings, 2019

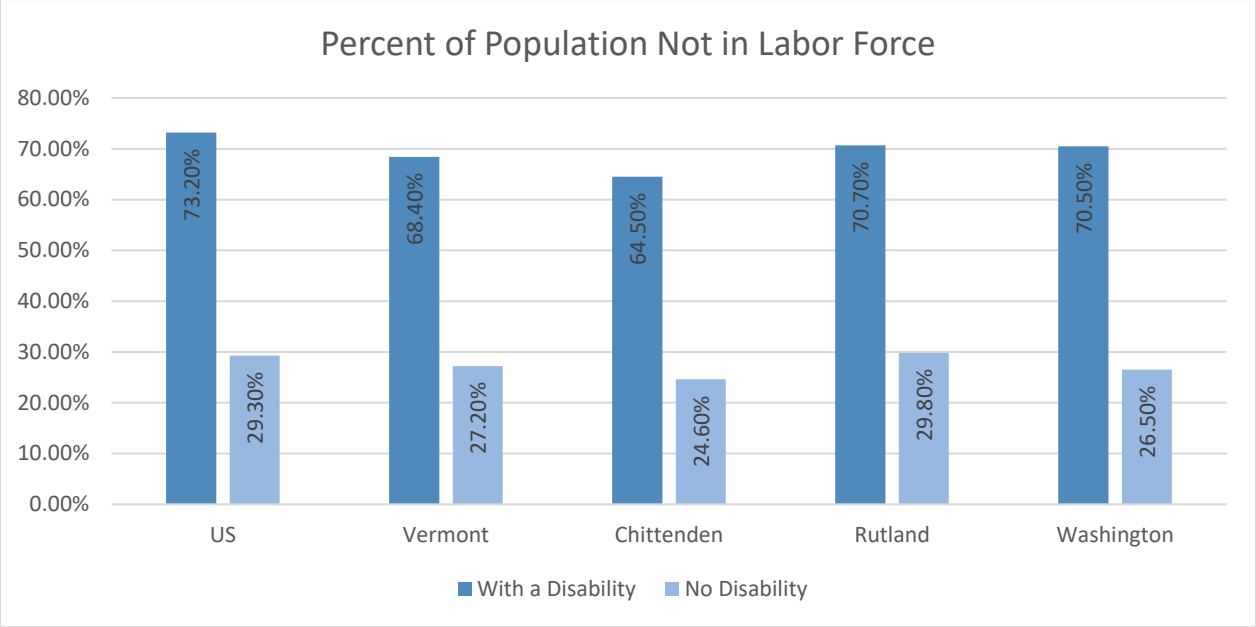
Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables S2001

	US	Vermont	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington
Male	$41,399	$38,342	$37,257	$41,509	$36,420	$37,757
Female	$29,863	$30,127	$28,303	$31,267	$28,295	$34,574

[9] Comparisons of women's and men's earnings can be reported as the actual gap between women and men's median earnings, calculated as the percent difference. (Change the Story: Women, Work and Wages in Vermont).

Percent of Population with a Disability in Labor Force, 2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, S1811

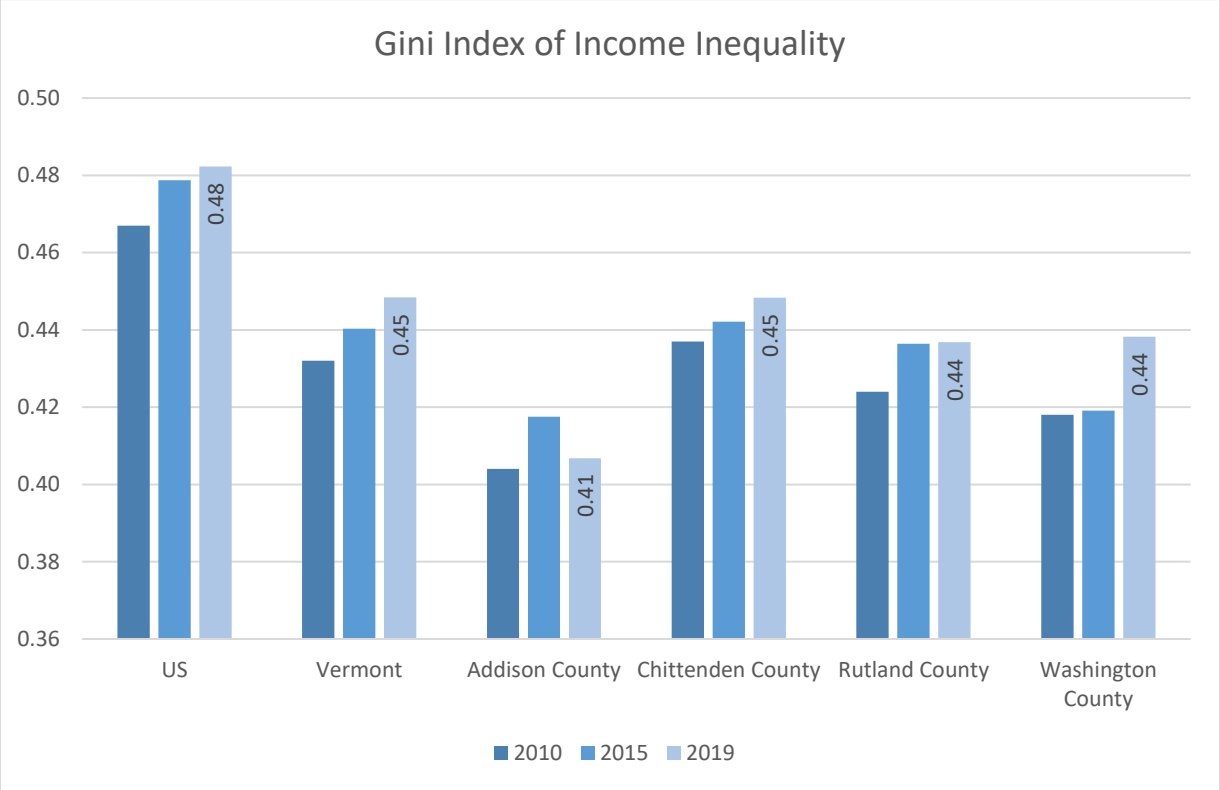


People with a disability are less likely to be in the labor force. While between 65-71% of the total population is in the labor force in the West Central Vermont Region's counties, only between 25-30% of the population of people with disabilities are part of the labor force.

*Note: Data for Addison County is not available.

Gini Index of Income Inequality[10]

Source: American Community Surveys 5-Year Estimates Detail Tables B19083



While Vermont and the counties in the region have less income inequality than the national average. However, the inequality index has increased in the past decade all counties in the Region except Addison. Addison County has slightly less income inequality of the compared to the rest of the region.

[10] *"The Gini coefficient incorporates the detailed shares data into a single statistic, which summarizes the dispersion of income across the entire income distribution. The Gini coefficient ranges from 0, indicating perfect equality (where everyone receives an equal share), to 1, perfect inequality (where only one recipient or group of recipients receives all the income). The Gini is based on the difference between the Lorenz curve (the observed cumulative income distribution) and the notion of a perfectly equal income distribution." From the Census Bureau.*

Business and Employers

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Gross Domestic Product by Geographic Area[11]

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

	2020 Real GDP (thousands of chained 2012 dollars)	Comparisons
Vermont	$28,648,501	0.16% of National GDP
Addison, VT	$1,512,084	5.28% of State GDP
Chittenden, VT	$10,104,070	35.3% of State GDP
Rutland, VT	$2,210,718	7.72% of State GDP
Washington, VT	$3,299,058	11.52% of State GDP

Chittenden County produces the most GDP of the four counties in the Region and contributes 35% of the state's GDP. (ACS, 2020).

Gross Domestic Product per Capita by Geographic Area

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimates

Real GDP (thousands of chained 2012 dollars) per capita	2010	2015	2019	Percent Change 2010 to 2019
Vermont	$45,039	$46,084	$47,742	6.00%
Addison, VT	$38,189	$39,476	$43,234	13.21%
Chittenden, VT	$62,741	$62,708	$64,382	2.62%
Rutland, VT	$40,487	$40,171	$40,741	0.63%
Washington, VT	$52,341	$55,966	$58,457	11.69%

GDP per capita has increased over the past decade. The greatest percentage increase in per capita GDP has been in Washington and Addison Counties. Chittenden still has the highest GDP per capita within the Region.

[11] Gross Domestic Product (GDP): "A comprehensive measure of U.S. economic activity. GDP measures the value of the final goods and services produced in the United States (without double counting the intermediate goods and services used up to produce them). Changes in GDP are the most popular indicator of the nation's overall economic health." (BEA)

Business and Employment by Sector

Employment by Sector, 2019[12]

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date 2019

	Region	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
Construction supersector	9200	947	5421	1517	1315
Education and Health Services supersector	50165	5409	28734	7256	8766
Financial Activities supersector	7943	425	4124	704	2690
Information supersector	2955	99	2224	248	384
Leisure and Hospitality supersector	20058	1395	11451	3812	3400
Manufacturing supersector	16955	2046	9495	3091	2323
Natural Resources and Mining supersector	1653	718	298	405	232
Other services, except public administration supersector	5566	399	3161	769	1237
Professional and Business Services supersector	20169	769	13650	2136	3614
Public administration supersector	10523	367	5072	1196	3888
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities supersector	32872	2358	19067	5601	5846
Federal Government	3068	106	2456	279	227
Government total	30123	1918	16578	3915	7712
Local government	14453	1654	7643	2604	2552
Private ownership	147934	13012	86120	22820	25982
State government	12602	158	6479	1032	4933
Total Covered - all ownerships	178058	14930	102698	26735	33695

[12] Covered employment includes business subject to Unemployment Compensation Law. This does not include the self-employed, most farms, some non-profits, churches, railroads, elected officials, student work-study workers. (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Glossary, Vermont Department of Labor).

Largest Employment Supersectors

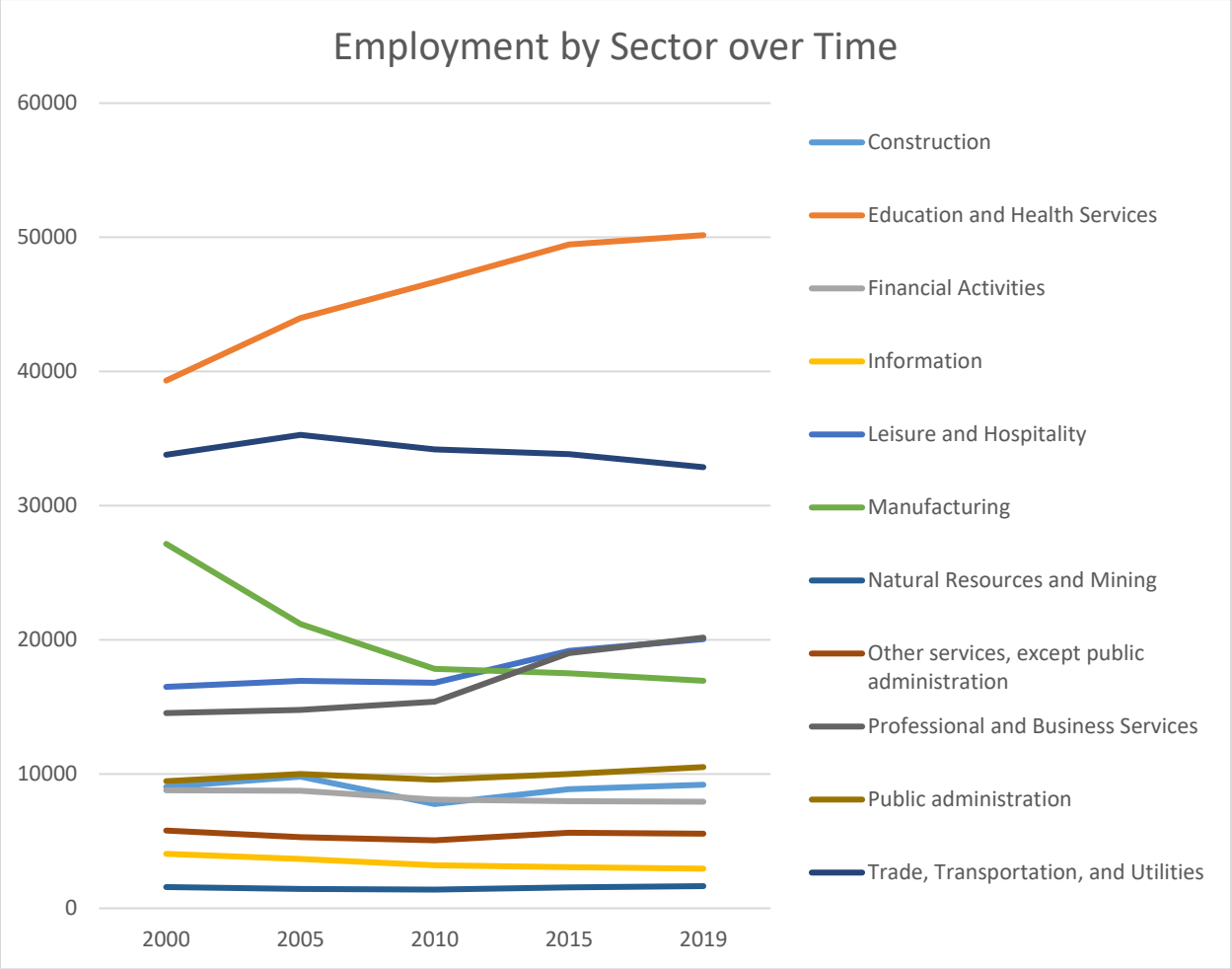
Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date 2019

	Region	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
1	Education and Health Services	Education and Health Services	Education and Health Services	Education and Health Services	Education and Health Services
2	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
3	Professional and Business Services	Manufacturing	Professional and Business Services	Leisure and Hospitality	Public administration
4	Leisure and Hospitality	Leisure and Hospitality	Leisure and Hospitality	Manufacturing	Professional and Business Services
5	Manufacturing	Construction	Manufacturing	Professional and Business Services	Leisure and Hospitality

Education and Health services lead as the largest employment supersectors in all counties in the Region, followed by Trade, Transportation and Utilities. Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality are mixed to fill in the next top sectors in all counties. Public Administration makes up the 3rd top employment sector in Washington County, and Construction the 5th highest in Addison County. These categories include both private and public sector data covered employment.

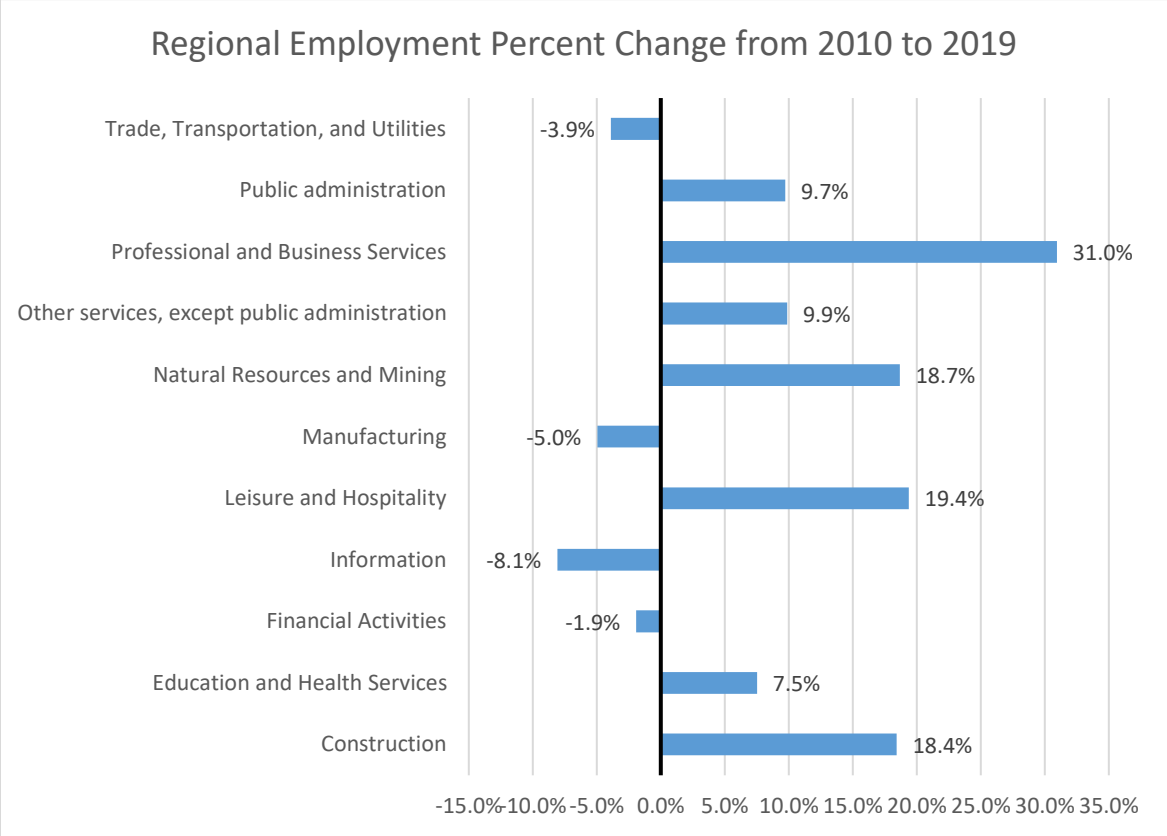
Employment by Sector over Time

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date



Regional Employment by Sector – Percent Change 2010 to 2019

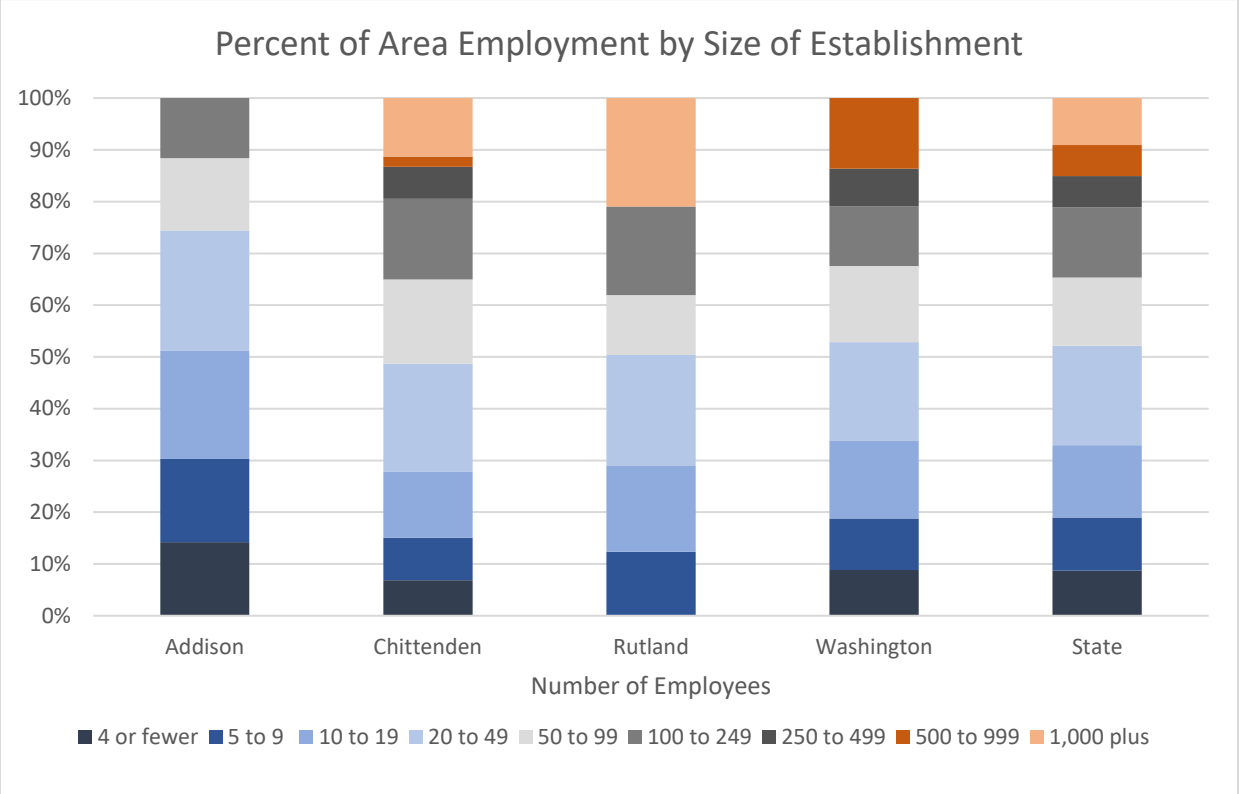
Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information, Year to Date



Employment in the West Central Vermont Region has generally grown, but some sectors have seen a slight decrease in covered employment.

