



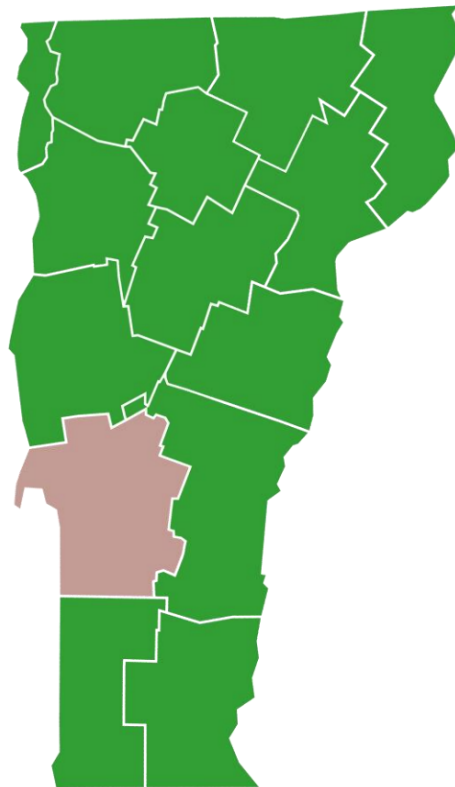
Community Care Network  
**Rutland Community Programs**

**Early Care and Education Programs**

**Rutland County Head Start**

**2022-2023**

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**



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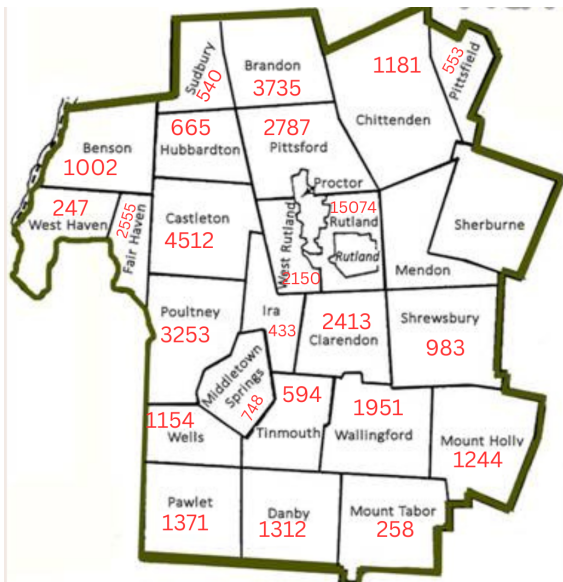
## Executive Summary

### Rutland County Region

The Rutland County Head Start (RCHS) service area is Rutland County, Vermont. The 2020 census reported Rutland County's population at 60,591, making it the second largest county in Vermont. Rutland County is located in western Vermont, with Windsor County to the east, Addison County to the north, and Bennington County to the south, with Lake Champlain and the state of New York to its west. Rutland County comprises 28 towns ranging in population from under 300 to 16,000.

Rutland City is the region's urban center with 15,851 residents. Rutland City is the third largest municipality in Vermont. Rutland has six sub-regional centers of economic activity and a series of smaller rural villages surrounded by agricultural and forest land.

Figure 1: Map of Rutland County, Vermont.



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## Demographic Snapshot<sup>1</sup>

The majority of families in Rutland County and Rutland City are white: 96.5% and 94.7% respectively. The rate of poverty in Rutland City is higher than Rutland County. At 10.5% at the county level and 12.2% in Rutland City, compared to the national poverty rate of 11.6% (2021)<sup>2</sup>

## RCHS Economic Snapshot<sup>34</sup>

Rutland's labor force was the third largest in Vermont with 3,446. However, jobs have been declining in the region. Since 2010 the labor force has decreased by 9.4%.

The most recent data from census.gov reports 703 total employer firms (2017). The median income in Rutland City is \$51,886 (2021) and the per capita income (2021) was \$33,425 in the last 12 months. (*NOTE: Per capita is income distributed across every man, woman, and child.*)

The four largest revenue sectors (\*plus mining) in Rutland City:

- Health Care and Social Assistance 473,776
- Retail Sales 441,1991
- Accommodation and Food Service Sales 69,027
- Transportation and Warehouse 11,902
- \*Rutland maintains a Mining industry (with .9 percentage points higher than the state's share)

## Trends from the Community Needs Data

- **Changes in Family Stability Factors Since COVID-19 Pandemic.** The community needs in Rutland County have changed in many ways since the 2020 RCHS Community Needs Assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic spanned the years since then. The effects on housing, mental health, and other stability factors are evident in the most recent data and research.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rutlandcityvermont/PST045221>

<sup>2</sup> Federal Poverty Safety Net: <https://federalsafetynet.com/poverty-statistics/#unemployment>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rutlandcityvermont/HSG010221#HSG010221>

<sup>4</sup> Bowes Community Assessment, 2022

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- **Availability and Implications of Vermont Pre-K, Preschool, Early Care for 3-5 year olds.** Since RCHS last community needs assessment, the availability of pre-k programs through Act 166 continues to add to free alternative Pre-K programming for preschoolers. School District Pre-K also provides higher salaried teaching jobs for early childhood teachers potentially exacerbating the Workforce Crisis in Early Childhood Education. Universal Pre-K offers a choice for Head Start eligible families. At the same time, Vermont's universal pre-k school programs universal pre-K does not offer the same level of wrap-around, resiliency building, child-readiness promoting support. Head Start offers Health/ Nutrition and Family Partnership along with high quality early childhood education.. Fifty years of research provides evidence that these "key ingredients" to families experiencing poverty and other adverse experiences, offer a "Head Start" for children that results in school success and positive outcomes into adulthood. Nonetheless, Universal Pre-K through Act 166 is an advantage to children above the poverty line and without the specialized needs of Head Start Children.
  - **Urgent Need for Center-Based, High Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers.** According to Let's Grow Kids *Stalled At the Start Report 2022*, families within Rutland County lack access to high quality, center based care for infants and toddlers. 83% of infants and 76% of toddlers in Rutland County likely to need care do not have access to high quality programs. Rutland County needs an additional 436 infant slots and 91 toddler slots to meet demand.
  - **Increase in Homeless Youth over Past Decade.** Rutland County has seen an alarming increase in homelessness amongst children (1,098 in 2015 to 1,312 in 2022). Head Start programming is vital to families experiencing homelessness. Further, homelessness in households with children increased by 36% compared to households with adults only (5%). This data underscores the vulnerability of families with children and need for services to stabilize and support early development and school readiness.
  - Children in Foster Care are priorities for Head Start Enrollment and are automatically eligible. In Rutland county 52 children were removed from their home and placed into foster care. Of these children 35 percent (n=18) were removed for neglect and 44 percent (n=23) were removed due to caretaker drug or alcohol abuse. This data informs both the number of children likely to need services as well as the type of family support / resources needed in the community.

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## **Community Assessment Team and Acknowledgments**

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## Section 1: Introduction

### Program Overview

Rutland County Head Start (RCHS) is a program of Community Care Network, which comprises Rutland Mental Health Services and Rutland Community Programs; Rutland Community Programs is the Head Start grantee.

RCHS provides comprehensive child development services to 117 low-income preschool children and their families. The Head Start program is center-based and operates six hours per day, five days per week, September through June. Program operations are centered primarily in Rutland City.

***Meadow Street Center:*** The main facility, located on Meadow Street in Rutland City, currently houses three classrooms and provides services to about 45 children. The Meadow Street center's program is NAEYC-accredited and has a 5-STARS quality rating from the Vermont Child Development Division.

***Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU):*** The collaboration with BRSU serves about 10 children and their families at the Mettawee Community School Early Essential Education classroom in the town of Pawlet, Vermont.

***Children's Discovery Center For Early Learning:*** Located at Juneberry Lane in Rutland City and has a 5-STARS quality rating from the Vermont Child Development Division.



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## Purpose

The purpose of the Community Assessment is to meet Head Start Performance Standard 1302.11(b)- *Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment (Community Assessment)*. The information from this assessment is used to set long and short-term program objectives, determine services most needed, and provide governing bodies with relevant information about the service area.

## Methodology

The information presented in this Community Assessment was acquired and analyzed according to the most recent and relevant data available. The sources of data can be found in the footnotes in each section.

## Special Note on Post-COVID-19 Data and Needs

The 2023 Rutland County Head Start Community Assessment reflects demographic, social, and social determinant data post-COVID. This phenomena contextualizes the changing needs of children and families served by RCHS. Kids Count Databook (2022) reported a 25.5% increase in the percentage of U.S. children with depression and anxiety. The data for Vermont is even more striking with a 40.1% increase. At RCHS, the behavioral and mental health needs of children are startling and taxing our teachers and education staff. Our family service program reports increased family needs. The National Survey of Health reports an “extraordinary toll” of the pandemic on children’s mental health. Nationally, the number of children (ages 3-17) struggling with anxiety or depression rose from 5.8 million to 7.3 million. Finally, a recent study found that the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted schooling nationwide, raising serious concerns about the impact on children’s learning.<sup>5 6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Vermont Agency of Education, Statewide Report on Kindergarten Readiness, Ready For Kindergarten! Survey 2020-2021

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/02/22/understanding-covid-19-era-enrollment-drops-among-early-grade-public-school-students/>

<sup>6</sup><https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>

## Section 2: Demographic Profile of Service Area

*The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1302.11(b)(i): The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak.*

### Overview

Rutland County Head Start serves Rutland County in Vermont, with its primary service focus in Rutland City. The declining numbers of Head Start Eligible children in surrounding areas combined with Pre-K services through public school districts has changed the need for center based services outside of Rutland City and neighboring towns.

### Population

The Rutland County Head Start (RCHS) service area is Rutland County, Vermont. The 2020 census reported Rutland County's population at 60,572, making it the second largest county in Vermont. Rutland County is located in western Vermont, with Windsor County to the east, Addison County to the north, and Bennington County to the south, with Lake Champlain and the state of New York to its west. Rutland County comprises 28 towns ranging in population from under 300 to 16,000.

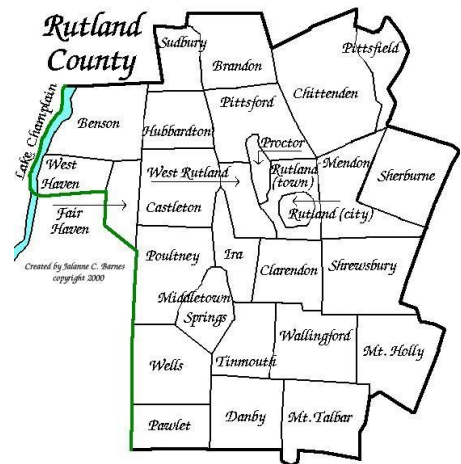


Figure 2: Map of Rutland County, Vermont.

