

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.⁸⁵ These residents take pride in their communities, engage in the democratic process, and value the strong social fabric of the state.

While much unifies 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,⁸⁶ 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.”⁸⁷

- 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.⁸⁸
- 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.⁸⁹
- 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.⁹⁰



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.