
2014

ecos

Annual Report

The State of Chittenden County

Second Edition



INTRODUCTION

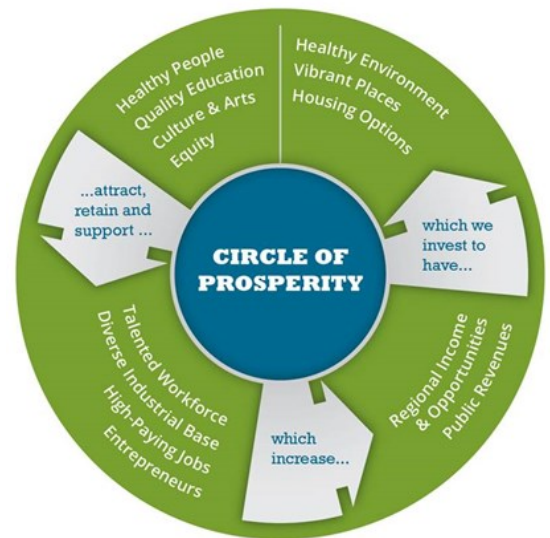
The [ECOS Plan](#) adoption in June, 2013 culminated efforts of over 60 organizations in Chittenden County, including all of the municipalities, working together. The ECOS Plan addresses the challenges facing the County and includes strategies to improve our community and achieve our shared vision for a healthy, inclusive and prosperous Chittenden County.

The ECOS Partnership formed to keep the focus on implementing the plan. The Partnership includes the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), the City of Burlington, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Chittenden County, University of Vermont, University of Vermont Medical Center, and the Vermont Department of Health. The Partners remain committed to working together to build upon collaborative successes and address areas of concern, using principles known as **collective impact**, to meet ECOS' goals.

Collective impact results from the commitment of a group of people representing different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific problem. This approach is collective, as diverse partners participate, having recognized that no one piece will bring success without the others. For example, we cannot achieve greater mobility, accessibility, affordability and health without concentrating development in planned growth areas. Further, we cannot concentrate growth without providing adequate infrastructure. Visually, these collective interrelationships are described in the Circle of Prosperity. Only by effective collaboration can we achieve improved outcomes without additional public expenditures. The ECOS Project will meet its goals through collective impact.

The [2014 ECOS Scorecard](#) compiles indicators depicting progress toward our goals. The indicators are drawn from the most reliable statistics, objectively based on substantial research, and intended to be understood by broad audiences.

The report that follows represents some of the most interesting trends, accomplishments, and actions needed to address the most pressing issues in our community. As we work collectively toward achieving our goals for a healthy, inclusive and prosperous Chittenden County, this Annual Report and the ECOS Scorecard will serve as tools to help track our progress and guide our actions. This work would not be possible without the help of our partners: the public and public representatives (federal, state, municipal, and regional), and the business and non-profit sectors.



The Circle of Prosperity reflects the interdependence of our efforts and results.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- From 2010 to 2013, Chittenden County's population increased by 1.8%, or about 2,800 people. For comparison, the population of the state of Vermont has remained relatively unchanged.
- The percent of the population over age 65 increased from 10.5% to 12.7% from 2007 to 2013. In comparison, the percent of the population under age 18 has decreased from 21.5% to 18.8%.
- Chittenden County is more diverse when compared to the state of Vermont as a whole. From 2007 to 2013, the non-White or Hispanic population grew from 7.4% to 9.7% of the total population. In comparison, Vermont's non-White or Hispanic population grew from 4.8% to 6%.
- Refugee resettlement is contributing to population increases, with over 50 languages spoken.
- The number of Black or African Americans in Chittenden County has increased by 60% since 2007. In 2007, the Black or African American population was 2,409 and grew to 3,851 in 2013.