Rutland City is the region's urban center with 15,851 residents. Rutland City is the third largest municipality in Vermont. Rutland has six sub-regional centers of economic activity and a series of smaller rural villages surrounded by agricultural and forest land.

Chart 1: Population by City/Town/Village in Rutland County

### Demographic Statistics in Rutland County and Rutland City<sup>7</sup>

Poverty thresholds for the U.S. Census Data below are defined by the following thresholds:

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandcountyvermont>

- \$13,788 annual income for one individual
- \$17,529 for two people in a family
- \$21,559 for three people in a family
- \$56,325 for nine or more people in a family

*Table 1. Demographics of Rutland County and Rutland City*

| <b>Demographic</b>                  | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Rutland County                      | <b>100%</b>    | <b>60,591</b> |
| Under Age Five                      | 4.1%           | 2,484         |
| White                               | 96.5%          | 58,470        |
| Hispanic or Latino                  | 1.8%           | 10,906        |
| Two or More Races                   | 1.6%           | 9,694         |
| Language Other Than English at Home | 4.5%           | 2,726         |
| Living in Poverty                   | 10.5%          | 6,362         |
| Rutland City                        | <b>100%</b>    | <b>15,851</b> |
| Under Age Five                      | 4%             | 634           |
| White                               | 94.7%          | 15,010        |
| Hispanic or Latino                  | 2.1%           | 3,328         |
| Two or More Races                   | 3.3%           | 5,230         |
| Language Other Than English at Home | 6.2%           | 983           |
| Living in Poverty                   | 12.2%          | 1,933         |

## Head Start Eligible Children Estimates: Rutland County

Based on the 2021 population estimates, there are roughly 260 children under age five throughout rural Rutland County who are eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start services.

Table 2: Data: Head Start Eligible Children, Estimated Based on Poverty Level

| Data Type   | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Total Population                                    | 60,591 | 100%    |
| # Children Under Age 5                              | 2,484  | 4.1%    |
| % Poverty Level                                     | 6,362  | 10.5%   |
| <b>Estimated # of EHS-HS-eligible children= 260</b> |        |         |

Notably, the poverty level in Rutland City is significantly higher (12.2%), where the greatest density of population resides (15,851). Taking this factor into account, the number of eligible children could be as high as 303.<sup>8</sup>

## Households and Families

There are 24,998 households in Rutland County. This is a decline from 25,317 reported in RCHS previous Community Needs Assessment. Household size is 2.34 persons.

Family households with married couples make up 60.4%; households with a female householder represent 11.4% of family households; male householders represent 6% of family households.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandcountyvermont>

<sup>9</sup> Census Reporter Data <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US50021-rutland-county-vt/>

## Income/Poverty

The median household income in Rutland County is \$56,751 with per capita income at \$33,494. Ten percent of Rutland County Residents live in poverty.<sup>10</sup>

Of the estimated population for Rutland County, 3.6% are at or below 50% of the poverty level. 13.4% are at 125% of the poverty level.<sup>11</sup>

Table 3: Income in Rutland County, 2021<sup>12</sup>

|                                   | Households | Families | Married-Couple Families | Non-Family Households |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Total Estimated Population</b> | 24,998     | 14,425   | 11,558                  | 10,573                |
| Less than \$10,000                | 3.6%       | 1.7%     | .8%                     | 7.1%                  |
| \$10,000 to \$14,999              | 6.5%       | 2.6%     | .7%                     | 11.9%                 |
| \$15,000 to \$24,999              | 9.2%       | 5%       | 2.8%                    | 16.7%                 |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999              | 9.4%       | 6.1%     | 5%                      | 14.9%                 |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999              | 13.2%      | 10.2%    | 9%                      | 16.4%                 |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999              | 19.1%      | 20.3%    | 19.8%                   | 17.2%                 |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999              | 13.5%      | 18.1%    | 20.2%                   | 6.9%                  |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999            | 15.6%      | 22.2%    | 25.2%                   | 5%                    |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999            | 5.6%       | 7.8%     | 9.5%                    | 2.3%                  |
| \$200,000 or more                 | 4.2%       | 6%       | 7.1%                    | 1.5%                  |

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census, Quick Facts: Rutland County <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandcountyvermont>

<sup>11</sup> <https://data.census.gov/table?q=poverty+in+Rutland+County,+VT&tid=ACSST5Y2021.S1701>

<sup>12</sup> <https://data.census.gov/table?q=income+in+Rutland+County,+VT&y=2021&tid=ACSST5Y2021.S1901>

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## Rutland County Labor and Economic Summary

Rutland's labor force was the third largest in Vermont with 3,446. However, jobs have been declining in the region. Since 2010, the labor force has decreased by 9.4%.

The most recent data from census.gov reports 703 total employer firms (2017). The median income in Rutland City is \$51,886 (2021) and the per capita income (2021) was \$33,425 in the last 12 months. (*NOTE: Per capita is income distributed across every man woman and child.*)

The four largest revenue sectors (\*plus mining) in Rutland City:

- Health Care and Social Assistance 473,776
- Retail Sales 441,1991
- Accommodation and Food Service Sales 69,027
- Transportation and Warehouse 11,902
- \*Rutland maintains a Mining industry (with .9 percentage points higher than the state's share)

The median income in Rutland County is \$51,000.

The poverty rate in Rutland county is 12%<sup>13</sup>.

The median gross rent for Rutland County is \$846.

## Unemployment Information

"Unemployment rates in the United States had been steadily declining since 2011 until the onset of the pandemic. Vermont rates mirrored that trend, declining from 6% in 2011 to 2.5% at the beginning of 2020. Rutland County trends also showed a decline over the same period, but with slightly higher numbers than the state rates: from 7.6% in January 2011 to 3.2% in January 2020."<sup>14</sup>

The unemployment rate in the Rutland County Labor Market Area was 3.3% in January 2023, compared to 2.9% statewide.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rutlandcityvermont/PST045221>

<sup>14</sup> Rutland Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment 2021

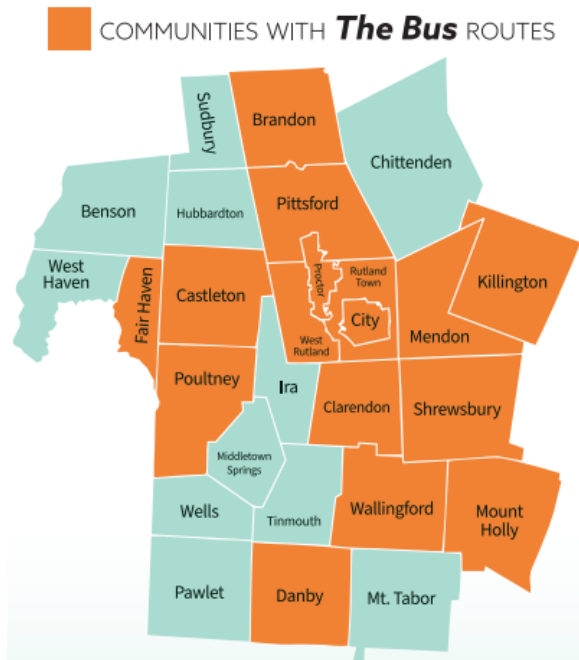
<sup>15</sup> Labor Market Data by County <https://labor.vermont.gov/labor-market-information/county-data>

## Transportation

Public bus transportation is available in the Rutland Region with fixed route and commuter services running to and from Rutland City, provided by Marble Valley Regional Transit District (MVRTD), often referred to as “The Bus”. Routes include Rutland City, Rutland Town, Proctor and the Killington area. Regional services are provided to Fair Haven, Killington, Middlebury, Manchester and Ludlow with stops in between. RCHS sites in Rutland City are all on public transit routes. Fixed routes within Rutland City operate every half hour 8:00am-4:30pm, Monday-Saturday.

In Vermont, 63% of children under 6 living in households with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) live in rural areas where having a vehicle is critical to access basic goods and services, as well as to get to work and school.

Figure 3: Rutland County: Bus routes<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Rutland Regional Planning Commission Rutland Regional Plan 2015, Marble Valley Regional Transit District

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## Education

In 2021, 93.7% of Rutland County residents had attained a High School diploma or equivalent; 32.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher. These numbers were slightly up from RCHS last Community Needs Assessment in 2020.<sup>17</sup>

The total public school enrollment in Rutland County (minus Slate Valley Unified School District, as the data was not available) was 8,520 for 2022. Of these students, 697 were reported as enrolled in PreK-EEE for 2022, an increase from the 680 reported in 2021. There was a sharp increase in PreK enrollment as reported by the Vermont Education Dashboard between 2018 (620 students) to 2019 (903). A decrease was reported from 2019 (903) to 2020 (830), as well as in 2021 (680). PreK-EEE showed an increase between 2021 (680) and 2022 (697).<sup>18</sup>

## Housing

The Updated Vermont Housing Report offered insight into the complexity of the housing market in Rutland City and the intersection with families living in poverty. Rutland City Housing data shows that affordability problems are mostly in the rental market and these problems are driven by low incomes in the area. They report that census data indicates that rental affordability problems are most severe for renters at the low end of the income spectrum. "Housing problems in Rutland are as much a job problem as a house problem."<sup>19</sup>

Rutland County and Rutland City continue to see downward population and household trends. The Vermont Housing Report forecasted a continued loss of population in the coming months. The study reports a 5-year average estimate of population for Rutland City with a 4.6% decline in population (3.2% for Rutland County).

Many Rutland households have relatively low incomes. Sixty-five percent of renters (and ¼ homeowners), have incomes below \$35,000 a year (2019). Even with relatively lower housing costs, renters in Rutland face affordability challenges due to their low incomes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census. Rutland County: Quick Facts:<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandcountyvermont>

<sup>18</sup> Vermont Education Dashboard: Enrollment 2022

<https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/enrollment>

<sup>19</sup><https://d3oenxrebt8fm.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Rutland-Housing-Market-Update.pdf>

<sup>20</sup><https://d3oenxrebt8fm.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Rutland-Housing-Market-Update.pdf>



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Housing is considered affordable when expenses are less than 30% of monthly income; when expenses are 30% or less of monthly income, it is likely there is remaining income to cover other necessities. 35% of Rutland County households pay more than 30% of their income towards housing, and 15% of households pay 50% or more of their monthly incomes towards housing. This is considered severely high and puts these households at high risk of housing instability, including frequent moves, eviction, foreclosure and homelessness.

