



# Supervised Visitation Programs Report

In accordance with Act 27 (H.493) of 2025

**Submitted To:**

House Committee on Human Services  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

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## Table of Contents

<b>Supervised Visitation Programs Report</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Enabling Statute</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Statewide Supervised Visitation Resources</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Supervised Visitation Center Access by County</b>	<b>6</b>
Addison County	7
Bennington County	7
Caledonia, Essex, & Orleans Counties	8
Chittenden County	8
Grand Isle & Franklin County	9
Windham County	9
<b>Identified Barriers</b>	<b>9</b>
Funding and Financial Support	10
Staffing Challenges	10
Capacity and Demand	10
Safety and Security Concerns	10
Geographical and Referral Challenges	11
Program Establishment Costs	11
<b>Comparative Models</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Current Funding</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recommendation for Sustainable Funding for Statewide Coordination</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Equitability and Access</b>	<b>14</b>

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Supervised Visitation Centers in Vermont \_\_\_\_\_ 6

## Enabling Statute

This report has been prepared in accordance with Act 27 (2025), Section E.316.2:

Section E.316.2. REPORT TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND ON JUDICIARY, AND THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND WELFARE AND ON JUDICIARY.

On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner for Children and Families and the Chief Superior Judge shall jointly submit a report to the House Committees on Human Services and on Judiciary and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Judiciary containing a proposal for funding supervised visitation programs. The proposal shall address and recommend sustainable funding for statewide coordination, equitable funding among supervised visitation locations, and access for residents of counties that do not currently provide supervised visitation services.

The Commissioner and Chief Superior Judge shall consult the Center for Crime Victim Services, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and supervised visitation providers in the preparation of the report

## Statewide Supervised Visitation Resources

Supervised visitation programs (SVPs) in Vermont play a vital role in guaranteeing that safe, appropriate, and meaningful interactions can take place between children and their non-custodial parents. These programs provide a controlled environment that ensures the safety and well-being of all parties involved.

Supervised visitation is typically court ordered for two reasons, to reinstitute or maintain a relationship between a parent and a child, or when there is a demonstrated physical or emotional safety concern to the child. When no supervised visitation program exists in the county that the family resides in, adjoining county's programs may be utilized, or a designated third-party supervisor can be implemented. However, the utilization of a third-party supervisor is not ideal, as these individuals are usually family or community members, who lack the training that supervised visitation centers are specialized in.

At the present time, Vermont does not have a statewide system of supervised visitation centers that provide consistent access to services. There are six supervised visitation centers in the state. [The Vermont Network](#) provides support to the coalition of providers, and practice standards have been established to ensure a baseline level of standardized services and approaches. The most recent standards were established in 2007.

# Supervised Visitation Center Access by County

Five counties in Vermont – Lamoille, Orange, Washington, Rutland, and Windsor – do not have supervised visitation programs. These counties are geographically connected, forming a contiguous area that runs directly through the center of the state (indicated in grey, below). The lack of supervised visitation centers in these counties creates a central corridor with no readily accessible programs, thereby impacting families in these areas who need supervised visitation center options.

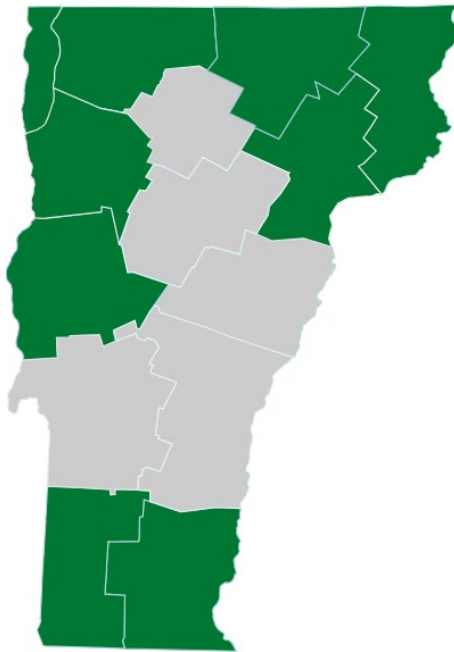


Figure 1: Supervised Visitation Center Locations in Vermont

## Addison County

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation (in person and virtual) Supervised exchange	1 full-time employee and 5 per diem	Yes	Yes - Referrals from outside of the county and state

\*Addison County would require at least two more per-diem employees to meet all supervised visitation needs.

## Bennington County

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation	1 full-time employee and 1 part-time employee	Yes	Yes

\*Bennington County would require either two full-time and two part-time employees, or one full-time and four-part-time employees to meet all supervised visitation needs.

## Caledonia, Essex, & Orleans Counties

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation	1 full-time employee	Yes	Yes

\*These counties would require between one and a half to two full-time employees to meet all supervised visitation needs.

## Chittenden County

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation Supervised exchange	1 part-time employee: 20 hours per week.	Yes	Yes

\*Chittenden currently has one part-time employee, and two families on a wait list, totaling 3 hours of time that cannot be accommodated (as of 12/04/2025).



