

# 2021 ecOS ANNUAL REPORT

## The State of Chittenden County

Achieving our vision for a healthy, inclusive, and prosperous future

To monitor and build on successes, bring new information to the legislature and community leaders, and continue to work on areas that need improvement, the ECOS Partnership prepares this annual report and an online data scorecard each year. These resources provide insight into current and future needs in Chittenden County, and allow us to focus on long-term solutions rather than just treating short-term symptoms.



This report is prepared by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) on behalf of the ECOS Partners.

<b>CCRPC</b> City of Burlington GBIC	Lake Champlain Chamber UVM Medical Center University of Vermont	United Way of Northwest Vermont Vermont Department of Health
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**LOOKING FOR MORE DATA?** Look for the sticky notes and cursor icons throughout the report for resources to dig further into the reported indicators.

# PEOPLE

## Racial Equity

Achieving a healthy, inclusive, and prosperous future for Chittenden County is the vision of our **Regional ECOS Plan**. However, the ECOS partners know we cannot achieve that future without addressing the systemic racism in our community. While addressing inequity has been one of the eight key strategies in the ECOS Plan since 2013, there is much work ahead.

### POPULATION & DIVERSITY

The total population in Chittenden County increased from 156,545 to 168,323 -- an increase of 7.5% from 2010 to 2020 -- and the region is growing more diverse.

of the population growth in Chittenden County over the last 10 years has been Hispanic (of any race), Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Native Hawaiian. This equates to **11,746** of the additional **11,778** people from 2010-2020. Source: 2020 Census

Still, many of our indicators are not disaggregated by race. In this report, we have disaggregated by race where possible and will continue to work with partners to improve data collection to help address this challenge.

Stark divides across race and ethnicity are seen in:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE   HOMEOWNERSHIP   HOUSEHOLD INCOME   EDUCATION

As such, it is clear that a healthy, inclusive, and prosperous future is not in reach for all Chittenden County residents.

To improve outcomes in the region, CCRPC completed an organizational equity assessment, and is assembling an Equity Advisory Committee to refine the recommendations from the assessment and identify priority actions. View the full assessment [here](#).

## Healthy Behaviors

### CHITTENDEN COUNTY 3-4-50 MEASURES

A change in only three behaviors can have a major influence on the health of Vermonters.

**3** BEHAVIORS

- No physical activity
- Poor diet
- Tobacco use

**4** DISEASES

- Cancer
- Heart Disease & Stroke
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Lung Disease

**MORE THAN 50%** of Deaths in Vermont

Adults in Chittenden County:

- 37% do not get the recommended physical activity (2017/2019)
- 73% do not eat 5 servings of fruits & vegetables per day (2017/2019)
- 10% currently smoke (2019/2020)
- 6% diagnosed with cancer (2019/2020)
- 6% diagnosed with cardiovascular diseases (2019/2020)
- 6% diagnosed with diabetes (2019/2020)
- 12% diagnosed with Lung Disease (2019/2020)
- 24% Deaths from Cancer (2017)
- 19% Deaths from Cardiovascular Diseases (2017)
- 3% Deaths from Diabetes (2017)
- 4% Deaths from Lung Diseases (2016)
- = 51% of Total Deaths

Source: Vermont Department of Health

To learn more about the 3-4-50 measures and health data specific to Vermont, visit the **Vermont Department of Health** website.

## Mental Health

### UNITED WAY MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

According to United Way's **Mental Health Initiative**, people experiencing mental health challenges, and the systems designed to help them, have been pushed to a breaking point.

Learn more about the initiative »

### 2022 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

University of Vermont Medical Center's **2022 Community Health Needs Assessment** has identified mental health and wellbeing as an emerging health priority.

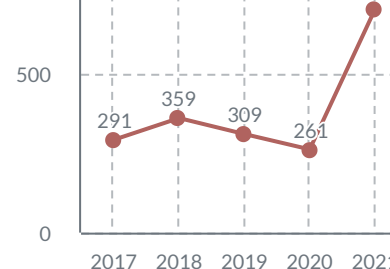
View the 2022 CNHA »

## Homelessness

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing housing challenges and uncovered a housing market that was even worse than previously documented for low-income households.

