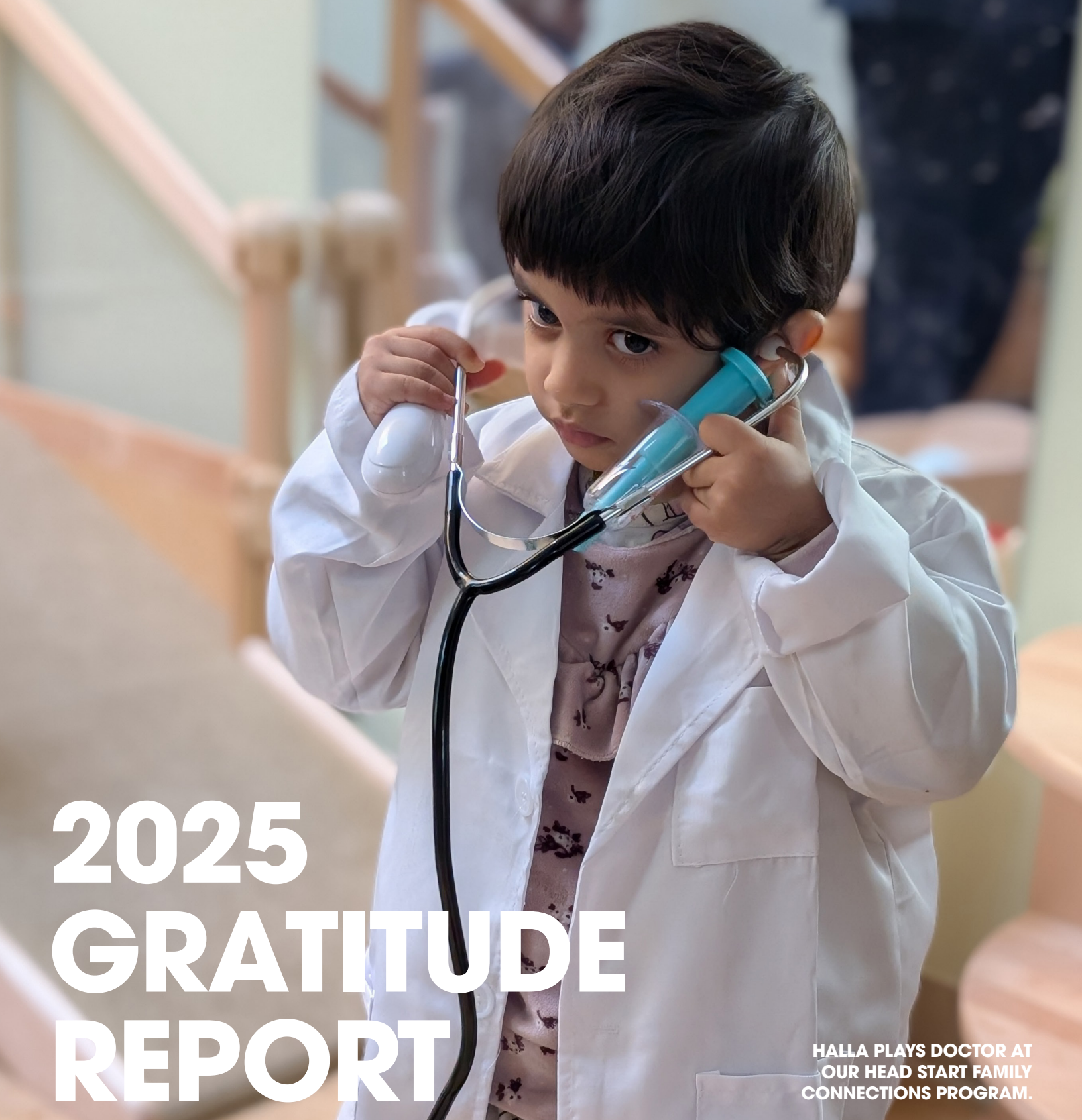




2025 GRATITUDE REPORT

HALLA PLAYS DOCTOR AT
OUR HEAD START FAMILY
CONNECTIONS PROGRAM.