ECONOMY

Trends & Issues

- The number of businesses in Chittenden County is increasing and has surpassed 2008 levels, which indicates recovery from the economic downturn. 2012 was the first year the number of registered businesses exceeded the 2008 number. Chittenden County gained 132 new businesses (2%) from 2012 to 2013. ¹
- The average wage in Chittenden County has increased by 8% since 2009 and continues to increase. Those working in the financial sector earned the highest average wage in 2013. ²
- Since 2009, Chittenden County and Vermont's unemployment rates have decreased from 5.5% and 6.9% respectively. In 2013, Chittenden County's average unemployment rate was 3.5%; statewide it was 4.4%, and nationally it was 7.4%. ³
- We continue to experience tight labor supply in the following sectors: professional/technical, production/technical, and computer and mathematical.
- Since 2010, median household income in Chittenden County has risen 16% and is \$64,950. U.S. median income is \$52,250, and Vermont median household income is \$52,570. ⁴
- Income disparities are still evident; median household income for Black/African American and Asians is about 1/3 lower than for Whites. ⁵

Notable Accomplishments

- In terms of business growth in 2014, Dealer.com, All Earth Renewables, ReArch Company, and Vermont Smoke & Cure were in the top 10 for fastest one-year sales growth.

¹ Vermont Department of Labor

² Ibid

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve Economic Data

⁴ American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate

⁵ Ibid

- The Burlington Town Center mall redevelopment was proposed, consistent with the plan BTV Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan. A proposed investment of more than \$200 million in new retail, office, housing, and public spaces will create new jobs, grow state and local revenues, and restore pedestrian and bike connections in the downtown area.
- The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation completed a general master plan for 400,000 square feet of the most developable areas on the Williston side of the IBM Campus to aid in accommodating future job growth and value added employers. The analysis included opportunities and challenges related to permitting, planning, and zoning.
- The University of Vermont Medical Center's Nutrition Services is actively engaged directly in many facets of the Farm to Plate initiative, partnering with over 70 local farm and good producers and spending over \$1.5 million annually on Vermont products. In 2014, a study completed by the UVM Economics department showed the UVM Medical Center's Nutrition Services' commitment to local food purchasing helped support 24 jobs in Vermont.
- Sodexo, food service provider for UVM, Saint Michael's College, Champlain College, Shelburne Museum, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Husky Injection Molding, and GE Healthcare, announced their **Vermont First** strategy, a formal commitment to support and invest in the production and purchase of local food. The commitment included the hiring of a local foods coordinator and sponsorship of annual summits on scaling up local food systems. Prior to this pledge, Sodexo accounts within the county spent over \$1.6 million on local food over the 2013/2014 academic year.
- UVM Medical Center conducts numerous workforce education and skills development initiatives, including a partnership with UVM to offer its Licensed Nursing Assistant trainee program to UVM freshmen to allow them to work within the field to gain experience while also pursuing their academic program. Preference was given to Vermont students.
- The Vermont Technology Council launched Vermont Internships, a new portal to match college students with high-tech internships.
- VCET@BTV was launched in Burlington, a new business incubator designed to enhance the statewide business 'ecosystem' by attracting, fostering and retaining entrepreneurs. FairPoint Communications donated the 11,000-square-foot space to the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies. VCET@BTV is one of a number of business incubators recently launched in the region, including VCET@UVM and The Generator, a 'maker space' for artists, engineers, and entrepreneurs located in Burlington's Memorial Auditorium.

High Priority Actions

- More targeted workforce development is needed to meet the needs of technology and manufacturing employers with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math to further the growth of our knowledge-based economy. These technical skills are supplemented by the presence of a strong arts and creative community. More work is needed to identify opportunities to provide training to the existing workforce that don't yet have the skills needed for the 21st century workplace.
- Support is needed to improve the effectiveness of workforce development programs and relations between the Workforce Development Council, Agency of Human Services, the Departments of Education, Labor, and Economic Development.
- Retention-based incentives for strategic, high value added employers are needed.