### ANNUAL POINT IN TIME SURVEY

As of January 2021, homelessness increased to 700 individuals (626 households); compared to 261 individuals (217 households) in 2020.



Among the homeless individuals in 2021, a disproportionate amount of people identified as Black or African American compared to state demographics. 14%, or 95 people, were Black or African American, while this demographic is only 3% of the overall county population.

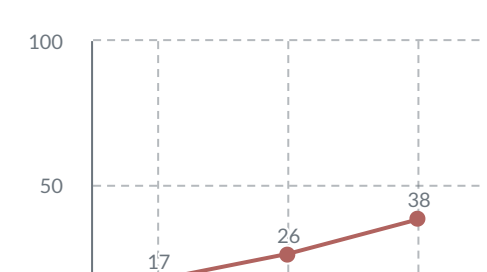
Learn more about the survey »

Source: Chittenden County PIT, 2021

## Substance Use

### OPIOID FATALITIES

While opioid fatalities decreased from 2017 through 2019, unfortunately they've since increased.



Source: Vermont Department of Health

### END ADDICTION STIGMA CAMPAIGN

The stigma that surrounds addiction—and the preconceived views of those who struggle with substance use—don't have to be permanent.

Learn more about addiction and substance use disorder, listen to Vermonters' experiences with this disease, and find helpful support resources for you, your family, or your friend.

Access the campaign resources »

To see more substance use information and data shown by race or ethnicity, view this **Vermont Department of Health** report.

## Homeownership

Modern day homeownership disparities between Black and white households are shaped by historical systemic racism. Homeownership among Black and African American households is significantly lower than white households.

Of Black and African American households in Chittenden County: **86%** Rent (Margin of error: 1.134 +/- 320)   **14%** Own (182 +/- 81)

Of White households in Chittenden County: **35%** Rent (Margin of error: 21.538 +/- 912)   **65%** Own (40,101 +/- 911)

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, Table B25003A-B

For further reading on racism and homeownership, see **VHFA's paper** on economic opportunity for BIPOC Vermonters.

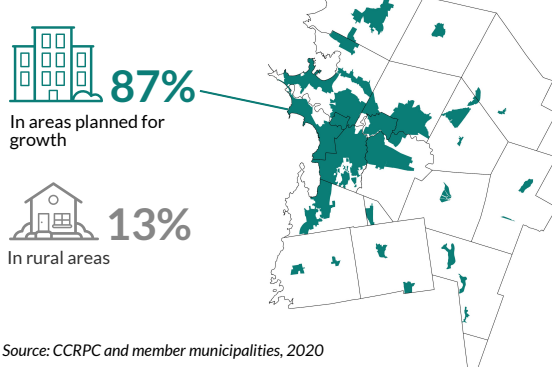
# PLACE

## Smart Growth

While development in existing communities can be difficult, infill in the right places has positive benefits of increased inclusivity and economic strength. For the ninth year in a row, Chittenden County has exceeded its ECOS Plan goal of 80% of development occurring in planned growth areas. In 2020, 419 of 508 units (82%) were in areas planned for growth.

### Homes Built in Chittenden County 2016-2020

5-Year Average for Net New Units



Learn more about smart growth in Chittenden County »

## Building Homes Together

The first five-year campaign met its target of developing more than 3,500 homes (just over 3,600) but failed to keep pace on affordable housing targets -- and the pandemic and slower economic recovery for low wage workers has only worsened the affordability gaps in the market.



The **Building Homes Together** campaign launched its second five-year targets for making Chittenden County's housing market healthier, more equitable, and more affordable. The campaign's goals include creating 5,000 new homes, with 1,250 permanently affordable.

Learn more about the BHT campaign »

Source: Building Homes Together

## Transportation

Drastic changes in transportation policies and investments are needed to reduce single-occupancy vehicle traffic and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change.

