

Office of Economic Opportunity

Partnering to develop local
solutions to end poverty



Office of Economic Opportunity

We work with more than **50 community partners** who work with more than **80,000 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.

Our Mission

Working in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations, government agencies, and others to

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

How We Work

- Manage programs & grants
- Training and technical assistance
- Results and performance accountability
- Identify and develop resources for communities
- Promote approaches based on evidence and research to improve policy and practice

Poverty & Homelessness in Vt

\$25,100

US Federal Poverty Guideline, Family of 4

\$46,585

“Housing Wage” to afford 2 bedroom apartment in Vermont

\$84,674

Vermont Livable Wage (2 working adults, 2 children)

Poverty & Homelessness in Vt

About 1 in 10 Vermonters living below the poverty level (11.6%) – that's about 70,000 people.

Nearly 1 in 3 Vermonters are low income (29% < 200% FPL) – includes those working, but often not making enough to get by.

On any given night, 1,291 people in Vermont are homeless (in a shelter, motel or unsheltered).

Annually,



Community Services

Community Action Agencies

- Broad charge: Change Agents
- Part of a national network supported by CSBG to mobilize communities to fight poverty
- Leverage (\$3.5 million → \$54.7 million)



BROC COMMUNITY ACTION

In Southwestern Vermont



Community Action

3 National Goals

- Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
- People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

Community Action



Range of services and strategies - based on a community assessment - to connect people to crisis resources and promoting economic mobility.

Asset Building

Helping low income Vermonters to save and invest in their future

- VT Matched Savings Program
- Micro Business Development Prog.
- Integrating Financial Empowerment



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

Income helps people get by, Assets help people get ahead

Homeless Assistance Programs

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

Housing Opportunity Program:

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



*Last year
3,872 people
were sheltered:
2,770 adults &
1,102 children*

Homeless Assistance Programs

Family Supportive Housing

- Supportive housing for families with complex needs experiencing homelessness
- 7 community providers, ~120 families currently
- Program components:
 - Permanent housing (MOU with housing providers)
 - Intensive, home-based services (small caseloads)
 - Financial empowerment services (banking, credit, spending, savings)

Weatherization

Warmer, safer and more energy efficient homes.

- **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
- **Referrals** for health & human services
- **Heating system** upgrades & replacements



Our Partners – Our Impact

- 821 homes weatherized last year
- 400+ faulty heating systems repaired or replaced at no charge
- 6,000+ households received housing help, including more than 1,500 whose homelessness was prevented
- 129+ businesses started and grew, creating 90 FTE jobs
- 3,872 people without housing were sheltered
- 187 families received intensive support to keep their housing
- 50,000+ people received food when they could not afford groceries
- 60 low income Vermonters invested \$129,552 in their first home, business or higher education
- Prepared taxes for 3,000+ households to make sure they receive all credits & refunds due, accessing over \$4 million in refunds

Office of Economic Opportunity

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Green

Located at Waterbury State Office Complex