

Office of Economic Opportunity

Partnering to develop local
solutions to end poverty





Office of Economic Opportunity

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Our Mission

- Increase self-sufficiency of Vermonters
- Strengthen Vermont communities
- Eliminate the causes & symptoms of poverty

Why Economic Opportunity?

- Meeting basic needs...as people gain know-how, tools and support to get ahead
- Making sure that low income people and communities are at the helm of their own destiny

“It is well to be prepared for life as it is, but it is better to be prepared to make life better than it is.”

–Sargent Shriver



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We work with more than **45 community partners** who work with more than **70,000 low income Vermonters** to help them meet basic needs in times of crisis, build skills and connect to resources to make their way out of poverty.



How We Work

- Manage programs and grants
- Training and technical assistance
- Identify & develop resources – Connect communities to resources
- Advocate for community partners
- Facilitate and provide a forum for education and discussion on poverty
- Foster the integration of anti-poverty initiatives with DCF and AHS.

Poverty in Vermont

About 1 in 8 Vermonters living below the poverty level (12%) – that’s about 75,000 people. Rate is higher for:

Children (15%), Families with children (14%), Single moms w/ kids (37%)

Nearly 1 in 3 Vermonters are low income (29.9% < 200% FPL) – includes those working, but often not making enough to get by

1 in 4 Vermont families are “asset poor” (26.7%), not enough to get by for 3 months without income

\$23,550 – US Federal Poverty Guideline, Family of 4

\$42,162 – “Housing Wage” to afford 2 bedroom apartment in Vermont

\$77,880 – Vt Liveable Wage (2 working adults, 2 children)

Long-term Disaster Recovery

- 40% of households displaced by Tropical Storm Irene were low income
- Statewide case management with links to resources to help families rebuild and/or resettle
- Staffed at Community Action Agencies and embedded in local recovery committee



At the moment a family is rebuilding their life, there is an opportunity to help them rechart their course for the future

Emergency Housing Solutions

Emergency shelter and services for homeless Vermonters

Help for people in crisis to find or keep stable, safe housing

Support for:

- homeless shelters;
- day shelters;
- domestic violence shelters;
- transitional housing for youth & vets;
- homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing programs



On any given night,
368 people are staying
in a shelter,
including 97 children

Last year 4,285 people
were sheltered:
3,469 adults & 816 children

Asset Building

Long-Term Solutions to Poverty

Helping low income Vermonters to save and invest in their future

- Individual Development Accounts
- Micro Business Development
- Community Capital of Vermont
- Family Supportive Housing
- Children's Savings accounts



Savings and assets are the building blocks for economic mobility and security

Develop approaches that help families build financial resiliency & reward people for getting ahead

Weatherization

Warmer, safer and more energy efficient homes

Putting approximately \$1,000 back in the pocket of each low income household

- **Energy audit** to identify where improvements can be made
- **Energy renovation** (e.g., insulation, sealing up drafts, improving ventilation)
- **Coaching** on energy saving best practices
- **Heating system** upgrades & replacements
- **Monitoring** and standardization
- **Healthy Homes**
- **1026 units** weatherized in 2013
- **In 2013** the percentage of the homes weatherized who are on fuel assistance has increased from 40 to 80 percent

