UNDERSTANDING Vermont

A Resource for Philanthropists and Grantmakers

THE Vermont Community Foundation

These three words summarize a commitment that the Vermont Community Foundation has made to help grantmakers advance the practice of effective philanthropy in our state.

The Foundation is introducing a range of programs, publications, and activities to support this commitment; among them, this report.
By their nature, philanthropists want to change the world for the better.

Yet achieving this kind of change can be a challenge, often demanding varied strategies and resources, and an understanding of many complex, interconnected issues.

All of us try to understand Vermont, often from different vantage points. Understanding Vermont is a collection of information from those vantage points, compiled as a resource for philanthropists who want to know more about the issues that shape our communities.

In the following pages, you’ll encounter a variety of facts and trends that surfaced as we analyzed many articles and studies and talked with people across the state about important issues. This document is a starting point, a work in progress that cannot be definitive or all-encompassing. We encourage you to learn more for yourself as new information emerges. You can also visit our website at www.vermontcf.org for updated facts and trends.

Our hope for this publication is that it sparks conversations and stimulates new ideas among Vermont-focused philanthropists. Most of all, we hope it serves as a useful reference as you think through the many different ways in which your giving can make a difference in Vermont.

In providing this information, we also acknowledge that the act of philanthropy is a deeply personal pursuit, a reflection of one’s evolving values, and an indicator of the hopes one holds for self and community. Cultivating your love of giving is an important way of cultivating your love of community.

We encourage you to consider the data offered here in the context of your own experiences, your passion for this state and its people, and the values that underlie your giving. Most of all, we ask that you allow yourself to be moved, as your philanthropy will surely move others.

Sincerely,

Brian T. Byrnes
President and CEO
The Vermont Community Foundation
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USING THIS RESOURCE

SECTIONS
We have organized this report into three primary categories that align with the Foundation’s grantmaking areas:

- Meeting Basic Human Needs
- Building Successful Communities
- Ensuring Sustainable Communities

TRENDS
As we collected data, we sorted and connected it through a series of trends expressed as headings to guide you through this report. Our final selection of trends was guided in part by a team of reviewers representing regions statewide.

HOTSPOTS
In conducting this research, we found that some of the state’s most serious issues, for example childhood poverty and drug use among youth, are especially concentrated in specific geographic areas. We called attention to these hotspots for grantmakers interested in these issues or communities.

PROMISING APPROACHES
We highlighted Vermont Community Foundation funds that employ grantmaking strategies we believe will have a positive impact on some of the trends presented in this report. Fundholders can also visit www.vermontcf.org to learn about specific agencies and programs tackling these issues in innovative ways.

GIVING THOUGHTS
We encourage Vermonters to further their understanding of the practice of philanthropy. Toward this end, “Giving Thought” sidebars frame some of the concepts most central to current philanthropic thinking.
Meeting Basic Human Needs

Every hope for Vermont depends on our capacity to meet the most basic human needs... a nourishing meal, shelter from the elements, treatment for illness. With the basics in place, every Vermonter has an opportunity to fulfill his or her potential. This section examines issues of health, hunger, housing and safety, with a special focus on populations including the elderly, children and families.
Residents are healthy; insurance coverage is broad but declining

Vermont is one of the nation’s healthiest states, perhaps reflecting a statewide love for outdoor activity and the availability of fresh, local food. Vermont ranks seventh highest among other states for the number of its residents covered by health insurance. While a comparatively high percentage of Vermont’s children (95%) are covered by health insurance, the overall number of uninsured is increasing at a rate that exceeds 44 other states. Factors contributing to this phenomenon may include Vermont’s high cost of living and significant number of residents who are either self-employed or employed through microenterprise.

* Adult Vermonters get more exercise and report better health on average than others in the U.S. Students weigh in lighter and demonstrate less risk for obesity than their peers in other states.
* Vermont ranks second highest in the nation for number of women, as a proportion of state population, receiving adequate prenatal care. The state ranks fourth lowest in the nation for low-birth-weight babies. Vermont has the lowest state birthrate in the U.S., including the lowest birthrate among our teens.
* A movement toward home- and community-based care has earned Vermont a ranking of fourth lowest in the country for the institutionalization of people with mental disabilities.
* In a 2006 poll, Vermonters identified healthcare as a first-priority issue. Following healthcare, top issues included jobs, government, economy, sprawl, taxes and environment.
* Vermonters without health insurance account for 11.4% of the state population.
* Nationwide, the working poor don’t often qualify for federal coverage through Medicaid and Medicare, and they are more than twice as likely as the general population to go without coverage. Healthcare costs are rising more than 10% per year in Vermont, amounting to approximately $1 million per day. Fifteen percent of Vermont residents have so little insurance that a serious illness would bankrupt them.
Childhood poverty is concentrated in some counties

Vermont has been declared one of the best states for raising children, yet the number of children living in poverty exceeds the national average in six of the state’s 14 counties. These areas of concentrated poverty have remained relatively unchanged for one and, in some cases, two decades.9

**the FACTS**

- Kids Count, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children, ranked Vermont sixth in the country for childhood well-being in 2006.
- Vermont ranks fifth lowest in the nation for childhood poverty. Still, a full 12% of the state’s children live at or below the poverty line. In Bennington, Caledonia, Essex, Orleans, Rutland, and Windham counties, childhood poverty rates exceed the national average.
- Twenty-eight percent of Vermont’s children live with a single parent—these families are statistically more likely to be low-income, especially when headed by women. Compounding the problem, one-third of child support payments due are never collected.
- One common childhood poverty indicator is the number of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches. Among school-age children in Vermont, 28.1% qualify for free/reduced-price school lunches—a higher percentage than at any other time in this decade.
- In Essex and Orleans counties, nearly 50% of students qualify for free/reduced-price meals, with 40% qualifying in Caledonia County. In some City of Burlington schools, more than 80% of students qualify.10

**GIVING THOUGHT**

**Better together**

Most significant social issues are larger than any single donor’s resources.

By aggregating knowledge, networks of service providers, and funds, it’s possible to create the critical mass of action often needed to make headway amid systemic problems. Collective action can also create efficiencies.

Warren Buffett placed his billions with those of Bill and Melinda Gates for these reasons, among others.

Many donors choose to work through pooled funds to achieve similar results. The Vermont Community Foundation offers a family of funds built to match donor interests in areas ranging from arts to the environment.

Another option is local giving circles—collaborations between small groups of donors sharing passion for a common cause. The Vermont Community Foundation helps donors launch and support these personalized collaborations.