SPARKING CHANGE



Dear Friends,

We are at another crossroads in our society—a time when things not only diverge, but fragment and risk coming apart. Our experience at CVOEO tells us something different, something deeper. It is a story of collective goodwill, care for one another, and a shared strength that holds us together.

In this Gratitude Report, you will see growth—in programs and in impact. We know that those in need are more than just numbers served—we see the faces, listen to the cries, and receive the words of thanks. **Every human emotion and connection draws us closer together in community.**

This past year at CVOEO, we took on a new family shelter, opened an additional domestic violence shelter, and moved our community action office and Food Hub in Addison County to a better location. We expanded our Burlington Food Shelf and Community Resource Center, opened a 26-bed warming shelter, laid the foundation for a new recovery shelter, and began planning for a new food shelf and food hub in Burlington's South End.

These efforts are possible because of your support and our shared belief in what we can achieve.

This year of service is not behind us—it lives in each moment we build upon, day by day. We move forward with gratitude and courage, carrying our collective voice and hope into the year ahead, confident that **together we will meet any challenge, move any obstacle, restore lost hope, and be a spark of light and change—today and tomorrow.**



Thank you,

Paul Dragon

Paul Dragon, Executive Director

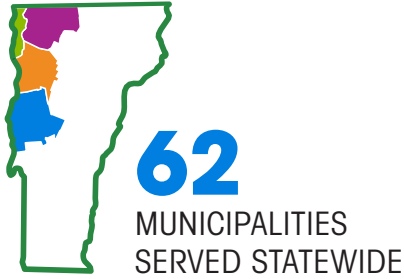
Our Programs

- Champlain Place Emergency Shelter
- Community Action Network
- Community Resource Center
- Feeding Champlain Valley
- Financial Futures Programs
- Foundations Family Shelter
- Champlain Valley Head Start
- Housing Advocacy Programs
- Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion
- Samaritan House
- Voices Against Violence
- Champlain Valley Weatherization

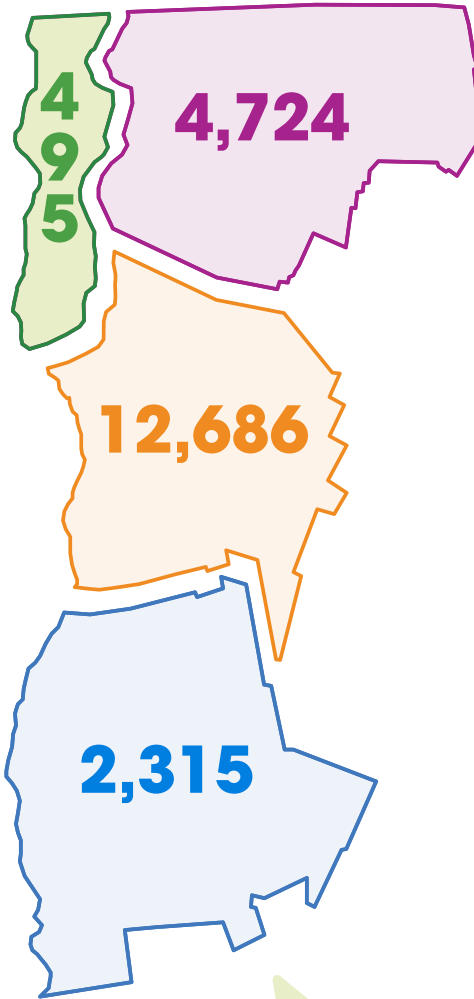
Keep reading to learn about these programs or visit cvoeo.org for more.