Percent of County Employment by Size of Establishment

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, 2020

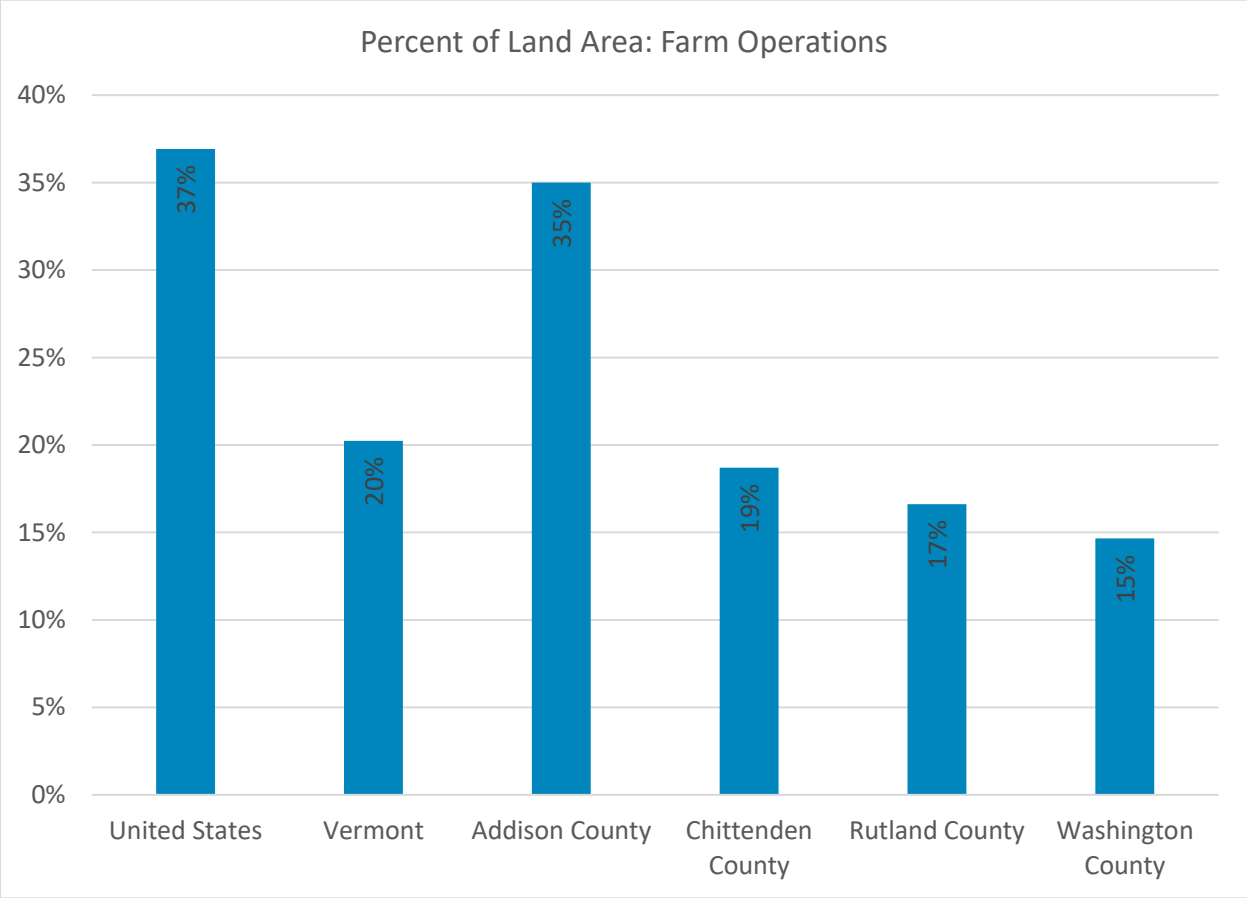


Most of the counties have high employment in small and mid-sized businesses. There are larger businesses in Chittenden County and with 3 very large employers in Rutland County. 75% of workers in Addison County work in establishments with fewer than 50 employees.

Working Landscape- Agriculture & Forestry

Agriculture as Percent of Geographic Area

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017

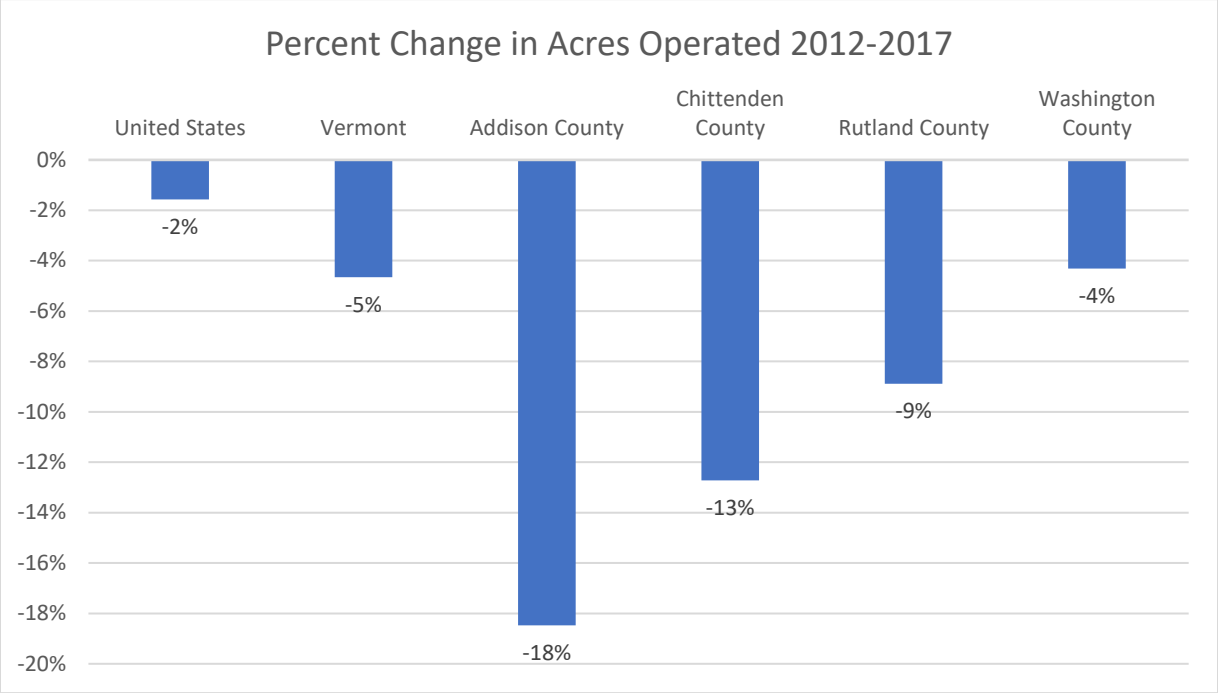


The Working Landscape[13] includes forestry, agriculture, and related businesses that shape the landscape and contribute to Vermont's aesthetic and economic history. With regard to agriculture, Vermont has a smaller percentage of land used for agriculture (20%) than the United States (37%) by about 17%. Within the Region, Addison County has the highest percentage of land used for agriculture (35%). Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington counties lag behind the statewide percentages.

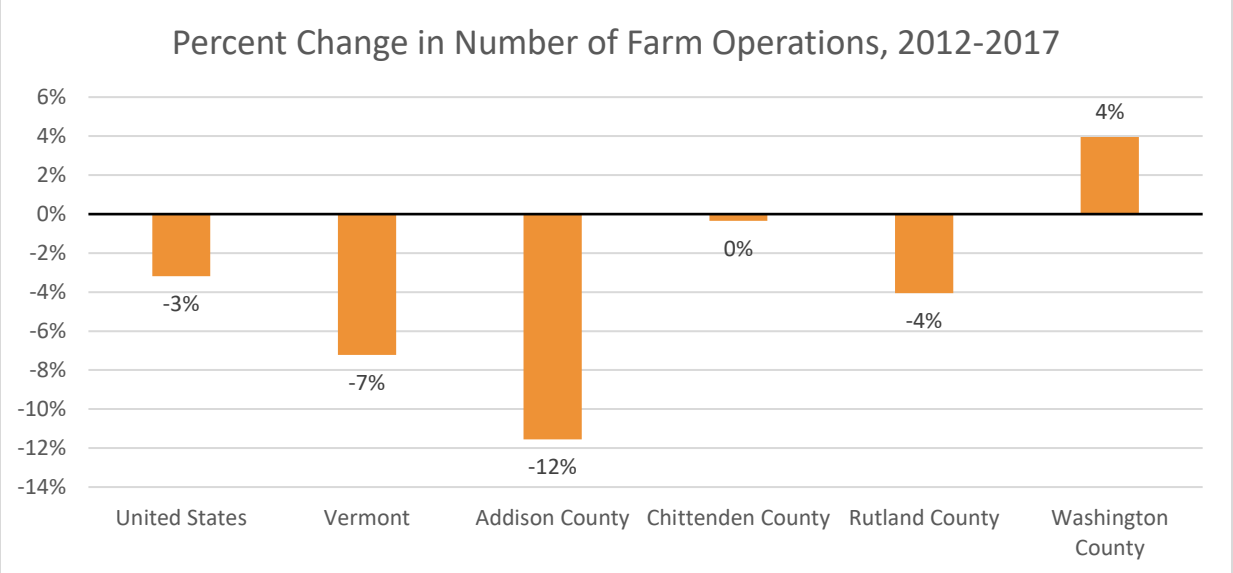
[13] https://workinglands.vermont.gov/history-initiative/mission-and-vision

Percent Change in Number of Operations, Land Area

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012-2017



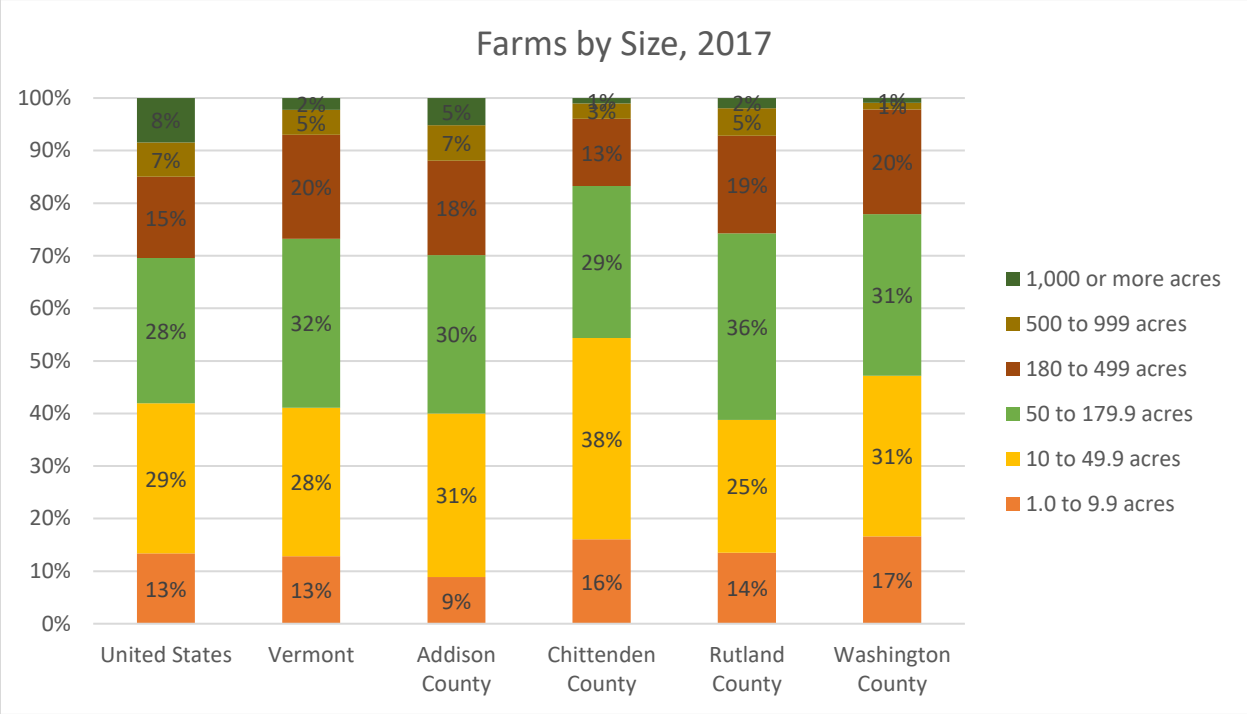
Across the Region, the percentage of acres in agricultural use is declining. Most notably, between 2012 and 2017, 18% of previously agricultural land was lost in Addison County and 13% of agricultural land was lost in Chittenden County. This is significantly faster than the Vermont and National trends, at 5% and 2% respectively.



Similarly, numbers of farm operations have been down generally between 2012 and 2017 with the exception of Washington County in the Region. Addison County was hardest hit, losing 12% of farm operations, outpacing Vermont (7%) and the US (3%).

Size of Farms by Geographic Area

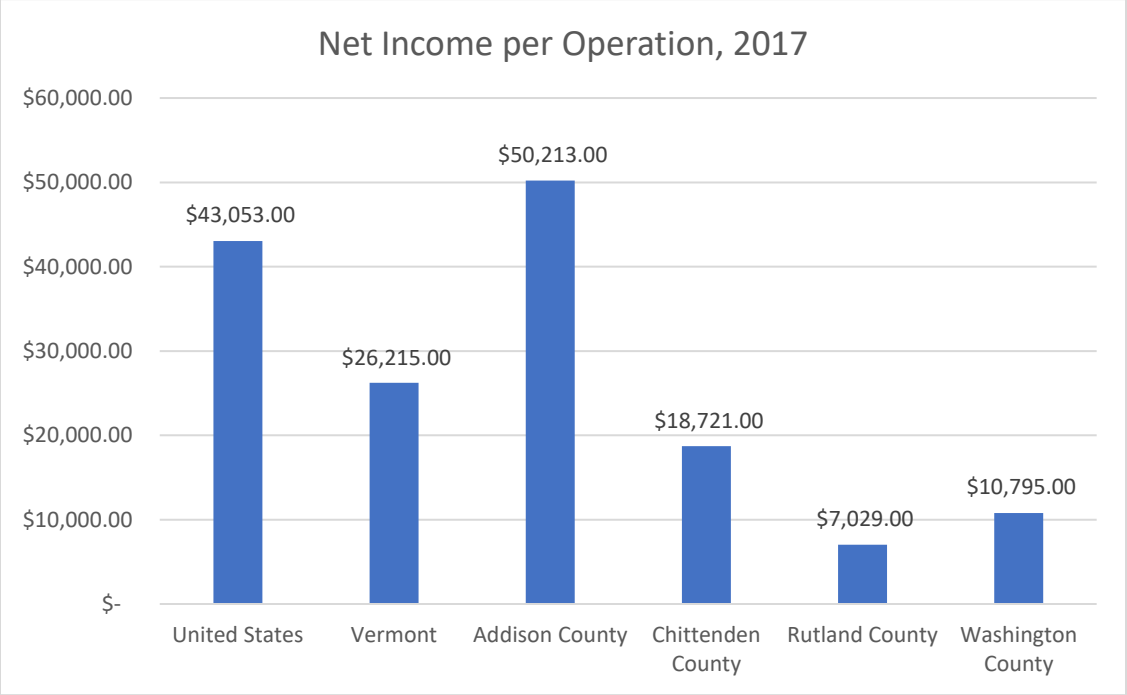
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017



The United States and Addison County have similar distributions of farm sizes. Within the Region, Chittenden County and Washington County have the highest percentage of farms under 10 acres. Addison County has the highest percentage of farms over 500 acres (5%).

Net Income per Farm Operation

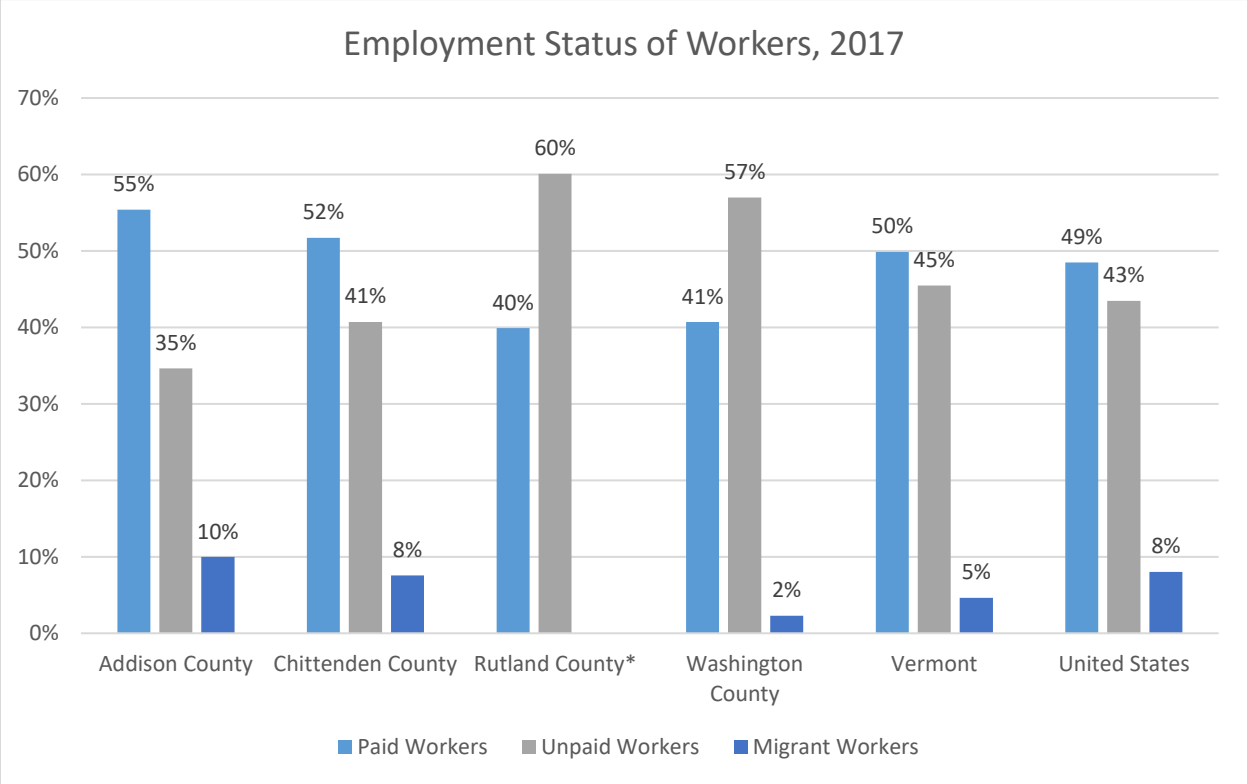
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017



Vermont farms are less profitable than the nationwide average. However, net income of Addison County farms ($50,213) exceeds State and national averages. Farm Operations in Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington Counties tended to be less profitable per operation compared to the State and Nation.

Employment Status of Farm Workers

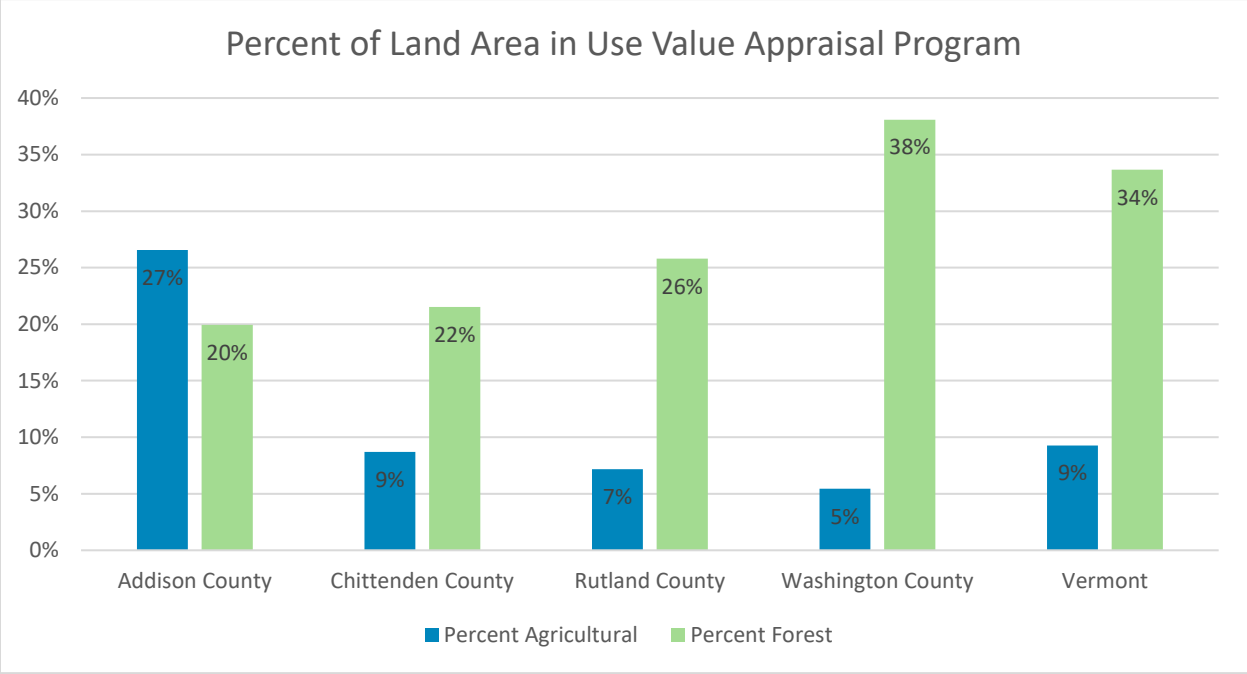
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017



According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, nationally 49% of farm workers are paid, 43% are unpaid, and 8% are migrant workers. In Addison and Chittenden Counties, over 50% of farm workers are paid. Rutland and Washington Counties have a high number of unpaid workers (60% and 57% respectively). Chittenden County (8%) and Addison County (10%) farms employ a relatively high number of migrant workers. Migrant worker information was not available for Rutland County due to confidentiality.

