

# The Regional Partnership Program: A Collaboration

## What is the Regional Partnership Program (RPP) ?

RPP is a collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and Lund which expands and enhances services with families, while bridging the integration within the child welfare and substance use disorder treatment system. Substance Abuse Screeners are co-located in 6 DCF district offices: Barre, Burlington, Hartford, Rutland, Springfield, and St. Albans. They are responsible for screening caregivers that have been identified by Family Services intake unit, for potential substance use and to help remove barriers to treatment as they relate to the child welfare case including early identification and frontloaded services to families.

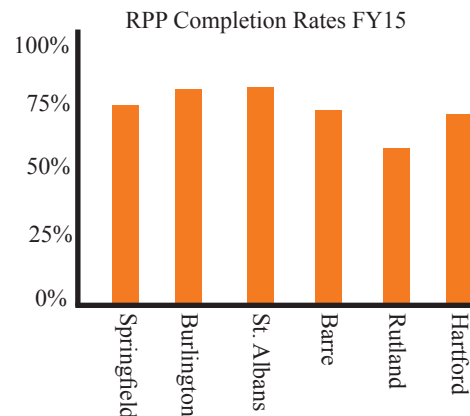
The program began in 2007, when Lund was awarded a federal Regional Partnership Grant which placed a substance abuse case manager and clinician from Lund in the Burlington Family Services office. The purpose was to partner child welfare with a treatment program to support timely access to assessment and treatment and increase permanency outcomes for children. On the back of the successful outcomes from this grant, the Regional Partnership Program was created in 2007 and expanded to the St. Albans Family Services office.

### In 2015 RPP expanded to 4 additional districts due to:

- An increase in opiate use in Vermont and its effects on the child welfare system. Between 1/1/14 and 6/30/14, 70% of the children under age 3 who entered custody had parents struggling with the use of opiates as a contributing factor
- DCF reported a 20% increase in the number of children in custody – in one year.
- Vermont’s Child Protection Line received a record 19,288 calls in 2014, up from 17,460 in 2013. Substance abuse was a factor in approximately one-third of the reports

### Is anyone better off?

- In FY14 a total of 364 clients were referred to screeners between the Burlington DCF and St. Albans DCF.
- Between May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 425 were referred to RPP across the six districts.
- Quicker engagement into treatment with RPP involved – clients getting the level of care needed
- DCF Social Workers report increased support on child welfare visits and a positive impact on families by having a Substance Use Disorder expert on site.



Graph to the left shows the % of people who screened into RPP and then successfully engaged and completed the program.