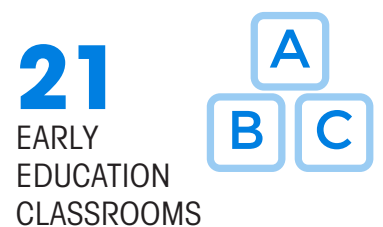
The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity addresses fundamental issues of economic, social, racial, and environmental justice and works with people to achieve economic independence.



21,748
INDIVIDUALS SERVED IN 2025



+1,528
STATEWIDE



EMERGENCY SUPPORT & ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

Over the course of 2025, **4,588 Vermonters experienced homelessness, including more than 1,000 children and 269 seniors.** 27.46% of these unhoused people reside in the Champlain Valley.

HOW WE HELP

2,152

NEIGHBORS SERVED AT
THE CRC

86

AVERAGE CRC VISITS PER
DAY*

23,570

INDIVIDUAL CRC VISITS

40,598

CRC MEALS SERVED

Our **Community Resource Center (CRC)** is a daytime warming and resource center that provides hot meals, case management, job seekers support, clothes, and essential supplies for people experiencing homelessness and other community members in need. *In 2025, the CRC underwent construction to expand and improve the site, resulting in fewer visits than in prior years.

A Community Resource Center visitor shared:

“You and your team go above and beyond for the homeless community, and we would be in a much worse spot if it wasn’t for you.”

CVOEO seasonally staffs **Burlington’s Emergency Cold Weather Shelter (ECWS)** at the Robert Miller Community & Recreation Center during disaster conditions. Located in the New North End, this shelter can hold up to 100 beds and is open to all adults. In 2025, this shelter was activated on **9** evenings and served an average of **75** individuals per night.



▲ ECWS set up for guests.



▲ Samaritan House staff working in the shelter lobby.

In addition to their daily operations, the **Samaritan House**, one of our shelters in Saint Albans, opens emergency warming space capacity during subzero weather. This space serves as the only overnight warming shelter in Franklin County, and offers critical support for our unhoused neighbors. In 2025, we opened for **23** nights, providing lifesaving services for an average of four guests per evening.

SAFE SHELTER

“The numbers speak for themselves. This crisis is the result of long-standing policy failures and underinvestment in affordable housing and homelessness prevention services. We are witnessing the human cost of those decisions.”

—Paul Dragon, Executive Director



▲ Staff tour the seasonal shelter at Champlain Place.

The **Champlain Place Emergency Shelter** has year-round and seasonal emergency shelter beds in Burlington, open 24/7, for people experiencing homelessness. We meet guests where they are with kindness, respect, and dignity.

Our **Foundations Family Shelter** is a communal-living style emergency shelter in Burlington that provides safety and resources to families experiencing homelessness.

The **Samaritan House** offers emergency shelter and support services for those experiencing homelessness in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, empowering community members to overcome housing crises and transition into safe, stable homes.

Voices Against Violence provides 24-hr crisis intervention, emergency shelter, and legal advocacy to survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Our work uses a survivor-centered approach combining direct service with community education, advocacy, outreach, and more to promote safety, healing, and prevention.

Of the **1,260 people experiencing homelessness** in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties, **more than 75%** have been without permanent housing for over 90 days, and **nearly one-third** have been unhoused for more than a year.

HOW WE HELP

26,182

TOTAL NIGHTS OF SHELTER

332

NEIGHBORS HELPED

51

NEIGHBORS MOVED TO PERMANENT HOUSING

108

DAYS WAS THE AVERAGE LENGTH STAY

▲ Data totals across programs



▲ Voices Against Violence Shelter.



NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Vermont consistently has the highest grocery prices on average in New England. New data shows that **1 in 8 Vermonters faces hunger. Over 65,000 Vermonters received food assistance from 3SquaresVT in 2025, of which 85% were older Vermonters, people with disabilities, and households with children.**

▼ Holly shops for groceries at Addison Food Hub.