Though vacancy rates vary by town, Rutland County's estimated vacancy rate is 5.5%, which is higher than the state rate of 3.4%, and is the second highest rent vacancy statewide.

Seasonal homes currently make up roughly 17% of housing stock in Vermont, making it the second highest rate of seasonal homes in the nation (second to Maine). Short term rentals also continue to gradually increase within the state, with Rutland County, Windsor, Windham, and Lamoille containing the largest portions of stock.

Rutland County is also the highest in the state for older homes, with the median home being built in 1969. Older housing stock is of concern for several reasons. Homes built before 1978 are likely to have lead paint, which can be a major health risk, especially for young children. Homes built before 1980 may have asbestos, which requires professional remediation if disturbed during renovations. Older homes are often less energy efficient than newer homes, leading to higher energy cost-burden for households living in these homes.<sup>21</sup>

During Covid-19, funds for past-due and currently due rent and utilities were made available through Vermont Emergency Rental Assistance Program (VERAP). As of March 2023, 2,038 Rutland County residents received an estimated \$18.8 million dollars in funding, second only to Chittenden County. This program has gradually scaled down their funding for eligible residents beginning in December 2022 and is now subject to available funds and residents at or below 30% area median income currently receive only 70% of assistance.

Approximately 59% of Rutland County residents receiving VERAP funds are located in Rutland City, for a total of \$11.5 million dollars. Second to Rutland City is Brandon; 7% of Rutland County residents receiving VERAP funds reside in Brandon and 6% reside in Fair Haven.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>[https://www.vhfa.org/documents/publications/vt\\_hna\\_2020\\_report.pdf](https://www.vhfa.org/documents/publications/vt_hna_2020_report.pdf)

<sup>22</sup><https://erap.vsha.org/>

## McKinney-Vento Data

The McKinney-Vento definition of “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youths who:

- Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Live in emergency or transitional shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not normally used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Are migratory and qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in the above situations

According to the Vermont's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, there were 1,312 homeless children/youth enrolled in public school during the 2020-2021 academic year in Vermont.<sup>23</sup> The State of Vermont's Children, released by Building Bright Futures, identified a sharp increase of Vermont children under 9 enrolled in school who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, from 247 in 2020-2021 to 398 in 2021-2022.<sup>24</sup> Further, homelessness in families with children increased at a greater rate than families without children: Vermont's Annual Statewide Count of Those Experiencing Homelessness 2022 report shows the number of persons experiencing homelessness and in a household with children increased by 36% compared to the 2021, compared to 5% of people in households with adults only.<sup>25</sup>

Table 4. Homeless children in Vermont 2015-2022<sup>26</sup>

| School Year | Enrolled Homeless Children/Youth |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 2015 – 2016 | 1,098                            |
| 2016 - 2017 | 1,097                            |

<sup>23</sup> VT Agency of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth

<sup>24</sup> Building Bright Futures, The State of Vermont's Children, 2022 Year in Review

<sup>25</sup> VT Agency of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth

<sup>26</sup> <https://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-Vermont-Point-in-Time-Report.pdf>

| School Year | Enrolled Homeless Children/Youth |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 2017 - 2018 | 722                              |
| 2018 - 2019 | 1,008                            |
| 2019 - 2020 | 883                              |
| 2020-2021   | 1,006                            |
| 2021-2022   | 1,312                            |

*Graph 1: Rise in Number of Homeless Children in Rutland County 2015-2022*

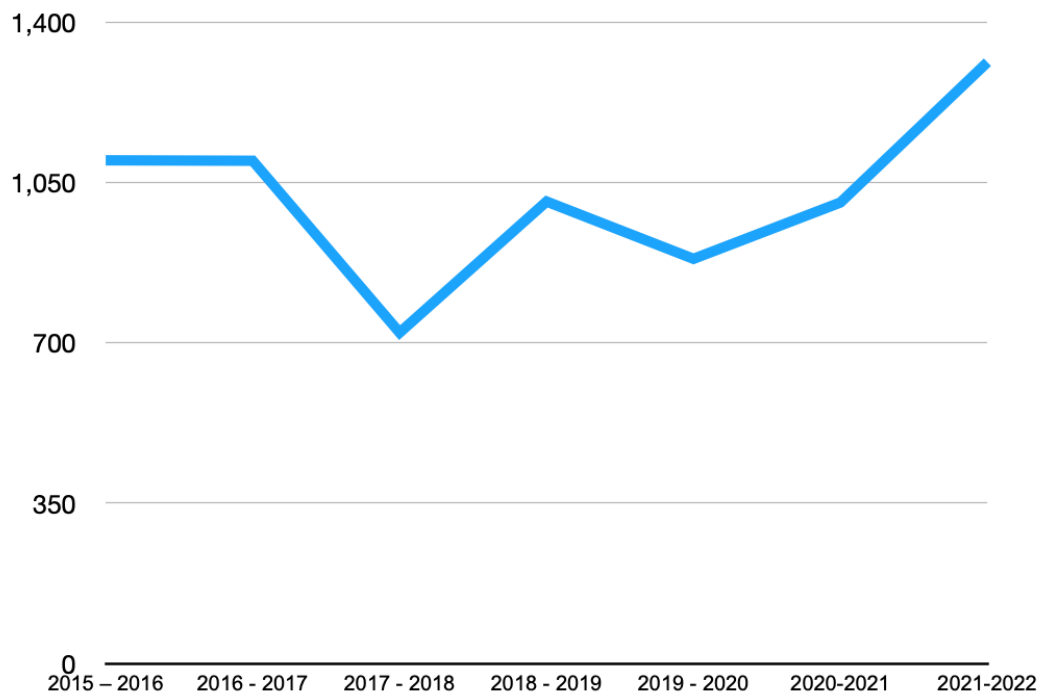
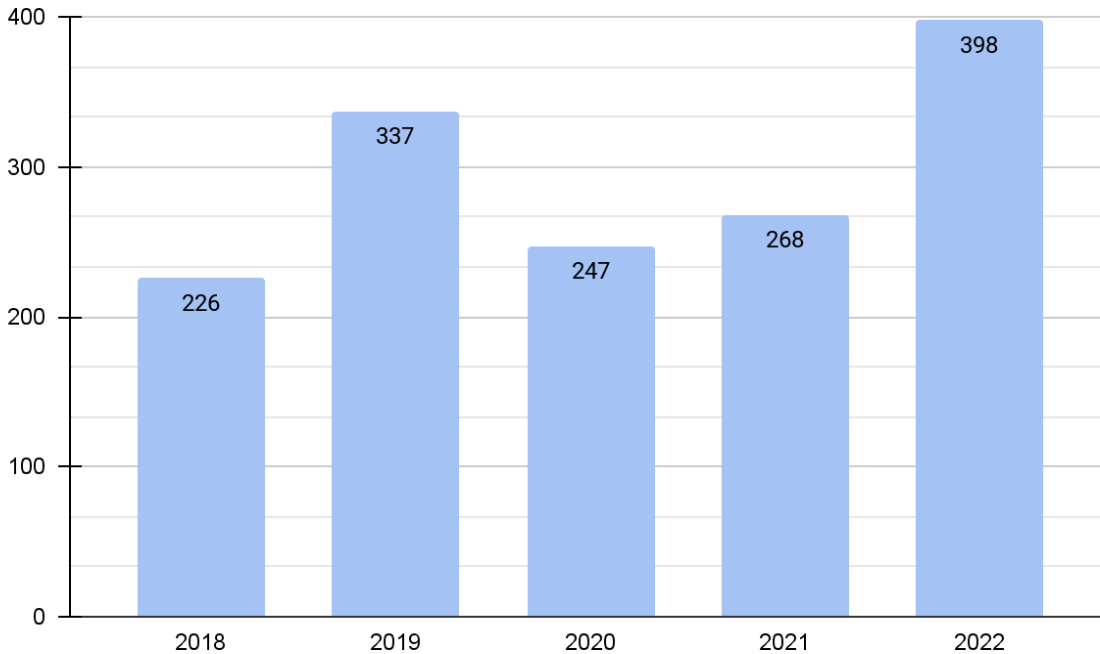


Figure 3: Students under 9 Eligible for McKinney- Vento Homelessness Assistance



At Rutland County Head Start, six (6) families with 6 children were homeless at some time during the 2021-2022 program year; 8 families acquired housing during that period.<sup>27</sup>

### Foster Children

The report for Rutland County Children Removed to Foster Care During October 2021 through September 2022 shows 52 total removals to foster care during that time frame. 11 of these 52 children were re-entries into foster care.

Rutland County saw a higher percentage of removals for caretaker drug or alcohol abuse when compared to state rates. Rutland County was 44% and the state rate was 36%. Rutland County also saw a higher percentage compared to state rates for removals for caretaker inability to cope, 19% versus 11%.

<sup>27</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

*Table 5. Rutland County Children Removed to Foster Care During October 2021 through September 2022<sup>28</sup>*

|  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Rate</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Total Removals to Foster Care</b>       | <b>52</b>    |             |
| Removals for Neglect                       | 18           | 35%         |
| Removals for Caretaker Drug or Alcohol Use | 23           | 44%         |
| Removals for Physical Abuse                | 1            | 2%          |
| Removals for Caretaker Inability to Cope   | 10           | 19%         |
| Removals for Inadequate Housing            | 1            | 2%          |
| Removals for Incarceration                 | 2            | 4%          |
| Removals for Child Behavior                | 6            | 12%         |
| Removals for Abandonment                   | 3            | 6%          |
| Removals for Sexual Abuse                  | 1            | 2%          |

<sup>28</sup> <https://fosteringcourtimprovement.org/vt/County/Rutland/>

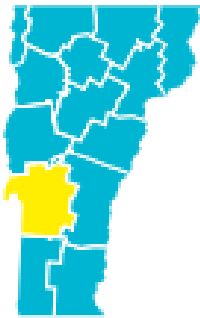
### Section 3: Other Child Development Data and Child Care Resources

*The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1302.11 (b)(iv). Other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served.*

Stalled at the Start Vermont’s Child Care Challenge: An Analysis of Supply and Demand for Regulated Child Care for Children Birth through Five in Vermont (February 2022) produced by Let’s Grow Kids, offers insight into the estimated need for care by age group. This study focuses on regulated early childhood education programs in Vermont. Regulated programs that serve infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers include registered family child care homes, licensed family child care homes, and center-based child care and preschool programs.