Percent of Total Land in Current Use

Source: Vermont Property Valuation & Review, 2020



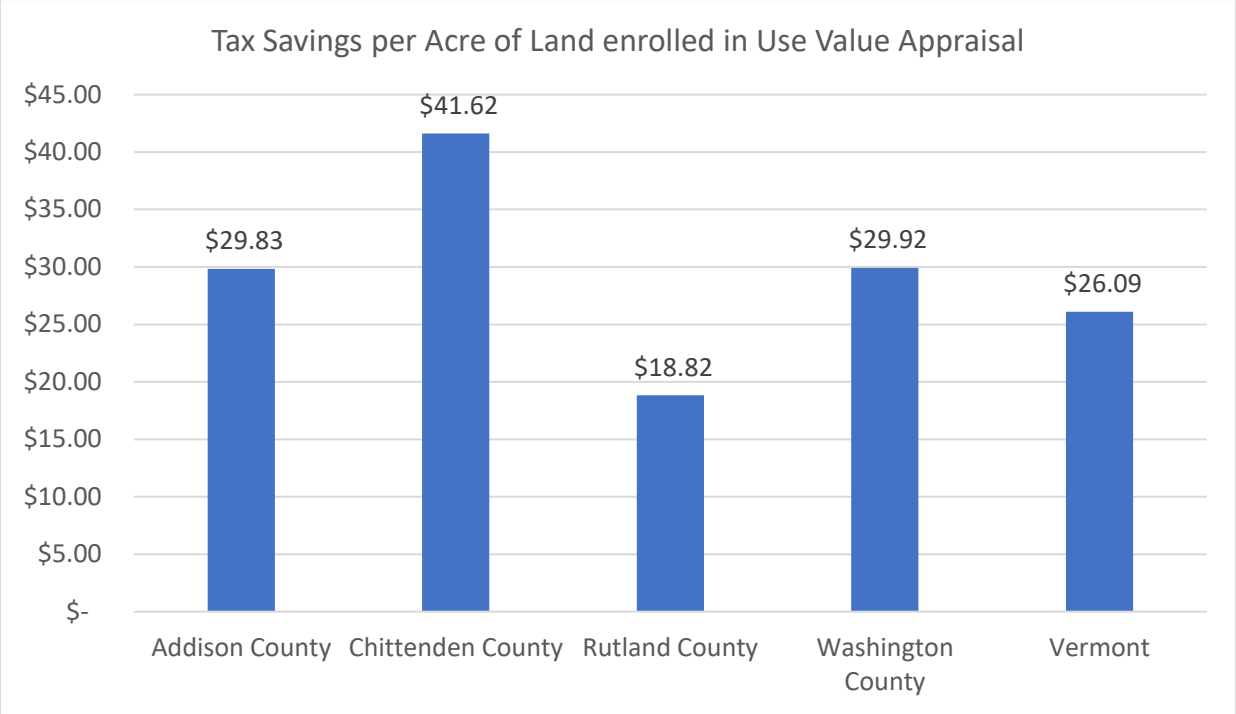
The State of Vermont operates the Use Value Appraisal[14] program which allows landowners with large forested or agricultural parcels to access reduced property tax rates in exchange for keeping their land "in use." There are certain conditions that allow parcels of certain sizes into the program to prevent fragmentation, so not all farms or forests may be enrolled in this program.

In the Region, 38% of the land in Washington County is enrolled in Current Use for forested parcels. Approximately 27% of the land in Addison County is enrolled for agricultural parcels. Approximately 47% of the land in Addison County is enrolled in the Current Use program (both agricultural and forestry). Enrollment in the Current Use program in Chittenden (31%) and Rutland Counties (33%) is below the Statewide percentage (45%).

[14] https://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/current-use

Tax Savings per Acre of Land enrolled in Current Use, 2020

Source: Vermont Property Valuation & Review, 2020



For Landowners in Addison, Chittenden, and Washington Counties, property tax savings per acres enrolled in the Current Use program are higher than the State average.

Distribution of Tourism Activity

Source: Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2021

Regional Distribution of Tourism Activity			
	State Total	Region	Region % of State
Overnight Lodging Visits	700,000	394,614	56%
Friends and Family Visits	870,000	441,429	51%
Second Home Visits	480,000	193,257	40%

The Region hosts visitors staying in Overnight Lodging, those visiting Friends and Family, and those coming to Second Homes. The region has a higher percentage (56%) of the state share of Overnight Lodging visits and a lower percentage (40%) of Second Home visits.

Tourism – Dollar Spending by Out of State Visitors

Source: Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2021

Figures in millions for 2019 for out of state visitors							
	State total	Addison	Chittenden	Rutland	Washington	Region	Region % of State
Lodging	600	**24**	**222**	**63**	**56**	365	61%
Restaurants	625	**26**	**161**	**55**	**57**	299	48%
Rec and Entertain.	370	**15**	**113**	**37**	**34**	200	54%
Retail	305	**13**	**83**	**29**	**28**	154	51%
Gasoline	240	**9**	**46**	**13**	**21**	89	37%
Groceries	145	**6**	**35**	**14**	**13**	68	47%
Other Travel	210	**11**	**46**	**19**	**19**	96	46%
Services	160	**6**	**39**	**13**	**14**	74	46%

Out-of-state tourism brings millions of dollars into the Region. The West Central Vermont Region hosts 61% of state of Out of State Visitor spending on Lodging and 54% of spending on Recreation and Entertainment.

Sales and Taxes

Sales Tax Receipts as Percentage of State

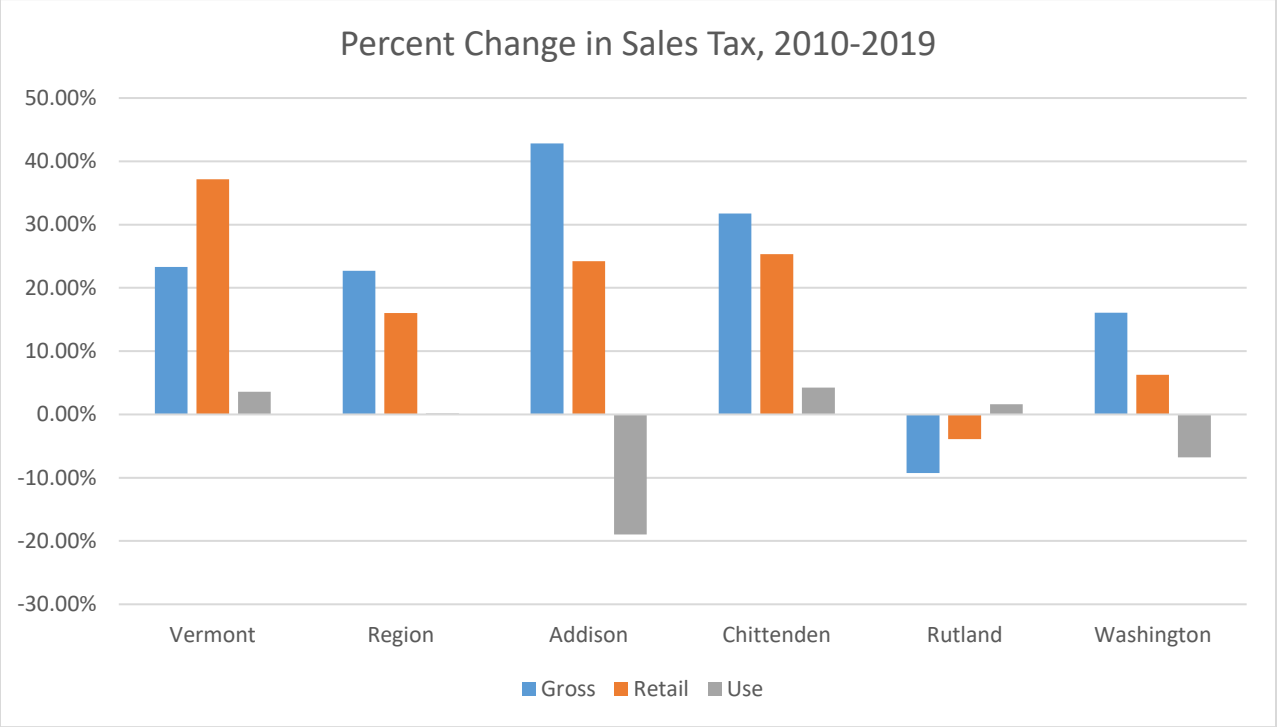
Source: Sales and Use Tax Statistics Report, Vermont Department of Taxes

	Gross	Retail	Use
Vermont	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Region	34.80%	40.77%	48.38%
Addison	2.46%	2.63%	3.07%
Chittenden	21.26%	24.84%	27.51%
Rutland	3.98%	6.99%	10.78%
Washington	7.10%	6.31%	7.01%
Rest of state	65.20%	59.23%	51.62%

The region contributes 40.77% of the total state retail receipts, with 24.84% of the state's retail receipts coming from Chittenden County.

Percent Change in Sales Tax, 2010 to 2019

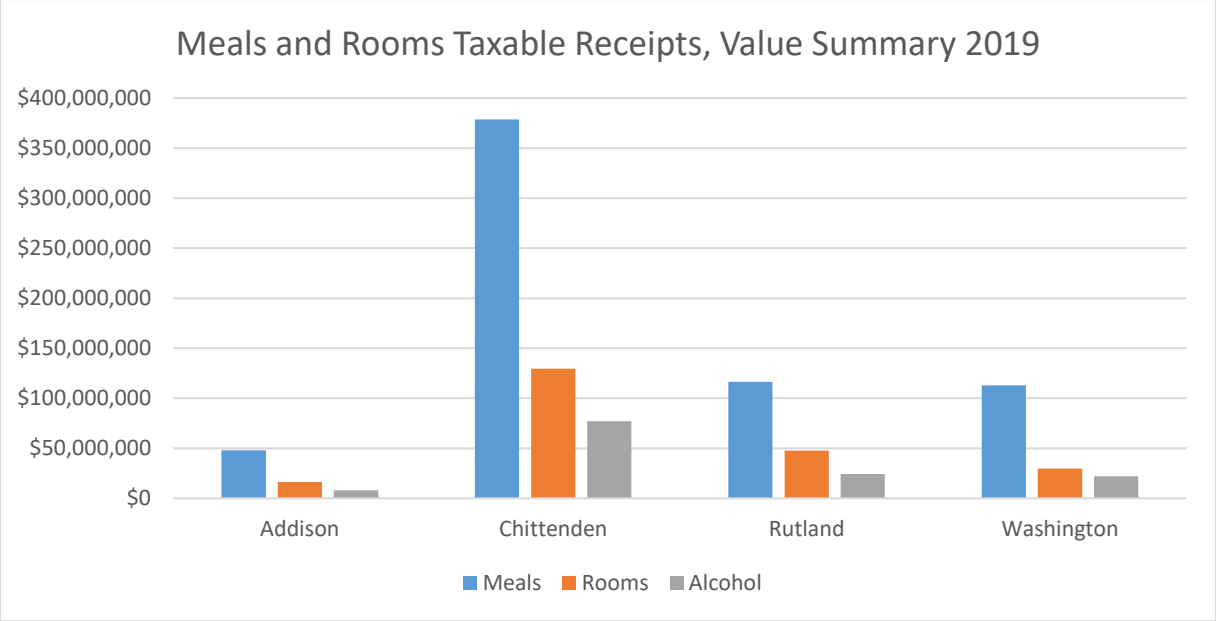
Source: Sales and Use Tax Statistics Report, Vermont Department of Taxes



Sales tax revenue has generally increased in the West Central Vermont Region, though tax revenue has gone down in Rutland. While the region as a whole has seen growth in gross receipts (all reported items, including those exempt from sales tax) and retail receipts over the past decade, this is not the case in Rutland County. Use Receipts on out of state business purchases subject to Vermont Use Tax have decreased in amount substantially in Addison and Washington Counties, but may not accurately represent online sales.

Meals and Rooms Taxable Receipts, Value Summary, 2019

Source: Meals and Rooms Tax Statistics Report, Vermont Department of Taxes

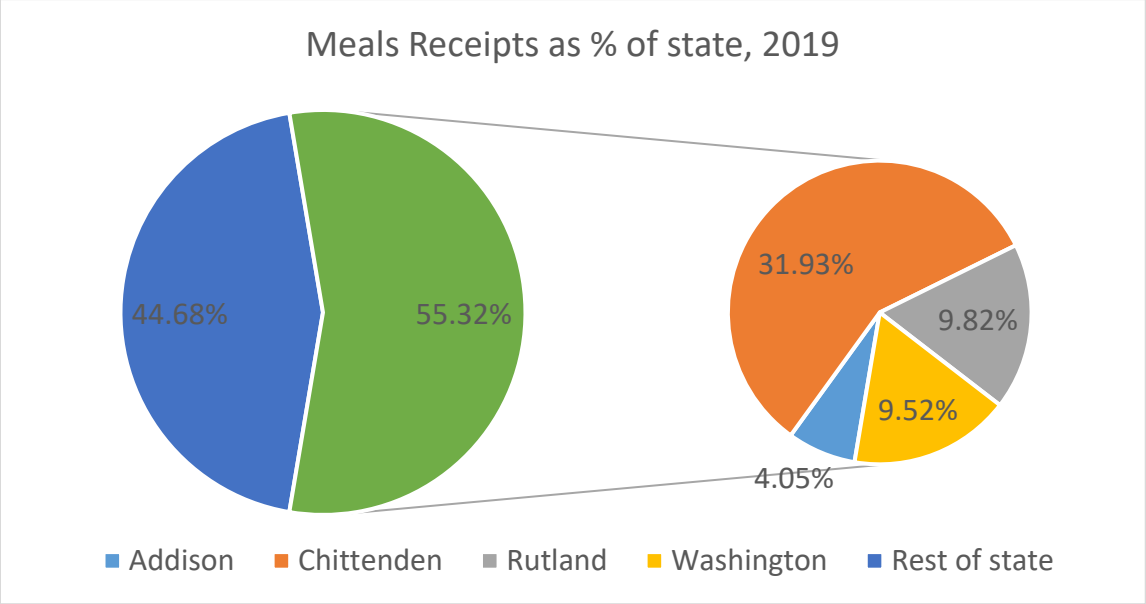


Chittenden County has the most taxable receipts of all the regional counties in all categories. Washington and Rutland Counties are similar in terms of revenue generated from meals, rooms and alcohol receipts, and Addison County sees the least amount of tax income generated from these sources. The impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic to meals, rooms and alcohol receipts is expected to be significant in the region, but the data and long-term effects are not yet apparent at the time of writing this report.

Meals and Rooms Statistics, January 2019 to December 2019			
	Meals	**Rooms**	**Alcohol**
Vermont	$1,186,345,236	$620,617,537	$238,704,694
Region	$656,286,079	$223,220,257	$131,089,938
Addison	$48,047,102	$16,278,286	$7,832,642
Chittenden	$378,772,710	$129,539,284	$77,157,070
Rutland	$116,525,650	$47,627,832	$24,163,518
Washington	$112,940,616	$29,774,856	$21,936,708

Meals Receipts Percent of State

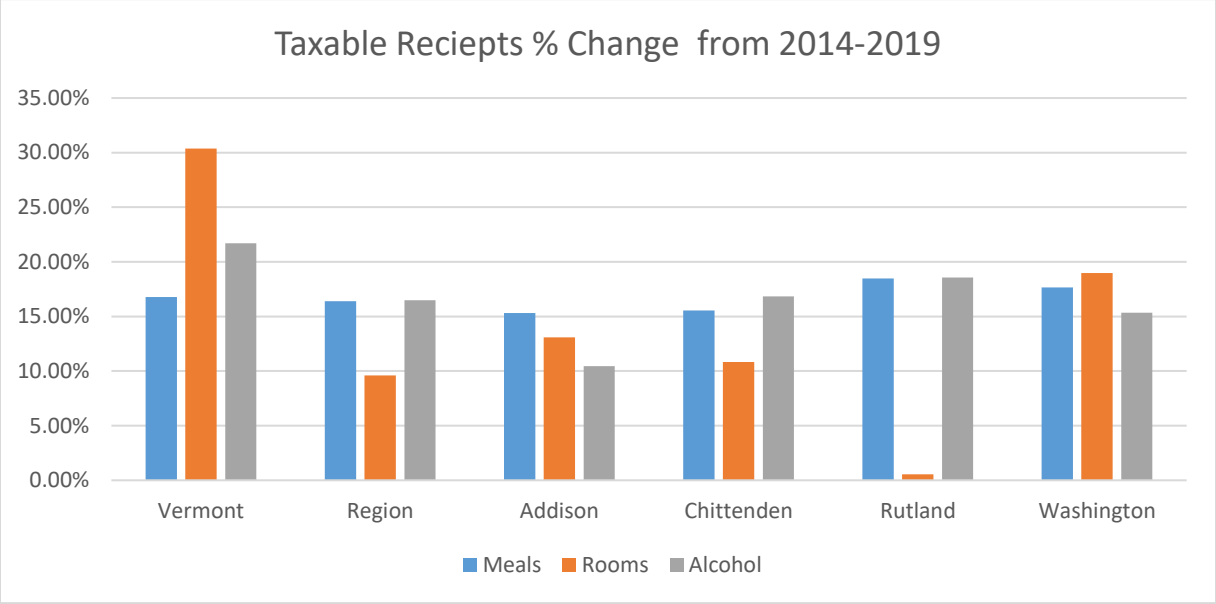
Source: Meals and Rooms Tax Statistics Report, Vermont Department of Taxes



The Region has 55% of the State's meal receipts, and 32% come from Chittenden County.

Meals and Rooms Taxable Receipts, Percent Change between 2014-2019

Source: Meals and Rooms Tax Statistics Report, Vermont Department of Taxes



All counties in the Region have experienced growth in Rooms, Meals and Alcohol receipts over the past 5 years. However this increase is less than across the State, and Rutland County's Room receipts shows minimal growth.

Exports

Vermont Top U.S. Exports (Origin of Movement)

Source: US Census of Foreign Trade

	2019 Value (millions of dollars)	2019 Percentage Share	Percent Change, 2018 - 2019
Processors And Controllers, Electronic Integrated	940.11	31.12%	-14.27%
Electronic Integrated Circuits, Nesoi	754.69	24.98%	40.30%
Articles And Equipment For General Physical Exercise	87.04	2.88%	10.16%
Civilian Aircraft, Engines, And Parts	78.1	2.59%	36.24%
Amplifiers, Electronic Integrated Circuits	72.78	2.41%	18.56%

Data for Exports is only available at the State level. Vermont's top five exports in 2019 can be seen in the table above, and represent a total value of $1,932,720,000. Electronically integrated processors/controllers and Electronic Integrated Circuits make up 56.1% of all of the State's exports.