HOW WE HELP

27

FOOD ACCESS SITES

12,336

NEIGHBORS SERVED

2,056

FOOD DELIVERIES

35,970

FOOD SHELF VISITS

2,000,000+

POUNDS OF FOOD SHARED

77,000+

MEALS PREPARED

4,309

HOURS OF VOLUNTEER
WORK



Feeding Champlain Valley shares nourishing, culturally relevant groceries and meals through food shelves, home deliveries, and more. We create and sustain programs and partnerships that foster innovation, improve health, and maintain dignity.

Food Shelves & Hubs: Addison Food Hub, Chittenden Distribution Center, food shelf in Burlington, NorthWest Family Foods, Richford Food Shelf, and Franklin & Grand Isle Food Hub.

Services and Programs: Culinary, Food Access Network, Good Food Truck, Healthy Roots Collaborative, Online Market, and the Stay at Home Program.

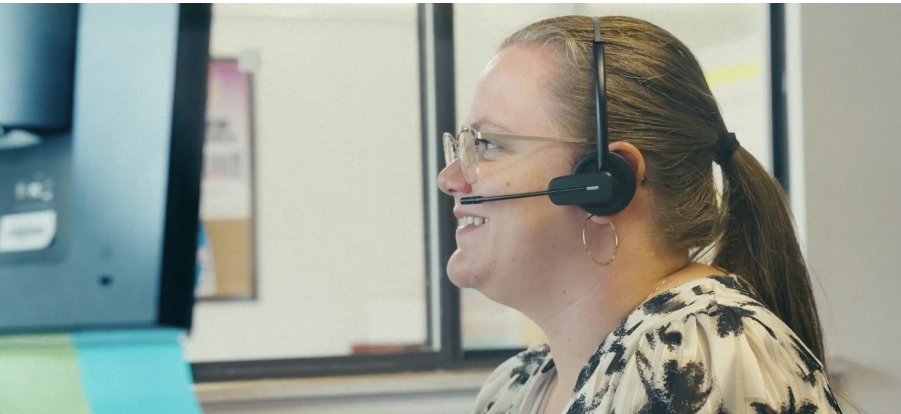
“Food is a great connector. People coming in to get a meal or groceries are also getting connected to other CVOEO resources.”

—Anna McMahon, Feeding Champlain Valley Associate Director

PERMANENT & STABLE HOUSING

In the Champlain Valley Region, **28% of households report that their housing expenses consume about a third or more of their income.** 13% of households experience an extreme cost burden, with over half of their income going towards housing expenses.

During a 2024 state Fair Housing Analysis, **30% of respondents said they experienced housing discrimination.** Increases in evictions, systemic discrimination, and high housing costs are among the many challenges and barriers that exist to equitable and accessible housing.



▲ Front desk staff at Community Action help visitors access resources.

Our **Housing Advocacy Programs** educate, support, and offer technical assistance to ensure all have equitable access to safe and affordable housing. We work to eliminate housing discrimination and protect the rights of Newcomers, renters, and mobile home residents statewide through the **VT Tenants Program**, **VT Fair Housing Project**, **VT Mobile Home Program**, and **Home Family Voucher Program**.

Our **Community Action Network** helps people meet their basic needs through regional food assistance, 3SquaresVT, financial assistance, tax preparation, utility bill assistance, and more. We are a resource to help our neighbors stabilize their lives and work towards economic independence using **Housing Financial Assistance**, **Housing Services Coordination**, **VITA**, **Coordinated Entry**, and more.