ENVIRONMENT

Trends & Issues

- 197 acres of wildlife habitat were converted to development between 2006 and 2011. This is 20% less than what was lost between 2001 and 2006. ⁶
- Air quality continues to improve with a 25% decrease in particulate matter and an 18% decrease in ozone from 2012 to 2013. ⁷
- To address clean water goals, the draft Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) preliminarily calls for the reduction of 216 metric tons per year (this means a 34% reduction) of phosphorus flowing into Lake Champlain and its streams and rivers (from Vermont). This figure is preliminary and subject to change as the TMDL is finalized (expected to be complete in the spring of 2015). ⁸
- Total energy consumption in Chittenden County has been decreasing from a high of 40 trillion BTU in 2003/4 to 32 trillion BTU in 2012, a 20% decrease. ⁹
- Renewable energy generated in Chittenden County has increased by 16% since 2011. ¹⁰
- There are a total of 15 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Chittenden County; five Fast Charging and 10 Level 1 & 2 stations. As of October 2014, 262 of Vermont's 801 registered EVs are located within Chittenden County. ¹¹

Notable Accomplishments

- The Vermont Shoreland Protection Act established a permit program to ensure environmentally responsible development around the shores of lakes and ponds greater than 10 acres in size.
- The Vermont Public Service Department completed the [Total Energy Study](#) which identifies policy and technology pathways to employ in order to reach Vermont's energy and greenhouse gas goals.
- Progress is being made by Chittenden County's urban and suburban municipalities to establish flow restoration plans to improve the water quality of streams impacted by stormwater run-off. Stormwater management improvements are also taking place in non-MS4 towns, including installation of a large, two-tiered rain garden in Hinesburg near the Route 116/Silver Street intersection, thanks to funding from a State Ecosystem Restoration Grant and assistance from the Lewis Creek Association.
- The Vermont Energy Investment Corporation and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission completed an electric vehicle (EV) charging station installation guide which includes municipal EV charging model bylaw language and an EV charging station planning analysis to determine the most appropriate locations for future charging facilities in the county.
- Invasive plant removal projects were conducted in Essex, Charlotte and Shelburne by the municipalities and the Lewis Creek Association.

⁶ National Land Cover Database

⁷ Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Division

⁸ Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), November 2014 Public Outreach Meetings, U.S. EPA, New England Region and State of Vermont

⁹ Vermont Gas Systems

¹⁰ Vermont Renewable Energy Atlas

¹¹ Drive Electric Vermont, Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles

- The Town of Essex replaced the outdoor lights at their highway garage with complex LED lights.
- Colchester, Essex Junction, Huntington and Jericho have adopted municipal plans that include flood resiliency elements. Colchester has applied for FEMA’s Community Rating System which recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum National Flood Insurance Program standards. Other notable resiliency efforts include culvert replacements such as the Huntley Road culvert in Westford that is now stable, and properly sized for flood resiliency and natural systems. The CCRPC also assisted Chittenden County municipalities with information and details regarding new rules for Emergency Relief and Assistance Funds and flood resiliency planning requirements.
- State energy-related legislation was passed that increased incentives for renewable energy production and increased financial incentives for energy efficient technology.
- South Burlington has launched a two-year energy efficiency campaign aimed at reducing electricity and natural gas use by City residents, government, and schools. South Burlington is one of 50 communities nationwide, three of which are in Vermont, that have been selected to compete for the \$5 million Georgetown University Energy Prize. The campaign, endorsed by the City Council, has been organized by the City Energy Committee and will receive active support from Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Gas, and Green Mountain Power. Other notable municipal energy accomplishments include: Both Richmond and Hinesburg created PACE (property assessed clean energy) districts which makes a new financing option available to residents seeking to do home improvements for energy efficiency and/or renewable energy technology; and Underhill and Jericho Energy Committees won \$10,000 grants for finishing first place (they tied) in the region for the Vermont Home Energy Challenge. The grant money will be used for energy efficiency projects in the towns.
- In 2012 UVM created a \$13 million Energy Revolving Fund to support energy efficiency upgrades with a pay-back period of seven years or less. The first project involved replacing 1,300 outdoor lightbulbs with LED fixtures. In 2014 the decision was made to contribute \$3 million from the fund toward efficient central cooling for the new STEM Complex, the University’s highest priority facility need.
- UVM’s Clean Energy Fund, supported by a dedicated student fee of \$10/semester since 2008, continues to finance new clean energy projects and activities on the UVM campus. Projects include solar panels and compost systems to heat greenhouses, lecture series, feasibility studies, and educational projects such as an off-campus student energy conservation challenge.
- In 2014 UVM Medical Center reduced their natural gas consumption by an additional 57,000 ccf (the equivalent of 57 average Vermont homes) and reduced their electrical consumption by nearly 300,000 kWh. These achievements resulted from several projects such as replacing fluorescent lighting technology with LED technology and upgrading the combustion management system on two of their largest boilers. Regarding the UVM Medical Center’s new construction projects, they strive for LEED certification that recognizes performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality—and are tracking toward silver and gold certifications. In addition, the UVM Medical Center is one of only a handful of hospitals in the U.S. that have a successful program to recycle “Blue Wrap” – a plastic fabric that can’t be recycled in the same manner as other plastics.
- Essex Junction recycles their bio-solids (a natural by-product of wastewater treatment) on permitted local farms when it can be accomplished in coordination with weather and crop management objectives of the participating farmers.