Either way, it’s about collective action for greater results.
In 2006, The Morgan Quitno Press compared states in more than 44 categories and deemed Vermont the nation’s fourth most livable. Yet Vermont’s promise of quality living is shadowed by the state’s rising cost of living and hefty tax burden. Many families are forced to choose which basic needs they will meet, including groceries, housing, utilities and transportation.

Cost of living factors include the price of groceries, housing, utilities and transportation. These costs are aggregated to produce a cost of living index. Nationally, the median index is 100. Vermont’s index exceeds that median notably at 114.2.

When their state and local taxes are combined, Vermonters contend with a tax burden that is consistently among the ten highest in the nation. Meanwhile, Vermonters place 22nd for income per capita, and the state’s annual wages are ranked 34th in the nation. It is important to note, however, that a large number of Vermont residents receive income from investments and other non-wage sources.

Nationally, the median hourly wage is $14.28. In Vermont, that median is $14.13—the second lowest in New England, which has a collective median of $15.92.

Another issue related to cost of living is the availability and expense of childcare. Sixty-eight percent of Vermont’s children under age six live in households where both parents work outside the home, compared to a national rate of 59%. According to a report released by the Vermont Child Care Advisory Board, “Vermont is failing to ensure that families have access to affordable, quality childcare services.” A family of four that has two working parents and two preschool-age children and that earns Vermont’s median household income will spend 21% of that gross income on childcare.

68% of Vermont’s children under age six are in families where both parents work outside the home.

The national rate is 59%.
Affordable housing falls short of demand

Scenic views and open spaces are easy to find in Vermont. But if you are part of the state’s moderate- to low-income population, finding a home you can afford that is close to your job can prove to be a challenge.

This issue pits multiple Vermont interests in a struggle for priority: preserving natural resources and green spaces, pursuing profitable development projects, attracting and retaining the workers who power the state’s economy, managing the length of commutes, and meeting baseline housing needs.

What’s “affordable” in Vermont?

* Affordable housing, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), must account for less than 30% of a household’s total expenses. A full-time, full-year minimum wage job in Vermont would pay $14,790, with 30% of this amount equal to approximately $4,437 or $370 per month.

* In Vermont, 43,000 families experience a “severe burden,” spending more than 50% of their income on housing and utilities. Vermonters in this situation outnumber those in any other state in New England. The Vermont figure also exceeds the national average.

* Nearly every major source of state and federal government support related to housing has declined significantly in recent years.

Rental homes

* The availability of rental homes in Vermont is 4.7% of total rental stock—a figure lower than that of any other state in the nation. The Vermont Housing Council estimates a current statewide shortage of 21,000 affordable rental units. The shortage is especially acute in Chittenden, Orleans, Bennington and Rutland counties.

* Nearly half of the available rentals are 50 years old or older, with those that are most affordable in a state of great disrepair.

* While Vermont’s minimum wage of $7.53 per hour compares favorably with that of other states, renters would need to earn almost twice as much to afford fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment, which has increased by 29% in the past decade to $723 per month.

* Despite great demand for affordable rental housing, units stand empty because some applicants with sufficient income to pay rent may not be able to provide a security deposit, and they may also need basic guidance on financial management and credit.

Home ownership

* Healthy housing markets have a 3% vacancy rate among non-rental homes. Vermont’s rate in this category is 0.8%—the fourth lowest in the nation, helping drive prices beyond the grasp of low- to moderate-income families.

* Over the past decade, the median purchase price of a home has risen 87%, with a 10% increase between the years 2004 and 2005. To afford a home in such a market, an individual or family would have to earn $65,000 annually, yet 73% of Vermont households have annual incomes lower than that.
Homelessness and hunger grow

The high cost of living creates a pinch felt even among Vermonters with full-time employment. A growing number of working families are living in shelters for increasingly long periods of time. Some communities are drastically short on emergency shelters, leaving many Vermonters out in the cold.

At the same time, hunger is on the rise in Vermont, especially among children and elders. In counties stricken with concentrated poverty, use of food pantries and the need for emergency hunger relief has spiked in recent years.

* In 2005, Vermont’s homeless shelters reported a 52% increase in the number of beds occupied over the previous four years. And while six years ago, the average length of stay was 13 nights, current stays stretch to an average of 26 nights. Among occupants, shelter workers report, are an increasing number of families, as well as adults who are employed full-time.

* Approximately 4,000 Vermonters are homeless at some point during the course of each year. The people most likely to experience homelessness are families headed by single women and single adults under age 65 who live below the poverty line.

* Emergency shelter is a critical unmet need in Vermont. Between July 2004 and July 2005, shelters filled to capacity turned away 1,443 homeless individuals.

* In 12 of Vermont’s 14 counties, the total population served by food shelves has increased. From 2003 to 2005, the number of families with minor children using food shelves has increased 28%.

* While Vermont seniors represent only 13% of the state’s population, they represent 21% of food shelf customers, jumping 12% from 2005 to 2006.
Domestic and sexual violence increase within a relatively safe state

Vermont is widely considered one of the safest states in the nation. In 2004, Vermont’s combined rate of violent crimes, including murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault, was less than one fourth of the national average. Nonetheless, rates of domestic and sexual violence are dramatically higher in two Vermont counties. While documented increases may reflect a growing awareness of this violence and a greater willingness to report it, the number of incidents, rate of increase and concentration of abuses are significant.

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**the FACTS**

* In 2004, Vermont residents reported 185 forcible rapes to law enforcement—50% more rapes than reported the previous year.
* Between 1997 and 2006, domestic violence in Vermont increased 50%, with a 15% increase from 2005 to 2006.
* Domestic violence is concentrated in Rutland and Franklin counties. For every 10,000 people in Rutland County, 84.6 have received “Relief from Abuse” protective court orders. The state average is 59.5 per 10,000.
* While more than half of Vermonters are aware that services for battered women exist, fewer than one in five knew where to access a crisis hotline, a shelter, counseling, and/or social services.
* Cases of reported or substantiated child abuse in Vermont have been declining moderately each year.

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**GIVING THOUGHT**

**Multi-year funding and systemic change**

It’s possible to address symptoms in one year. Systemic changes usually require more time.

Multi-year funding is patient and is especially well-suited for projects that require incremental system change—for instance, helping the public better understand an issue or raising awareness among legislators.

Multi-year funding can be efficient, allowing a grantee to pace the implementation of a grant over several years with limited staff rather than create a temporary, unsustainable increase in staffing.

This type of funding can also incorporate incentive milestones, requiring grantees to show progress the first year before securing funding for the second year. Using this approach, donors may achieve greater results than they could with single-year funding.
Prison population is low but growing

No state has fewer residents incarcerated as a proportion of the total population than Vermont. Through unique approaches such as local Reparative Boards, the state has a history of reserving corrections facilities for the most serious offenders, with only 14% of those convicted incarcerated.32

But Vermont’s prison rate continues to rise, due in part to a higher volume of crime and tougher sentences.