## Grand Isle & Franklin County

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation Supervised Exchange	1 full time employee	Yes	Yes

\*These counties would require one full-time and one part-time employee to meet all supervised visitation needs.

## Windham County

Service Types	Staffing	Waitlist?	Cross-County Acceptances?
Supervised visitation Supervised Exchange	1 full-time employee, 1 part time	Yes	Yes- including New Hampshire

\*Windham County would require an additional part-time employee to meet all supervised visitation needs.

## Identified Barriers

FSD staff engaged in a series of focus groups in preparation for submitting this report. These groups included input from Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), supervised visitation program staff, and agencies that previously had supervised visitation centers in their counties. Chief Superior Judge Zonay also solicited feedback from judicial officers. The Center for Crime Victim Services and the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence were consulted and provided input for this report. Common barriers for SVPs are broken down in the sections below.

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## Funding and Financial Support

- Many SVPs are underfunded, with state funding covering only a portion of operational costs, leaving organizations to absorb the rest.
- Difficulty in hiring additional staff due to payroll and overhead costs, especially for weekend supervised visitation/supervised exchange site hours.

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## Staffing Challenges

- Difficulty in finding supervised visitation monitors with the appropriate background, skills, and personality, leading to high turnover.
- Previous reliance on students in the Orange and Addison County areas, leading to scheduling challenges and temporary employment/high turnover.

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## Capacity and Demand

- Limited ability to accommodate referrals for multiple hours per week, resulting in waitlists.
- High demand for services, with some programs operating at full capacity and unable to expand due to staffing and space limitations.
- The rural and isolated nature of some areas makes access to SVPs difficult, with long distances to the nearest center.
- Misunderstandings by parents that a judicial order to utilize a SVP does not constitute an enforceable order for the SVP to provide services.

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## Safety and Security Concerns

- Lack of training for monitors in de-escalation techniques, raising concerns about handling potentially dangerous situations.
- Need for security measures, such as metal-detection wands, private security, or law enforcement presence, additional supervisors, especially for high-risk visits. All these additional measures cost money.
- SVPs in rural areas have additional concerns for safety and security due to their physical location.

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## Geographical and Referral Challenges

- Judges continue to recommend supervised visitation, even when accessing a center may create logistical challenges or is infeasible for families.
- Receiving referrals from outside the immediate community, including from neighboring states like New Hampshire, strains already stretched resources.
- Variability in the number of referrals, with peak demand during certain times of the year.
- When an SVP is not available in the family's community, more informal supervised visits may be required by the court or DCF. Often, this enlists family members in providing supervised visits or exchanges which can pose additional safety risks.

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## Program Establishment Costs

- Securing Physical Spaces: Finding and maintaining appropriate locations for the centers can be costly.
- Hiring Qualified Employees: Recruiting and training staff members requires significant investment.
- Implementing Safety Measures: Ensuring safety through adequate training and security measures adds to the expenses.
- Hiring a Program Manager: A capable manager is essential for effective operations but will contribute to staffing costs.
- Managing Startup Costs: Initial expenses for setting up the centers can be substantial.
- Ensuring Ongoing Funding: Sustaining operations requires reliable baseline funding and continued financial support. Establishing and maintaining this funding can take time away from services provided.

## Comparative Models

In New York, the [Report from The Working Group on the Future of Supervised Visitation in New York State](#) produced a report highlighting similar challenges related to the existence and ongoing funding of SVPs within the state. Similarly to Vermont, New York experienced counties that previously had SVPs, who could no longer maintain the centers due to grant funding expiring, concerns for providing safety, and not having dedicated, permanent funding sources.

Ultimately, the working group in New York determined that there needed to be dedicated state funding, to support the continued function of SVPs in their state.

## Current Funding

Historically, programs in Vermont have been funded, in part, by the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS) and by the Department for Children and Families (DCF). Over the past decade, these programs have faced flat or declining funding levels, despite rising expenses. Previously, each program received approximately \$31,000 from VCCVS and \$8,000 from DCF, resulting in less than \$40,000 annually for each program on average.

The grants paid by VCCVS for supervised visitation have come from the Victims Compensation Special Fund. However, due to declining revenues in this fund, VCCVS eliminated funding for several SVPs in 2025, resulting in additional program closures. Historically, funding for supervised visitation did not consider factors such as population size, the number of individuals served, or the geographic area.

Currently, SVPs are funded through a combination of public (federal and state), and privately fundraised dollars, with variations in funding across the different centers. Privately fundraised (unrestricted) dollars are often used to cover expenses that are not eligible for grant funding use, such as overhead costs, which are becoming increasingly expensive and challenging for SVPs to maintain.

For example, one SVP is using federal dollars through the Healing Together Project, through the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This program also utilizes private fundraising dollars to supplement their program and uses unrestricted funds from the program's overhead agency to supplement the program's operational expenses.

One SVP that closed within the last five years had a program model where parents or family members whose time with their children was supervised were required to pay a fee. The program offered very flexible payment arrangements, only asking for what the individual could minimally pay, which at times was as low as \$5. For multiple reasons, this model was not ideal for the families served, or the organization, and did not constitute a fund that consistently supported the program's ability to continue to provide the service.