Business Survival

Survival Rate of Private Sector Establishments, March 2020

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

	One year survival rate	5 year survival rate
Vermont	78.50%	47.70%
US	78.10%	50.00%

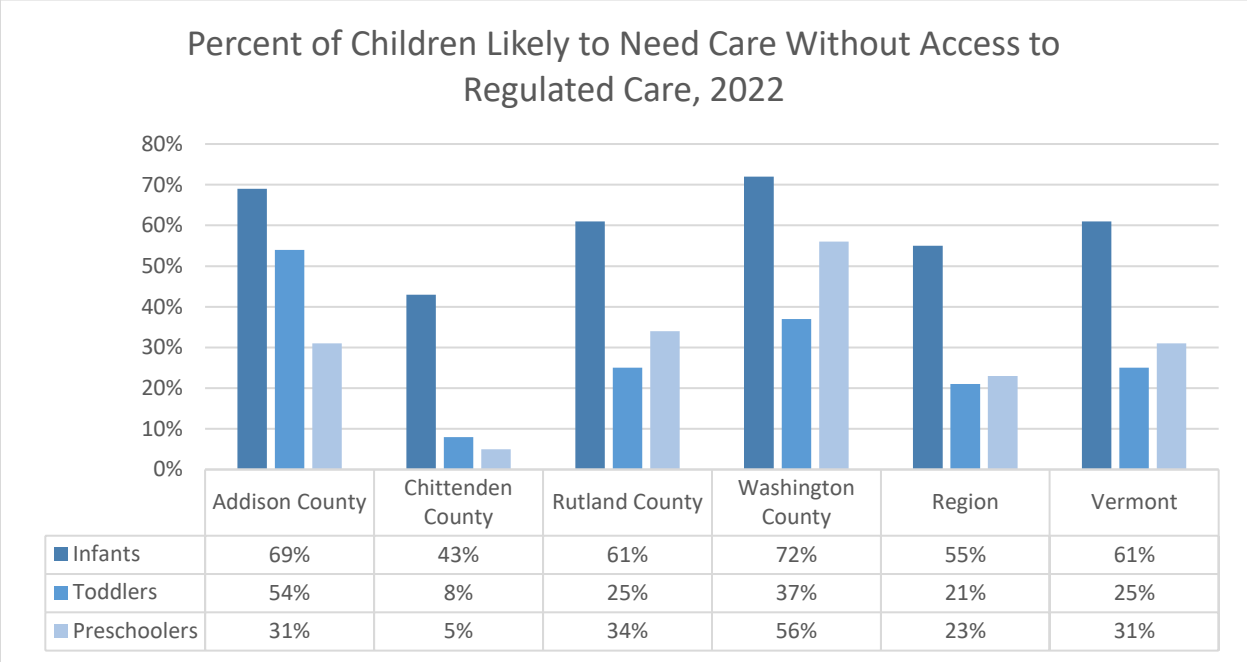
The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides information on survival rates for private sector establishments at the State level. As of March 2020, Private sector establishments were on par statewide and nationally for the one-year survival rate. However, after 5-years, the Vermont survival rate was about 2.30% lower than the national average.

Services & Infrastructure

Education & Childcare

Percent of Children Likely to Need Care Without Access to Regulated Care

Let's Grow Kids Stalled at the Start Report, 2022



	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County	Region	Vermont
Infants	69%	43%	61%	72%	55%	61%
Toddlers	54%	8%	25%	37%	21%	25%
Preschoolers	31%	5%	34%	56%	23%	31%

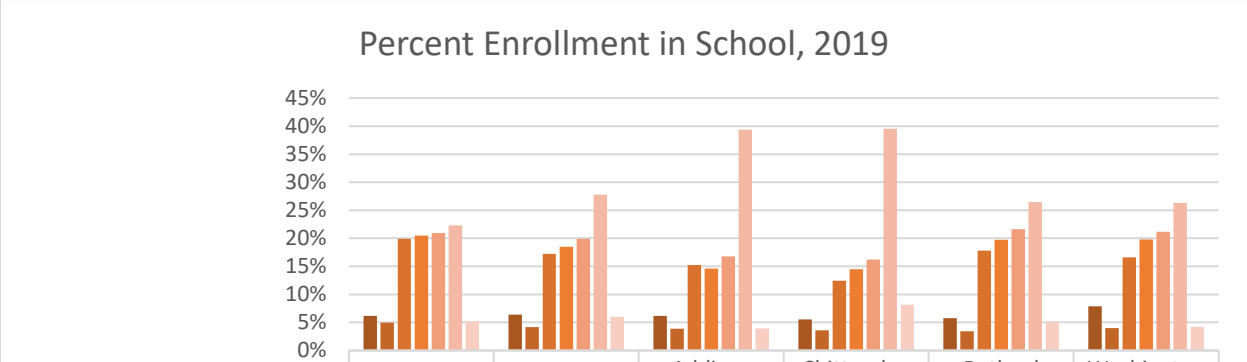
The availability of high-quality, regulated childcare is vital to ensure that adults who would like to work can stay in the workforce and participate in the local economy.

Vermont childcare data is available through the Building Brighter Futures program and through reports developed by Let's Grow Kids. According to the 2022 Stalled at the Start Report, across the West Central Vermont Region, 55% of infants are likely to need care and there is not enough regulated care to meet this demand. These percentages are higher in Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties.

While 25% of toddlers in the State do not have access to regulated childcare facilities, Addison County (54%) and Washington County (37%) far exceed this percentage.

Enrollment Distribution by Geographic Area

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1401, 2019



	United States	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
Percent Pre-School	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	8%
Percent Kindergarten	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Percent Elementary (1-4)	20%	17%	15%	12%	18%	17%
Percent Elementary (5-8)	20%	18%	15%	15%	20%	20%
Percent High School (9-12)	21%	20%	17%	16%	22%	21%
Percent Undergraduate	22%	28%	39%	40%	26%	26%
Percent Graduate or Higher	5%	6%	4%	8%	5%	4%

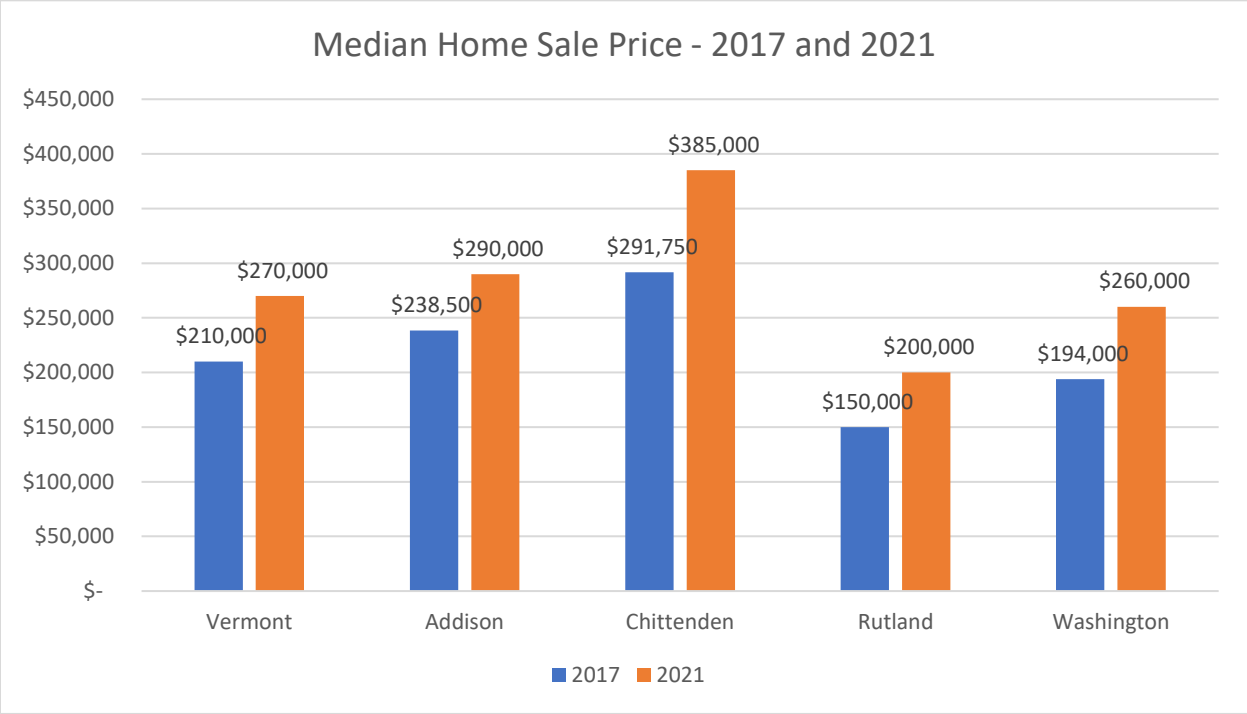
The above graph shows the distribution of the population age 3 and older currently enrolled in education. The Region and Vermont in general have less of a percentage of students enrolled in K-12 education, and a higher percentage of students enrolled in undergraduate programs compared to national trends.

This is emphasized in Addison and Chittenden Counties where 39% and 40% of the population enrolled in education is enrolled in undergraduate programs. Middlebury College is located in Addison County and the University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, and Champlain College are located in Chittenden County, which may explain these percentages.

Housing

Median Home Sale Price Over Time by Geographic Area

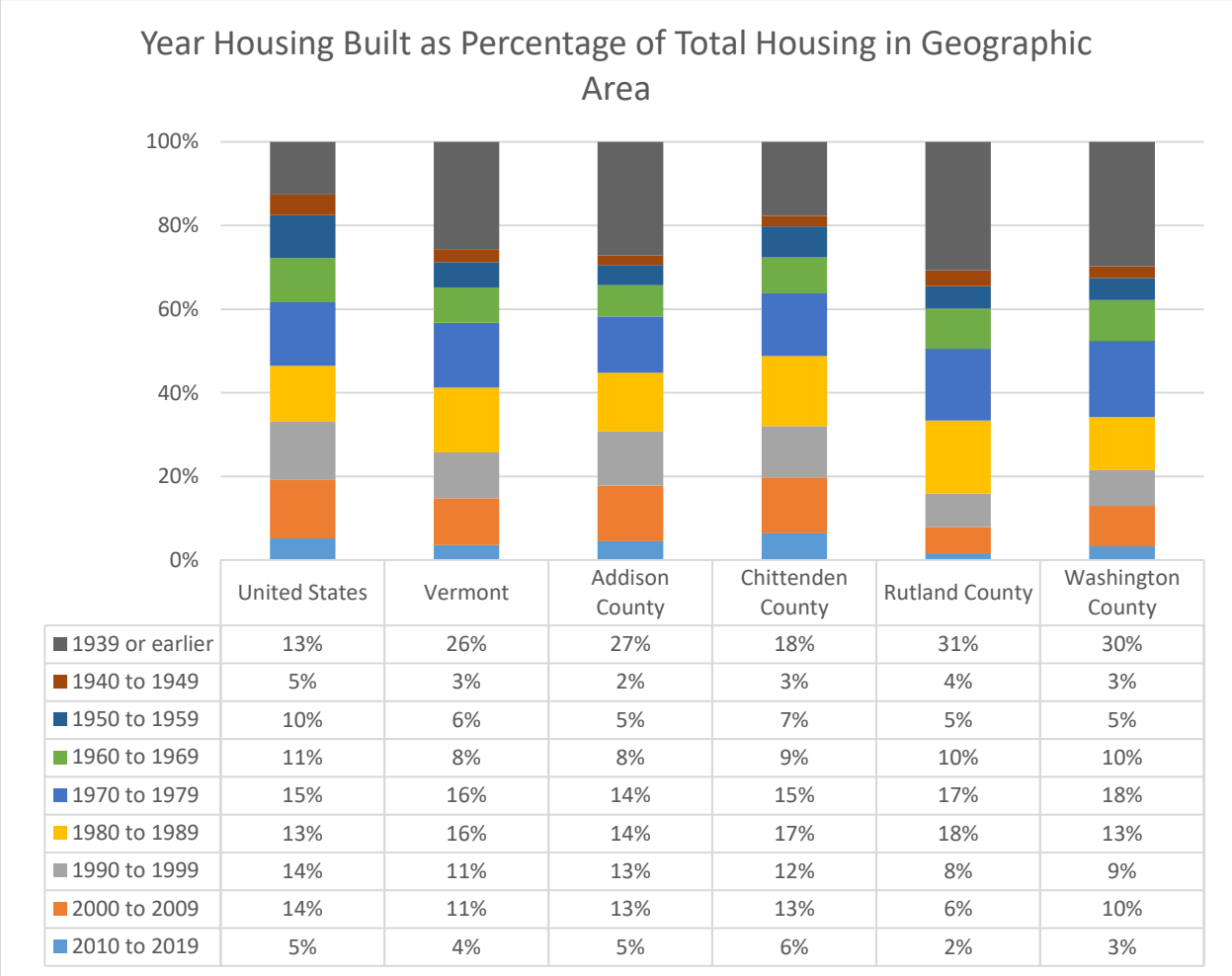
Source: VT Department of Taxes



Between 2017 and 2021, median home values have also increased considerably. Median home values are above or near the Statewide median in Addison, Chittenden, and Washington Counties. Median home values in Rutland County are $56,100 lower than the Statewide median.

Years Housing Built by Geographic Area

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04, 2019

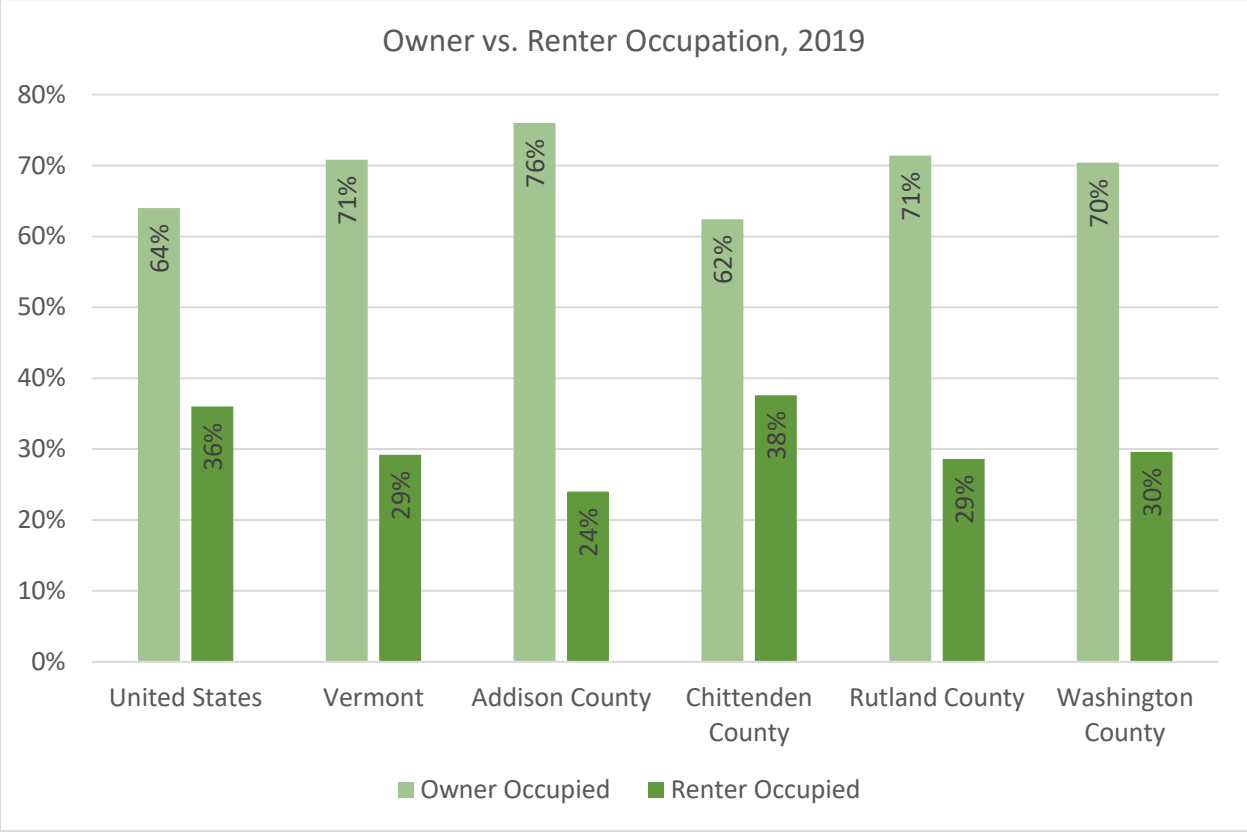


	United States	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
1939 or earlier	13%	26%	27%	18%	31%	30%
1940 to 1949	5%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
1950 to 1959	10%	6%	5%	7%	5%	5%
1960 to 1969	11%	8%	8%	9%	10%	10%
1970 to 1979	15%	16%	14%	15%	17%	18%
1980 to 1989	13%	16%	14%	17%	18%	13%
1990 to 1999	14%	11%	13%	12%	8%	9%
2000 to 2009	14%	11%	13%	13%	6%	10%
2010 to 2019	5%	4%	5%	6%	2%	3%

Vermont in general has a much older housing stock than the United States and the West Central Vermont Region is no exception. Nearly 30% of homes in the Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties were built during 1939 or earlier. Development surged between 1970 and 1999 in Vermont, but has slowed over the past two decades. Chittenden County had a more comparable housing stock compared with the national housing stock.

Occupancy Status

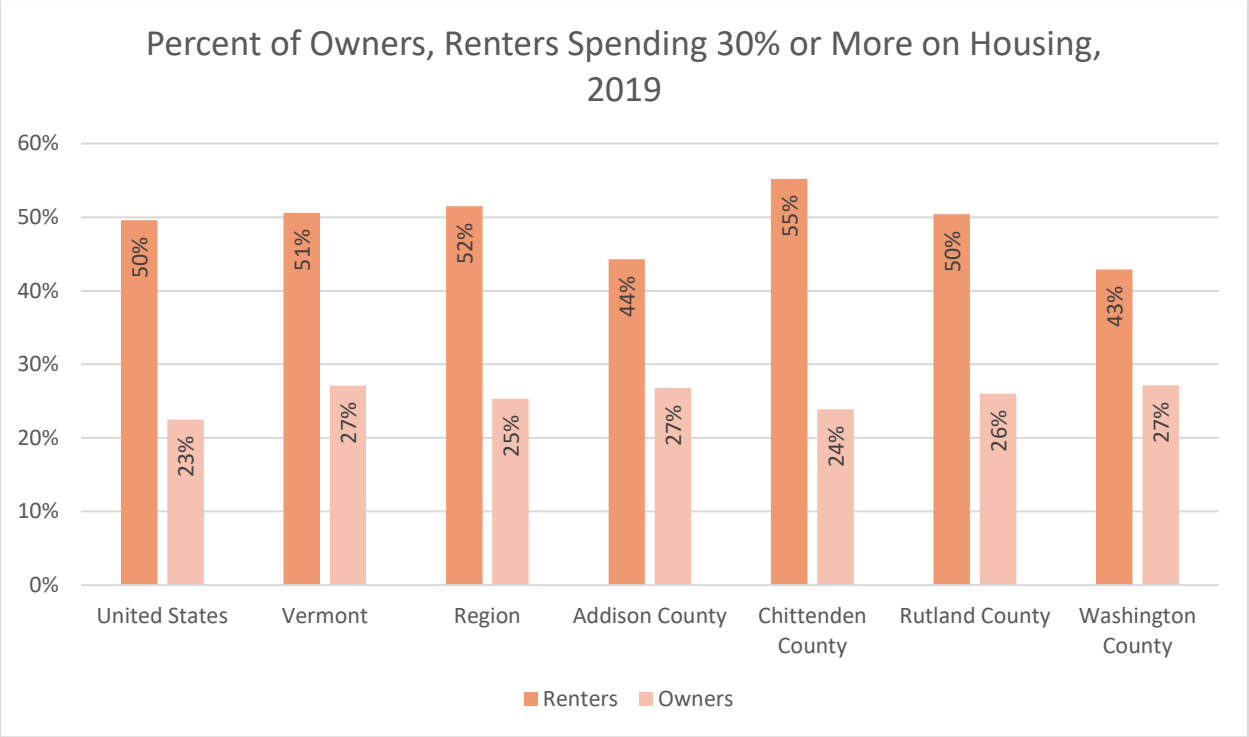
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04, 2019



Compared to the United States, Vermont households tend to be more owner-occupied and less renter-occupied, with the exception of Chittenden County. Approximately 38% of housing units are renter-occupied in Chittenden County, which is 8 to 14 percentage points higher than the rest of the Region. Chittenden County's owner/renter distribution is similar to the national distribution, whereas Addison, Rutland, and Washington Counties are much more similar to the Vermont distribution.