**the FACTS**

* By 2011, the Vermont prison population is expected to increase 33%—the fifth highest rate of increase in the nation.33
* Corrections experts refer to a higher volume of crime and a higher rate of convictions that receive jail time, including felonies, misdemeanors and motor vehicle offenses. Higher rates of pre-trial detention and returns also contribute to the significant increase in Vermont’s prison population.
* The increase may also underscore a need for support systems designed to help high-risk populations avoid entering or returning to prison.34 Potential strategies include aggressive high school dropout prevention, mandated juvenile drug treatment programs, and access to transitional housing.
* Vermont leads the nation in providing meaningful ways for offenders to restore themselves to their communities.35 Vermont’s community approach to crime places small-time offenders before local Reparative Boards, where they must listen to victim testimony, apologize, and agree to a monitored community service assignment. If they fail to honor the agreement, they are incarcerated.
* Transitional housing for ex-offenders is scarce, in some cases extending the time convicts spend in prison beyond the term sentenced.36

Vermont leads the nation in providing meaningful ways for offenders to restore themselves to their communities.
Students feel unsafe

In Vermont schools, the threat of weapons and physical and verbal harassment is real. Confidently, Vermont students report safety concerns that echo statistics in schools across the country. The Vermont Community Foundation

The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children, a supporting foundation of the Vermont Community Foundation, funds community-based prevention strategies that improve life for the state’s children and families.

Describing their approach as proactive and “respectfully engaged,” the Permanent Fund matches promising strategies for change with strong leaders. Investing time upfront, the Permanent Fund works to understand the issues, the community and the players holistically, and then supports a lead nonprofit in developing specific outcomes and indicators for a project. This investment of time may even result in the development of a funding collaborative to build sustainability for the initiative as well as awareness of the issue within the funding community. Over the life of a project, the Permanent Fund remains engaged and is increasingly called upon by grantees for technical support and nonprofit management advice.

* Eighteen percent of Vermont students in grades eight to 12 reported that they bullied someone within the past 30 days. Twenty-one percent reported that they were bullied during the same time period.

* The problem intensifies within the eighth grade. In this subset, 31% reported that they had bullied someone and 26% reported being bullied.

* Nearly 10% of Vermont students reported carrying a weapon onto school property one or more times in the past 30 days—well above the national rate of 6.5%.

* One in four Vermont students was offered, sold or given illegal drugs on school property within the past 12 months. In the same time period, nearly one in four was involved in a physical fight.
Youth abuse alcohol and marijuana

Called Vermont’s greatest health challenge by leaders in the field, alarmingly high use of alcohol and marijuana threatens not only the health, but also the self-esteem, behavior, employability and general well-being of future adults in the state.

Vermont ranks highest in the nation for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past year in both the 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 age groups.

The FACTS

Underage drinking
* Twenty-two percent of Vermonters between ages 12 and 17 drank alcohol in the last 30 days, ranking the state fourth in the nation for this behavior. Vermont ranks number one for the 73% of its residents ages 18 to 25 who report the same. Underage drinking occurs at the highest rates in Caledonia and Rutland counties.39
* Vermont mirrors the national average for student binge drinking. Nearly one in four high school students consumed five or more consecutive alcoholic drinks on one or more of the past 30 days.  
* Alcohol was a major factor in 56% of all motor vehicle deaths involving people between ages 15 and 20, ranking Vermont the highest in the nation.40 And in 2005, 22% of the state’s students, grades eight to 12, reported riding with a driver who had been drinking.41

Youth marijuana use
* Vermont leads the nation for the highest percentage of youth (ages 12 to 17) who initiate the use of marijuana. Among the state’s students in grades eight to 12, 25% have used marijuana in the past 30 days, compared to a national average of 22%. Use is concentrated in Rutland, Windham, Bennington and Orleans counties.42 For all ages, Vermont’s proportion of current marijuana users is second only to Washington, D.C.43
* Vermont ranks highest in the nation for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past year in both the 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 age groups.44, 45
Aging population presents new challenges

Due largely to the aging of baby boomers, Vermont’s elders will represent one fifth of the state population by 2025. Across the nation, this demographic shift is expected to place high demands on healthcare, assisted living and other systems. Basic needs are of critical concern for Vermont seniors. This group is particularly vulnerable to poverty, hunger, lack of transportation, and suicide.

This growing community also represents a force for good: Many older residents volunteer their time and experience to improve the quality of life for everyone.

* By 2013 the number of seniors in Vermont requiring assisted living care will rise by 42%.
* Among today’s Vermonters age 75 and older who require daily assistance, 43% live on incomes below $20,000 per year.
* Research confirms that the vast majority of seniors prefer to live almost anywhere but a nursing home. As a result of Act 160, the percentage of elderly Vermonters living in nursing homes has dropped dramatically. As a more personal and economical alternative, many of the state’s elders have entered home-based or community-based care environments.
* Based on recent surveys, about 6% of Vermont elders are at risk for depression. Elder depression is most evident in Essex, Orleans and Addison counties, where it surpasses the state average. Risk factors for depression include mental illness, physical illness and poor sleep patterns, isolation and lack of social support, and substance abuse.
Suicide exceeds national rate

Vermont’s suicide rate exceeds the national average. Though the state ranks highly among others for its residents’ physical health and general quality of life, a sense of isolation in pockets of concentrated poverty may contribute to the state’s high suicide rate.50

Among youth, rates of suicide and suicidal thoughts are disturbing but parallel to national trends. The high statewide rate of suicides committed, therefore, occurs within Vermont’s adult population.51

Though Vermont ranks high for its residents’ physical health and general quality of life, a sense of isolation in pockets of concentrated poverty may contribute to the state’s high suicide rate.

the FACTS

* Vermont’s suicide rate is 12.7 per 100,000 people, far surpassing the national average of 10.9 per 100,000.52
* Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Vermont youth ages 15 to 24. Teen girls made suicide plans at a rate nearly twice that of boys, and twice as many girls as boys attempted suicide. More than one in 10 students in grades eight to 12 reported planning suicide during the past 12 months. Six percent of all Vermont students attempted suicide one or more times during the same period.53
* Among students who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning, more than 27% reported having made a suicide attempt.54
* Vermont’s suicide rate is higher than the national average, with the state’s highest concentration of suicide among the elderly, especially older men.55
* Nationally, the rate of suicide among men triples when they pass age 75.56
Established by a community-minded couple, The Avada Fund supports the health, education and safety of children in Vermont. Rather than help one child at a time, The Avada Fund’s founders were intent on creating major, lasting change within the systems impacting the lives of many children.

