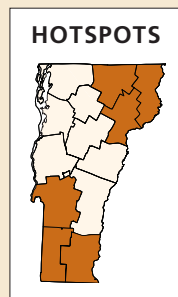


Childhood poverty is concentrated in some counties

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.