Let’s Grow Kids identifies that within Rutland County, 718 infants, 361 toddlers, and 792 preschoolers are likely to need care. To meet the demand, Rutland County would need 436 infant slots, 91 toddler slots, and 271 preschool slots.

### RUTLAND COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS



#### CHILDREN LIKELY TO NEED CARE:

- 718 Infants
- 361 Toddlers
- 792 Preschoolers

#### CHILD CARE SPACES NEEDED TO MEET DEMAND:

- 436 for Infants
- 91 for Toddlers
- 271 for Preschoolers

LetsGrowKids.org • [invest@letsgrowkids.org](mailto:invest@letsgrowkids.org)

Statewide in 2022, approximately 61% of infants, 25% of toddlers, and 31% of preschoolers likely to need care do not have access to regulated early care and education programs. Rutland County is in trend with the statewide figures; 61% of infants, 25% of toddlers, and 34% of preschoolers likely to need care do not have access to regulated early care and education programs. Within Rutland County, as well as statewide, these percentages jump significantly when considering children who do not have access to high quality programs.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> [https://letsgrowkids.org/client\\_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf](https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf)

## Child Care Access and Need

Table 6. Rutland County & Statewide Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers Without Access to Child Care 2022<sup>30</sup>

|  | Rutland County | Statewide |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| <b>Infants</b>   |                |           |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to regulated programs    | 61%            | 61%       |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to high-quality programs | 83%            | 76%       |
| <b>Toddlers</b>  |                |           |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to regulated programs    | 25%            | 25%       |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to high-quality programs | 76%            | 54%       |
| <b>Preschool</b>   |                |           |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to regulated programs    | 34%            | 31%       |
| Likely to need care but don't have access to high-quality programs | 58%            | 52%       |

The Vermont Child Development Division (CDD) provides Vermont Child Care Provider data through [data.vermont.gov](https://data.vermont.gov), with the most recent data update on January 20, 2023. It is important to note that licensed capacity may not reflect the actual enrollment at a particular provider. For example, a center may opt to keep classroom sizes smaller

<sup>30</sup> [https://letsgrowkids.org/client\\_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf](https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf)

based on the needs of the children or program philosophy, or may have reduced classrooms due to staffing shortages.

The table below reflects the maximum number of licensed slots available in Rutland County as of the January 20, 2023 report.

*Table 7. Number of Child Care Providers and Licensed Capacity in Rutland County (updated January 2023)* <sup>31</sup>

|  | <b>Number of Providers</b> | <b>Licensed Capacity</b> |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Center-based child care and preschool programs                 | 46                         | 1,712                    |
| Center-based child care and preschool programs (non-recurring) | 1                          | 59                       |
| Licensed family child care homes                               | 3                          | 34                       |
| Registered child care homes                                    | 31                         | 310                      |
| After school providers   | 18                         | 1,101                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>99</b>                  | <b>3,216</b>             |

The Vermont Child Care Provider Data report, updated on January 20, 2023, also looks at capacity and vacancy rates by town. As of the January 20, 2023 update, there are an estimated 1,756 child care slots for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and 74 vacancies, approximately a 4% vacancy rate. The location of child care is generally aligned with the population size within Rutland County; Rutland City has 35% of programs and 849 of 1,756 total slots (48%).

<sup>31</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023



## Child Care Capacity and Vacancy Rates

Table 8. Child Care Provider Capacity and Vacancy Rates by Rutland County Town (Excludes non-recurring care and afterschool programs.)<sup>32</sup>

| Town               | # of Programs | # of Programs STARS High Quality Rating (4-5 stars) | Infant /Toddler Capacity | Infant /Toddler Vacancy | Pre-SC HCapacity | Pre-SCH Vacancy |
|--------------------|---------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Benson             | 4             | 1   | 12                       | 0                       | 24               | 0               |
| Brandon            | 4             | 2   | 31                       | 0                       | 58               | 2               |
| Castleton          | 6             | 4   | 24                       | 3                       | 24               | 3               |
| Chittenden         | 2             | 1   | 4                        | 0                       | 17               | 0               |
| Clarendon          | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 39               | 0               |
| Danby              | 2             | 2   | 9                        | 0                       | 28               | 0               |
| Fair Haven         | 6             | 2   | 29                       | 0                       | 28               | 4               |
| Ira                | 1             | 1   | 4                        | 0                       | 2                | 0               |
| Killington         | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 30               | 0               |
| Mendon             | 1             | 1   | 19                       | 3                       | 0                | 0               |
| Middletown Springs | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 20               | 0               |
| Mount Holly        | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 20               | 0               |
| Pawlet             | 2             | 1   | 4                        | 0                       | 22               | 0               |
| Pittsford          | 2             | 1   | 4                        | 0                       | 17               | 0               |
| Poultney           | 3             | 3   | 8                        | 0                       | 58               | 2               |

<sup>32</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023

| Town         | # of Programs | # of Programs STARS High Quality Rating (4-5 stars) | Infant /Toddler Capacity | Infant /Toddler Vacancy | Pre-SC HCapacity | Pre-SCH Vacancy |
|--------------|---------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Proctor      | 2             | 2   | 26                       | 0                       | 41               | 1               |
| Rutland City | 28            | 10  | 389                      | 30                      | 460              | 21              |
| Rutland Town | 4             | 2   | 42                       | 2                       | 62               | 2               |
| Shrewsbury   | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 18               | 0               |
| Tinmouth     | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 18               | 0               |
| Wallingford  | 3             | 2   | 34                       | 0                       | 52               | 0               |
| Wells        | 1             | 1   | 0                        | 0                       | 22               | 0               |
| West Haven   | 1             | 1   | 16                       | 0                       | 20               | 0               |
| West Rutland | 2             | 1   | 4                        | 1                       | 17               | 0               |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>80</b>     | <b>44</b>   | <b>659</b>               | <b>39</b>               | <b>1,097</b>     | <b>35</b>       |

### Publicly Funded State and Local Preschools <sup>33</sup>

Act 166 of 2014 provides access to publicly-funded prekindergarten education for Vermont students. All prekindergarten education programs, including Head Start and public school-operated programs, must meet the following requirement to operate in Vermont:

- Maintain either NAEYC accreditation or a minimum of 4 STARS in Vermont’s Step Ahead Recognition System,
- Currently licensed or registered by the Department of Children and Families, and is in good regulatory standing
- Curricula is aligned with the Vermont Early Learning Standards

<sup>33</sup> State of Vermont, Agency of Education, Universal Prekindergarten: Act 166

- Staff meet specific professional standards. Private pre qualified prekindergarten programs must employ, or contract the services of, at least one teacher who holds a valid Vermont educator licensing with an endorsement in either early childhood education or early childhood special education.

20 programs in Rutland County are public pre-qualified PreK programs. These programs account for 436 of 1,097 preschool slots.

13 programs in Rutland County are private pre-qualified PreK programs that account for 352 of the 1,097 preschool slots.

### Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Enrollment in Rutland County 2022

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten enrollment numbers offers a snapshot into the numbers of children in Rutland County Schools between ages 4 and 5 years old. Pre-Kindergarten programs offering early education to 4 year olds is a factor in the declining need for Head Start Slots in Rutland County. For example, 103 4 year-olds in Rutland County attended Pre-Kindergarten through public elementary schools. Prior to universal Pre-K in Vermont, eligible Head Start Children in that cohort would have been in need of early childhood programming. There is an argument that eligible children (due to social determinant’s impact on school readiness) would be better served by Head Start Programs, but this assessment does not include efficacy data for Universal Pre-K for children experiencing poverty and adverse childhood experiences. Further, public school Pre-K programs are not rated on the same quality criteria as early care programs in Vermont. Quality ratings are discussed below.

Table 9. 2022-Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Enrollment in Rutland County<sup>34</sup>

| Supervisory Union                        | School               | Pre-K Enrollment | K - Enrollment (FT) | SU Pre-K and K Total |
|--|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Addison Rutland Supervisory Union</b> |                      |                  |                     |                      |
|  | Benson Valley School | 19               | 7                   | 190                  |
|  | Castleton Elementary | 30               | 29                  |                      |

<sup>34</sup> Vermont Education Dashboard:

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiaMzA2YWMyNjctODI0MS00YTEwLTIiODctZGQ1YTE0Yjc5ZWY0IiwidCI6IjIwYjQ5MzNiLWJhYWQtNDMzYy05YzAyLTcwZWRjYzclNTIjNiJ9>

| Supervisory Union                           | School                      | Pre-K Enrollment | K - Enrollment (FT) | SU Pre-K and K Total |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|   | Castleton Village School    | 0                | 0                   |                      |
|   | Fair Haven Grade School     | 31               | 31                  |                      |
|   | Orvell Village              | 25               | 18                  |                      |
| <b>Bennington Rutland Supervisory Union</b> |                             |                  |                     |                      |
|   | Currier Memorial #23        | 8                | 13                  | 241                  |
|   | Dorsett US                  | 9                | 17                  |                      |
|   | Flood Brook US #20          | 45               | 27                  |                      |
|   | Manchester Elementary       | 55               | 26                  |                      |
|   | Mettawee Community School   | 18               | 13                  |                      |
|   | Sunderland Elementary       | 3                | 7                   |                      |
| <b>Greater Rutland Supervisory Union</b>    |                             |                  |                     |                      |
|   | Poultney Elementary         | 50               | 29                  | 188                  |
|   | Proctor Elementary          | 24               | 19                  |                      |
|   | Rutland Town Elementary     | 29               | 37                  |                      |
|   | Totals                      | 103              |                     |                      |
| <b>Mill River Supervisory Union</b>         |                             |                  |                     |                      |
|   | Clarendon Elementary School | 25               | 13                  |                      |
|   | Tinmouth Elementary School  | 8                | 8                   |                      |
|   | Wallingford Village School  | 16               | 22                  |                      |
|   | Totals                      |                  |                     |                      |

| Supervisory Union                     | School               | Pre-K Enrollment | K - Enrollment (FT) | SU Pre-K and K Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Rutland City School District</b>   |                      |                  |                     |                      |
|                                       | Northeastern Primary | 49               | 78                  | 238                  |
|                                       | Northwestern         | 48               | 63                  |                      |
|                                       | Totals               |                  |                     |                      |
| <b>Rutland NE Supervisory Union</b>   |                      |                  |                     |                      |
|                                       | Barstow Normal       | 20               | 18                  | 250                  |
|                                       | Lothrop School       | 26               | 27                  |                      |
|                                       | Neshobe School       | 74               | 53                  |                      |
|                                       | Otter Creek          | 19               | 13                  |                      |
|                                       |                      |                  |                     |                      |
| <b>Slate Valley Supervisory Union</b> |                      |                  |                     |                      |
|                                       |                      |                  |                     |                      |

**Quality Care**

Vermont’s Steps Ahead Recognition System (STARS) is designed to promote the strengths that early educators bring to their work every day at early childhood education programs like interactions with children and families, staff training, and administrative practices. Through STARS, programs can receive a quality designation of 1 to 5 stars, with a 5-star designation being the highest quality recognition level a program can receive.