HOW WE HELP

1,391

NEIGHBORS RECEIVED
HOUSING FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE

2,087

NEIGHBORS RECEIVED
HOUSING SERVICES
COORDINATION

85

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED
HOUSING STABILIZATION &
RETENTION SERVICES

59%

HOUSEHOLDS REMAINED STABLY
HOUSED FOR AT LEAST 90 DAYS

1,490

PARTICIPANTS IN FAIR
HOUSING MONTH ACTIVITIES

938

RENTERS WORKSHOP AND
COACHING PARTICIPANTS

127

MOBILE HOME PARKS
SUPPORTED ACROSS
VERMONT

212

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED
HOME VOUCHER SUBSIDIES

269

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED
HOUSING NAVIGATION BY
VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

“IF A PARENT IS EMOTIONALLY STRONG, THEN THEY CAN RAISE GOOD KIDS.” —Sash, Head Start Parent

Every morning, our Head Start program hosts the Family Connections group in downtown Burlington. Mothers, fathers, and caregivers join their young children for playtime, music, yoga, and activities that spark joy. Children are at the heart of meaningful family engagement, but the positive benefits of this space often extend to the parents.

Head Start links parents and families together with peers, mentors, and other community members. Sehrish, mother of two, has benefited deeply from these connections. Sehrish, known to friends as Sash, started attending the Family Connections group four months ago with her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Halla. Sash and her family moved from her native home in Pakistan to the Czech Republic in 2021, where they lived for three years. The move was hard on her and her family, as the language barrier prevented her from forming deep friendships. In January of 2025, her husband got a job in Vermont, and the family relocated to Burlington.



“The moment I came to this country, I was not strong. Sometimes I cried because I did not have anyone. But now I have Family Connections, a place to go where I can share my happiness, and my sadness. I have people who will help me in every situation.”

◀ Sash and Halla do yoga at Family Connections.

Four months after moving to Burlington, Sash learned about Head Start and began bringing her daughter, Halla, to the Family Connections group. This was life-changing for Sash and Halla, who found support and friendship amongst this group. Since attending, Halla’s development has transformed from speaking only a few words to full sentences, making friends with other kids, and gaining more independence.

Sash has also blossomed in this time. She has made friendships that have changed how she shows up in the community and as a parent. **“This is my second home. I found friends, I found sisters, I found community, and people who will help me. I feel so positive now. I am a different mom.”**

Head Start staff and fellow parents have connected her with other CVOEO programs and local resources. She is now receiving deliveries of nutritious, culturally relevant food from Feeding Champlain Valley that she can easily order online. Head Start has brought in staff from our Housing Advocacy Programs who gave a presentation on renters’ rights, as well as nurses who provide check-ups, and dental assistants to offer fluoride and dental hygiene demonstrations.



▲ Sash at a sewing class provided by CVOEO.

Before joining the group, Sash often felt lonely and depressed, being so far from her family in Pakistan. Now, thanks to the Family Connections group, she feels happy, and her family is thriving. **“Many of us are coming here because we face the same problems, like kids throwing tantrums or not meeting milestones. They really help us here. Sometimes, when Halla is crying, and I am exhausted, my friends take her and let me rest and take care of myself.”**

This space feels like home to Sash and her family: a place where she can socialize, get the support she needs, and find joy and love.

“It’s like grandma’s house to us—because my own mother is not here, I call this place grandma’s house.”

Sash plans to get a job in the microbiology field as soon as her visa is upgraded, but until then, she is focused on parenting and volunteering in the community. **“Because of Head Start, I started volunteering. It helps me; it gives me a good feeling to help others. It reaches me towards self-actualization. If you are going up, up, up, you can help others get there too.”**

At CVOEO, we envision a community where every person is valued, has access to opportunity, and can achieve their full potential. Our programs work together to make this dream a reality for Sash, her family, and thousands of neighbors like her.