Because of the couple’s professional experience in the fields of education and healthy development, they understood that systemic change takes time—and compelling, credible data. To generate data, The Avada Fund invested in a study that revealed the critical nature of education from a child’s birth to his or her kindergarten year. This information was used to launch a statewide awareness campaign about the potential of early childhood education and the realities in Vermont. Grounded in compelling facts, the campaign has mobilized thousands of people and hundreds of organizations and resulted in changes to state policy affecting children.

By investing in knowledge, the Avada Fund has created a platform that any interested donor, volunteer, educator, policymaker and parent can use to improve life for the youngest Vermonter.
Building Successful Communities

A truly successful community is one that nurtures the strengths of every member and acknowledges the value of our interconnectedness. This section examines education, social capital and civic engagement, and diversity and tolerance.

20 Vermont leads the nation in education but achievement gaps still remain
21 National education testing sidelines other school subjects
22 Youth volunteer in great numbers; many desire acknowledgement
23 Some youth struggle with intolerance and lack of support
24 Residents are interested and involved in their communities, yet divisions exist
25 State welcomes immigrants; undocumented laborers are vulnerable
Vermont leads the nation in education but achievement gaps still remain

For the second year in a row, Vermont was ranked “Smartest State in the Nation” by the Morgan Quitno Press. Smaller classrooms; comparatively high scores in reading, math and science; wide access to preschool programs; and a low dropout rate contribute to the state’s status as an education leader. But nationally, the bar is set low. Too many Vermont students are being left behind, scoring well below proficiency levels, repeating grades, and leaving school under-prepared for work and life.

Pre-kindergarten preparation

- Vermont ranks second in the nation for making preschool and Head Start available to three-year-olds and fourth in the nation for making them available to four-year-olds. A partial state scholarship for these programs is largely responsible for these rankings.
- As many as 40% of Vermont preschoolers did not meet developmental milestones used to indicate readiness for kindergarten.
- Vermont ranks 30th in the nation in education spending during the preschool years but spends about $2.5 million each year on children who must repeat kindergarten, first, second or third grade.

Primary and secondary school

- Vermont’s teacher-pupil ratio is 1:11.7, compared to a national average of 1:15.9.
- In 2005, Vermont eighth-grade students ranked second in the country for science and third for mathematics. Math scores in the state have increased every test year since 1996. Despite this, one in four Vermont eighth-grade students performs below grade level in science, and one in five performs below grade level in reading and math.
- Thirty-eight percent of Vermont’s fourth-grade students read at or above proficiency, ranking the state second in the nation in this category. But that leaves one in four Vermont fourth-grade students reading below grade level. One in five scores below grade level in science.

Graduation and beyond

- Vermont’s 4% dropout rate is half the national average and tied with Connecticut for lowest rate by state in New England. Nationally, 75% of public high school freshmen go on to graduate. In Vermont, the percentage is 85.4.
- Only 20% of Vermont 9th-graders will go on to earn a four-year college degree. This figure exceeds the national college graduation rate of 18%.
- While Vermont’s young adults attain college degrees at a slightly higher rate than the national average, other states with high rates of college degree attainment have significantly higher percentages who attend “some college or earn associates degrees.”
- Over the past 30 years, the percentage of Vermont high school students aspiring to pursue post-secondary education has increased significantly—from 43.9% in 1978 to 62.9% in 2003. Even with this increase, college aspirations among Vermont’s young people fall below the national average of 63.9.

85% of Vermont high school freshmen go on to graduate.

The national average is 75%.
National education testing sidelines other school subjects

Confined by shrinking budgets and pressed by national requirements in reading, math and science, schools are inclined to “teach to the test.” This phenomenon is narrowing the educational experience of Vermont’s youth, who have diminishing access to the intrinsic personal and social value of arts, history, social studies and other subjects.68

The FACTS

- Despite a statutory requirement for arts education in Vermont, local budget cuts are compromising the scope and quality of arts education, including the elimination of funds for art tools, materials and field trips.69 This negatively impacts Vermont students because young people who consistently participate in comprehensive arts programs are dramatically more likely to excel in school through academic achievement, including math and science success and school leadership.70
- Attending arts events and learning side-by-side with artists have been shown to have a dramatic impact on students, according to the Arts Education Partnership.71 But many rural schools are struggling to fund artist residencies and trips to cultural events.
- A shortage of educators in urban and rural classrooms finds many teachers in these regions teaching outside of the subject areas for which they earned their degrees.72
- In addition to core subjects, more than 96% of Vermonters feel that it is important for children to study “food, farms and nutrition” in school, as reported in a 2004 poll.73

food smarts

96%

of Vermonters felt that it is important for children to study food, farms and nutrition.
Youth volunteer in great numbers; many desire acknowledgement

Almost half of Vermont’s young people volunteer in their communities, but more than half report feeling unengaged and unappreciated by their communities. A lack of youth-oriented programming and transportation may contribute to a growing sense of isolation among Vermont’s youth.

GIVING THOUGHT

Charity and philanthropy

Both are important acts of giving that improve the human condition, and the two play complementary roles in the lives of donors and the communities that benefit from their giving. Charity often addresses immediate relief, like emergency shelters; philanthropy looks for root causes, like programs that address affordable housing. The Vermont Community Foundation is able to assist donors with both charitable giving and philanthropy.

the FACTS

- Nearly half of Vermont students (49% of girls and 43% of boys) in grades eight to 12 volunteer in their communities, but these percentages are slowly waning. Fewer than half in this age group feel valued by their community.
- One in five Vermont students report that they discuss school with their parents less than once a week. The frequency of these conversations is a commonly used predictor of academic achievement, responsible behavior and community engagement.
- While 61% of Vermonters over age 30 vote, only 20% of Vermonters ages 18 to 29 voted in the last midterm election as of 2002. Nationally, voter turnout in this age bracket was 22% during the same election cycle. High voting rates are correlated with high social capital, which is a positive indicator of community well-being.
Some youth struggle with intolerance and lack of support

Young Vermonters with physical, developmental and learning disabilities are likely to encounter significant gaps in support at school and at home. When these systems fail them, these youths often enter the juvenile justice system.

Progress reports also indicate that Vermont’s students of color, as well as students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation, continue to suffer harassment.

In more than 30 Vermont high schools and middle schools and at least seven of its colleges, school-based, student-run gay-straight alliances address sexual orientation issues and homophobia.