Since the 2016 Stalled at the Start report, Vermont has seen an increase in the number of high quality programs (rated 4 or 5 STARS).

*Table 10. Quality of Programs in Rutland County Ranked by STARS Updated January 2023<sup>35</sup>*

| <b>Ranking</b> | <b>Number of Providers</b> |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| N/A            | 1                          |
| 1 STARS        | 19                         |
| 2 STARS        | 4                          |
| 3 STARS        | 13                         |
| 4 STARS        | 25                         |
| 5 STARS        | 18                         |

Of the 80 licensed family and center based providers that serve infants, toddlers, and preschool age children in Rutland County, approximately 54% have achieved a 4 or 5 STAR rating and are considered high quality programs.

According to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, child care professionals they spoke to in the development of the child care chapter of the Regional Plan mentioned the increasing number of children in the region who struggle with mental health issues, behavioral issues, and/or disabilities. Children with these needs require specialized services that are not available at many child care facilities, especially in small towns with few providers to begin with.

### **Operating Hours and Schedules**

Beginning in 2022-2023, Rutland County Head Start transitioned to a School Year Schedule. Until that time the program operated with before and after care (8:00-5:00 p.m.) and during scheduled school breaks and summer. This program structure met the needs of many Rutland County Head-Start eligible families. However, the extended care program structure had a negative impact on staff and program quality. It was difficult to attract and retain quality staff. Further, staff turnover rates threatened the quality of the programming. This coupled with the workforce crisis following COVID-19 pandemic led the governing body to change the structure to a school day (8:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.) and school year calendar. Rutland County Head Start will continue to collect and evaluate

<sup>35</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023

community data and feedback from families and staff in order to develop programming to best serve the needs of the community. This section of the 2023 RCHS Community Assessment reviews the available data related to program schedules for early care in Rutland County.

- Of the 80 programs in Rutland County, 21 follow a school year only calendar (approximately 26%).
- 19 of the 21 programs that follow a school year calendar are pre-qualified pre-kindergarten programs.
- 20 of the 21 programs that follow a school year calendar are considered high quality and rank 4 to 5 STARS (one program is not yet rated). 40% of programs ranked at 4 STARS follow a school year calendar and approximately 56% of 5 STARS programs are school year only.
- Majority of programs within Rutland County open between 7:00am-8:00am and the majority close between 5:00-6:00 pm.
- Though 3 programs on the Vermont Child Care Provider Data show as open from 12:00am-11:59, the websites for 2 of the programs display different hours and one does not have a website. The chart below reflects the website information for those 2 programs.

*Table 11. STARS Ranking of Programs in Rutland County That Follow School Year Calendar Updated January 2023*<sup>36</sup>

| Ranking | Providers (SY Calendar) | Total Providers | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| N/A     | 1                       | 1               | 100%       |
| 4 STARS | 10                      | 25              | 40%        |
| 5 STARS | 10                      | 18              | 56%        |

*Table 12. Opening Hours for Programs in Rutland County*<sup>37</sup>

| Time Program Opens | Number of Programs |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 12:00am            | 1                  |
| 5:30am             | 3                  |

<sup>36</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023

<sup>37</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| 6:00am | 5  |
| 6:30am | 6  |
| 6:45am | 3  |
| 7:00am | 19 |
| 7:15am | 4  |
| 7:30am | 14 |
| 7:45am | 6  |
| 8:00am | 14 |
| 8:15am | 3  |
| 9:00am | 1  |

*Table 13. Closing Hours for Programs in Rutland County* <sup>38</sup>

| <b>Time Program Closes</b> | <b>Number of Programs</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12:00am                    | 1                         |
| 11:30am                    | 1                         |
| 11:45am                    | 1                         |
| 1:00pm                     | 2                         |
| 1:45pm                     | 1                         |
| 2:00pm                     | 1                         |
| 2:30pm                     | 6                         |
| 2:45pm                     | 4                         |

<sup>38</sup> Vermont Child Care Provider Data updated: January 20, 2023



|        |    |
|--------|----|
| 3:00pm | 6  |
| 3:15pm | 1  |
| 4:00pm | 3  |
| 4:30pm | 6  |
| 5:00pm | 19 |
| 5:15pm | 3  |
| 5:30pm | 14 |
| 6:00pm | 10 |

Programs, including both center based and registered homes, that provide infant and toddler care typically close after 4:00pm. Majority close between 4:30 pm and 5:00pm.

Of the 55 programs within Rutland County that close at 4:00pm or later, 50 provide infant and toddler care. As of the January 20, 2023 Vermont Child Care Provider Data report, these programs show 14 infant vacancies and 22 toddler vacancies.

### **Affordability**

*Stalled at the Start Vermont’s Child Care Challenge* from February 2022 identified that Vermont families can spend almost 30% of their annual income on child care, even with financial assistance. In contrast, the U.S. Agency of Health and Human Services’ Department for Children and Families recommends that families spend no more than 7% of their annual income on child care. There is a significant gap between what the federal government considers affordable and what families are actually paying for child care in Vermont. <sup>39</sup>

According to the Rutland Regional Plan adopted in 2018, affordable care for infants and toddlers (children under 2 years) is difficult to find throughout the region. This is due to the additional expenses required for infant care, as child care licensing regulations call for a lower provider to child ratio compared to preschool aged children. <sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Stalled at the Start [https://letsgrowkids.org/client\\_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf](https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Rutland Regional Plan, 2018 [https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Pubs\\_Plans\\_Reports/Act\\_174/RRPC/Rutland%20Regional%20Plan%20Adopted%20June%2019\\_%202018.pdf](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Pubs_Plans_Reports/Act_174/RRPC/Rutland%20Regional%20Plan%20Adopted%20June%2019_%202018.pdf)

Affordability is also an issue for early childhood educators. Vermont, like many other states, has been working to advance the quality of child care and early learning by supporting early childhood educators in advancing their skills and education. Vermont child care licensing regulations and Head Start performance standards require specific staff qualifications based on staff role and program size. However, the average annual salary for an early childhood educator is far lower than the average annual salary for a Vermont kindergarten teacher, though the qualifications are similar.

The Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) pays a higher rate on behalf of families based on the number of stars the program has earned. The rate for a 4 star program is set at the 75th percentile of the Market Rate Survey.

Over time, CCFAP’s reimbursement rates have not kept pace with the cost of child care due to program funding constraints. This leaves a gap between financial assistance payments and the current market rates for child care programs. It means that a family eligible for 100% financial assistance may still have a co-pay for their child care provider, often making early care and learning unaffordable. Weekly child care rates for both registered homes and licensed centers in Rutland County tend to run less than the Vermont average rates, but lower median household income in the county means that a higher percentage of a family’s income goes to pay for child care than in other areas of Vermont.

In comparison to the 75th percentile of statewide market rates the child care programs in the Rutland AHS district rates are lower. According to the 2019 Vermont Child Care Market Rate Survey and Cost of Care Report, Rutland County is amongst the lowest for both infant and preschool rates across the state.

*Table 14: Rutland County Child Care Rates 2019 compared to 2017 <sup>41</sup>*

|                          | 2019     | 2017     | Percentage Increased |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|
| <b>Licensed Provider</b> |          |          |                      |
| Infant                   | \$250.00 | \$212.50 | 18%                  |
| Toddler                  | \$250.00 | \$200.00 | 25%                  |
| Preschool                | \$202.25 | \$197.50 | 2%                   |

<sup>41</sup> 2019 Vermont Child Care Market Rate Survey and Cost of Care Report, Department of Children and Families

|                        |          |          |     |
|------------------------|----------|----------|-----|
| School Age (Part Time) | \$120.00 | \$100.00 | 20% |
| School Age (Full Time) | \$182.50 | \$161.25 | 13% |
| <b>Registered Home</b> |          |          |     |
| Infant                 | \$196.25 | \$175.00 | 12% |
| Toddler                | \$175.00 | \$167.25 | 5%  |
| Preschool              | \$175.00 | \$160.00 | 9%  |
| School Age (Part Time) | \$110.63 | \$100.00 | 11% |
| School Age (Full Time) | \$167.50 | \$153.75 | 9%  |

**Teacher Salaries for Private vs. Public PreK Programs**

“In particular, early childhood education experts have warned about the implications of disparities in salary and benefits between public school educators and private school educators (Ackerman et al., 2009; Barnett & Kasmin, 2017; Chaudry, 2017; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016). PreK teachers who work for public schools typically receive substantially higher salaries and better benefits than PreK teachers who work for private centers. In theory, this puts public schools in a better position to attract and retain the best and most experienced teachers... (Ackerman et al., 2009; Chaudry, 2017).”<sup>42</sup>

**Kindergarten Readiness**

Since 2000, Vermont has gathered information on the readiness of children entering kindergarten by surveying kindergarten teachers about students’ knowledge and skills within the first six to ten weeks of school. The table below shows the percentage of children in each of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for RCHS who are deemed “kindergarten ready” as a percentage of all children entering kindergarten.

The 2016-2017 school year marked the deployment of the new *Ready for Kindergarten! Survey* (KRS), with changes in scoring methods, and criteria used for identification of students “ready.” The new survey also includes new and revised questions, including six in the Physical Development and Health domain. The KRS is not a direct assessment of

<sup>42</sup> Source: Prekindergarten Education Study: Final Report (2018) Subtitle: Act 11 (Special Session) of 2018, Section E.500.7  
<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-legislative-report-act-11-prek-evaluation-final-report.pdf>

children; rather, it relies on the accumulated observational knowledge the teacher has developed about the child during the first few weeks of kindergarten. It is also important to take into consideration the impact of COVID-19.