A Strategic Model developed for Chittenden and the five surrounding counties as part of the **I-89 2050 Study** demonstrated that the combined effects of the following policies and investments showed the best results for decreasing vehicle traffic and GHG:

- Increase teleworking by 50% compared to pre-pandemic.
- Increase land use density: 90% of households in areas planned for growth (see **Smart Growth** data above).
- Double trips made by bike and triple transit services.
- Double participation in Transportation Demand Management programs and increase cost of parking in villages and downtowns
- Implement a mileage-based fee (5 cents/mile)
- For more information about the strategic model and TDM policies see the **Envision89 website** for the I-89 2050 Study.

## Energy

### WEATHERIZATION

Chittenden County residents are making progress on installing cold climate heat pumps, heat pump hot water heaters, and weatherization to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions.

Unfortunately, the waiting list for the **Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity weatherization program** can be up to 1 year, burdening low-income Vermonters.

The wait time for completing weatherization projects is due to a lack of available workforce. It is estimated that **5,000 workers** are needed to meet the State's goal of weatherizing 120,000 households by 2030.

The Vermont Climate Council adopted the **Vermont Climate Action Plan** »

The Vermont Department of Public Service updated the **Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan** »

### ELECTRIC VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Electric vehicle ownership continues to rise.

**50%** Between 2021 and 2022, the number of electric vehicles (including hybrid vehicles) registered in Chittenden County increased 50% or by 788 registrations.

As of January 2022, Chittenden County had the most EVs registered (2,404 total: 1,254 all electric models, 1,150 hybrid models) in Vermont and highest rate of EV ownership with about 1 EV for every 70 people. Some reasons why:

- More EV options are available, making it easier for drivers to find options that meet their needs.
  - Incentive programs offered by electric utilities and the State of Vermont are supporting more purchases.
  - A **Consumer Reports** study estimated EVs could cut typical maintenance costs in half when compared to gasoline-powered vehicles, with an average savings over the life of an EV of \$4,600.
  - Plugging in is like paying \$1.50/gallon.
- Learn more about EV options »

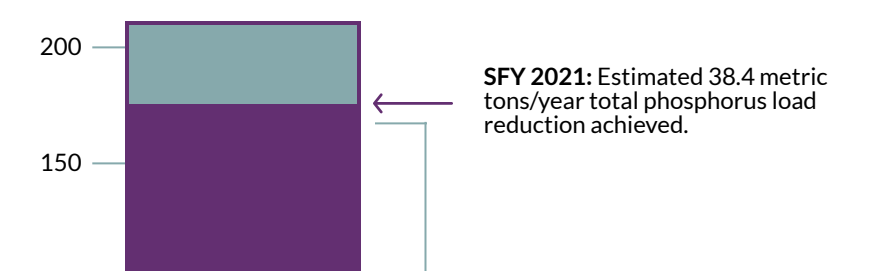
## Water Quality

The Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requires a total phosphorus load reduction of 212 metric tons per year by 2038.

As of the state fiscal year 2021, an estimated 38.4 metric tons of phosphorus reduction has been achieved. This represents 16% of the reduction required to achieve VT's water quality goals.

Source: VT Clean Water Initiative 2021 Performance Report

### LAKE CHAMPLAIN TMDL PROGRESS



The state is tracking progress on this goal, and the details are outlined in the **Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2021 Performance Report** »