- Nationally, only 14% of youth with disabilities enter college, compared to 53% of the general population.  
- In 1995, research indicated that approximately 90% of youths in the corrections system meet the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental health disorders. 
- Ninety percent of youths incarcerated in Vermont do not have a high school diploma. Fifty percent received special education services. 
- According to the Vermont Human Rights Commission’s 2003 progress report on Racial Harassment in Vermont Public Schools, various forms of racial harassment continue to affect students. 
- Students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation are twice as likely to be bullied, more than five times as likely to attempt suicide, and at least 50% more likely to use drugs and alcohol. In response, at more than 30 Vermont high schools and middle schools and at least seven of its colleges, school-based, student-run gay-straight alliances address sexual orientation issues and homophobia.
Residents are interested and involved in their communities, yet divisions exist

As one of few states in the country where annual town meetings gather citizens for discussion and voting on local issues and budgets, Vermont is home to many civic-minded individuals.\(^8\) These residents take pride in their communities, engage in the democratic process, and value the strong social fabric of the state.

While much unites the residents of Vermont, regular Pulse of Vermont: Quality of Life studies conducted by the Vermont Business Roundtable have confirmed a “persistent and vexing” division among Vermonters. Major divisions correlate strongly with whether or not a person was born in Vermont.

**the FACTS**

- In national polls, only 34% of people felt that most others could be trusted,\(^8\) while 71% of Vermonters reported that they trusted most people in their state.

  **Sixty-two percent of Vermonters rated their sense of belonging to their community as “good” or “very good.”**\(^8\)\(^7\)

- Vermont voters regularly turn out in excess of national averages during presidential elections, with typically lower turnout for midterm elections. In 2004, 67.3% of Vermonters voted compared to the 63.8% of citizens voting nationwide.\(^8\)\(^8\)

- Native-born Vermonters indicated almost twice as often as their non-native counterparts that the “sense of community in Vermont” has “worsened.”

- Only 19% reported that “life in Vermont is getting better,” down from 35% that reported the same in 1990. Working-age males with no more than a high school education felt more strongly that quality of life has declined.\(^8\)\(^9\)

- As a percentage of the state’s population ages 18 to 59, Vermont has lost more soldiers to the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq than any other state.\(^9\)\(^0\)

**GIVING THOUGHT**

**Program and operating support**

Both are necessary and good. The strategic question is: Do you want to help efforts already on the road get more traction... or introduce new approaches through start-ups?

**PROGRAM SUPPORT** buys the cars that drive innovative new approaches within an organization.

**OPERATING SUPPORT** is the fuel that keeps programs on the road, focused on fulfilling their missions.
State welcomes immigrants; undocumented laborers are vulnerable

Vermont has a reputation as a welcome haven for immigrants. The state has accepted and supported thousands of refugees from troubled regions.

Vermont’s farms are powered, in part, by the labor of Latino immigrants. But these workers, some of whom have immigrated without legal documentation, fear racial profiling and deportation.

Refugee welcome

* In the last two decades, more than 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers from at least two dozen countries have made Vermont their home. Each year, an average of 250 refugees settle in Vermont, many of the latest arriving from countries in Africa and the former Soviet Union.91
* Vermont has helped nearly 40 refugees from Africa, Vietnam and Bosnia start their own businesses through the Vermont Refugee Micro Enterprise program. An additional 60 refugees have received business educations funded through a Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement grant.

Immigrant labor

* The Vermont Agency of Agriculture recognizes the critical role of immigrant labor in the Vermont farm economy, estimating that immigrant workers contribute to half of the state’s milk production.
* As many as one-third of full-time farm workers in Vermont are Latino. There are an estimated 2,500 migrant workers in Vermont.92
* Latino farm laborers are ill at ease in Vermont. Some avoid leaving the confines of private property for fear that they will be targeted by police, detained and deported. According to several reports, police have detained migrant workers without cause until they can find them to be undocumented and make an arrest.93
Ensuring Sustainable Communities

The ultimate success of Vermont’s communities will be determined by our ability to act responsibly with a long-term view that considers the state and world we hope to share with future generations. This section examines economic development; the environment; and the arts, humanities and cultural heritage.
Unique strengths enrich state economy

Compared to other states, Vermont’s business sector is diverse, its workforce is skilled, and its people are propelled by an entrepreneurial spirit. Vermont political and business leaders are also recognized for their accessibility. The state’s powerful brand and reputation for high quality of life make it an attractive place to work. Transportation is eased by Vermont’s proximity to major hub cities including Boston, New York and Montreal; international airports can be found within three hours’ drive of any Vermont city.

In 2005, Vermont was ranked fourth in the nation for “work environment” based on job opportunities, job quality and workplace fairness.94

- Vermont leads the nation in employing residents with disabilities. Sixty percent of this population in Vermont is employed, compared to 47.2% nationally.100
- The number of dairy-only farms in the state declined 10% between 2005 and 2007.101 A growing number of Vermont farms are reinventing themselves to remain financially sustainable. By the end of 2007, 15% of Vermont’s dairy farms will be certified organic—commanding more profitable pricing from in-state and out-of-state buyers. Some dairy farmers are shifting their focus to cheese to capitalize on 20% per year growth in the premium cheese market, the dairy industry’s fastest growing segment. Farmers are also targeting crops used to make biofuels and reducing their own energy costs through creative use of farm by-products.

- Vermont’s 1,365 cultural organizations employ more than 1,800 residents and bring in as much as $27 million per year from sources outside state borders.99
- Vermont is ranked second lowest in the country for bankruptcies of all types. In 2005, the state’s business bankruptcies decreased by 8.2%. Business terminations decreased by 9% the same year.96
- Vermont attracts outside interest and resources. Nearly 50% of its undergraduate population is made up of out-of-state students.98
- According to a study by the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, Vermont’s economic well-being is double the national average. The study considered factors including income distribution, the cost of crime, the loss of leisure time, and the erosion of nonrenewable resources.95

In the 2005 Pulse of Vermont: Quality of Life study by the Vermont Business Roundtable, Vermonters reported that they preferred to “promote globalization” or “allow it to continue” more than they wanted it to “slow down.”97

- In 2005, Vermont was ranked fourth in the nation for “work environment” based on job opportunities, job quality and workplace fairness.94

- In 2005, Vermont was ranked fourth in the nation for “work environment” based on job opportunities, job quality and workplace fairness.94
Once ranked fifth in the nation, Vermont’s business climate is reportedly losing some ground. Business climate is determined by government and fiscal policy, business incubation, human resources, technology and other factors. Permitting processes, telecommunications needs, utility costs, and other business-related hurdles can make it difficult for startups to get going.