Of the Rutland County LEAs, Rutland City Public Schools reports the lowest percentage of children who were “ready” for kindergarten. At 62%, Rutland City School District also has the second highest percentage of surveyed children eligible for Free and Reduce Lunch (FRL) statewide.

*Table 15. Rutland County LEA Percentage of Public School Students Deemed Kindergarten “Ready”<sup>43</sup>*

|                                      | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bennington-Rutland SU                | 88.89%    | 87.18%    | 88.00%    |
| Greater Rutland County SU            | 83.33%    | 85.84%    | 76.00%    |
| Mill River Unified SU                | 78.18%    | 69.57%    | 88.00%    |
| Rutland Northeast SU                 | 76.27%    | 84.85%    | 82.00%    |
| Rutland City SD                      | 68.53%    | 76.23%    | 71.00%    |
| Slate Valley Unified School District | 84.21%    | 90.16%    | 95.00%    |

<sup>43</sup> Vermont Agency of Education, Statewide Report on Kindergarten Readiness, Ready For Kindergarten! Survey 2019-2012, 2020-2021, 2021-2022

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## Section 4: Children with Disabilities

*The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1302.11(b)(i)(c): Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;*

### Special Education Child Count Data

This section will present the most recent data associated with special education in Vermont. The data accounts for children receiving Part B Services of Individuals with Education Act (IDEA) (ages birth through age 2) and IDEA, Part C (ages 3 through age 5 / up to 21 ).

Special education in Rutland County is managed through Supervisory Unions and delivered through public school districts. Rutland County has 7 Supervisory Unions (listed below).

### Note on Special Education Data for Rutland County

The Vermont Agency of Education website/ report on special education counts for young children has not been updated since the last Community Assessment Data (2015, VAE Child Count). The declining population in Rutland County, State Funded Pre-K availability, and COVID-19 impact likely had effects on the number of young children receiving special education services under Part C and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Part C services are for eligible infants and toddlers (0-3 years) and Part B special education services are provided to eligible preschoolers (3-5 years).

The Office of Special Education for all of Vermont reported an increase in infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services under IDEA, Part C (from 2.95% in 2014-15 to 3.7% in 2019-20. Children receiving Part B (ages 3-21) increased from 8.85% in 2014-15 to 9.86% in 2019-20

The Office of Special Education reported child count data for all Vermont preschoolers receiving individualized education plans. Table 16 presents the state-wide data disaggregated by ages under Part B of IDEA. A total of 1,361 preschoolers (ages 3-5) have IEPs. The majority of preschoolers (ages 3-5) receive special education in a regular early childhood program (N=935) followed by receiving special education services in their home (N=112). A scant number receiving special education in a separate special education class (N=5) or separate school (N=6).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Blog 2022  
<https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2021/04/osep-releases-fast-facts-on-part-c-and-b-new-data-files-and-part-b-per-sonnel/> SY 2020-21 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS089; Data group 613) Date: 07/07/2021

Table 16. Number of 3, 4, and 5 year-olds in Vermont Receiving Special Education Services <sup>45</sup>

| Description  | 3 year-olds | 4 year-olds | 5 year-olds | All Ages Total |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Total number of children with IEPs   | 454         | 689         | 218         | 1,361          |
| a1. Number of children attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program | 274         | 502         | 159         | 935            |
| b1. Number of children attending separate special education class  | 4           | 1           | 0           | 5              |
| b2. Number of children attending separate school   | 2           | 4           | 0           | 6              |
| b3. Number of children attending residential facility  | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0              |
| c1. Number of children receiving special education and related services in the home  | 45          | 46          | 21          | 112            |

Table 17. Infants and Toddler Receiving Services in Vermont <sup>46</sup>

| Number of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who primarily receive early intervention services in the home or community-based settings | Total number of Infants and toddlers with IFSPs | FFY 2019 Data | FFY 2020 Target |
|---|---|---------------|-----------------|
| 873   | 899   | 96.49%        | 97.30%          |

<sup>45</sup> Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Blog 2022  
<https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2021/04/osep-releases-fast-facts-on-part-c-and-b-new-data-files-and-part-b-per-sonnel/>

<sup>46</sup> SY 2020-21 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS089; Data group 613) Date: 07/07/2021

## Disability Categories

**Table 18. Percent of Children with Disabilities (IDEA) by Disability Categories, ages 3-5<sup>47</sup>**

| Disability Category           | Vermont State | Nationwide |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Autism                        | 2.3%          | 8.9%       |
| Deaf-blindness                | 0%            | 0%         |
| Developmental delay           | 93.7%         | 37         |
| Emotional disturbance         | .1%           | .4%        |
| Hearing impairment            | .2%           | 1.2%       |
| Intellectual disability       | .1%           | 1.9%       |
| Multiple disabilities         | .5%           | 1.1%       |
| Orthopedic impairment         | 0%            | .8%        |
| Other health impairment       | 1.3%          | 3.1%       |
| Specific learning disability  | .2%           | 1.4%       |
| Speech or language impairment | 1.5%          | 43.7%      |
| Traumatic brain injury        | 0%            | .1%        |
| Visual impairment             | .1%           | .4%        |

The Vermont Agency of Education website/ report on special education counts for young children has not been updated since the last Community Assessment Data (2015, VAE Child Count). Table 18 reflects IDEA 2014 Child Count data and was published in 2016.

### How IDEA Part B and Part C Services Are Delivered in Vermont

All Vermont school districts have Essential Early Education (EEE) programs. This statewide program coordinates early childhood special education services for children aged three to five. Services are administered by local school districts in conjunction with local early childhood service providers to ensure inclusive educational environments.

<sup>47</sup><https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-data-vermont-state-special-education-pro file-2016.pdf>

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Most of the children who receive early special education services do so in a typical preschool or child care setting.

RCCHS has formal agreements with all Rutland County supervisory unions and school districts to coordinate disability services (and kindergarten transition). Additionally, RCCHS participates in the Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Program of the Vermont Department for Children and Families. CIS brings parents and professionals together to identify areas where young children may need additional support.



## Section 5: Characteristics of Head Start Children

*The purpose of this section is to meet the requirements of 1302.11(b)(i): Data regarding the education, health nutrition and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families; the education, health, nutrition and social service needs of Head Start eligible children and their families as defined by families of Head Start eligible children and institutions in the community that service young children.*

### Age Distribution

The percentage of children age 4 served by RCHS in 2021-2022 is higher than other Head Start programs nationally (37 percent), based on the Head Start Program Fact Sheet 2021 (U.S. Administration for Children and Families).

*Table 19. Child Age Distribution of RCHS at Time of Enrollment / Entry (2021-2022)<sup>48</sup>*

| Age                     | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------|--------|------------|
| Age 3                   | 27     | 36%        |
| Age 4                   | 39     | 52%        |
| Age 5                   | 9      | 12%        |
| Total Actual Enrollment | 75     | 100%       |

### Family Educational Characteristics

The majority of RCHS families have at least one parent or guardian with a high school diploma or GED.

*Table 20. Educational Characteristics of RCHS Families 2021-2022 <sup>49</sup>*

| Type of Degree  | # of families |
|---|---------------|
| An advanced degree or baccalaureate degree              | 7             |
| An associate degree, vocational school, or some college | 10            |

<sup>48</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

<sup>49</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report (not all families disclosed educational information)

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| A high school graduate or GED  | 57 |
| Less than high school graduate | 5  |

Because county educational data is only available at the individual level and not aggregated by family, it is difficult to determine how RCHS parents compare countywide, however.

*Table 21. Educational Attainment for Rutland County*<sup>50</sup>

| Type of Degree  | % of Population |
|---|-----------------|
| An advanced degree or baccalaureate degree              | 29%             |
| An associate degree, vocational school, or some college | 29%             |
| A high school graduate or GED                           | 34%             |
| Less than high school graduate                          | 7%              |

### Typical Work, School, and Training Schedules of Parents

*Table 22. Typical Work, School, and Training Schedules of Parents with Eligible Children (1302.12iii)*<sup>51</sup>

| Location   | Data Type | 2015-2019 | 2016-2020 | 2017-2021 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Children under age 6 with all available parents in the labor force in Rutland County | Percent   | 72.9%     | 75.3%     | 79.4%     |

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 Estimates

<sup>51</sup>

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8503-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force?loc=47&loct=5#detailed/5/6808/false/1692,880/any/17161>

Table 23. Parental Employment Status at Time of Child Enrollment (2022) <sup>52</sup>

|   | Number of Families at Start of Enrollment | Number of Families at End of Enrollment |
|---|---|---|
| At least one parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school | 41  | 39                                      |
| Neither/no parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school   | 28  | 30                                      |

At enrollment for 2021-2022, two families had at least one parent/guardian who is a member of the United States military on active duty and one family with a parent/guardian who is a veteran of the United States military.

### Health Indicators

**Overview.** Nationally, the 2022 National Kids Count Data reportive positive trends in child well being. The state to state comparison of overall child well being reports Vermont in the category of “best” overall well being in the U.S. and ranked number 5 in the country. The report underscored that the national data masks variations in child well-being. The health data reported for children in Vermont similarly masked the variability among demographic groups within the state. In a state to state comparison Vermont ranks in the “best” category at the 3rd best ranking in the U.S. Disaggregated Vermont Health and Well Being Data is presented in this section for Vermont Adults and children.

**Mental Health.** Generally Vermont residents have comparable health indicators as national averages (about 1 in 6 report poor mental health). However, among the demographic of families served, particularly the experience of living in poverty, there exists great disparities in Quality of Life and Mental health. In 2021 Vermonts with Poor Mental Health for high income individuals is 11%. In contrast, 33% of individuals with incomes less than \$25,000 annually experience mental health problems. Rutland County reports 16% poor mental health, a similar proportion of all Vermont Counties

*“Mental health can’t be separated out from cognitive development, language development, and social competence. They all have their roots early on in either a sturdy or weak foundation” Jack P. Shonkoff, Director, Harvard Center for the Developing Child.” Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., Director, Harvard Center for the Developing Child*

<sup>52</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

Table 24. Mental Health Disparities in Vermont Adults by Demographic Characteristic <sup>53</sup>

| Comparison Data / Mental Health Disparities in Rutland County* |     |                 |     |
|--|-----|-----------------|-----|
| Women  | 13% | Men             | 8%  |
| High School or Less  | 21% | College or More | 9%  |
| Income < 25K   | 33% | Income > 75K    | 11% |
| LGBTQ+   | 31% | Non- LGBTQ+     | 14% |
| Disability   | 10% | No Disability   | 33% |

\*NOTE: Poor mental health defined as 14+ days in the last 30 where mental health self-reported as not good.