Cost Burden: Percent of Households Paying 30% or More on Housing, 2019

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04, 2019



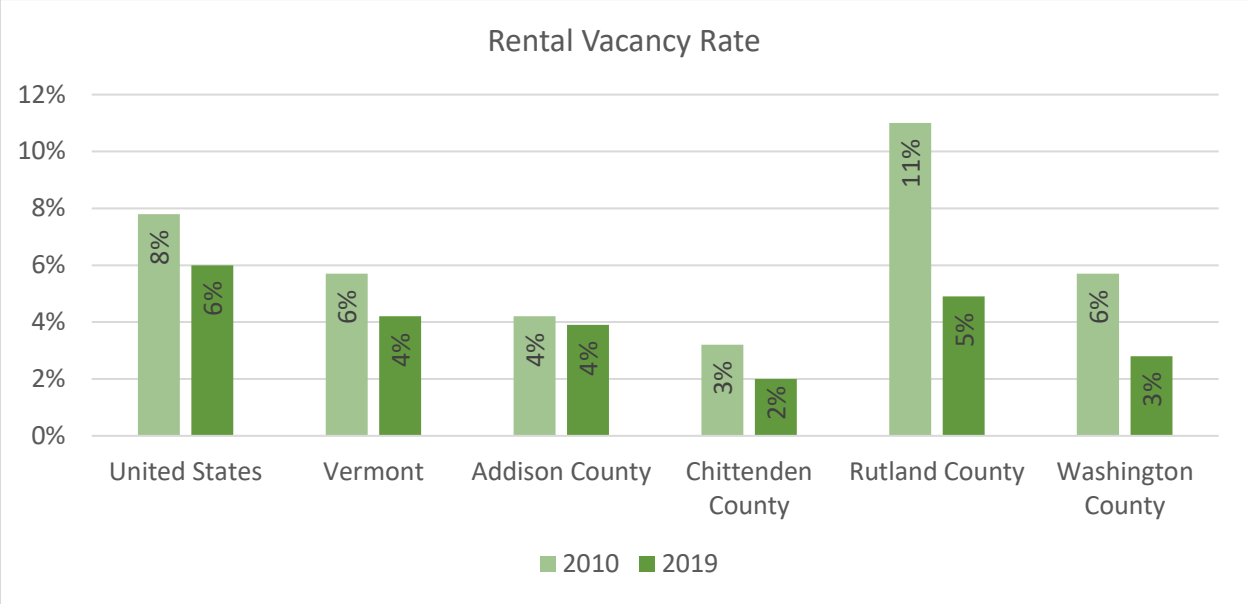
To understand housing affordability in the West Central Vermont Region, one factor may be the percentage of household income spent on housing. "Housing expenditures that exceed 30 percent of household income have historically been viewed as an indicator of a housing affordability problem."[15]

Owners and renters are slightly more cost-burdened in Vermont compared to the United States. A quarter of all homeowners in the Region are cost burdened, and 52% of renters in the Region spend more than 30% of income on housing.

[15] M. Schwartz & E. Wilson, "Who Can Afford To Live in a Home?: A look at data from the 2006 American Community Survey." *U.S. Census Bureau.* https://www.census.gov/housing/census/publications/who-can-afford.pdf

Rental Vacancy Rate

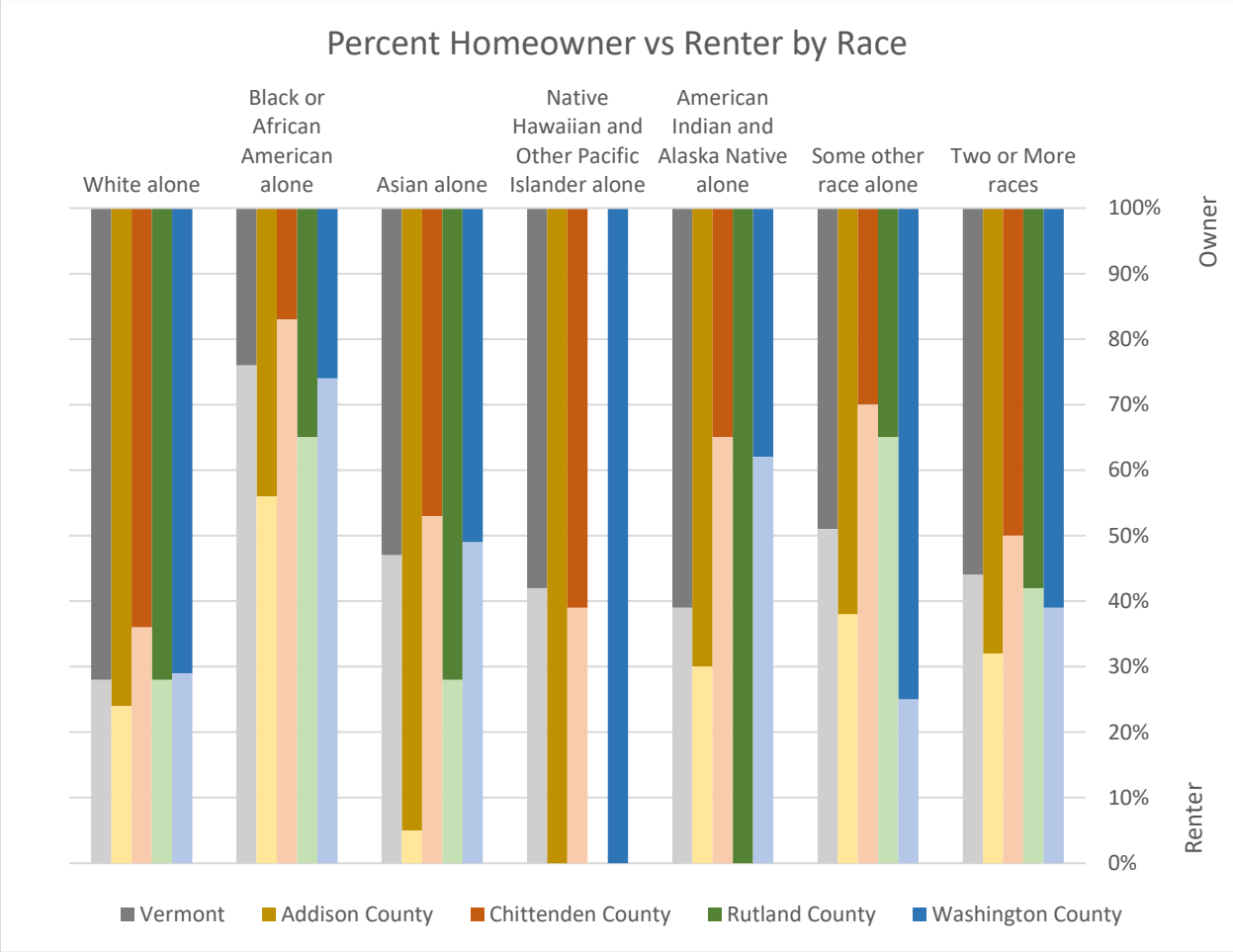
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04, 2010, 2019



The vacancy rate for rental housing units has gone down from 2010 to 2019, and is lower in the State and in the Counties in the Region than US rental vacancy rates; indicating there may be a shortage of available housing stock.

Home Ownership and Rental by Race

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25003A-G, 2019



Homeownership among Black and African American households is significantly lower than White households. While there are differences across the counties, home ownership rates across the State are lower for all races compared to White alone.

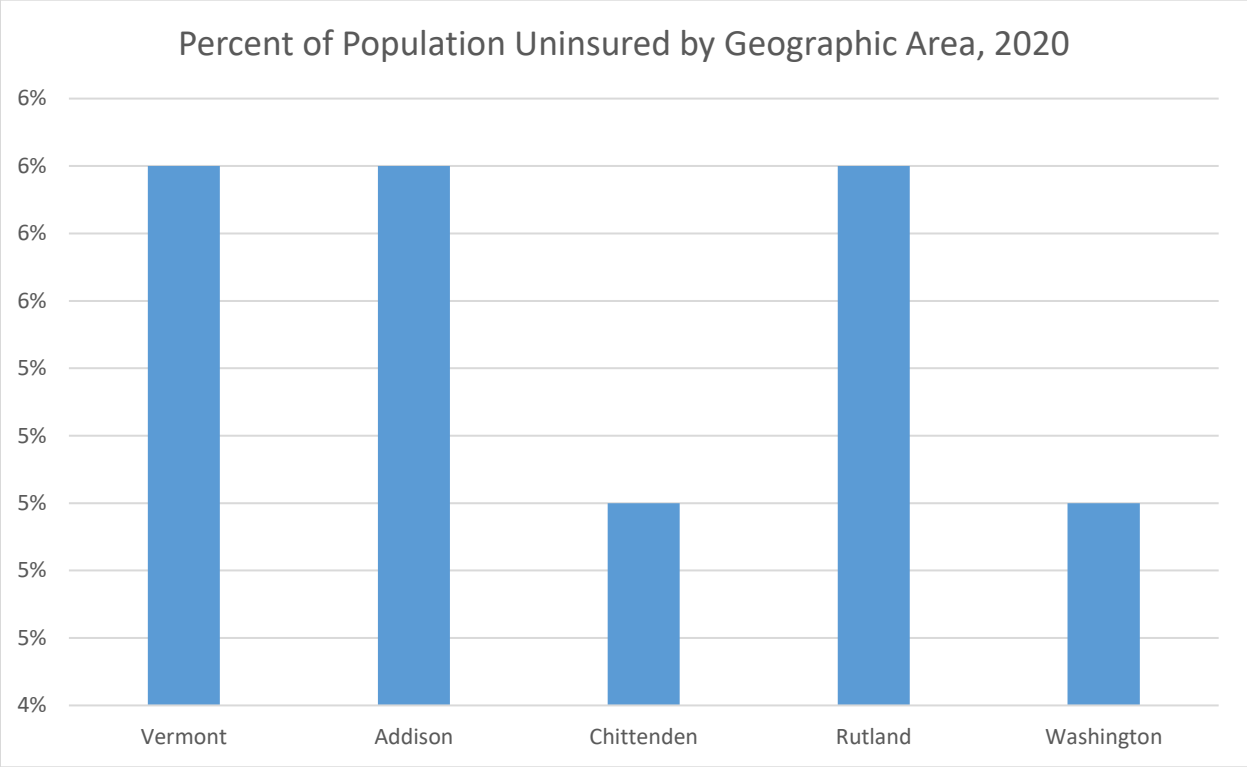
Percent Home Owner by Race	Vermont	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
White alone	72%	76%	64%	72%	71%
Black or African American alone	24%	44%	17%	35%	26%
Asian alone	53%	95%	47%	72%	51%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	58%	100%	61%	-	100%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	61%	70%	35%	100%	38%
Some other race alone	49%	62%	30%	35%	75%
Two or More races	56%	68%	50%	58%	61%

Note: Red data points have a high margin of error

Health Care

Percent of Population Uninsured

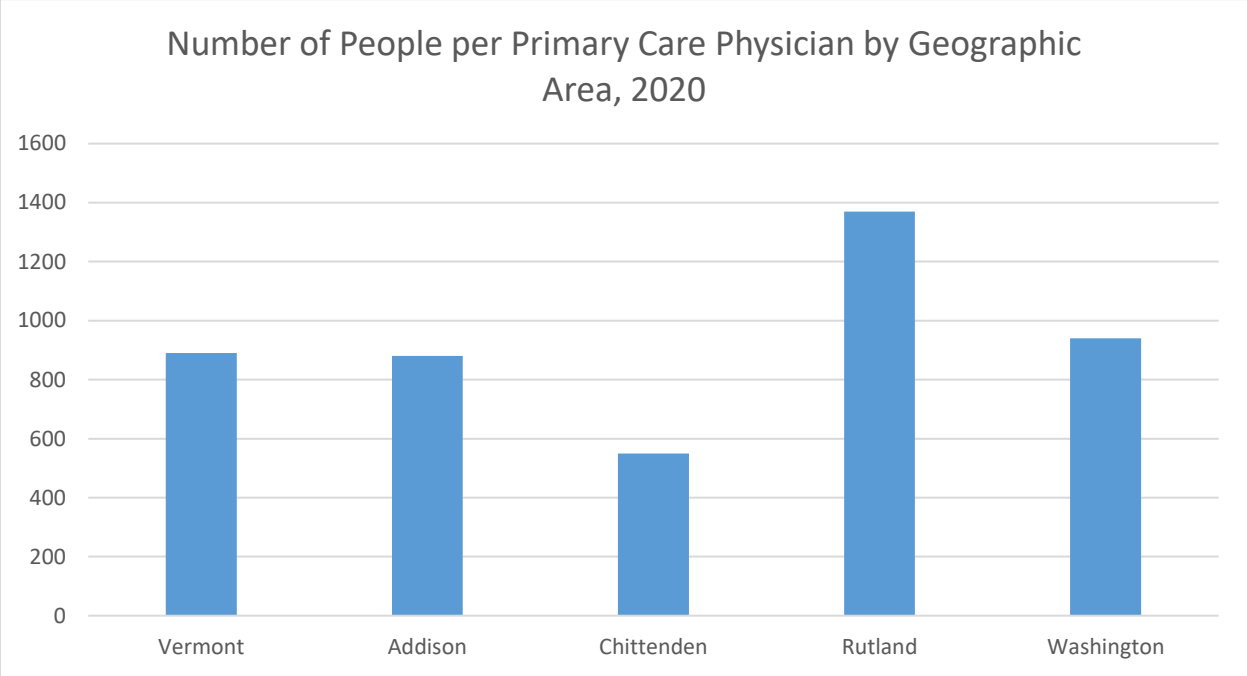
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020



Most of the population in the Region holds health insurance, but still 5-6% of the population is uninsured and may not be able to access adequate health care.

Number of People per Primary Care Physician

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2020

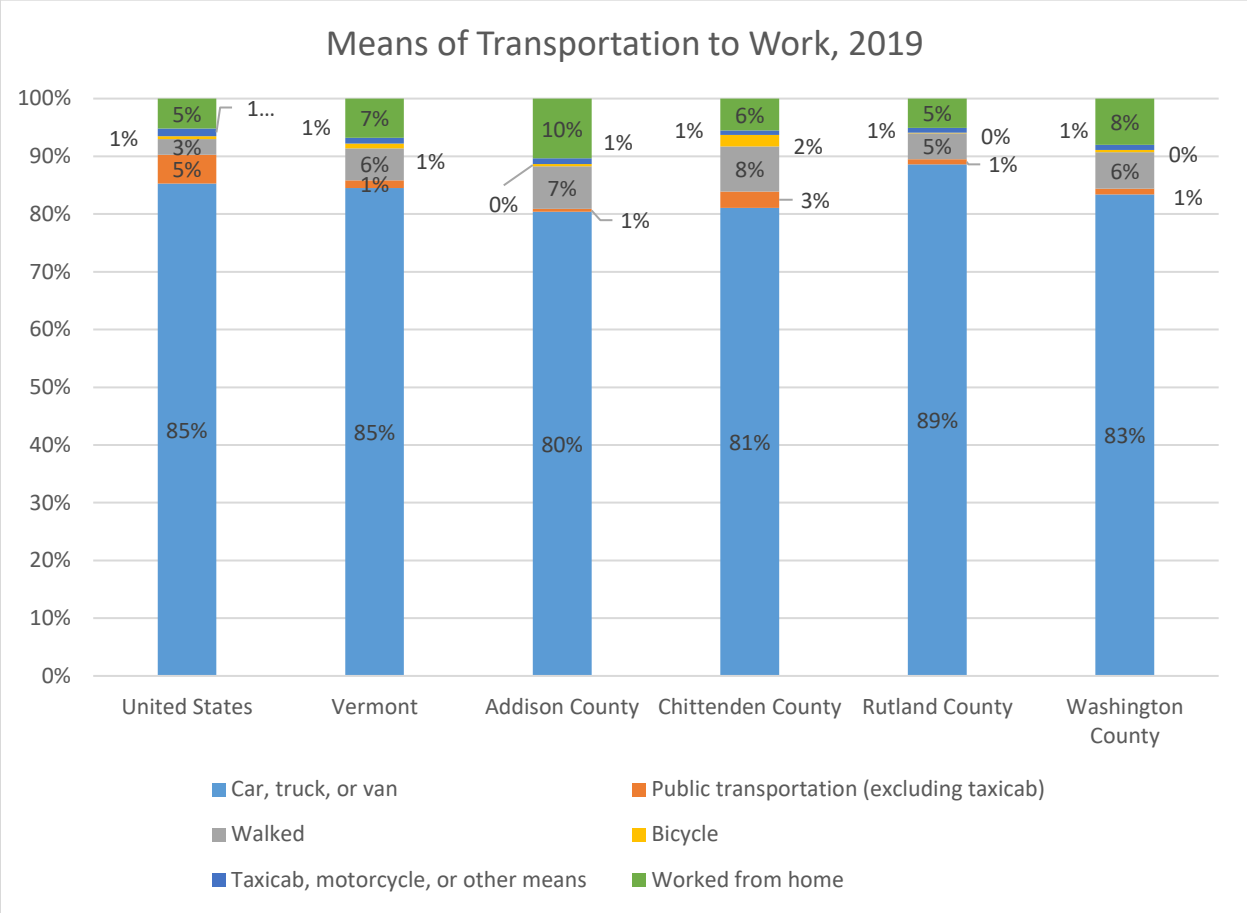


There is a low ratio of people per primary care physician in Chittenden County with robust health network. Addison, Washington and Rutland Counties all have slightly higher numbers of people primary care physician than the State average, indicating that some areas may not have sufficient access to medical care practitioners locally.

Transportation

Means of Transportation to Work

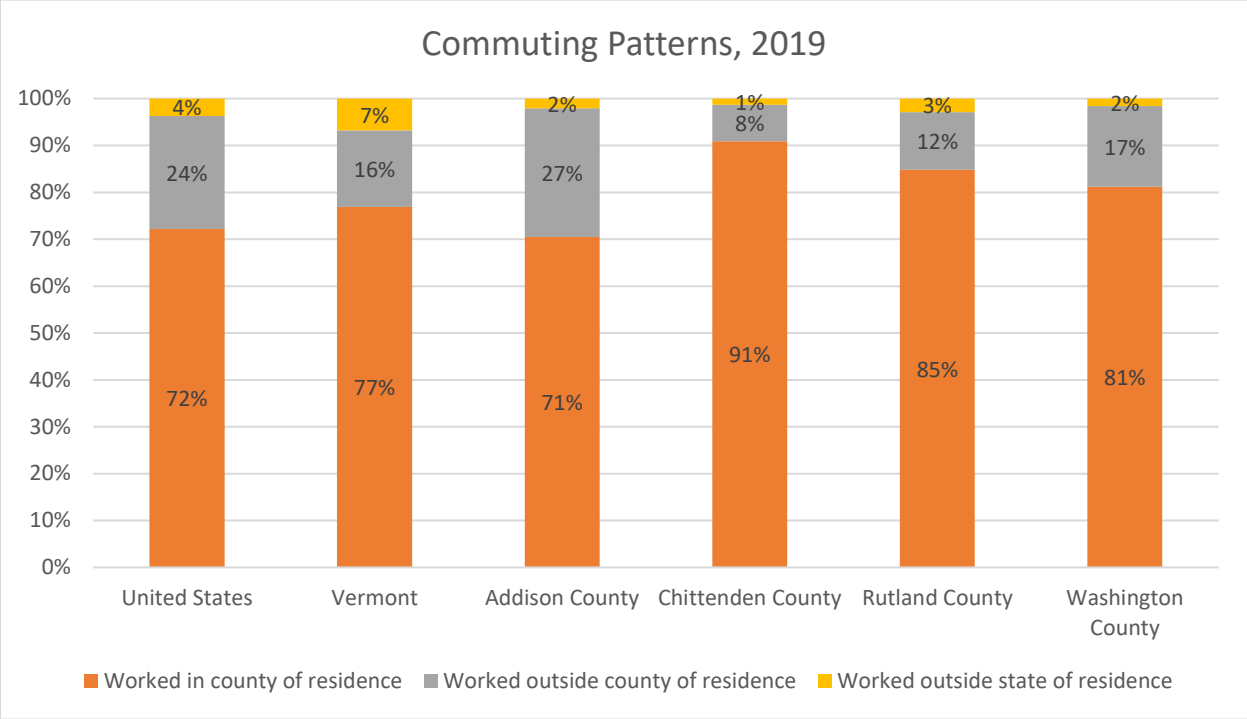
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0801, 2019



Across the United States, Vermont, and the Region, 80% or more of the population commutes to work in a car, truck or van. Public transportation, which 5% of the US population relies on, is not as well used in the Region due in part to limited service area. Approximately, 2% of Chittenden County residents utilize bicycles to commute, which is higher than the national average. Notably, the Region's population who works from home is the same as, or higher, than the national average.