# PROSPERITY

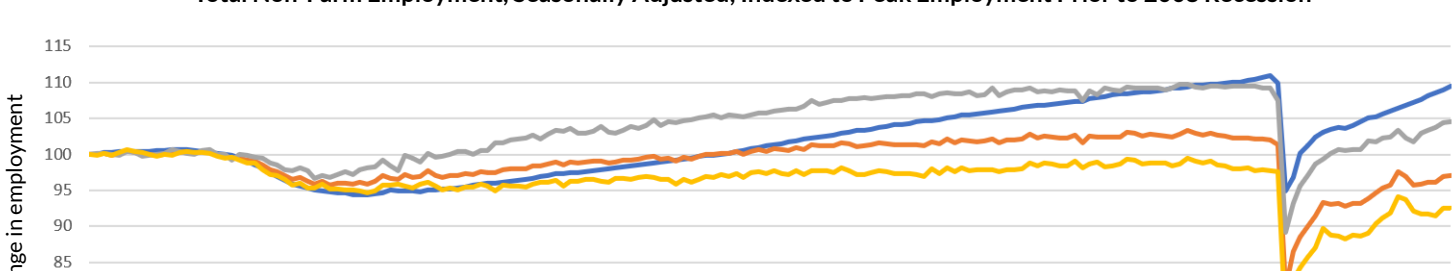
## Employment & Labor Force

There are fewer people working in Chittenden County as of March 2022 than before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the labor pool is extremely tight. Employment is 92,572 employees compared to 98,208 in February 2020. The number of unemployed individuals continues to decline. The unemployment rate is very low at 1.6%. These data reflect what has been deemed nationally as the "great resignation" where people have left their jobs for different opportunities or left the workforce altogether for reasons ranging from a lack of childcare.

Source: Vermont Department of Labor

The employment graph below shows employment recovering from the lows of the pandemic, however still not back to the level of employment pre-pandemic. Both the region, and more so the State, are lagging behind the national recovery.

### Total Non-Farm Employment, Seasonally Adjusted; Indexed to Peak Employment Prior to 2008 Recession



Source: FRED

### WORKFORCE EQUITY

The **State Racial Equity Executive Director Report** describes both positives (improved hiring practices by reducing bias) and negatives (the State lost senior-level staff of color in 2021) in workforce equity in State employment.

This work requires a sustained, long-term effort.

While this is only an assessment of one employer, the State of Vermont, it's a significant employer and one that can be an example for others.

### COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

34% of the population identifying as Black or African American (+/- 12.6%) goes on to a Bachelor's degree or higher.\*

53% of the white population (+/- 1.5%) goes on to a Bachelor's degree or higher.\*

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

VSAC released a **special report** on the percentage of all 2012 high school graduates who attained a post high school degree within six years of graduating to better understand how to help Vermont high school graduates pursue and achieve their post high school goals.

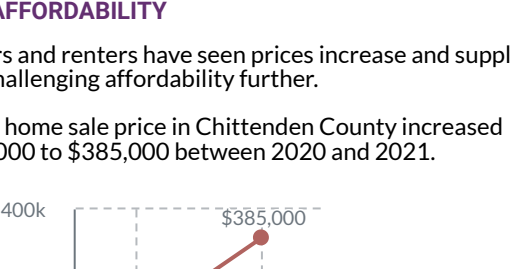
In comparison to the State, Chittenden County had the highest percentage of students who obtained a four-year degree (51%) and had among the lowest percentage of students who obtained a two-year degree (3%). The educational attainment rate of those 25 years and up was similar to 51.3%, reported by the American Community Survey in 2020.

Source: VSAC Six-Year Attainment and Completion Rates Report

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Homebuyers and renters have seen prices increase and supply plummet, challenging affordability further.

The median home sale price in Chittenden County increased from \$339,000 to \$385,000 between 2020 and 2021.



The December 2021 Allen, Brooks, and Minor Report indicates an extreme scarcity of available rentals caused upward rent pressure in 2021. A 2.7% rent inflation increase between 2020 and 2021 occurred which is the largest single increase seen since 2011.

This is troublesome given that in 2020, 54.2% of renters were cost burdened (those who spend over 30% of their income on housing).

Source: ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate, Allen Brooks & Minor Report, Property Transfer, Tax primary home sale data

### LOOKING FOR MORE DATA?

Visit the **ECOS Scorecard** to view all the indicators measuring progress toward the ECOS Plan goals.

**ecosproject.com**

Childcare shortages negatively impact our children, businesses, schools, communities, health care system and the economy. In Chittenden County:

Children likely to need care:

- 2,069 infants
- 1,129 toddlers
- 2,245 preschoolers

Childcare spaces needed:

- 897 for infants
- 0 for toddlers
- 117 for preschoolers

Source: Let's Grow Kids 2022 Stalled at the Start Report

Learn more about childcare in Chittenden County »