High Priority Actions

- Significant efforts will be needed by all parties to meet clean water standards for Lake Champlain. Prioritizing and funding these investments will be a substantial challenge, and an opportunity to improve our community and the health of Lake Champlain.
- Continued work around capital investments, regulatory reform, technology innovation, and public engagement is needed to reduce energy consumption and fossil fuel usage to achieve the state's goals of 90% renewables by 2050 and a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2028. Examples include providing comprehensive plan and bylaw language to municipalities for electric vehicle charging stations and assistance to businesses who would like to install them.
- Continued flood resiliency planning at the municipal and regional level is needed, including a risk analysis and hazard mitigation prioritization tool pilot project to bring relevant transportation and river management data into one place to help prioritize infrastructure investments, and be better prepared for flood events. In addition, the All Hazard Mitigation Plan update will begin in 2015.
- Continued land protection efforts are needed.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Trends & Issues

- In 2013, 85% (373) of the total 439 units of new housing development occurred in areas planned for growth, exceeding the goal of 80% for the third year in a row. ¹²
- At the end of 2013, the vacancy rate for all of Chittenden County remained low at 1.2%, causing high rents and negatively impacting the overall housing market (a healthy vacancy rate is 3-5%). On a positive note, the number of affordable rental units increased by 1% (52 units) with the addition of one rental complex completed between 2013 and 2014. ¹³
- Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) per capita declined from 25.9 to 25.4 (2%) from 2012 to 2013.
- Chittenden County has a total of 466 miles of walking/biking infrastructure and it has increased by 4% since 2009.
- There has been little change in the percent of the Chittenden County population driving to work alone since 2007; about 71.5% of commuters drove alone to work in 2013.

Notable Accomplishments

- Improvements to Vermont's growth center designation process were made by the Legislature and ACCD.
- Transportation demand management strategies became an Act 250 requirement (Act 147 of 2014).
- A mechanism for collection of state transportation impact fees was established to cost share capital projects resulting in capacity increases (Act 145 of 2014).