Commuting Patterns

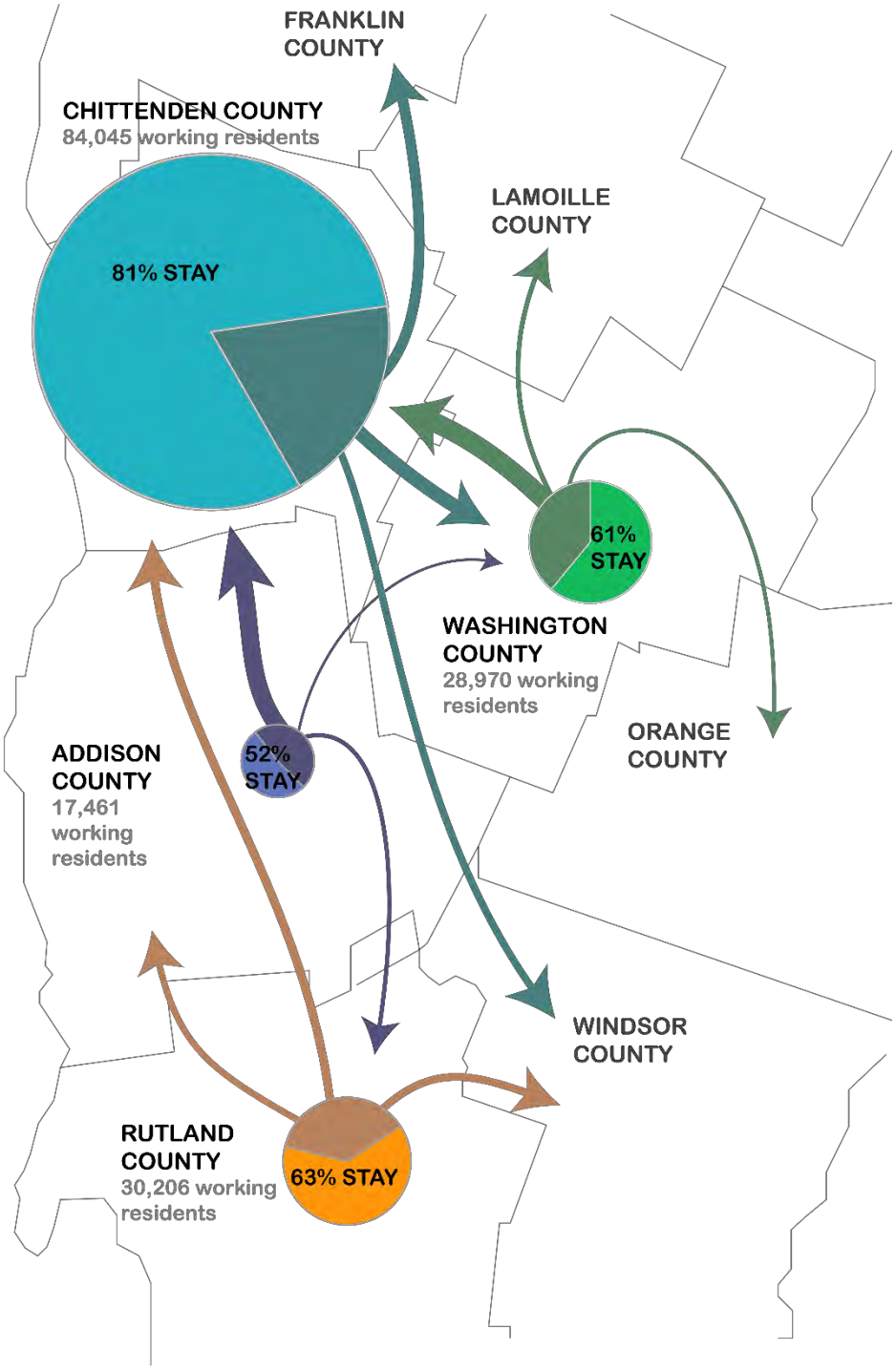
Source: American Community Survey, Table S0801, 5-Year Estimates, 2019



Most residents in the Region work in Vermont. Compared to national trends, more residents in Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington counties work within the county that they live in. Addison County residents are similar with commuting trends more aligned with national trends.

Travel to Work

Source: Vermont Department of Labor, 2017

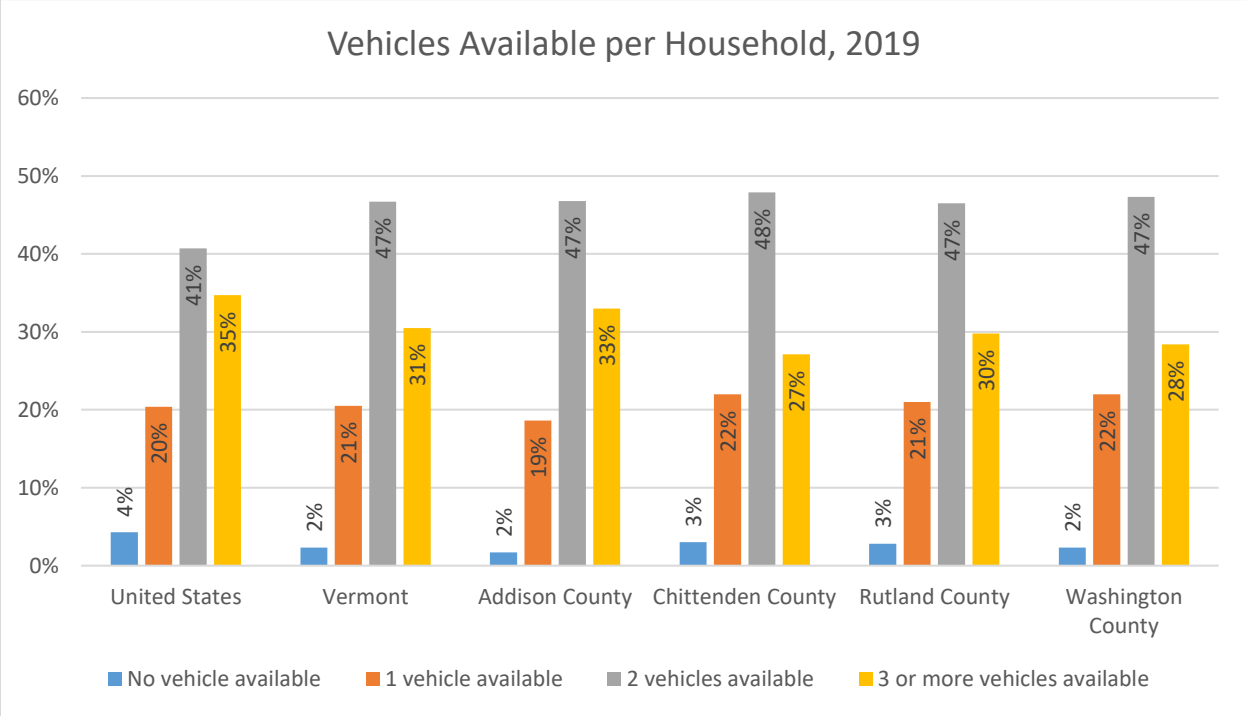


Chittenden County is a strong draw of regional employment, with a net inflow of 17,020 jobs. 20% of Addison County residents work in Chittenden County. Similar numbers of people travel between Washington and Chittenden Counties for work.

	Addison County	Chittenden County	Rutland County	Washington County
Number of working residents	17,461	84,045	30,206	28,970
Number of people who work in this region (living in or outside this region)	14,451	101,065	27,376	30,821
Net inflow/outflow	-3,010	17,020	-2,830	1,851

Vehicles Available per Household

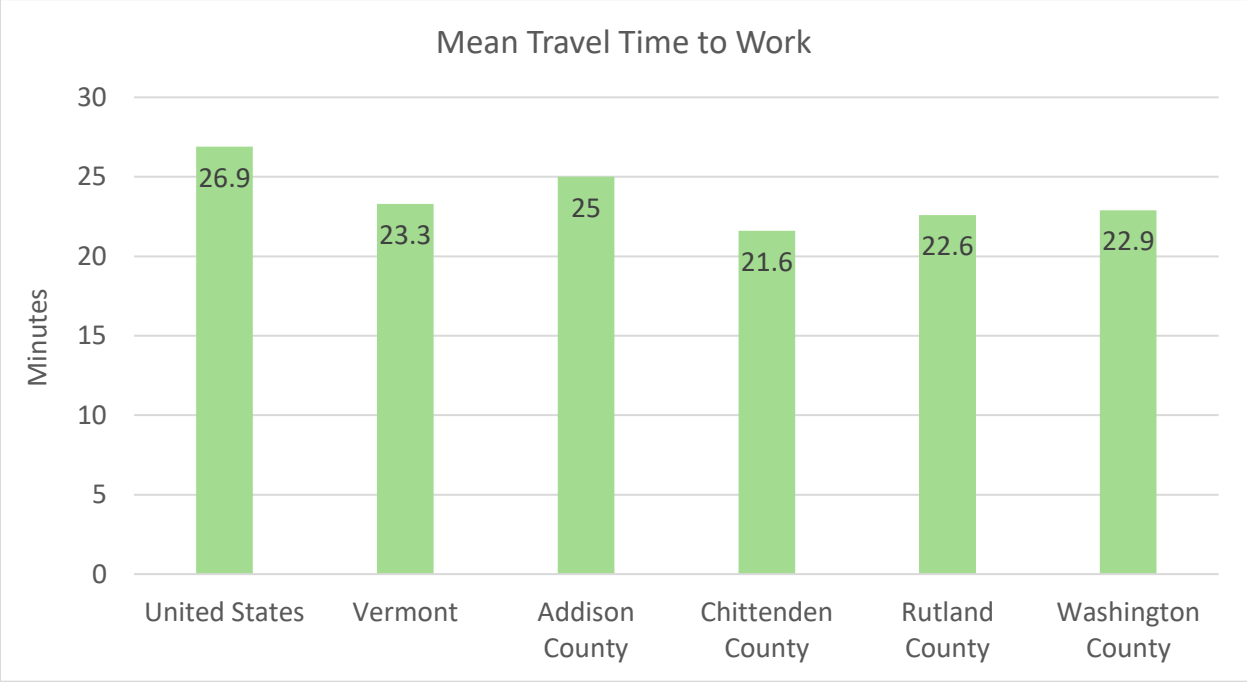
Source: American Community Survey, Table S0801, 5-Year Estimates 2019



Households in the Region mainly tend to own 1-or-2-vehicle (66% to 70%) This is higher than the 61% nationally. More households in the United States have no vehicles available compared to the Region.

Mean Travel Time to Work (Commuting)

Source: American Community Survey Table S0801, 5-Year Estimates, 2019



The average commute time in the counties in the Region is less than the national average by just under four minutes. Commuting times in Chittenden County are the lowest at 21.6 minutes. Average commute time in Addison County is the highest at 25 minutes. This is understandable when considering that Addison County has the highest percentage of residents commuting out of the county for employment.

Transportation Network Statistics

Source: Vermont Agency of Transportation, Traffic Research Division, 2020

Distribution of Road Class per Geographic Area, 2020									
	Class 1 Lane Highway	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Legal Trail	State Highway	Total Class 1, 2, 3 and State Highway	Scenic Highway
Addison County	0%	1%	21%	51%	8%	2%	16%	89%	1%
Chittenden County	1%	1%	23%	57%	3%	1%	14%	95%	0%
Rutland County	0%	1%	20%	50%	8%	4%	16%	87%	0%
Washington County	0%	1%	16%	53%	10%	5%	14%	84%	1%
Region	0%	1%	20%	53%	7%	3%	15%	89%	1%
Vermont	0%	1%	17%	52%	10%	3%	17%	86%	0%

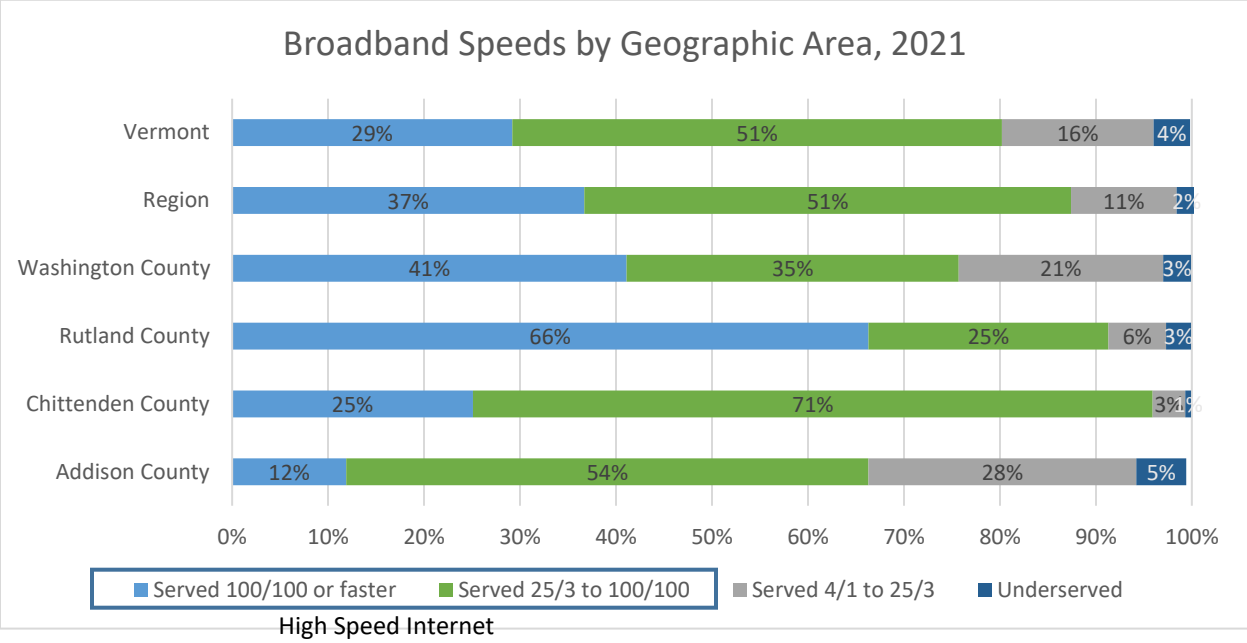
Distribution of Paved and Gravel Roads, Percent of Total Road Miles		
	Paved	Gravel/Dirt
Addison County	51%	49%
Chittenden County	73%	27%
Rutland County	53%	47%
Washington County	38%	62%
Region	54%	46%
Vermont	45%	55%

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) maintains an inventory of Road Class and Road Surface for the State and County levels. State Highways in the above table include interstate highways. The Region contains 30% of the State's State Highways, which facilitate commercial travel and tourism. Within the Region, Washington County road network is 62% gravel/dirt, which may disrupt potential commercial travel during the spring months when roads are closed due to "mud season."

Broadband

Internet Speeds by Region

Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, 2021



High Speed Internet

The Vermont Department of Public Service defines "high-speed internet" at 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload (commonly written 25/3). Internet speeds of 100/100 are considered "very high-speed internet," and are usually installed through fiber optic cable. In 2020, the average internet speed in the United States was 135/52. Nationally, Vermont ranks 48th according to Speedtest.net.

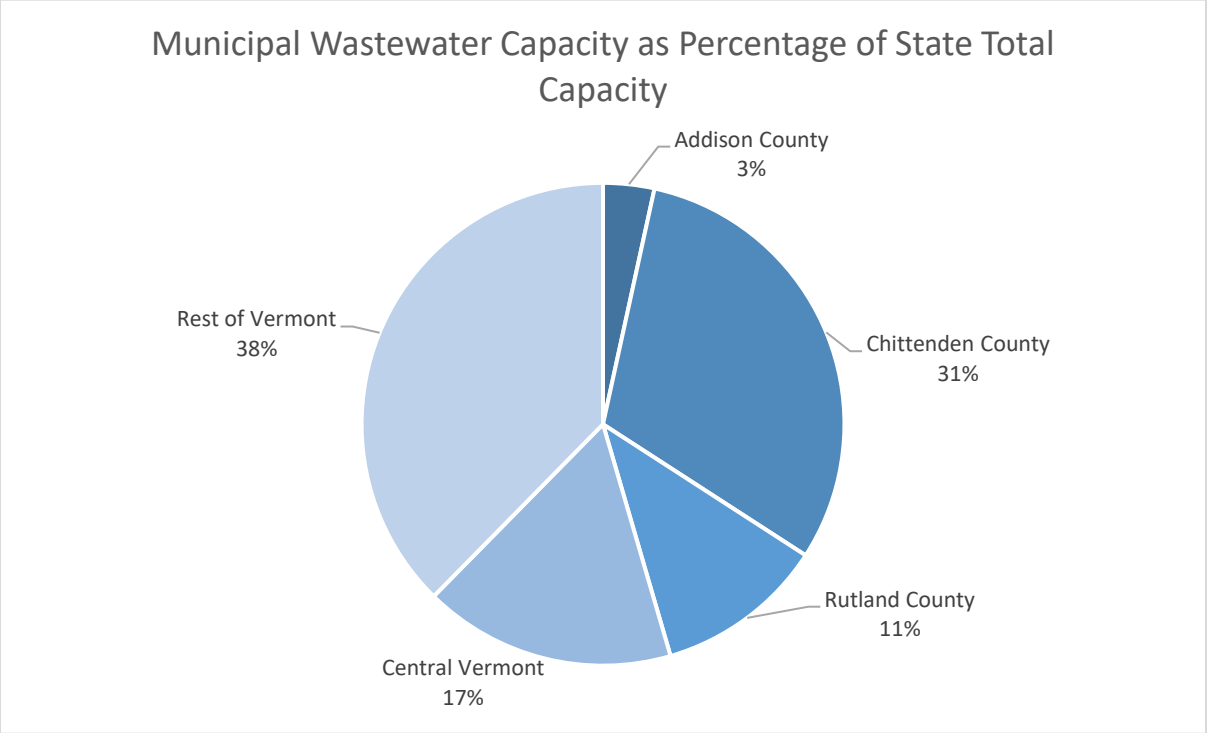
The fastest internet speeds in the Region are found in Chittenden County where 26% of structures have access to internet speeds faster than 100/100. This is followed closely by Rutland County where 22% of structures are served by 100/100. Addison and Washington Counties have 20-34% of residents served at speeds above 4/1 but under 25/3, meaning these structures do not have access to high-speed internet.

High-speed internet is critical for economic opportunities, including working remotely and operating businesses.

Water & Wastewater

Municipal Water and Wastewater Capacity as Percentage of Statewide Capacity

Source: Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Local Operators 2020

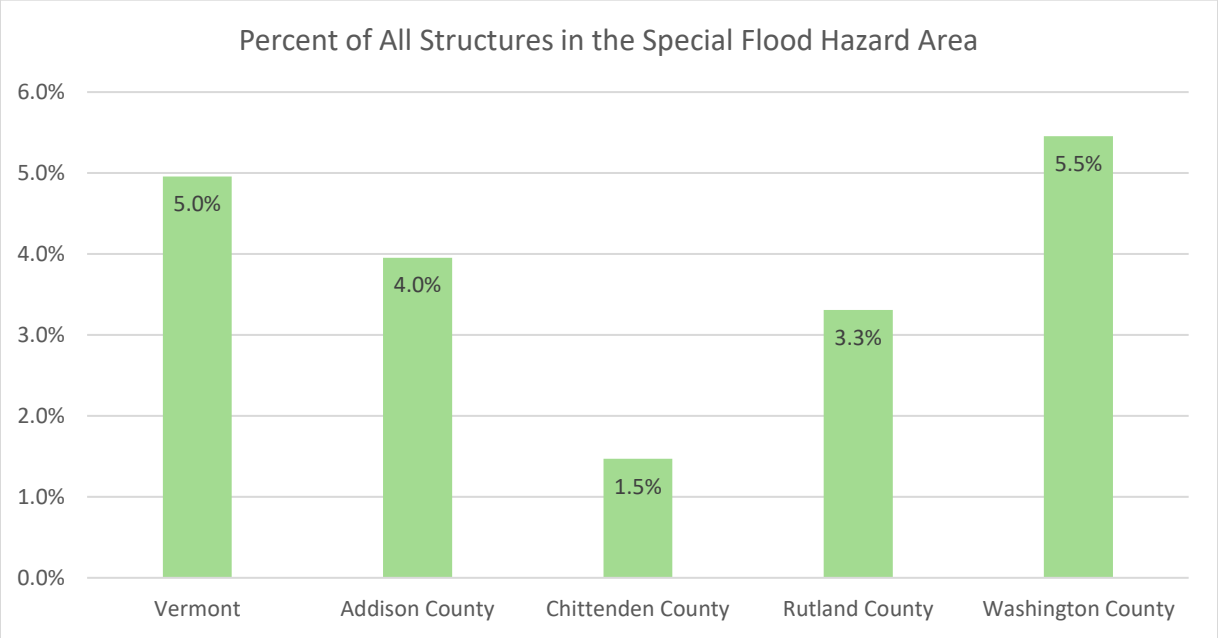


The Region includes 62% of the municipal wastewater capacity in the entire State of Vermont. Chittenden County provides half (31%) of this capacity. Water and Wastewater capacity is vital for infill development and lowering the cost to entry to open small businesses. The above graphic does not include industrial and private wastewater systems, and is based on capacity of municipally owned and operated facilities.