**The FACTS**

- The Beacon Hill Institute’s *State Competitive Report* placed Vermont 15th in the nation for business climate in 2005, losing out to 10 states it had surpassed just four years earlier.\(^{102}\)
- Business leaders have indicated that these areas of Vermont’s business climate need improvement: permitting processes, worker compensation, the regulatory environment, healthcare costs, workforce retention, workforce skills and ethics, business taxes, utility costs, telecommunications, housing affordability, personal taxes, air travel, the highway system and childcare.\(^{103}\)

**Vermont is ranked the 11th most expensive state for doing business, for its wages, tax burden, electricity costs, and price of industrial rent and office space.**\(^{104}\)

- In 2005, the Vermont Business Roundtable’s *Pulse of Vermont: Quality of Life* study reported that Vermonters felt their quality of life was threatened by a lack of financial security and/or problems with affordable access to healthcare. Generally, Vermonters believed that their quality of life would improve with economic growth in the state.\(^{105}\)

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**GIVING THOUGHT**

**Philanthropy and public policy**

Many believe philanthropy is ideally suited to serve as the “research and development” sector for society.

It’s the “independent sector”—with unique flexibility for testing new approaches.

Grantmaking can generate and test innovations that may be taken to scale through the governmental or corporate sectors. In this way, lessons learned through philanthropic endeavor may be used to inform public policy.

The Vermont Community Foundation offers philanthropists with an eye toward policy change the opportunity to learn about unmet needs, promising approaches, grantmaking strategies, and assessment of results through credible evaluation.
Workforce skills fall short of industry needs

Despite the relative diversity of Vermont’s chief employers, individual communities are shouldering the decline of industries such as farming and manufacturing. And the state’s low-skilled workers are losing pace with increasingly complex tasks required of them at traditionally blue collar jobs.106

Vermont shows signs that it will encounter a shortage of skilled workers during the next 15 years, which could hinder the growth of existing Vermont businesses and lessen the state’s appeal to new businesses and investors.107

Vermont is losing its young people at a rate more than three times the national average.

The FACTS

* A study by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund identified five towns as vulnerable due to a dependency on one large manufacturing business: Georgia, Arlington, Bethel, Rutland and Calais.108
* Since 2002, Vermont has lost 8,000 manufacturing jobs. These losses are primarily the result of increases in productivity, not decreased output or job relocation out of state.109
* According to the Vermont Human Resource Investment Council, more than 70% of Vermont employers interviewed reported that they have passed up opportunities to expand their businesses because they could not find workers that met job requirements.110
* Of the top 10 fastest growing jobs in Vermont, seven require at least a two-year college degree for entry, and two others require specific postsecondary training.111
* Vermont is losing its young people at a rate more than three times the national average. Experts agree that this is a function of the state’s high cost of living and the scarcity of jobs that a young person with limited education can obtain.112
Limited infrastructure inhibits commerce, connections

Broadband Internet access, cell phone coverage, quality roads, public transportation—these networks are essential to daily life in modern working communities. In Vermont, such infrastructure is limited and unreliable.\textsuperscript{113}

Even Vermont’s many traditional, low-tech workers and microenterprise need an adequate infrastructure to flourish in a highly connected, high-speed world market. Job searches and applications are fewer and slower without Internet access. Spotty cell phone service hinders communication. With limited public transportation, travel is more expensive and produces more pollution on an individual basis.

\textbf{The FACTS}

\begin{itemize}
\item Cell phone coverage is poor even on primary state highways. High-speed Internet service is available in only 60\% of the state. These gaps in service make Vermont less appealing for businesses of all types and sizes, and increase isolation among the state’s residents.\textsuperscript{114}

\item Vermont’s abundant libraries contain more books per person than libraries in all but four other states, yet Vermont ranked 48th in the nation for libraries with Internet access.

\item Libraries represent one of the few places where low-income residents can access the Internet for job application, tax preparation and other needs.\textsuperscript{115}

\item Inadequate public transportation is a problem throughout Vermont, all but stranding the working poor, the elderly and those needing regular medical treatment for chronic illnesses. It is commonplace for a Vermont senior citizen to pay $100 for a single trip to receive dialysis. For some, this travel expense means reducing the number of treatments against doctor’s orders.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{itemize}
Residents are caring stewards of natural resources

Vermont’s natural beauty and abundance is not lost on its residents. Despite cultural and economic divisions, Vermon ters are united in their love of their state’s rolling, rugged landscape known for its deep winters and rich flora and fauna.

Recognizing the value of the ecosystems in their charge, Vermon ters are generally inclined toward conservation, restoration and enjoyment of their natural surroundings.

In 2004, the National Geographic Society listed Vermont as the most desirable destination in the United States, tied for sixth place among the world’s 115 most desirable destinations. 117

**Enjoyment and conservation**

- More than 200,000 Vermon ters regularly watch, photograph or feed wildlife. 118
- Since 1990, The Vermont Land Trust has conserved more than 425,000 acres. The areas conserved include over 600 working farms and large forested parcels. 119
- In a 2006 survey by the Vermont Land Trust, Vermon ters indicated that land conservation was their fourth most important issue, following public education, affordable healthcare, and affordable housing. Forty-seven percent of those surveyed felt that if land conservation were to stop today it would have a “very negative” impact on Vermont tourism.
- In the same 2006 survey, 63.8% of Vermon ters said that it was “extremely important” to have working farms in the state. In descending order, additional priorities included: have locally grown food (54%), have recreation areas for non-motorized activities (50.8%), have farmer’s markets (47%), have natural or wildlife areas set aside for human use (45%), have scenic vistas (44%) and have working forests (37.7%). 120

**Wilderness and forest-based industry**

- More than 78% of Vermont is blanketed by forests. Of forested land, 81% is privately owned. 121 Research indicates that Vermon ters prefer to fund land conservation through special property tax on “luxury homes.”
- In a 2006 survey by the Vermont Land Trust, 47% of those surveyed reported that if land conservation were to stop today it would have a “very negative” impact on the state’s working forests. 122
- When combined, forest-based manufacturing and forest-related tourism and recreation contribute more than $1.4 billion to Vermont’s economy each year. Forest-based manufacturing provides jobs for more than 7,800 people. An additional 6,000 are employed through forest-related recreation and tourism. 123
- Vermon ters favor wilderness on public lands. A U.S. Forest Service report found that more than 90% of Vermont residents preferred to retain Green Mountain National Forest as a wilderness rather than use it for timber harvesting. 124
Energy alternatives crop up locally

Though the state’s air quality is degraded by neighboring sources of pollution, Vermont is the country’s second lowest producer of air pollution emissions. Vermonters are also demonstrating a growing affinity for cleaner, more renewable home-grown alternatives to fossil fuels.