HEALTHY HOMES

Older homes and mobile homes experience worse air leakage and more insulation issues than newer buildings. **Vermont, one of the top 10 coldest states in the country, has over double the amount of older homes as the national average, with 25% of buildings constructed before 1940.**

HOW WE HELP

2,315

NEIGHBORS SERVED VIA
CRISIS FUEL

2,670

NEIGHBORS SERVED VIA
THE WARMTH SUPPORT
PROGRAM

650

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED VIA
WEATHERIZATION

**TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS
FROM WEATHERIZATION
SERVICES:**

11,418

GALLONS OF OIL

4,176

GALLONS OF PROPANE

7,299

GALLONS OF KEROSENE

8,873

THERMS OF NATURAL GAS

18

CORDS OF WOOD

18

TONS OF PELLETS

29,702

KWH OF ELECTRICITY

Our **Community Action Network** teams across the Champlain Valley help Vermonters stay safe and warm in their homes all winter long through emergency support programs like **Crisis and Seasonal Fuel** and the **Warmth Support Program**. If a neighbor faces a utility shutoff, we are able to offer emergency intervention to ensure that no one goes without heat during the cold winter months.

“We are so thankful for the Warmth funds. It is the only path we have to heat our camper during these cold nights.”

—Warmth Support Program recipient who is living in their camper. (CVOEO staff have seen an increase in people who are unhoused, living in campers, and in need of help this winter.)

Champlain Valley Weatherization provides free electrical and thermal energy upgrades to help income-eligible homeowners and renters lower fuel costs, improve home comfort, and increase safety and durability—reducing energy waste and enhancing safety for residents.



▲ Weatherization crew insulating a Vermont home.

EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT



▲ Head Start students.

3 out of 5 of Vermont's youngest children don't have access to early childhood education. Approximately 73% of Vermont children have all available parents in the labor force, which means that **21,131 children under the age of 5 need some form of child care.**

Children enrolled in Head Start programs are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, have improved social, emotional, and behavioral development, and their parents are better prepared and supported.

Champlain Valley Head Start provides early childhood education and delivers comprehensive services for pregnant women, children from birth to five, and their families throughout the Champlain Valley region.

"I cannot overstate the relief and gratitude I feel having affordable, reliable childcare—and the confidence of knowing my children are well cared for, well-fed, engaged, and thriving when they are away from home."

—Head Start parent



▲ Early Head Start classroom in Saint Albans.

HOW WE HELP

21

CLASSROOMS

226

FAMILIES SERVED

304

PARTICIPANTS SERVED BY
HEAD START & EARLY HEAD
START

2,026

HOME VISITS

80%

OF 4 YEAR OLDS
MEETING OR EXCEEDING
EXPECTATIONS FOR
KINDERGARTEN



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & STABILITY

The cost of living in Vermont is significantly higher than the national average, likely due to higher housing, utility, and healthcare costs. **Parts of our service area have the largest debt-to-income ratio in the state, at 1:5.96, which means that for every \$1 of income, some of our neighbors hold \$5.96 in debt, often as a result of medical bills.**

HOW WE HELP

29

FINANCIAL LITERACY CLASSES

12

MICRO BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

1,083

FINANCIAL COACHING AND
MICRO BUSINESS SESSIONS

2,286

TAX RETURNS COMPLETED

\$4,807,492

COMBINED TAX CREDITS AND
REFUNDS

Financial Futures Programs offer free financial education, coaching, and micro business support to help people build credit and achieve long-term stability. Classes include Spend SMART, Keys to Credit, Sustaining the Rent, Avoiding Scams and Financial Fraud, Creating a Financial Future, and Credit Basics for Newcomers.

Our **Community Action Network** teams help low and middle-income Vermonters file their taxes through the **VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)** program.

**“Once you’re out of crisis, now what?
How do we move you from insecurity
towards security and stability?”**

—Rachel Goldstein, Financial Futures Director

TRUST & COMMUNITY BELONGING

Chittenden County is the most linguistically diverse area in the state, with approximately **20 different primary languages spoken. Chittenden County has the highest percentage of population with limited English proficiency of any county in Vermont.** Access to translation services can make all the difference for a family's ability to get the help that they need.

The **Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion** advances racial justice through advocacy, training, and community-led initiatives. We work to eliminate cultural and linguistic barriers for Newcomers and BIPOC Vermonters through our **Community Ambassadors** and language services. Languages spoken by our team include Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Dari, French, Hindi, Kibembe, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Lingala, Maay-Maay, Mandarin, Nepali, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili.