Flood Hazard and Resilience

Percent of All Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area

Source: Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, FloodReady Reports 2021



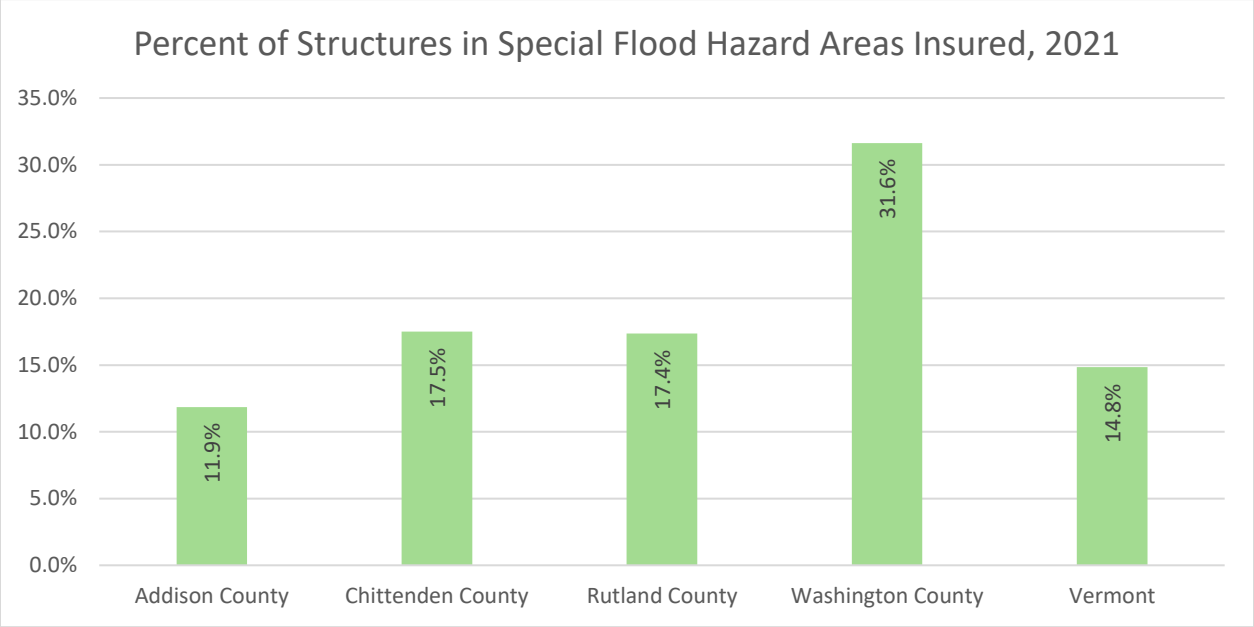
According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 5% of all structures in Vermont are located in the Special Flood Hazard Area. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, "the SFHA is the area where the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the area where the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies."[16]

One percent of structures (Chittenden County) to five percent of structures (Washington County) are located in the SFHA. Much of the existing development in the SFHA is historic.

[16] https://www.fema.gov/glossary/special-flood-hazard-area-sfha

Percent of Structures in Special Flood Hazard Area with Flood Insurance

Source: Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, FloodReady Reports 2021



According to FEMA[17], properties with mortgages, or properties located in communities who have received federal assistance, are required to have flood insurance. Statewide, nearly 15% of structures in the SFHA have active flood insurance policies. In the Region, Washington County leads with about 32% of structures insured. Addison County only has about 12% of structures insured.

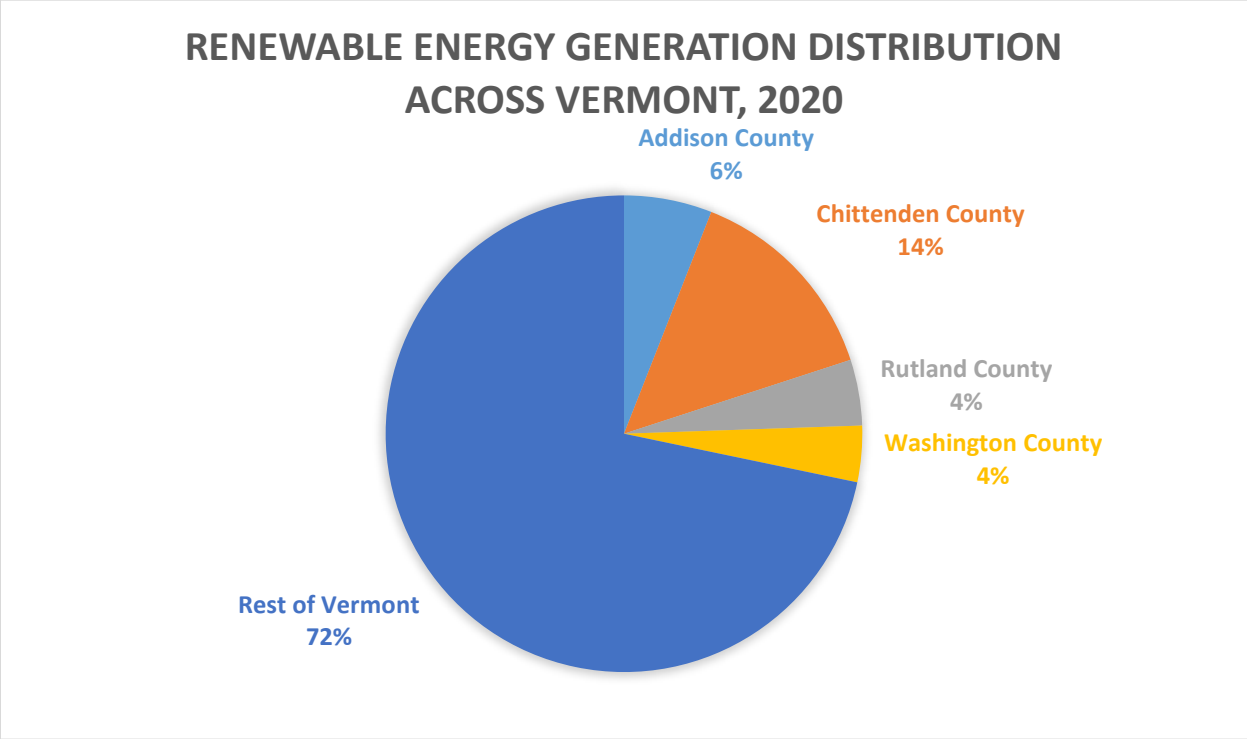
Flood insurance is important to ensure the future viability of residents and businesses in the event of a disaster. Without flood insurance coverage, the municipality and landowners may experience significant economic losses.

[17] https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood-insurance/requirements

Energy

Renewable Energy Capacity

Source: Vermont Department of Public Service: Certificates of Public Good, 2020

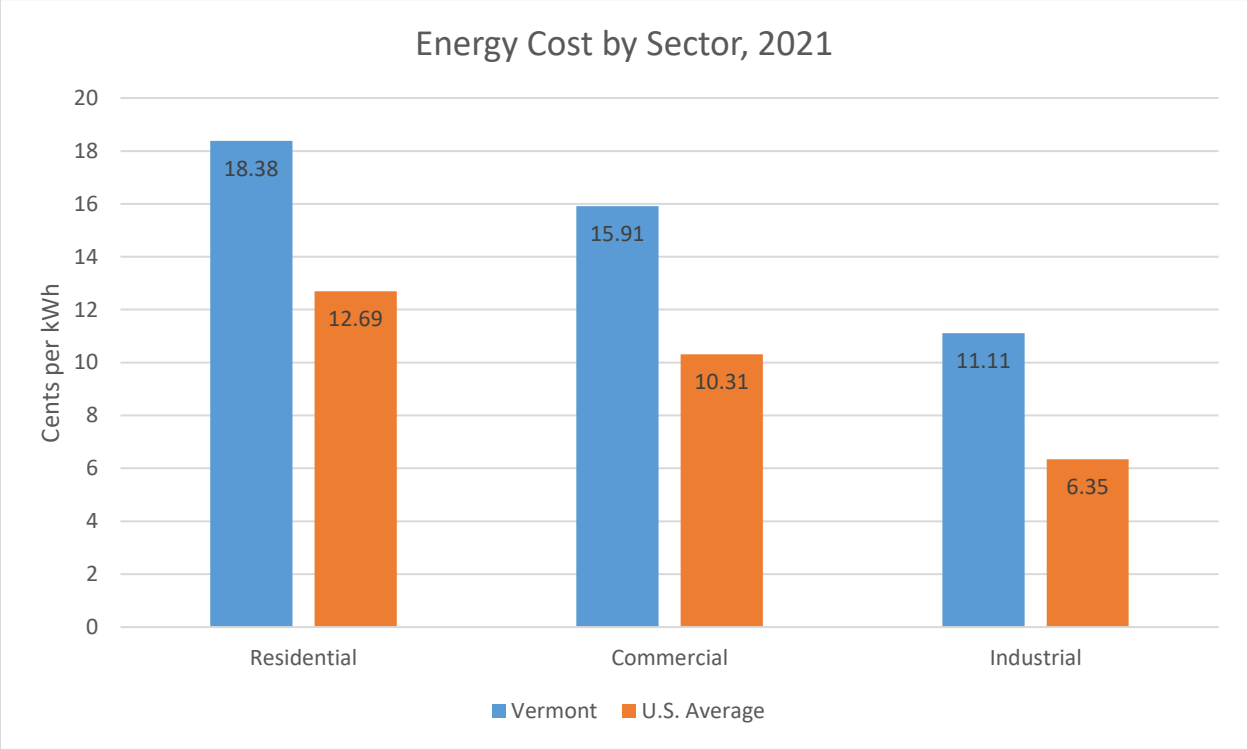


As part of the transition to renewable energy, the Region contributes 28% of the State's total renewable energy capacity. The Region itself occupies 31.7% of the State of Vermont's land area, so this aligns closely with area operated. As the Region contains 50.8% of the State's population, there may be some land use conflicts between the need for land for housing vs. energy generation.

All of the Regions have adopted Enhanced Energy Plans (24 V.S.A. 4352) as part of their Regional Plans. Enhanced Energy Plans are focused upon achieve several State energy and climate goals including the State's 90% Renewable Energy use across all sectors by 2050.

Energy Cost by Sector

Source: Energy Information Administration, 2019, 2021



Energy costs across the State are higher than the US average.

Appendix F – VT Professionals of Color Network – BIPoC Workforce and Small Business Environment Qualitative Assessment – Final Report

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

BIPoC Workforce and Small Business Environment Qualitative Assessment
WCV CEDS Steering Committee
Final Report

Submitted by:
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Weiwei Wang
Krystal Sanchez-Williams
Charlotte Santiago Graf

Aug 31, 2022

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The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

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The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

About The VT PoC Network

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VT PoC) is a state-wide organization that is built on the desire to help BIPoC and People of the Global Majority living in this state to advance their prosperity in whatever way they choose to define the word; whether it be economic, cultural or social prosperity. Our goal is to be the conduit in which the water (or resources) flow to the people.

We believe that systems that are failing communities of color fail the entire state. Our goal is to eliminate the economic and professional gaps that exist as a result of systemic racism, because prosperity starts with opportunities to climb the economic ladder. We are constantly striving for a new era of professional mobility, promoting entrepreneurial ventures, and nurturing our community by creating safe spaces for connections within the community and through networking, education and advocacy. Specifically, we work to empower youth, support entrepreneurs, and promote personal and professional development within the BIPoC community. We believe that creating environments in which People of the Global Majority feel a sense of belonging is critical to this work, because it has implications on the future of this state.

The state of Vermont is home to over 65,000 Black, Indigenous, Peoples of Color and People of the Global Majority as of the most recent US census. That is an increase of about 120% over the 2010 census. There is incredible value to this state by providing this community with the resources necessary to have a lasting impact on the economic development efforts in Vermont.

VT PoC is a 501c3 designated organization.

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

Executive Summary

The West Central Vermont region Steering Committee contracted with the Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VT PoC) in Spring 2022 to conduct focus groups with historically excluded groups, specifically BIPoC individuals living in Vermont, to better understand the challenges and needs of the community, and potential changes at the policy level to alleviate these burdens; this information would be included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

VT PoC conducted in-person and virtual focus groups in Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, Orange and Washington counties between April 2022 and July 2022. The following were identified as the biggest challenges and needs by participants:

- **Access to capital** - participants found difficulty in accessing capital, whether for personal or business activities, from traditional institutions.
    - Recommendation: Financial institutions, whether public or private, must steer away from traditional "one size fits" approach and seek alternatives that meet the needs of the BIPoC community.
- **Accessibility of resources** - while participants acknowledged the existence of resources across the state, most participants did not access because they did not know where to start, had a negative past experience with similar resource providers, or experienced inconsistent quality from resource providers.
    - Recommendation: State entities and human services organizations must ensure that BIPoC community members are receiving equal access to resources across the state and ensure that the quality of service is consistent, if not at a higher level, to white counterparts.
- **Business basics** - BIPoC business owners felt disconnected from
    - Recommendation: Continued efforts towards making Vermont a more digitally capable state. Additionally, development of a business basics workshop series by a BIPoC-led organization specifically for the BIPoC business community to help inform and guide business owners through the various stages of development can help mitigate issues of trust and accessibility.

- **Systemic inequities** - participants felt the weight of Vermont's "insider mentality", which results in many BIPoC leaving the state.
    - Recommendation: Consistent and on-going budget funding for bias training by both public and private employers will ensure that system inequities are incorporated into organizational culture and are addressed regularly by all levels of employment.
- **Why Vermont?** - Despite the challenges, participants noted the desire to stay in Vermont. Many felt that Vermont has much to offer and, if challenges can be overcome, many see a future for themselves in the state.
    - Recommendation: Efforts to retain BIPoC Vermonters must be made at the state level, with support from employers must go beyond current actions.

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

Project Introduction

Overview

VT PoC was engaged by the members of the Strategy Committee of regional planning and regional economic development organizations within the West Central Vermont region (WCV). In an effort to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Strategy Committee selected VT PoC to conduct focus groups within the WCV region to better understand:

1. What needs to change at a policy level to build capacity in low opportunity areas/communities?
2. What actions are needed to meet the needs in order to build capacity in low opportunity areas/communities?

Three core components of this project included:

1. Outreach and recruitment of participants,
2. Data collection in the form of up to 3 focus groups per county, and
3. Analysis and reporting of the findings.

In all three components, VT PoC engaged with key community leaders. While VT PoC has state-wide membership, we represent only a segment of the broader community and therefore engaged other BIPoC-led/focused organizations in addition to organizations representing low-income and other underserved communities to ensure all voices are heard.

Our Audience

This project focused on traditionally underserved populations, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC) and low-income residents and communities living in West Central Vermont, specifically Addison, Chittenden, Rutland, Washington and Orange counties.

Success

Currently, there is no source of reliable data on the needs of the underserved communities in WCV around economic development, particularly in terms of BIPoC voices. Success in this

endeavor will be finding a saturation of information from these underserved communities, and identifying the key themes of interest from these conversations. VT PoC sees this as the first and most critical step in engaging with and understanding the needs of these community members.

Methodology

Data collection and analysis occurred over four months between Spring and Summer 2022. Planning of recruitment and focus groups occurred between April and early May. Focus group sessions took place between late May through the end of July. Analysis was conducted concurrent to the data collection efforts and completed in August.

A semi-structured focus group guide was developed in April 2022. To ensure the most robust results, the team determined five broad key questions, and identified probes to supplement where needed (see Appendix A for focus group guide). Questions and probes were amended after each session as needed to ensure that question wording was appropriate based on participant feedback, and any probing questions eliciting unique or robust conversation were included as key questions in subsequent focus groups.

Recruitment of participants was based on the WCV CEDS project RFP, which identified Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Color (BIPoC) and low-income individuals living in counties located in West-Central, Vermont as the populations of interest. This area was defined as Addison, Chittenden, Orange, Rutland and Washington counties. Partners identified by CCRPC and GBI, as well as VT PoC direct partners were contacted via direct email and a bi-weekly newsletter to inform organizations of the focus group dates/times so that they could inform the communities of interest within their service area. Additionally, VT PoC conducted outreach to the VT PoC BIPoC Business Directory members and its internal membership database via social media channels and a bi-weekly newsletter created specifically to announce focus group session information. Flyers were developed and distributed across main thoroughfares along Route 7 in Addison, Chittenden and Rutland counties, as well as in major town hubs within Washington and Orange counties. However, public press releases and public news media stories were avoided to ensure that sessions were safe for participants to attend. All outreach materials provided information about the session, and noted that participants would be compensated for their time and energy.

During the planning phase, VT PoC identified focus groups in-person by region as a best-practices method to ensure each county was represented. Two to three focus groups were scheduled per county with maximum 12 participants per group. Each focus group was scheduled for a 90-minute block, including introduction of the project, group agreements, informed consent of the processing being recorded, and introductions.

In total, 18 participants were recruited across all five counties (see Appendix B for table of participant figures). In the process of recruitment, the VT PoC team found that in-person meetings were less successful in terms of the number of total participants signing up and the number of participants in attendance, particularly for Orange and Rutland counties. Four focus groups were rescheduled as a result and transitioned to virtual spaces, which was more fruitful. In-person sessions took place in public and private spaces that were identified by local BIPoC leaders as safe spaces for BIPoC participants to travel to.

Each focus group was managed by a trained facilitator and a notetaker. Facilitators were identified by the VT PoC team through BIPoC networks to ensure that community participants were comfortable sharing their experiences and interests within the group.. Local BIPoC leaders were invited to facilitate or asked to help identify another local BIPoC leader to support at least one focus group per region. A notetaker supported each focus group.

VT PoC utilized emergent thematic analysis for each focus group. Two VT PoC staff reviewed the data to ensure intercoder reliability. The following section details the broad themes from all focus groups.

Summary of Findings

The following were identified as the broad themes from all focus groups. Secondary themes are included as "tags" to provide additional context and show interconnectedness amongst findings.

Access to Capital

Access to Capital refers to clear and accessible avenues for grants, loans, and other forms of funding to help support small businesses. This includes, but is not limited to, capacity building grants, low interest loans, opportunities for brick and mortars, etc. It is important to note that all sessions with attendees mentioned access to capital as a barrier and/or wish.

- "A lot of us do not have grandparents that left us $100,000 to use as start-up money. We are using money from back pockets, savings, under the couch, etc." - Transportation Service
- **(Grants)** "Grants with required fund matching are extremely difficult for small and young businesses. Potentially receiving 10k would be amazing, but I couldn't currently match that with my business's income." - Micro Farmer
- **(Business Basics)** "We have a lot of growing pains. With farms, you need infrastructure which you can't get unless you have access to capital, and you can't have access to capital unless…so on and so on." - Agricultural Business Owner
- **(Business Basics)** "Capital is at the top of my list. The second is the legal support (like knowing what insurance is), and up until connecting with VT PoC, google was my only resource for these areas." - Jewelry Maker
- **(Business Basics)** "We (business partner and I) are talking about starting an LLC, but I do not have money because I am not charging people but I can't charge people without the LL." - Fundraising Consultant `
- **(Business Basics)(Network)** "I would categorize needs in three different buckets: Capital, Experts, Network. We need to create capital to start, we need experts who can

advise us such as LLC, and a strong network to get to more places and people seeing us." - Fundraising Consultant

- **(Business Basics)(Technical Support**) "My three wishes would be capital, staffing such as an assistant, and technical support. I say that because my business has been established for five years and my website isn't running and I don't have business cards…I feel like they don't take people of color seriously when trying to establish themselves." - DEI Consultant

Assessment of Resources

Assessment of Resources details participant's experiences with state and regional resources offered to small businesses in Vermont. This includes, but is not limited to, participants' experiences accessing of- and their overall assessment of resources offered in the state.