**the FACTS**

- Nearly half of Vermont’s energy is derived from renewable resources including hydroelectric, wood and nuclear power.
- Vermonters use less electricity per household than residents in 42 other states. For total energy consumption per capita, Vermont ranks 40th in the nation despite the state’s long, cold winters.
- The country’s greatest concentration of homes warmed by wood heat is found in Vermont. Wood is considered a renewable heat source, but older wood stoves produce significant emissions. Replacing these stoves would drastically cut pollution from this source.
- Biofuels reduce emissions, extend the petroleum supply and help provide rural areas with sustainable jobs and energy self-sufficiency. In-state demand for biofuels, recently in the hundreds of thousands of gallons, was expected to have reached one million gallons in 2006.
- In Vermont, biodiesel is used for commercial transportation fleets and has been employed as a heat source for some state buildings, colleges and businesses. Additionally, programs such as Central Vermont Public Service’s Cow Power utilize methane gas generated by farms. Biomass, currently the largest source of renewable energy in the United States, is being used successfully by some Vermont businesses. Energy from biomass is derived from burning organic matter such as wood pellets or chips, grass pellets, crop waste and manure.

**PROMISING APPROACH**

*Partner with grantees*

The High Meadows Fund, a supporting foundation of the Vermont Community Foundation, supports programs for a better environment in Vermont and the health and well-being of Vermont’s children. While most organizations of its size make grants through a formalized application process, High Meadows prefers a more engaged and interactive approach.

Reluctant to use the word “grantee,” High Meadows instead engages a handful of “portfolio partners.” Three to four times a year, High Meadows board members visit partner sites, engaging in dialogue with the nonprofit agencies about their work, the trends that have an impact on it, and major issues and opportunities. High Meadows is also developing an annual retreat to bring portfolio partners together to share ideas and make plans in areas of mutual interest.

This uncommon partnership gives High Meadows trustees a rich, first-hand perspective that is difficult to achieve in the boardroom. Through the process, they build respectful relationships with portfolio partners—and confidence that, together, they can translate dollars into impact.
Global warming hurts natural resource-based income

Vermonters and out-of-state visitors alike spend time and money enjoying the state’s natural resources—accounting for a significant portion of Vermont’s economy. This nature-based income primarily comes from foliage tours, skiing and other snow sports, camping, and maple sugaring.

In spite of Vermont’s best intentions for its natural assets, human activities within and outside of the state have led to global warming, which threatens Vermont’s natural resources and economy in some very real, near-term ways.

Snowfall in Vermont has decreased 15% since the 1950s.

* Though Vermont is the nation’s second lowest producer of air pollution, the state’s emissions that contribute to global warming have increased 23% since 1990.131
* Snowfall in Vermont has decreased 15% since the 1950s, straining the state’s $1.4 billion per year ski industry. When ski resorts compensate by generating their own snow, groundwater supplies are diminished and native plants are harmed.132
* Foliage tourism accounts for 20% to 25% of all Vermont tourism. But warmer temperatures are already beginning to drive out native tree species like the sugar maple.133
* Maple sugaring, as a pastime and a product export, generated more than $13 million for Vermonters in 2000 alone. Warmer springs could shorten the sugaring season, reducing the number of cold nights with warm days that sap requires to flow.134 Maple syrup production has been in steady decline since the 1960s.135
Pollution compromises water bodies

Vermonters rely on a network of rivers, streams and lakes for drinking water, economy-boosting tourism and recreation dollars, and as habitat for the state's plant and animal life. Almost without exception, the state's water bodies have been compromised by pollution. Due to the grade of surrounding mountains, Lake Champlain has a naturally short watershed making it especially vulnerable to pollutants.

the FACTS

- Vermont has the lowest level of toxic releases per capita and the country's 10th lowest number of toxic waste sites. Despite this ranking, the state is home to more than 3,000 hazardous waste sites and 1,500 sites containing MTBE, a gasoline additive known to contaminate water supplies.\(^\text{136}\)

- Pollution has had a dramatic and long-term impact on Lake Champlain, a source of drinking water for 200,000 people and 40% of all tourism dollars in the Champlain Valley Basin. High bacteria levels, caused largely by farming runoff, have led to beach closings. Contaminants from automobiles and other sources concentrate on paved surfaces and run off as phosphorous pollution that has stimulated toxic algae growth in the lake.\(^\text{137}\)

- None of the state's rivers or lakes can fully support all official designated uses including swimming, drinking, recreation, wildlife habitat, and fish consumption.\(^\text{138}\) According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Vermont ranks seventh in the country for the cleanliness of its rivers and streams. Yet mercury pollution has restricted consumption of fish from all Vermont lakes, rivers and streams.

- The Connecticut River Watershed separating Vermont from New Hampshire is threatened by toxins from storm water, loss and fragmentation of habitat, invasive species, mercury contamination from air pollution, and hydroelectric damming. Though this watershed remains challenged, recent cleanup and restriction efforts have produced promising results.\(^\text{139}\)

VALUED RESOURCE

200,000 people depend on Lake Champlain as a source of drinking water.
Habitat losses endanger wildlife

The wildlife enjoyed by so many of Vermont's residents and visitors is threatened by shrinking natural habitat. Many critical ecosystems have been lost, fragmented or damaged by development.

Reductions in viable habitat have life and death consequences for species representing every link in the food chain, from predators such as the bear and bobcat, to large herbivores such as moose and deer, to small reptiles and vulnerable indicator species such as amphibians.

**the FACTS**

- Every year, more than 10 square miles of Vermont's natural habitat are lost to commercial and residential development.\(^\text{140}\)
- The state's endangered species list includes 154 plants and 34 animals. Twenty percent of Vermont's vertebrates are considered endangered, threatened or of “special concern.”\(^\text{141}\)
- Seven out of the state's 40 documented amphibian species are endangered. In some areas, state biologists have discovered that 43% or more of young frogs from a single species are malformed.\(^\text{142}\)
- Preliminary results from a citizen survey conducted by the University of Vermont and the Vermont Institute of Natural Science are showing a significant decline in some bird populations.\(^\text{143}\)
- Approximately 21% of endangered plants and 13% of threatened plants depend on wetlands for survival. Vermont has lost more than 35% of its original wetlands and continues to lose this essential land feature to development. Ninety-five percent of Vermont's remaining wetlands are privately owned. Nearly 40% of the state's wetlands are located in the counties with the fastest-growing populations: Chittenden, Addison, Franklin and Grand Isle.\(^\text{144}\)

**FRAGILE ECOSYSTEM**

21%

of endangered plants and 13% of threatened plants depend on wetlands for survival.
Sprawl is likely to increase

Sprawl encroaches on the green spaces for which Vermont is known and loved. Spread far apart, homes and businesses create inefficiencies of travel and service provision. Between them stretch hundreds of miles of paved surfaces that collect toxins and inhibit natural water filtration. But sprawl is perpetuated, in many cases, by the same people who detest it, making it a difficult problem to resolve.