¹² Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

¹³ Allen & Brooks Report

- Improved coordination between local development review for Site Plan applications and VTrans highway access permitting was established (Act 167 of 2014).
- Chittenden County municipalities are succeeding in encouraging redevelopment and development in areas planned for growth. Some specific highlights include:
 - Richmond adopted interim zoning to study and address the Casing property which was a major driver of water and sewer infrastructure for the village water system and has been vacant for 15 years.
 - Burlington received a Neighborhood Development Designation from the State to help encourage development in and around the downtown. Redevelopment projects benefitting from this program include 247 Pearl Street.
 - Colchester installed a water tank to provide necessary fire storage capacity for their growth center.
 - Housing was added to Shelburne Village: three nonprofits, Champlain Housing Trust, Housing Vermont, and Cathedral Square collaborated to build a mixed-income, mixed-generation neighborhood of 78 new homes including 42 family apartments and 36 senior apartments. A second partnership between Champlain Housing Trust and Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity will result in four affordable homes for sale in two duplexes.
- The Champlain Housing Trust, in collaboration with community partners, purchased a Shelburne motel and converted it to Harbor Place. About 600 people accessed this emergency housing in its first year; these individuals were twice as likely to find permanent housing as those in the motel voucher program, for about two-thirds the cost. The Harbor Place model supplants a significant portion of the state's use of motels for emergency housing while adding support services that help people find permanent housing, all at a lower cost. Partners include the Vermont Agency of Human Services, United Way of Chittenden County, the Fanny Allen Foundation, UVM Medical Center, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Community Health Centers of Burlington/Safe Harbor Health Center. The Vermont Community Loan Fund provided financing and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board supplied capital support.
- In October 2014 the League of American Bicyclists recognized the University of Vermont as one of the nation's most "Bicycle Friendly Universities," and promoted UVM to its silver-level award. UVM was honored as one of 33 new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Universities in 20 states. Since first participating and receiving a bronze-level award in 2011, UVM has created the position of a bicycle coordinator and opened a Bicycle Center, a full-service work space where students can learn bicycle maintenance and get free assistance each afternoon.
- Investments in efficient transportation projects during 2014 included:
 - US2/Exit 14 improvements—Staples Lane, South Burlington;
 - Transportation Demand Management - Regional Transportation Demand Management pilot project (Go! Chittenden County) with local and regional transportation partners including: Expansion of TDM services through Campus Area TMA (CATMA); Bike commuter workshops and walk/bike site assessments by Local Motion; Bus Pass Program through CCTA; Park It Pledge Program through Car Share VT; Carpool/Vanpool Matching through Go! Vermont and Way to Go! Week through VEIC;
 - Continued implementation of the United Way Neighbor Rides program including the recruitment/retention of 26 volunteer drivers and provision of 3,157 rides, an increase of 13% over the prior year;
 - Improved service of commuter transit to Milton and Colchester on Route 7, operating six times a day;
 - Williston mid-day transit service;
 - Installation of nine transit shelters with solar lighting in Colchester and Williston;
 - The formation of an Employee Transportation Coordinator Network, with 15 local businesses currently en-

rolled;

- Sidewalk projects include Hinesburg Village VT 116 Corridor improvements from Charlotte Road to Community School and Williston South Brownell Sidewalk Connector;
- Commuter Bus service to Jeffersonville began service in October 2013, providing service to Jericho and Underhill;
- Montpelier Link ridership is up 10% over 2013 despite the overall CCTA ridership decline from the 2014 driver's strike;
- 50% expansion in spaces at the Richmond Park and Ride;
- Continuation of construction of the VT 15 footbridge to replace footbridge adjacent to VT 15 over Browns Trace River in Jericho;
- Paving of VT128 (Essex to Westford), US2 (South Burlington to Williston) and VT2A (Williston), US 2 (Bolton -Waterbury).
- CIRC Highway Alternatives Task Force – CCRPC staff, VTTrans and the "CIRC Communities" (Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, and Williston) completed a series of projects and planning activities which will aid in meeting the original Purpose and Need of the CIRC Highway Project, which broadly stated are mobility, congestion, transportation demand, safety, livability, and economic development.
- Assistance was provided to seek hazard mitigation funding from FEMA for property owners with structures in hazard zones in Underhill and Huntington.

High Priority Actions

- Form-based code efforts continue in Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, Westford, Jericho, and Winooski.
- More investments in efficient transportation projects are needed. Projects for 2015 include:
 - Continuation of construction on the 3-year Milton I-89 bridge replacement over Lamoille River
 - Construction of Colchester VT2A/US7/Creek Road/Bay Road Intersection
 - Construction of Charlotte US7 improvements
 - Permitting and design of Colchester Exit 16 improvements; Essex Junction Crescent Connector Road; Hinesburg VT116/CVU Road Improvements; Jericho VT15/Browns Trace Intersection improvements; South Burlington VT116 Culvert; Williston US2/Industrial Avenue Intersection; Williston VT2A/James Brown Drive Traffic Signal; Winooski Circulator safety improvements.
 - Intelligent Transportation System Plan update which describes how to best use telecommunications and computing technology to boost the efficiency of roadway, transit and emergency and maintenance vehicle response systems, and provide timely information on travel options.
 - Transportation Improvement Program – The Federal Fiscal Year TIP for 2015 through 2018 was adopted by the CCRPC at its July 16, 2014 meeting. The FY15-FY18 TIP includes nearly \$240 million in federal dollars for transportation projects within the county.
 - Burlington Pedestrian and Bicycle Action Plan - refinement of facilities identified in 2011 Transportation plan and 2013 planBTV
 - Burlington Waterfront Bike Path Realignment to realign and improve the bike path near the Moran Plant
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects: Regional Bike/Ped Master Plan update; Burlington Champlain Elementary