- "I have worked with the Center for Women and Enterprise. I did their 10-week business planning course and it was really good. I learned a lot about myself and the business. I was not building it for the current business that I am operating (travel agent) but I have all the resources from that course to help with my current business. They were so amazing." - Online Travel Agent
- "I looked into some of these resources, one in particular, that will help you build your business. I did not fit in the parameters which were being in business for two years and having a revenue, from that business, of 50k… The parameters for a small business were really high but I would have benefitted from it." - Jewelry Maker
- "I have known about these resources but it is difficult to know what I will get out of it. There's not enough information about what they do, there are so many [listed acronyms] but you don't know which will actually help grow your business. If there was a way to make them more distilled." - Transportation Service
- "Finding resources has been difficult for me, specifically finding vendors that sell the products that I need. I am at the mercy of local markets but my desire is to support BIPoC businesses." - Food Producer

- **(Grants)** I have gained access to Embrace Grant and CNPP grant. The Embrace Grant was pretty straightforward but the CNPP was difficult because it wasn't very much money and it was split between multiple vendors..Some technical assistance grants do not allow you to receive funds if you already have another grant, which can be frustrating." - Food Producer

- **(Infrastructure)** "The internet is not good where I live…it is very hard to run an online business. I believe this is Vermont specific because I live in a rural area and Vermont is a rural state. They are trying to do fiber internet but they are 2-3 years out from that." - Online Travel Agent

- **(Resources)** "I don't think [lack of resources are] Vermont specific, or even BIPoC specific, I think it's small business specific. I do think it is more pronounced in the BIPoC sector because we do not have a history of starting small businesses and turning them into multi-billion dollar companies. We don't have that generational knowledge or wealth." - Transportation Service

Business Basics

When referring to Business Basics, participants outlined introductory skills, certifications, and technical assistance as essential to successfully running a small business. Participants with more established businesses called for workforce development and a more welcoming environment.

- "The first wish is the ability to get technical assistance. Similar to what was said [regarding access to starting a small business], I have legal documents that I'm not sure are legit and I have an accountant but it took so long to find." - BIPoC Transportation Service

- **(Resources)** "I would like a step by step guide (on how to start a business). It would make the process easier because once I got my website done, I was able to do other administrative things like establishing an LLC, EIN, creating your own contract, etc." - Digital Artist in Vermont

- **(Resources)** It would be helpful to sit down with someone to talk about how to start a business. For example, what is the difference between sole proprietorship and LLC?" - BIPoC Jewelry Maker in Vermont

- **(Certifications)(Workforce Development)** If I want to do something in the marketing field, I have to have all these other qualifications to be taken seriously." - Budding Business Owner

- **(Workforce Development)** "It's been mentioned before, but also trying to run a business while also working full time is very challenging; hiring an employee eats into already slim profit margins." - BIPoC Transportation Service

- **(Access to Capital)(Insider Mentality)** "(I wish we had) access and knowledge of long term contracts in the area. The scale that larger businesses want might be out of our reach or they only want [the service] one time…and I just grew this specific product for them." - BIPoC Micro Farmer

- **(Infrastructure)** "I wish [businesses] in Vermont specifically would embrace technology and modern processes. What I mean is that I feel like I have to bend over backwards to fill out their process and forms…I have taken the time to set up the digital infrastructure to be more efficient. The response is to print a form, send it in, and then receive a check a month later. But in the meantime, I have contractors to pay which comes out of my pocket." - BIPoC Athletic Business Owner

Systemic Inequality

System Inequalities refers to the policies and procedures coupled with attitudes and biases that create institutionalized and structural problems in inequality, specifically impacting BIPoC small business owners. It is important to note that systemic inequality is weaved through all findings of the report, not just this section.

- "If I hadn't arrived in Vermont with a business, clients, and overall profile then I do not think I could have started here from the ground out. I do not think I would have been

taken seriously…there are a lot of suspicion between immigrants, being BIPoC, and a lack of sense of belonging and the lack of relationship building," Creative Director

- "I feel like I could scale and could increase profit margins but then the question is at what cost to the community? I had so many opportunities to access athletics at very low cost which was informative experiences for me so as I built [my business], I have kept that in mind of how to make it inclusive and community based. So I have to ask myself, do I want to pursue revenue? I prioritize access at the cost of revenue." - BIPoC Athletic Business Owner in Vermont
- "Being a woman working in business is a bit tough because it is a bit of a boys' club. I am also a person of color and an immigrant to this county, so racism is what I am faced with most in the businesses. If that can be addressed in the workplace it would be helpful." - Goods Retailer

- **(Insider Mentality)** "(Focusing on) economic development through jobs and creating extra revenue, people eyes get really wide and it allows us to get integrated here... we are taking huge projects to help develop the town and the fact that we are BIPoC it just adds to the "PR thing" of working with black folks. I can imagine that if we weren't (integrating the community), it would not go smoothly. The insider concept that we spoke about before, it is how it is." - Agricultural Processor

- **(Microaggression in the Workforce)** "[When speaking of microaggressions in the gig economy] This is the type of experience that we are experiencing in the workforce so we turn to entrepreneurship." -DEI Consultant in Vermont

- **(Grant Systems)** "When focusing on the actual application process, I do not want to give financial background and (my) whole life story." -Independent Artist in Vermont

- **(Grant Systems)(Insider Mentality)** "The hustle that comes with being brown, black…it seems like the same people are getting the same resources and it's like 'what about us?'It's exhausting and it takes away from my creativity." - Small Business Owner

- **(Access to Capital)**"As a black woman, I am already getting paid less than I'm supposed to." -Budding Business Owner in Chittenden County

- **(Business Basics)(Resources)** When referring to starting a business as a BIPoC New American: “New Americans and Immigrants are coming to this place without a solid understanding of the systems, they can’t just sit us down and be like, ‘okay here is how to do this’?”- Digital Artist

- **(Gatekeeping)** “I don’t feel like I have access to capital and I don’t even know when markets are going on. I find out from a friend of a friend or an ally. Whoever is running the show [or market], who they know is who gets into the shows.” - BIPoC Jewelry Maker

- **(Gatekeeping)** “I’ve been in the food and beverage industry for quite some time and I haven’t met a network. I know the clientele is out there, it is just meeting them.” - Online Travel Agent for Vermont

- **(Gatekeeping)** I do not think I would experience the same challenges with networking (outside of Vermont). For instance, the same guy has been doing commercials for 20 years. Everyone has the person they go to.” - Digital Communicator in Vermont

- **(Insider Mentality)** “(Focusing on) economic development through jobs and creating extra revenue, people eyes get really wide and it allows us to get integrated here... we are taking huge projects to help develop the town and the fact that we are BIPoC it just adds to the “PR thing” of working with black folks. I can imagine that if we weren't (integrating the community), it would not go smoothly. The insider concept that we spoke about before, it is how it is.” - Agricultural Processor

Why Vermont?

It is essential to understand why BIPoC individuals and small businesses owners are operating in Vermont. This section details a variety of experiences.

- “[It’s a] great place for people of color to be a business owner. We should not be forced to be in urban areas, we are entitled to live here and work here and thriving businesses.” DEI Consultant

- **“**I arrived here eight years ago and felt so lost, with no reflection of people who look like me, not knowing that other BIPoC folks are in Vermont…so I am here to show the representation.”-Marketing Specialist
- “I can drink my coffee in my backyard quietly and I can’t ask for much more…except for less racism.” - Agricultural Processor
- “I get to go to these big cities for work and come back and trail run on the weekends and that balance for me is really important.” - Fundraising Consultant
- “I can almost say wholeheartedly that if I was not from here, I would not be here…the average age is 55.” - Agricultural Processor

Outside of WCV CEDS Sessions

In addition to the WCV CEDS focus groups, VT PoC held focus groups for BIPOC community members and businesses outside of the WCV area. The following themes were identified as the top concerns for BIPOC individuals and business owners, many of which align with the themes identified by VT PoC within the WCV CEDS sessions.

- **Access to Capital**
- **Systemic Inequities**
- **Bias Grant Systems**
- **Workforce Development + Employee Support**
- **Business Basics**

Conclusions and Recommendations

Access to Capital

Access to Capital is the most sought after need for BIPoC small business owners and community members. Historically, BIPoC individuals experience income disparities due to systemic inequities, specifically the lack of generational wealth to support business growth and development. One focus group participant who owned a transportation service business noted that, “A lot of us do not have grandparents that left us $100,000 to use as start-up money. We are using money from back pockets, savings, under the couch, etc.”

In order to support BIPoC small businesses, organizations and policies need to circumvent these disparities by adjusting the process in a meaningful way. For example, administering grants reserved specifically for BIPoC small business with little to no restrictions (i.e. required fund matching), as experienced by a Micro-Farmer in the WCV region, “Grants with required fund matching are extremely difficult for small and young businesses. Potentially receiving 10k would be amazing, but I couldn’t currently match that with my business’s income.” The accessibility of financial capital for BIPoC individuals must be reviewed at policy and organizational levels to ensure accommodation of BIPoC community needs.

In general, a significant need is for organizations focused on providing resources to come to the table with openness on creating a different process rather than a one-size fits all model when working with BIPoC individuals. The diversity in businesses, individuals, and identities requires white-led organizations to assess each individual’s circumstance beyond the traditional models, and create a collaborative plan led by the BIPoC community member to support and uplift their needs. We recommend that state policies and human services organizations address the treatment of BIPoC individuals seeking support as the experience is often unsupportive and rooted in biases, whether intentional or unintentional.

Accessibility of Resources

Our data shows a general lack of awareness- and/or approachability of resources. While participants had general awareness of resources in the state, many felt lost in terms of how the

offerings actually supported their individual needs. A participant noted, “I have known about these resources but it is difficult to know what I will get out of it. There’s not enough information about what they do, there are so many [listed acronyms] but you don’t know which will actually help grow your business. If there was a way to make them more…[distilled],”.

Even where there is awareness, resources often have unattainable prerequisite criteria that particularly impact BIPoC small business owners and community members. Specifically, business owners felt they, “did not fit in the parameters which were: being in business for two years and having a revenue, from that business, of $50,000.” These types of criteria block BIPoC individuals from accessing resources that could benefit the health of their business or other needs.

Accessible resources were noted to lack consistent quality at the varying levels of operation and direct support yet it was noted that each organizational representative represents all such organizations (white-led) as a whole. Meaning that the experience of a BIPoC community member with any staff member within a given organization may be perceived to represent their potential experience with others within the organization, and even the organization as whole.

This lack of consistent quality of service across an organization has a broader effect. When BIPoC community members perceive that they have been provided with lower quality of service or less attention by a service provider compared to their white counterparts, the impact is that the negative experience will influence their willingness to interact with the organization/service in the future. Additionally, the experience of one BIPoC community member with an organization may inform their willingness to interact with other similar organizations throughout the state.

Therefore, the way a staff member of an organization interacts with a member of the BIPoC community can have significant future implications for that individual and, potentially, for the larger community. The lesson here is that the action of an individual or an organization is not felt in isolation. We recommend that organizations provide resources to BIPoC small business owners and community members to redirect the mentality of “one-size fits all” and engage and assess each individual’s circumstance.

Business Basics

Emerging BIPoC small business owners and BIPoC small business owners in the early or start-up stages struggle to find answers and resources to common questions because there is not a single source of information to get the process started. Many business owners asked for a one-stop resource for all of their questions.

I would like a step by step guide [on how to start a business]. It would make the process easier because once I got my website done, I was able to do other administrative things like establishing an LLC, EIN, creating your own contract, etc. -Digital Artist in Vermont

Additionally, sector specific standards often require additional certifications because, "[i]f I want to do something in the marketing field, I have to have all these other qualifications to be taken seriously," said one budding business owner. In addition to time, individuals must have access to capital, which was previously identified as a challenge.

Small businesses have also adjusted their often-elevated business processes to meet the needs of larger businesses with more antiquated processes. One athletic business owner noted about her experience with the current business environment and systems, "I have taken the time to set up the digital infrastructure to be more efficient. The response is to print a form, send it in, and then receive a check a month later. But in the meantime, I have contractors to pay, which comes out of my pocket." Vermont's business systems generally lack digital literacy, which means that many small businesses who need to be more nimble and dynamic have to slow down their systems to accommodate those structures that are in place. This in turn can lead to slower growth and a reduction in profitability.

Overall, there is a statewide need for building digital literacy and capacity within the broader business environment, which will serve small businesses in their ability to grow. This includes the need for building the physical infrastructure for broadband access statewide, as well as alternatives in rural areas until WIFI becomes more accessible. Additionally, participants in the focus groups called for assistance that is in line with their direct needs. VT PoC recommends that the development of a workshop focused on navigating the Vermont business landscape by a

group like ourselves would benefit all BIPoC community members to increase awareness and business capacity. Additionally, we recommend that the state and organizations offer micro-grants for certifications that do not require an extensive application process and can be immediately applied to courses.

System Inequities

Participants all noted the structural and systemic inequities that they face as BIPoC individuals and business owners in Vermont. One example is the implicit biases of funding organizations. One goods retailer who also identified as female noted that, "it is a bit of a boy's club," and that because she is "...also a person of color and an immigrant to this county," she finds that racism is part of doing business. New Americans experience even more obstacles because they are experiencing racism while also navigating new social, political and economic systems, which makes it more difficult to navigate existing systems.

BIPoC individuals and businesses that start without an existing community or client base struggle more because of the explicit and implicit racism within social and institutional systems. While this is not Vermont specific, for those community members coming from beyond state borders, there exists an "insider mindset" in Vermont, which has historically excluded non-Vermonters and currently exacerbates the existing systemic inequities faced by BIPoC. Participants felt that, "it's exhausting and it takes away from my creativity." Additionally, in more rural areas where there may be limited demand for some services, the insider mentality makes it more difficult for businesses to stake a claim within local economies. One digital communications business owner said that finding clientele in Vermont is more difficult because "everyone has the person they go to". One agricultural sector participant who grew up in Vermont understood the benefits of being a known entity within the community and the benefits that has had on his business: "I can imagine that if we weren't [integrated within the community], it would not go smoothly. … It is how it is."

White-led organizations and institutions should seek long-term, on-going bias training as a core part of their organizational framework. These training should be offered to those in leadership positions as well as to all staff members to ensure consistent messaging and understanding of

these issues across the organization. Such on-going training(s) helps to provide touchpoints to critique, evaluate, and implement new processes to dismantle system inequities and uplift BIPoC businesses and community members.

Why Vermont?

Vermont attracts BIPoC individuals with the hope of experiencing a particular work-life balance, outdoor lifestyle, strong community ties, and the desire to experience diverse individuals. Participants in the focus groups particularly enjoyed the balance of Vermont's proximity to large cities and the ability to indulge in the state's natural beauty. Yet, despite these natural assets, participants noted that racism, whether social, structural, or otherwise, blocks the BIPoC community from fully enjoying the benefits of the state. "I can drink my coffee in my backyard quietly and I can't ask for much more…except for less racism," noted an agricultural processor who participated in the focus groups.

Despite the difficulties of living in Vermont as a BIPoC individual, many choose to stay for a variety of reasons, including work-life balance, the natural beauty of the state, proximity to large cities, and the sense of responsibility towards the existing BIPoC community to stay and build community. However, more efforts by the state and employers must be made, in addition to on-going bias training, to ensure that BIPoC Vermonters feel safe at work and beyond.

The current efforts by state entities and many non-profit organizations like United Way of Northwest Vermont to create training for corporate and non-profit employers to better understand the needs of the immigrant and refugee communities will help to demystify the hiring process. VT PoC also believes that organizations must look towards their various internal processes to ensure that all aspects of an organization, including employee handbooks and communications, are ready and able to invite immigrant, refugee and BIPoC Vermonters to any working environment. Connecting BIPoC Vermonters with employers at BIPoC specific career opportunity events can also help to mitigate concerns for both the potential employee and employer. By building relationships with the community early and intentionally, employers have a greater chance of retaining valued employees.

Limitations

This project faced limitations including the overall timing of data collection; BIPoC community members identifying more with their community, which could be statewide, and small business owners identifying more with their sector rather than their region; and the lack of interest for in-person listening sessions.

Timing of Data Collection

Listening sessions began in April and ended in July. This period of time is busy for community members as it marks the end of the academic year, and families tend to be focused on children and summer plans. Anecdotally, Q2 and Q3 are also amongst the busiest for small business owners in the state of Vermont, particularly those in the hospitality industry. The result is that the timing could have negatively affected the number of participants and attendees per session.

Additionally, the limited amount of time to recruit, collect data and analyze within five months in five counties may have resulted in the lower participation rates in some counties.

Sector vs. Region

Registration trends showed BIPoC community members identified more with direct community, which may have been beyond the borders of their county, and small business owners identified with their sector (i.e. food industry, tech industry, creative industry, etc.) rather than the region where they lived (i.e. Chittenden County, Washington County, etc.). This aligns with findings on Networking, reinforcing BIPoC individuals' priority to meet others in their direct line of interest rather than their living area. In future listening sessions, listening sessions should solely focus on interest or sector specific conversations with widespread marketing to all counties.

In-Person Listening Sessions

VT PoC offered a mix of in-person and online focus groups to accommodate various needs. Registration and attendance for in-person sessions were low, whereas registration for virtual sessions were high and yielded 80-90% attendance rate. We can reasonably assume BIPoC community members and small business owners value virtual sessions for state-wide conversations.

Appendix A

Logistics

- Meeting Format
    - Virtual: Calendar Invites with Zoom information
    - In-Person: Calendar invites with address, parking, etc.
- Listening Session Materials
    - Listening Session Facilitation Guide
    - Recording of Training Session
    - List of Confirmed Participants and answers to the following registration question: As a small business, what are some of the biggest challenges you face?
- Timeline
    - Set Up: 30 minutes
    - Listening Session: 90 minutes
    - Debrief: 60 minutes

Listening Session Questions

1. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for that would serve your business to be more resilient?

2. What are the biggest challenges your business is currently facing?
    a. Opportunity for probing questions based off of answers
        i. Insert Calendly responses
    b. Q1 Probes:
        i. Do you think these challenges are Vermont specific?
        ii. Are you hearing the same thing from other business owners?

3. There are resources available at the local and state level like: the Center for Women and Enterprise, Vermont Small Business Development Center, BROC and other similar organizations. **What has been your experience with these resources?**

4. What is the reason you operate in Vermont?
    a. Q4 Probes:
        i. What keeps you in VT?
        ii. What was the draw to open your business in Vermont?

5. [If time] We've spoken a lot about what challenges your businesses have been facing. What keeps you going?
    a. Q5 PROBE: What is working well for your business?

The Vermont Professionals of Color Network

Appendix B

Overview of Listening Sessions

Day	Date	Listening Session	Affinity Space	Set-Up Time	Time	Debrief	Location	Meeting Location	Notes
Tues.	**5/24/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC Women Identified // Non-Binary	12:00 PM	12:30-2:00pm	2:00-3:00pm	Chittenden	**Virtual - Zoom**	**Registration: 2, Attendees: 2**
Tues.	**5/24/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC	5:00 PM	5:30-7:00pm	7:00-8:00pm	Chittenden	**Hula Lakeside - Sunset 901**	**Registration: 3, Attendees: 3**
Tues.	**6/14/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC Women Identified // Non-Binary	12:00 PM	12:30-2:00pm	2:00-3:00pm	Washington	**Zenbarn**	**Registration: 6, Attendees: 3**
Tues.	**6/14/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC	5:00 PM	5:30-7:00pm	7:00-8:00pm	Washington	**Zenbarn**	**Registration: 4, Attendees: 2**
Mon.	**6/20/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC Women Identified // Non-Binary	5:00 PM	5:30-7:00pm	7:00-8:00pm	Orange	**Virtual - Zoom**	**Registration: 6, Attendees: 0**
Mon.	**6/20/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC	10:00 AM	10:30-12:00pm	12:00-1:00pm	Orange	**Virtual - Zoom**	**Registration: 1, Attendees: 0**

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Tues.	**6/28/22**	CEDS: Business + Workforce Development	BIPoC Women Identified // Non-Binary	11:00 AM	11:30-1:00pm	1:00-2:00pm	Rutland	**Rutland Free Library (Small Meeting Room)**	**Registration: 1, Attendees: 2**
Tues.	**6/28/22**	CEDS: Businesses + Workforce Development	BIPoC	4:00 PM	4:30-6:00pm	6:00-7:00pm	Rutland	**Rutland Free Library (Small Meeting Room)**	**Registration: 0, Attendees: 0**
Thurs.	**7/28/22**	CEDS: Businesses + Workforce Development	BIPoC	10:30 AM	11:00-12:30pm	12:30-1:30pm	Addison	**Virtual - Zoom**	**Registration: 7, Attendees: 6**
Thurs.	**7/28/22**	CEDS: Businesses + Workforce Development	BIPoC	3:00 PM	3:30-5:00pm	5:00-6:00pm	Addison	**Virtual - Zoom**	**Registration: 0, Attendees: 0**