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**the FACTS**

- Acre for acre, urban development is the primary source of phosphorus pollution in Lake Champlain. Seventy percent of this contaminant derives from rain and snow melt runoff. The soil's natural ability to purify drainage is cut in half when toxins are gathered and concentrated on pavement. Sprawl contributes to this problem because it generates more pavement and more pollutants due to lengthy commutes.\(^{145}\)

- In a 2005 poll conducted by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl, 90% of Vermonters polled believed that current trends of increasing sprawl will continue unless preventative action is taken.\(^{146}\)

**In a 2006 poll, Vermonters identified sprawl among their five most important issues.**\(^{147}\)

- Two-thirds of Vermonters would like their new home to be located in an outlying or rural area, yet 90% of the same respondents believe that residential development should occur in or adjacent to existing downtowns or neighborhoods.\(^{148}\)

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**GIVING THOUGHT**

*Spending today and setting aside for the future*

Now or later? Where timing is concerned, grantmakers work within two schools of thought. Both are valid and each serves a distinct purpose.

Spend today—make more dollars available to address urgent needs and prepare for the future by building capacity in the present.

Set aside for the future—spend some today, but invest the most for tomorrow. Beneficiaries receive fewer dollars today but, because of investment returns, they enjoy far more dollars over time. Plus, the collection of sizable long-term assets helps attract new funds and positively influences other grantmakers’ decisions.

The Foundation has an obligation to help interested donors do both, benefiting Vermont residents of today, while building community capital that future generations can put to good use.
The arts are alive and well

The arts are thriving in Vermont, providing a source of community and an important element in Vermont tourism. In combination with the state’s natural attractions, arts and heritage factored largely into the National Geographic Society’s decision to proclaim Vermont the number one U.S. destination.

The FACTS

- In a study identifying the most creative regions in the country, the Vermont city of Burlington was rated number one in the category of communities with populations below 250,000. Among U.S. metro areas of all sizes it ranked fourth.149
- Hardwick, Windsor, Rutland and St. Albans are designated “Creative Communities.” Bellows Falls and Vergennes have also experienced extensive arts-driven revitalization. In 2006, the State Division of Historic Preservation allocated $230,000 through its Downtown Designation program to three arts facilities with plans to support four more in 2007.150
- In recent years, the Vermont Arts Council has awarded nearly $200,000 toward the improvement of cultural facilities, including restorations and renovations.151
- The Vermont State Department of Education holds some of the nation’s strictest requirements for arts education. All art teachers must be licensed. Minimum art requirements and assessments apply to every grade or grade cluster.152
- More than 70 Vermont cultural organizations provide a variety of arts programs in schools.153
- Vermont is home to dozens of organizations dedicated to making the arts accessible to traditionally underserved residents. Each year the Vermont Arts Council receives financial recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts for its extensive programs reaching rural communities, the disabled, seniors, low-income residents and the very young.154
- As individuals, Vermonters value the arts. In a 2006 poll, 42% said that it is “very important” for the state government to provide funding to support arts programs. Another 37% qualified government arts support as “important.”155

CREATIVE COMMUNITY

42%

of Vermonters said that it is “very important” for the state government to provide funding to support arts programs.
Cultural heritage is a major asset

Vermonters recognize and reap the rewards of a rich cultural heritage. The state’s historic architecture and host of traditional American arts and crafts—and its inclination to preserve these assets—contribute to the quality and texture of life and make Vermont a top destination for the most lucrative type of tourism.

* Vermont has instituted many safeguards and incentives to protect the rural and historic character of its communities, including Act 250, the Scenic Roads Program, Investment Tax Credits, preservation planning support, and conservation easements and covenants.\(^\text{156}\)

* Vermont is home to one of the nation’s few interdisciplinary professional training programs in historic preservation.\(^\text{157}\)

* More than 8,500 buildings in Vermont are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. More than 30,000 buildings have been recorded in the state’s Historic Sites and Structures Survey. The Vermont Archeological Inventory includes more than 1,500 sites.\(^\text{158}\) And, every year, the Preservation Trust of Vermont supports 150 preservation projects.\(^\text{159}\)

* The Vermont Humanities Council sponsors more than 1,500 programs reaching 160 towns in each Vermont county every year. These programs take place in local libraries, museums, community centers and schools, and they target childcare providers, teen parents, incarcerated adults, and adult basic education students.\(^\text{160}\)

* The Vermont Historical Society has developed an annual History Expo, held on the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. Since its inception in 2000, this popular event has attracted 40,000 visitors, with 140 local historical societies participating each year. This first and only statewide heritage festival in the country received an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.\(^\text{161}\)

* In New England, “cultural heritage tourism” brings in nearly $6.6 billion in yearly revenues. Sixty-six percent of cultural heritage visitors are likely to visit the same destination more than once in 12 months. They tend to stay longer and spend nearly twice as much per trip than other types of travelers.

* Seventy-six percent of cultural heritage tourists rate Vermont as “very good” or better as a destination. Of Vermont’s cultural heritage visitors, 87% purchased products made in the state and 45% attended a cultural event while visiting.\(^\text{162}\)
Greater Understanding


We look forward to helping you participate in peer learning opportunities, topical forums, and site visits to inform your grantmaking and connect you with other philanthropists. We would be happy to facilitate meetings with our staff, other philanthropists, and nonprofit experts, as well as help you explore opportunities with other grantmakers to multiply the impact of your investments.

If you hold a fund with the Foundation, we encourage you to visit our website at www.vermontcf.org. There, you’ll find additional information about emerging trends in Vermont, access a growing collection of resources for grantmakers, and review pending grant proposals to consider options for getting involved.

www.vermontcf.org
We encourage you to further your understanding of our state's communities and grow in your personal practice of philanthropy.

Pages 44 to 48 reference knowledge sources cited throughout this publication. Pages 42 and 43 acknowledge several of the many people and organizations with deep understanding of assets and needs in our state.
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Works Cited

A complete list of sources used to develop Understanding Vermont is provided in this section. Each source corresponds to information included in the report, as noted by superscript numbers throughout. The author of the source is listed first (if applicable), followed by the title of the source, the publishing body or organization, the date of publication, and in some cases, the website address. The full citation is included when the source is first referenced. Upon subsequent references to the same source, the citation is abbreviated to include only the author's name or the publication title.

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