According to the 2021 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, one quarter of Vermont adults report being told they have depressive disorder. Vermont's reported rates of depressive disorder are significantly higher than national (25% vs 19%).

Table 25. Depressive Disorder in Vermont Adults by Demographic Characteristic <sup>54</sup>

| Comparison Data / Depression Disorder Disparities in Rutland County* |     |               |     |
|--|-----|---------------|-----|
| Women  | 31% | Men           | 20% |
| Income < 25K   | 43% | Income > 75K  | 22% |
| LGBTQ+   | 45% | Non- LGBTQ+   | 23% |
| Disability   | 43% | No Disability | 20% |

<sup>53</sup> Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Report, <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSI-BRFSS-2021-DataSummary.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Report, <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSI-BRFSS-2021-DataSummary.pdf>

## Health Conditions in Vermont

Disaggregated data on health conditions among adults and children in Vermont illuminate the concerning trends correlating income level with incidence of health conditions. From an ecological view of parenting and child development, costs, stress, and access complicate and hinder family stability, quality of life, and service needs. Social determinants of health is a term that describes social, economic, and physical conditions in which people live that may affect their health. Studies have shown that growing up in poverty (affecting over 15 million children in the U.S.) has serious implications and life long effects on children's physical and mental health. Health data described in this section, has implications for Rutland County Head Start's families and children. This includes family stabilization, school readiness, and far-reaching effects on health, mental health, and quality of life. Further, the dynamic and cumulative harm associated with growing up in poverty shows that poor children are more likely exposed to multiple adversities and trauma including parent incarceration, domestic violence, housing instability, household substance abuse, and discrimination. This impairs parental capacity and ability to provide a secure base and resiliency buffering associated with a safe, stable, responsive, and nurturing environment for children. These circumstances during the first five years of life are associated with changes in early brain development and lifelong outcomes.<sup>55</sup>

- **Asthma.** Adults: One in eight Vermont adults currently have asthma (12%), statistically higher than the 10% of U.S. adults. According to the 2021 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Report, the greatest disparity in asthma rates among adults in Vermont is between(a) individuals with and without disabilities (19% and 9%) , and (b) low and high income adults (11 % and 18% respectively). [Note: cost burden on families with increased health problems. rates related to social determinants but also related to access issues (i.e., medicare less likely to refer to specialists. poverty and medications that control conditions?)
- **Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes.** At 9%, Vermont adults have lower rates of diabetes than all U.S. adults (11%). The rate of diabetes in Vermont adults is more than twice as high as the U.S. average. Prediabetes has similar rates in Vermont with 9% of adults reporting having pre-diabetes. There is a significant difference between lower and in higher income Vermont adults:
  - Diabetes. <25K Income VT (15%) compared to >75K Income VT (7%)
  - Pre-Diabetes <25K Income VT (15%) compared to >75K Income VT (6%)

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<sup>55</sup> Francis L, DePriest K, Wilson M, Gross D. Child Poverty, Toxic Stress, and Social Determinants of Health: Screening and Care Coordination. Online J Issues Nurs. 2018 Sep;23(3):2. doi: 10.3912/OJIN.Vol23No03Man02. Epub 2018 Sep 30. PMID: 31427855; PMCID: PMC6699621.

- **Obesity.** In the 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report for Rutland County Head Start, 14 students were considered overweight (BMI at or above 85th percentile and below 95th percentile for child's age and sex) and 10 children were considered obese (BMI at or above 95th percentile for child's age and sex)<sup>56</sup>. The 2020 Weight Status Among Infants and Children in WIC report show 17.5% of children in Rutland County are considered overweight and 15.5% are considered obese. Statewide, the WIC report shows 16.3% are considered overweight and 13.5% are considered obese. This report states the prevalence of obesity increases among children with lower socioeconomic status and obesity increases slightly in older children when broken down by age group.<sup>57</sup>

Of the 69 families receiving RCHS services during 2021-2022 (this includes families who dropped out during the program year), 9 families reported receiving services under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

### **Primary Health Care Access** <sup>58</sup>

- According to the County Health Rankings in 2017, the rate of people without medical insurance had decreased to 6% from 11% in 2008. The Vermont Department of Health, however, also specifies the number of people who are under-insured which plays a role in access to care.
- The VDH 2018 Health Assessment states that 27% of people under 65 with private insurance in Vermont were under-insured because of high deductible plans, uncovered care, or both.
- On a positive note, 99% of children in Vermont have health insurance.
- The primary care ratio is high compared to that of other counties in Vermont, with 1330 people to one provider.

### **Dental Care**

Dental care availability in Rutland County has increased in recent years, however, a significant percentage of low income residents in Rutland County either do not have access to preventive, primary, or specialty dental care, or do not seek it out.

- Rutland celebrated the opening of Community Kids Dental in 2022. As of Winter 2023, Community Kids Dental does not have a dedicated pediatric dentist.

<sup>56</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

<sup>57</sup><https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/cyf-WIC-Infant-Child-Weight-2020April-Final.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> Rutland Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment 2021

- Access to dental care is a concern: it is estimated that only 57% of the population has dental insurance.<sup>59</sup>
- For Rutland area children, in 2017, 129 (7%) Medicaid enrolled children aged 1- 5 years were treated for extractions, endodontics or restorations.
- The percentage of children treated in an office in Rutland is significantly lower than the rest of Vermont, as is the percentage of children treated in any setting.<sup>60</sup>
- 60% of Rutland Medicaid– enrolled children aged 2-5 received dental services by a dental provider in 2017.
- Poverty has a significant impact on a child’s oral health. Children eligible for the national school lunch program are more likely to have tooth decay.<sup>61</sup>
- Parent/guardian’s oral health has a significant impact on a child’s oral health. Children whose parents/guardians have lost three or more teeth due to dental disease are more likely to have tooth decay.
- About one-third of Vermont’s children have experienced tooth decay. Although Vermont’s children have less tooth decay than the general U.S. population, too many still suffer from this preventable disease.
- Rutland County Head Start children receive dental support through a Tooth Tutor, which is a grant funded program through Delta Dental.

## Medical Conditions <sup>62</sup>

- Rutland Hospital Service Area has the highest hospitalization rates for asthma complications for all age groups, more than twice that of the statewide rate (14.4 compared to 6.3 per 10,000).
- Rutland also has the highest prevalence of current asthma for both adults and children (14%) compared with the rest of the state, at 11% and 12%, respectively.
- The Department of Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Rutland County Profile shows Rutland with a statistically significant number of people with asthma and COPD (19.2%) compared to the state rate (15.7%)
- Rutland County rates for cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes are all above the state rate.
- The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) illustrates that the majority of Rutland County residents do not meet daily aerobic exercise recommendations and that 21% of adults smoke cigarettes. These are two behaviors that contribute to poor health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease.
- The VDH also indicates that hypertension, arthritis, and obesity (age 20+) rates in Rutland County are all statistically significant when compared to state rates.

<sup>59</sup> Rutland Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment 2021

<sup>60</sup> Oral Health in Rutland Office of Local Health and Vermont: June 2019

<sup>61</sup> Keep Smiling Vermont The Oral Health of Vermont’s Children 2016–2017

<sup>62</sup> Rutland Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment 2021

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- Depressive disorder, falls in older Vermonters, skin cancer, and asthma rates are also trending in the wrong direction as we look at overall community health.

### **Mental Health**

- Community Care Network provided 178,296 hours of service to 3,094 clients across the functional service areas of Developmental Disabilities Services, Substance Use Disorders Treatment, Community Rehabilitation and Treatment, Adult Behavioral Health Services, Child and Family Services and Mental Health Crisis Services.<sup>63</sup>
- Community Care Network implemented a new, 24-hour a day, 7-day a week Crisis Text Line via support from the Vermont Community Foundation to allow for even greater accessibility and levels of comfort among those seeking assistance during a mental health emergency.

### **Substance Use<sup>64</sup>**

- The preliminary 2021 opioid-related accidental and undetermined fatal overdose data show an increase in opioid-related fatal overdoses. At this time, data shows a 33% increase from 158 deaths in 2020 to 210 in 2021.
- The percentage of fentanyl involvement continues to increase. Fentanyl was involved in 93% of opioid-related deaths in 2021. Cocaine was involved in 48% of opioid-related fatal overdoses in 2021. Involvement of methamphetamine also increased to 10%. Heroin involvement in opioid-related fatal overdoses decreased dramatically from 25% in 2020 to 10% in 2021.
- Rutland and Windham counties have the highest rates of opioid-related fatal overdoses compared to the state rate, but it is not significantly different than the state rate.
- Orleans, Bennington, Rutland statistically higher rates of alcohol-attributed deaths per 10,000 than Vermont overall. In Vermont, alcohol-related deaths have increased 59% for people ages 35-49 between 2017 and 2021 although more people aged 65+ died than any other age group. Men are more likely than women to have an alcohol-related death.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Community Care Network 2022 Impact Report

<sup>64</sup> Opioid-Related Fatal Overdoses Among Vermonters April 2022

<sup>65</sup> Alcohol-Related Deaths Among Vermonters January 2023



## Free and Reduced Lunch

Rutland County has a higher percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch than the state average, which was 37% percent in 2021-2022. The table below shows free and reduced lunch data at the school district/supervisory union level in Rutland County. The primary service area for RCHS, Rutland City, has the highest concentration of population in the county and has the highest FRL eligibility rate in the county.

Per the Vermont Agency of Education Annual Statistical Report on Percent of Students Approved for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, in school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, meals have been free to all students, using USDA waivers. However, schools have been instructed to carry over student eligibility for free and reduced meals from the school year 2019-2020 for students who remain enrolled, unless new information is available. Schools have also continued to receive direct certification information and to collect new applications from newly enrolled students and for households whose economic status has changed. Even though meals are free to all students, there is some incentive for households to submit applications so that they can become eligible for the Pandemic-EBT benefit.