HOW WE HELP

18

LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY OUR
COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

379

TRANSLATION AND
INTERPRETATION SERVICES
PROVIDED

Our statewide **Housing Advocacy Programs** operate the **Asylum Seekers Assistance Program** that supports community organizations helping Newcomers across six regions with employment support, housing stability, promoting self-sufficiency, and enhancing community inclusion.

ADVOCACY & JUSTICE

This year has been one of endless advocacy. **Community Action, Feeding Champlain Valley, Head Start, Housing Advocacy Programs, and CVOEO as a whole have all experienced federal funding cuts or the threat of funding cuts.**

CVOEO has advocated in the community, at the State House, and in Washington, D.C., to maintain critical funds for our Vermont neighbors.

We will share updates as we learn more. Visit cvoeo.org/updates to stay informed. CVOEO will always work harder and dig deeper, even with diminished resources, to protect and strengthen our community.



▲ Paul Dragon on regional television news.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

The **Champlain Place Emergency Shelter** helps those experiencing homelessness, regardless of their past or present situation. In addition to providing safe shelter and a warm bed, a hot dinner is served 7 nights a week. These dinners are prepared and delivered by Feeding Champlain Valley, and served to guests by dedicated volunteers.



▲ Patty and Joan serve dinner at Champlain Place.

“People are flexible, people are grateful, people are polite. This is our community.”

—Patty Wesley, CVOEO Volunteer

Every Monday night, you can find volunteers Patty and Joan ready to help for their weekly shift. Patty has volunteered since the program’s beginning. She says, “**This is my neighborhood. I’m really happy that the space is being used for this.**” Around 25 guests joined us for a dinner of pea and ham soup, chicken drumsticks, rice, and chocolates supplied by Patty.

Volunteers are needed for the dinner service shift, which runs nightly from 6-8 pm. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to connect@cvoeo.org.

Board Members

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Franklin & Grand Isle Counties
Amanda Bliven
Addison County
Lesli Blount
Chittenden County
Wendy Bova
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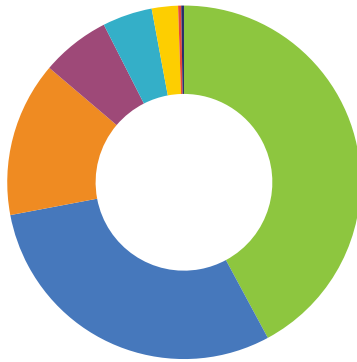
▲ Cody Fiala, past Board President, honored with the Community Action Circle Award.



▲ Staff at Best Places to Work in Vermont celebration.

FINANCIALS

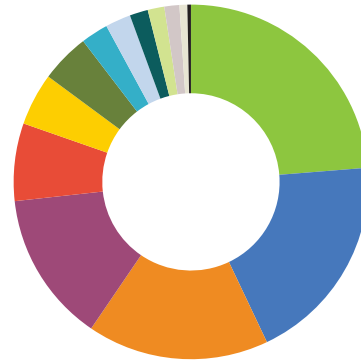
October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025



\$38,345,602

TOTAL REVENUE

Federal Grants.....	\$16,155,944
State Grants.....	\$11,463,490
In-Kind.....	\$5,438,135
Foundations & Private Organizations.....	\$2,416,265
Donations.....	\$1,748,351
Program Income, Fee for service, & Other.....	\$919,831
Towns & Cities.....	\$108,418
United Way.....	\$95,168



\$39,377,779

TOTAL EXPENSES

Champlain Valley Head Start.....	\$9,342,307
Feeding Champlain Valley.....	\$7,570,890
Community Action Network.....	\$6,521,724
Champlain Valley Weatherization.....	\$5,416,118
Housing Advocacy Programs.....	\$2,786,350
Champlain Place Emergency Shelter.....	\$1,882,537
Voices Against Violence/Laurie's House.....	\$1,761,572
Administration & General Expenses.....	\$981,711
Samaritan House/Tim's House.....	\$913,528
Financial Futures Programs.....	\$657,119
Housing & Family Support/Day 1 Families Fund.....	\$596,971
Foundations Family Shelter.....	\$537,258
Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion.....	\$281,435
Vermont Community Action Partnership.....	\$128,259