Pedestrian Crossing improvements; Burlington Wayfinding improvements; Colchester sidewalk along Water Tower Hill; Colchester Fort Ethan Allen Sidewalk improvements; Essex VT2A Bike Path – Old Colchester Road to Pinecrest Drive; Hinesburg Village North Sidewalk from Commerce Street to Riggs Road; Jericho Browns Trace Multimodal Connection from Jericho Center to MMU High School; Milton McMullen Road Sidewalk Improvement Project; Jericho VT15/Underhill Flats Sidewalk; Williston Harvest Lane Sidewalk; Williston Meadow Run to Alliance Church Path.

- Huntington Lower Village Bicycle/Pedestrian Scoping Study
- Exit 12 Park & Ride lot in Williston
- Water infrastructure improvements are being planned in Essex, Hinesburg village and Richmond village.
- Hinesburg was awarded a \$475,000 grant (VT Community Development Program) to help make critical repairs and updates to 24 units of affordable senior housing on Kelleys Field Road in the village area. Built in 1979, Kelleys Field is Hinesburg's only senior housing facility. Housing Vermont (the property owner), and Cathedral Square Corporation will partner on redevelopment of the property. The rehabilitation is expected to be complete in March, 2016. Hinesburg was awarded another VCDP grant—for \$675,000—to help with the construction of 21 affordable homes as part of the recently revised Green Street development project off of Charlotte Road in the village area. The project includes a mixture of one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, some accessible (i.e., ground floor) and some town-house style (two-story). Champlain Housing Trust and Housing Vermont will partner with Snyder Construction to build the project. Construction will begin in 2015.

COMMUNITY

Trends & Issues

- Based on the [Opportunity Index](#), which looks at pre-school enrollment, high school graduation, post-secondary education, access to healthy foods, access to healthcare, and engagement in civic life, Vermont ranks first among the states for overall opportunity and overall education, with Chittenden County ranking first among Vermont counties. ¹⁴
- In the 2013/2014 school year, 47% of 11th grade students in Chittenden County were proficient in math and 45% were proficient in science. These percentages are significantly lower for English language learners and low income students. ¹⁵
- On average, low income and non-white residents in Chittenden County have significantly poorer outcomes related to health and education. For example, residents with incomes below 250% of the federal poverty level are three times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and asthma, and are twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression. ¹⁶
- Food insecurity persists throughout the county, with 1 in 8 people not being able to afford access to enough healthy food due to financial constraints. ¹⁷

¹⁴ Opportunity Nation

¹⁵ Vermont Agency of Education

¹⁶ Vermont Department of Health

¹⁷ Ibid

- Substance abuse remains an issue in Chittenden County and has many negative consequences. While alcohol consumption is the most prevalent form of substance abuse in Chittenden County, there is also an ongoing concern about opiate abuse. In 2013, for the first time, the number of Vermonters receiving treatment for opioids has surpassed the number for those being treated for alcohol abuse. Abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs strains families, communities, medical and social service systems, and public safety.
- Homelessness remains a persistently serious issue for Chittenden County. According to the Point in Time Survey, the number of homeless individuals increased by 7% between 2011 and 2014. The Point in Time Survey counts the number of homeless people throughout the state on a single night every January. ¹⁸
- The 6-year cohort drop-out rate for all Chittenden County schools increased from 5.2% in 2012 to 6.2% in 2013. The 6-year cohort drop-out rate varies among schools with the lowest being 4% and the highest being 25%. ¹⁹