Table 26. Rutland County School District Free and Reduced Lunch 2021-2022 <sup>66</sup>

| School District                            | Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch |
|--|--|
| Bennington-Rutland SU                      | 39%                                      |
| Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union   | 34%                                      |
| Rutland City School District               | 64%                                      |
| Rutland Northeast SU                       | 45%                                      |
| Mill River Unified SU                      | 43%                                      |
| Slate Valley Unified Union School District | 41%                                      |

<sup>66</sup> Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Annual Statistical Report, Percent of Students Approved for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, School Year 2021 – 2022

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## Domestic Issues <sup>67</sup>

- Since 1994, Chittenden and Rutland Counties have had the largest percentage of domestic violence homicides – each of those two counties account for 17% of all domestic violence-related homicides. However, the population of Chittenden County is nearly three times larger, approximately 168,865 as compared to 60,591 in Rutland, according to 2021 census data.
- In 2021, there were 435 Relief from Abuse (RFAs) filed in Rutland County. 247 temporary orders were granted and 84 final orders were granted.
- Rutland County had the 2nd highest rate of RFAs in 2021, second only to Chittenden County.
- NewStory Center reported a 36% increase from 2021 to 2022 in the number of people served.
- NewStory Center reported 8,013 bednights; survivors were housed in their residential shelter as well as local motels.
- NewStory Center fielded 497 calls via their 24/7 crisis hotline, providing emotional support, information, and referrals. <sup>68</sup>

The table below shows the total number of child safety interventions, investigations, and substantiated investigations for Rutland County. Notably, the Child Protection Line for reporting concerns about a child’s safety and well-being, saw a 22% decrease in calls between 2019 and 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic which saw the shutdown of schools, child cares, and other in-person social services. The Child Protection Line received 2,785 more calls in 2021 compared to 2020; the Department for Children and Families attributes this increase to the return to “normal operations” since the pandemic began. In 2021, 75% of reported calls came from mandated reporters, with educators making approximately 29% of reports (the largest category of calls made by mandated reporters).

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<sup>67</sup>Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Statistical Report Recommendations and Trends 2022

<sup>68</sup> NewStory Center Annual Report FY2022

Table 27. Child Safety and Well Being: Interventions & Outcomes- Rutland District 2017-2021 <sup>69</sup>

| Calendar Year                     | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total Child Safety Interventions: | 573  | 525  | 486  | 370  | 472  |
| Investigations                    | 324  | 302  | 279  | 173  | 187  |
| Assessments                       | 249  | 223  | 207  | 197  | 285  |
| Child Abuse Assessments           | 146  | 122  | 132  | 115  | 165  |
| Family Assessments                | 103  | 101  | 75   | 82   | 120  |
| <b>Outcomes of Interventions</b>  |      |      |      |      |      |
| Investigations Substantiated      | 65   | 66   | 68   | 48   | 55   |
| Cases Opened for Services         | 103  | 105  | 90   | 64   | 113  |

### Public Assistance

Ten (10) out of 69 RCHS families received public assistance such as TANF or SSI in 2021-2022. Twenty-Six (26) families received services benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly referred to as Food Stamps.

Six (6) families with 6 children were homeless at some time during the 2021-2022 program year; 8 families acquired housing during that period.<sup>70</sup>

The table below shows the number of Rutland County families receiving ReachUp and 3SquaresVt (food stamps) assistance in December 2022. There has been little change year to year.

<sup>69</sup> 2021 Rutland District Office

<https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/FSD/Reports/CP-RUTLAND.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

Table 28: Rutland County Reach Up & 3SquaresVT December 2022 <sup>71</sup>

|            | Families Households | Recipients | Children Under 18 | Benefits % |
|------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| ReachUp    | 430                 | 1,055      | 755               | 12%        |
| 3SquaresVT | 5,23                | 8,660      | 2,490             | 12%        |

### Head Start Services Requested from RCHS Families

The table below summarizes the family support services requested and received by RCHS families during the 2021-2022 school year.

Table 29. Family Support Services Requested by RCHS Families 2021-2022 <sup>72</sup>

| Services Requested   | # Families |
|--|------------|
| Emergency/crisis intervention such as meeting immediate needs for food, clothing, or shelter | 1          |
| Mental Health services   | 29         |
| Housing assistance such as subsidies, utilities, repairs, etc.                               | 5          |
| Job Training   | 0          |
| Adult education such as GED  | 7          |
| Child abuse and neglect services (referrals)   | 0          |
| Substance Abuse prevention/treatment   | 0          |
| Domestic violence services   | 0          |
| Health education (medical and oral health, nutrition, tobacco use)                           | 64         |
| Parenting Education  | 54         |

<sup>71</sup> Vermont Economic Services Division ReachUp/3SquaresVT Families, Recipients and Benefits December 2022

<sup>72</sup> 2021-2022 Head Start Program Information Report

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|  |
|--|
| <b>Number of families receiving at least one service</b> |
|--|

|           |
|-----------|
| <b>38</b> |
|-----------|

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## Section 6: Strengths of Community and Community Resources

*The purpose of this section is to meet the requirement of 1302.11(b)(v & vi): Resources in the community that could be used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and their families and; strengths of the community.*

### **Strengths of Community**

Rutland County is a vibrant part of Vermont state, with beautiful rural landscapes, lakes, and an active downtown area within Rutland City. Many small towns in the region host a variety of community events, where families and community members gather, such as town wide sales, cookoffs, shopping, town meeting days, holiday celebrations, arts events and concerts. Schools are community hubs and host a plethora of events, including club activities and sports.

Farmers markets throughout the region are major strengths of our community, as they bring community members and partners (such as WIC) together and provide access to locally produced food and goods, even throughout the winter.

Green Up Days in Rutland County bring out a ton of community members and families who show their care for their community by keeping it clean and beautiful.

The availability of services and resources in Rutland County are also incredible strengths within our community.

RCHS partners with numerous government and community agencies to support the needs of low income families and children.

### **Government**

The primary conduit for social services support is the Vermont Agency of Human Services- Department for Children and Families district office in Rutland City. Services include the following:

- **Child Development Division.** The Child Development Division's goal is to increase accessibility to high-quality child care and child development services by working with programs within communities to coordinate and deliver services that meet families' needs.
- **Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS).** The Vermont Office of Disability Determination Services determines the eligibility of Vermonters who apply for disability benefits under Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). DDS also determines the medical eligibility of Vermonters who apply for Medicaid based on having a disability.
- **Family Services Division (FSD).** The mission of the Family Services Division is to protect children and strengthen families, in partnership with families and communities. FSD works with thousands of Vermont families who are struggling and need help to keep their children safe.
- **Office of Child Support (OCS).** OCS is the state agency responsible for establishing, collecting upon, enforcing, and modifying support orders for children who do not live with both parents. OCS helps to establish parentage; establish an order for child and medical support; modify or enforce an existing order for child and medical support; make support payments to the custodial parent; and locate a missing noncustodial parent.
- **Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).** The OEO administers the Federal Community Services Block Grant through five Community Action Agencies that provide direct services to nearly 40,000 Vermonters, including emergency food shelves, emergency housing assistance, employment counseling and search, and health and nutrition services.

## Community Resources

Throughout Rutland County, numerous private organizations work in an integrated fashion to address the often complex needs of low-income families. These include:

- Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC)- employment, housing, education
- Castleton Cares- food program
- Child Care Support Services of Rutland County- child care subsidy assistance
- Child First Advocacy Center- prevention, intervention, treatment of child abuse
- Children's Integrated Services- early intervention, family support services, prevention services
- Early Childhood Clinical Services (Rutland Mental Health Services)- mental health services
- Easterseals- family support, development screenings, early intervention
- Evergreen Substance Abuse Center (Rutland Mental Health Services)- substance use

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resources

- Everyone Eats- food program
- Fair Haven Concerned- food program, supplies
- First Step Pregnancy Clinic- medical services, childbirth education
- Hireability (previously Voc Rehab)- employment and career development
- Homeless Prevention Center- housing and rental assistance
- Housing Trust of Rutland County- housing and rental assistance
- Marble Valley Lions Club - assistance with Eyeglasses
- Neighborworks of Western Vermont- housing assistance, heating assistance
- NewStory Center- emergency shelter services for domestic violence victims
- Open Door Mission- emergency shelter, clothing, supplies
- Pat's Place- clothing for children and adults
- Pawlet Community Church - food program
- Pittsford Food Shelf- food program
- Planned Parenthood- medical services, childbirth education
- Poultney Public Library- free family movie nights, hat/toys/craft supplies swaps
- Restorative Justice Center -Rutland County- restorative crime response
- Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association- medical services, childbirth education
- Rutland Community Cupboard- food program
- Rutland County Eats- food program
- Rutland County Free Clinic- free adult health/dental clinic
- Rutland County Parent-Child Center- early intervention, food and housing resources, parent education
- Rutland Housing Authority - housing and rental assistance
- Rutland Regional Medical Center- medical services, mental health services
- Salvation Army- food program, utility assistance, clothing assistance
- Turning Point Recovery Center- substance use resources
- United Way of Rutland County- assistance with community resources
- Vermont 2-1-1- assistance with community resources including housing, utilities, education, employment, health care, mental health
- Vermont Achievement Center- child care support services, therapy pool
- Vermont Catholic Charities- housing assistance, food assistance, utility assistance, counseling services
- VT Dept of Health- medical services, mental health services
- VT Dept of Labor- employment assistance
- West Ridge Center for Addiction and Recovery- substance use resources
- WIC
- WSYB Christmas Fund- holiday assistance



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## **Early Childhood Mental Health Services**

Rutland County Head Start and Rutland Mental Health Services' Early Childhood Team continue to operate with greater levels of collaboration and integration. The direct service program provides experienced Case Managers and Therapeutic Support Specialists to support children's therapeutic goals. This staff works in partnership with Rutland County Head Start to serve the most challenged families and young children of Rutland County. Early Childhood Mental Health consultants serve the Head Start program with an array of basic observations, specialized observations geared toward helping children with intensive needs, and overall support for Head Start teachers.

The Early Childhood Team provides consultation and training to Rutland County Head Start. For 2021-2022, 46% of enrolled children were served with clinical services at Head Start. Mental Health Support services include (a) psychotherapy and clinical support to families and children, (b) case management and coordination, and (c) in-class therapeutic support to children. These services help address the behavioral and mental health initiatives underway in the program. As mentioned earlier in this report, since COVID-19, Rutland County Head Start teachers anecdotally report an increase in children's behavioral and mental health challenges. This is consistent with recent research and reports from other Head Start and Education programs. The teaching teams are in need of intensive and specialized support to meet the education, kindergarten-readiness goals of the Head Start.