Administrative Leadership

Matt D'Agostino
Chief Financial Officer

Stephanie Davison
Director, Quality Improvement

Virginie Diambou
Director, Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion

Paul Dragon
Executive Director

Shiferaw Gameda
Associate Director, Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion

Kevin Lomedico
Controller

Carol Paul
Deputy Director

Jason Rouse
Director, Philanthropy & Communications

Sarah Russell
Director, Emergency Services

Terri Terrieri
Director, Human Resources

Program Leadership

Linda Amante
Director, Chittenden Community Action

Brenna Bedard
Director, Community Resource Center

Mars Bernabeo
Associate Director, Foundations Family Shelter

Erin Davis
Associate Director, Samaritan House

Dwight DeCoster
Director, Champlain Valley Weatherization

Mark Demers
Director, Addison Community Action

Jeremy Francis
Associate Director, Champlain Valley Weatherization

Christine Gilliam
Associate Director, Champlain Valley Head Start

Rachel Goldstein
Director, Financial Futures Programs

Jess Graff
Associate Director, Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action

Sandra Graves
Director, Champlain Valley Head Start

Adam Hall
Director, Foundations Family Shelter

Jess Hyman
Associate Director, Housing Advocacy Programs

Moiria Jamieson-Brooks
Associate Director, Voices Against Violence

Ben Kaufmann
Director, Samaritan House

Sandrine Kibuey
Director, Housing Advocacy Programs

Kris Lukens
Director, Voices Against Violence

Anna McMahon
Associate Director, Feeding Champlain Valley

Rob Meehan
Director, Feeding Champlain Valley

Travis Poulin
Director, Community Action Network

Tiffany Rich
Director, Champlain Place Emergency Shelter

Stephanie Smith
Systems Director, Coordinated Entry

Nick Soutiere
Associate Director, Champlain Place Emergency Shelter

For a list of data sources, please scan the QR code here:





▲ Staff fulfill online orders at the Addison Food Hub.

**“ONCE WE EXTEND
BEYOND OURSELVES
AND START HELPING
OTHER PEOPLE, WE
FIND MEANING IN
OUR OWN LIVES.”**

—Paul Dragon, CVOEO Executive Director

Every donation makes an impact. When you give to CVOEO, we can provide individuals and families with essential services like food, fuel, and housing support in times of crisis, and help them acquire the necessary education, financial skills, and assets to build a stable future in which they thrive.

Volunteering

Dedicated volunteers work with staff to help meet community needs. You can volunteer as an individual, a business, or a family.

Make a Donation

Whether one-time or recurring, your gift will make a real difference in the lives of the Vermonters we serve.

Checks can be made out to:
CVOEO, Attn: Philanthropy P.O. Box
1265, Burlington, VT 05402

When you become a monthly donor to CVOEO, you join the Community Action Circle, a group of dedicated community members who make our work possible.



Donate with your DAF

As a 501(c)(3) organization, CVOEO and our programs are eligible to receive distributions from donor-advised funds.

In-Kind

Many of CVOEO's programs rely on in-kind support from our community. We often seek new or like-new clothing items, unopened food, baby clothes, toiletries, and more.

Remembering CVOEO in your Will or Trust

You can make an impact for years to come when you include CVOEO in your estate planning or as an account beneficiary.

Questions?

Please contact Jason Rouse, Philanthropy & Communications Director at 802-862-2771 X744 or jrouse@cvoeo.org.

CVOEO is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit. Donations are tax-deductible. EIN #03-0216837.



Learn more:
cvoeo.org/donate