Notable Accomplishments

- United Way of Chittenden County (UWCC) works with employers through their Working Bridges collaborative to develop and share effective initiatives and policies that help employers improve retention, productivity and advancement of low-to-moderate income (LMI) workers. To date, several employers have seen significant reductions (~50%) in turnover and unscheduled time off for their LMI employees.
- In 2013, UWCC's Director of Community Impact & Volunteer Mobilization participated in a cross-sector leadership development fellowship offered by the CDC's National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health, along with leaders from the Health Department's Burlington District Office, University of Vermont Medical Center Community Health Improvement, and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission/ECOS. The goal of the fellowship was to develop capacity within and among key local organizational for cross-sector leadership in addressing public health priorities. In addition to participating in the leadership development curriculum, the Chittenden County team is now working with the Chittenden County Hunger Council to develop local messaging around the problem of food insecurity – and its cause and consequences – in the community and the ways in which various sectors must play a role in solving this problem.
- CCRPC and UVM's Center for Rural Studies received a grant from the Substance Abuse Mental Services Administration to conduct a community assessment on behavioral health trends in Chittenden County. Human service, social service, and local government officials surveyed were in agreement that alcohol abuse, illegal drug abuse, and domestic violence were high priority issues.
- The University of Vermont received the prestigious STARS Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education in 2014. The [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System](#) is a comprehensive measurement tool designed to advance sustainability in all sectors of higher education. UVM scored particularly well in credits for research, co-curricular education, water use reduction and initiatives to address diversity and affordability.
- UVM participates in the Real Food Challenge, a national campaign, and has committed to purchasing 20% "Real Food" by 2020. The Real Food Challenge provides the institution with tools and strategies to support the development of a sustainable, local, fair, and humane food system through responsible procurement decisions. As part of this commitment, the University is requiring an unprecedented level of transparency in the next dining contract. The Real Food Working Group, which advises the University and works with the vendor about meeting the 2020 goals, is led by students and includes staff and faculty in the Food Systems.

¹⁸ The Point in Time Survey

¹⁹ The Vermont Agency of Education

- The University of Vermont Medical Center is again being counted as a top performer among leading academic medical centers in the 2014 University Health System Consortium (UHC) Quality and Accountability Study, nationally recognized as the most important analysis of its kind.
- A farm-to-school program is investing \$100,000 to bring locally grown food to cafeteria tables and classrooms in Vermont.
- Church Street Marketplace became smoke free as of December 17, 2014.
- Community Health Organizations throughout Chittenden County conducted assessments to identify barriers to access healthy foods, and the Winooski Coalition for a Safe and Peaceful Community established a farm stand at the O'Brien Community Center in collaboration with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont.
- The Vermont Department of Health's Burlington District Office completed a Health Impact Assessment associated with the North Avenue Complete Streets corridor study in Burlington, and are currently working on others in Milton and in the South End of Burlington.
- Westford installed an emergency generator at its shelter (i.e. Westford School) to ensure access to heat, water, and electricity as well as kitchen and bathroom facilities in times of crisis/need.
- The Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity completed the City of Burlington [Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan](#), presented to the City Council in June, 2013. The Plan seeks to eradicate institutional and structural racism and ethnic-based discrimination within the City of Burlington.
- As part of the Transforming Primary Care initiative, the UVM Medical Center offered a 12-week local farm share to 150 patients at Colchester Family Practice, Milton Family Practice, South Burlington Family Practice and Winooski Family Health. Shares were delivered weekly to these sites where, at pick up, a full curriculum of recipes, nutrition and wellness information was available. Participants were also offered two holiday baskets, one in November and one in December. Participants are enrolled in an Institutional Review Board-approved study to determine health impact of the program (not yet complete).

High Priority Actions

- Decrease health disparities by addressing the recommendations in the [Health Disparities of Vermonters Report](#) by the Vermont Department of Health.
- Take additional actions to meet the increasing opiate crisis including actions for prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Support public schools and higher education efforts to increase the quality and quantity of STEM graduates to make sure graduates have the skills and competencies they need for the 21st century workplace.
- Strengthen career development and experiential programs at institutions of higher education to prepare graduates for jobs in the county.
- Continue access to recreational opportunities for all users (for example, South Burlington has been working on improving ADA accessibility at existing parks since 2013).
- Implement the [CCRPC Public Participation Plan](#) to ensure all residents are involved in the decisions that impact our community.
- Continued Collective Impact: United Way of Chittenden County, UVM Medical Center, CCRPC and the Fanny Allen Foundation are currently funding several initiatives jointly, including the Neighbor Rides program; a children's mental health pilot; and a transitional housing project. UWCC just received a \$100,000 two-year grant to establish a funders' collaborative and to bring collective impact training to the funders and the non-profit sector. The training is expected to take place in spring 2015.