The Vermont Network previously received a small amount of funding from the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services, to provide statewide support to the SVPs functioning in Vermont, including support for coordination and technical assistance to centers around Vermont. The Center first received a State General Fund appropriation of \$100,000 in 2005 to support these services, which was increased to \$137,500 where it has remained constant since that time.

Beginning in 2008, CCVS started utilizing victim's compensation funds to enhance its programming, adding over \$2.7 million beyond the general fund appropriation. However, to guard the financial health of the of the Victim's Compensation Special Fund, the

CCVS decided to stop using these funds for support in fiscal year 2026. As a result, this funding has been discontinued, and the Vermont Network now continues to offer the services without financial support from the Victim's Compensation Fund.

The centers that receive substantial grant funding through private foundations are continuously at risk for funding to end, as grant funding is typically limited and, if not continued, could result in the discontinuation of programming.

## Recommendation for Sustainable Funding for Statewide Coordination

The availability of stable and securely funded SVPs is crucial for Vermonters, as these safe, affordable, and accessible centers facilitate meaningful contact between Vermont children and their families.

To ensure the most sustainable and reliable funding for SVPs in Vermont, consideration could be given to using general fund dollars following a fiscal analysis of SVP cost needs. As previously noted, funding has been flat or declining for years, and there are program waitlists ubiquitously across the state. The true price tag to sustainably fund these programs is unknown at this point in time.

While further analysis is needed before committing to a path forward, broadly speaking, general fund dollars could potentially offer stability that is frequently lacking in federal or grant funding. They provide the flexibility needed to reallocate resources easily if a county's SVP changes in capacity. Additionally, general fund dollars support the long-term needs and implementation of SVPs, helping to close existing geographical gaps. This approach also reduces, or could potentially eliminate, the dependency on external funding sources.

Additionally, grant funding, while not a completely viable option due to the known deficits surrounding these funding sources, could provide an additional avenue to support SVP funding. The Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, [Justice for Families Program \(JFF\)](#) provides discretionary grants to support supervised visitation and exchange programs. Over the last five years, JFF is the only recurring national competitive program whose core statutory purpose includes supervised visitation. There are other grants available where funding could be explored for SVPs, however, the lack of a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) and modern data reporting system are relevant, limiting factors.

Sustainable funding is critical both to directly resource supervised visitation services, as well as the statewide coordination of those services, to ensure SVPs operate as a statewide system with standardized and high-quality services. Essential coordination activities include training and technical assistance, creating and maintaining program standards, and supporting communication and collaboration among programs.

## Equitability and Access

Considering Vermont's diverse county compositions and the pre-existing SVPs in the state, ensuring consistent funding presents the need for innovative problem-solving strategies and additional research to maintain an equitable distribution and access among the counties and centers.

Rutland, Washington, and Windsor counties make up three of the five most populous counties in Vermont. These three counties do not have designated SVPs. Orange and Lamoille, two of the five of the lowest populated counties, are the other counties lacking SVPs.

All five of the counties that do not currently have SVPs will require an increased amount of funding to initially establish programs. An analysis on a county-by-county basis to better understand the more exact costs associated with establishing centers would be a prudent use of time and resources, to best understand where funding allocations should be distributed to ensure equitability. At a macro level, it can be assumed that the establishment of centers in higher cost of living counties will require a large amount of funding to be allocated to them, and, centers in lower populated or more rural areas, may require a higher amount of funding to accommodate additional safety assurances, such as two staff members monitoring visitations, metal detectors, or other more extensive safety measures or features.

Many of the SVPs in Vermont are housed under overarching non-profit agencies, that are dual purposed but support a related cause. Assessing agencies in the areas that are lacking SVPs to better understand their willingness to establish and operate SVPs, would provide additional information about funding allocations, to ensure an equitable distribution of funds. If the funds were consistent and ensured to be stable, pre-existing agencies may be more likely, and willing, to establish SVPs for their region, effectively mitigating the substantial costs that may come along with the establishment of an entirely new center and program.

Engaging in a formalized and specific cost analysis could support a better understanding of how to ensure equitability and access. Conducting a cost analysis on a county-by-county basis is essential, as the location, staffing, and security costs may differ significantly from county to county. The funding allocation must balance the needs of the more populated communities, as well as the counties that are more rural, and less populated.

Conducting this analysis would also be prudent as it could provide raw data surrounding the number of referrals made, the number of families who were waitlisted, and the specific locations of the families who are requiring supervised visitation. This information would support the appropriate geographic distribution throughout the state, providing broader availability and access by closing the resource gap in the five contiguous counties in the central/southern part of Vermont.

To achieve equitability in funding SVPs in the counties that currently lack centers, a detailed county-by-county cost analysis is essential. This approach will ensure that funding allocations are in line with each county's specific needs, while also exploring the potential for centers to be geographically placed in areas that allow counties to share and pool their resources. Through the support of a detailed analysis, Vermont can effectively balance allocated resources with coinciding data to support accessibility, and fair and equitable distribution of funding.