

Vermont Ending Family Homelessness

Quarterly Update | April 2016

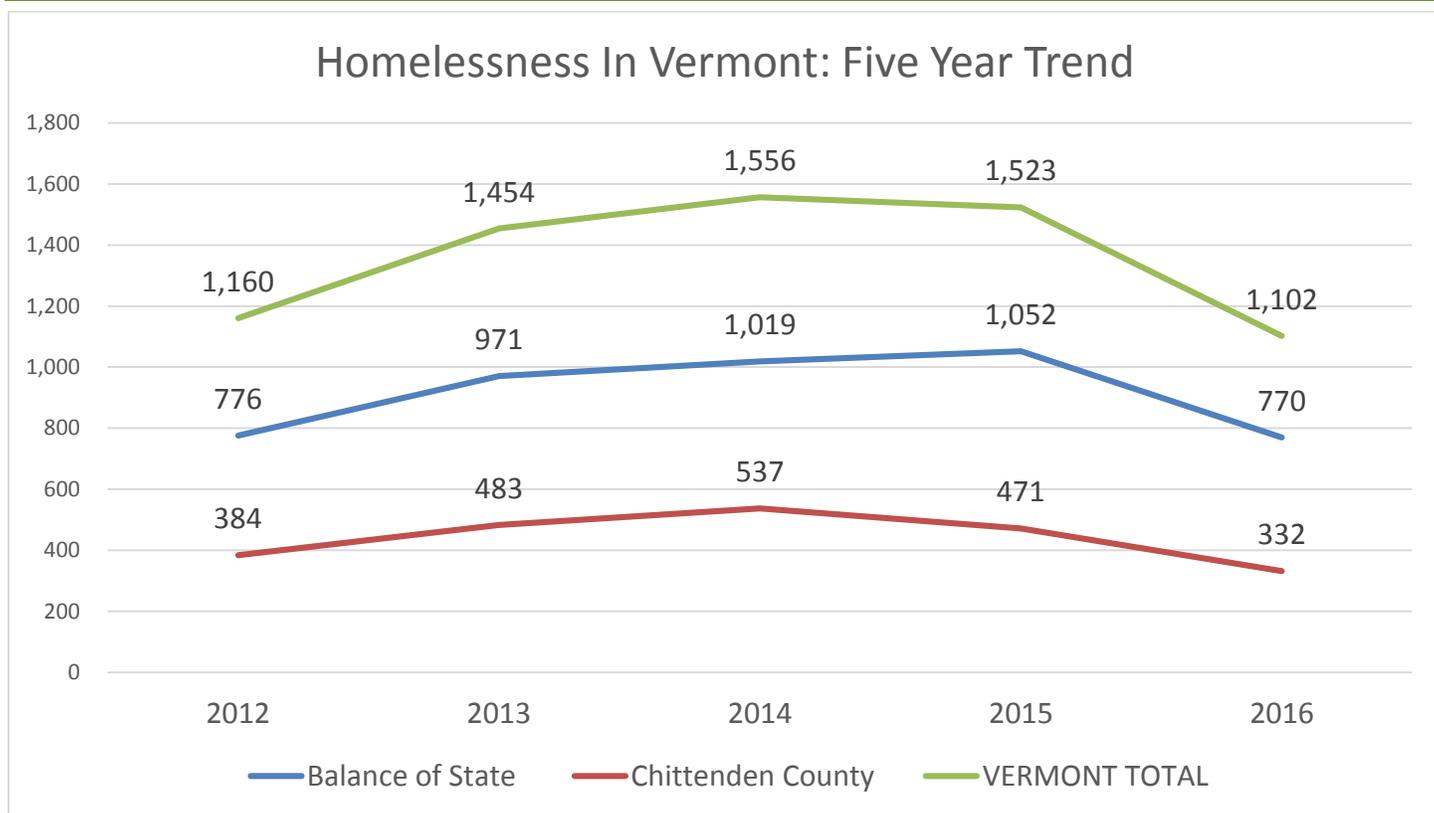
Vermont's Three-Part Strategy for Ending Family Homelessness

Adopt the national “*Family Connection*” framework to ensure local communities have a coordinated system for assessing families’ housing needs and connecting them to the appropriate housing, benefits, employment supports, and evidence-based intervention the first time.

Braid supportive services, housing, and rental assistance to improve stability for families, children, landlords and communities.

Construct and rehabilitate rental housing which is affordable to households with extremely low incomes, and accessible to families and individuals who have experienced homelessness.

New Data: Second Year Decline in Homelessness in Vermont



For the second year in a row, the rate of homelessness has declined in Vermont. Data from the annual point in time count released in April and available [here](#) show a 28% decline in the number of homeless Vermont children in 2016, and a 22% decline in the number of homeless families with at least one child. These data reflect the lowest statewide rate of homelessness in our state for the past five years!

Additional Information on Vermont's Goal and Strategies for Ending Family Homelessness Available at:
humanservices.vermont.gov/end-family-homelessness

Personal Narrative: “One stop shopping” for families who need services beyond the school system

Jane and Joe are young parents raising three children from previous relationships together. The children are in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. All have developmental delays and one has a physical disability requiring speech and language services.

The family moved out of state to live with Jane’s mother but was unable to find work and the children were not doing well in school. They moved back to Vermont to no jobs, no housing and an unreliable car. They doubled up with Joe’s parents in housing for low income seniors but had to leave due to federal regulations. They slept in their car in temperatures as low as five degrees. The children boarded the bus in the morning near where the car was parked. After talking to school staff, they called the Homeless Education Liaison for their supervisory union. The liaison confirmed that the family could not receive motel vouchers but called a local minister who met them at a motel and paid for two nights with funds from the Salvation Army. The parents were referred to the local Community Action

Agency (CAP Agency) (which is a Parent Child Center) for help with emergency housing and applications for subsidized housing. The liaison set up daily transportation to and from school as neither parent had passed their test to obtain a driver’s license. The parents enrolled in classes to earn a driver’s license and GED.

The children were eligible for free breakfast and lunch at school, as well as supper at the afterschool program fun by the school. The children received help with homework and participated in an enrichment program on a daily basis.

After a year, the family moved into a subsidized apartment found with help from the CAP Agency. Both parents got driver’s licenses and continue to work on earning their GED. The children attend the afterschool program most days and attend school on a regular basis. Both parents are extremely proud of how they maintained stability for their family through these tough times and that the children did not have to change schools during this time.

Personal Narrative: “Success to Build On”

Mark and Alicia are the devoted 20-year-old parents of 13-month-old Jimmy. Both grew up in Vermont’s foster care system. Alicia lost both her parents at an early age, and Mark was placed in a foster home when his birth parents were unable to properly care for him. Both Mark and Alicia are committed to providing the safe and happy childhood for Jimmy that they never had themselves as children.

After Jimmy was born, Mark landed a good job in Burlington but the family was unable to find an apartment they could afford. In part due to their age, back debt and few references, landlords passed them over. They went from couch surfing with friends to a large family shelter. The family was fearful of the effect the chaotic atmosphere was having on their little son, who was just learning to walk and say his first words. They asked to come to the John Graham Shelter in Vergennes where they could get help to get back on their feet.

When they arrived, Mark and Alicia immediately began work with Kristen, their service coordinator, to find a path to affordable housing. They received a rental subsidy but learned they would need to clean up back debt and an unfavorable landlord reference before they could rent an apartment. They enrolled in the Rent Right program and started budgeting and paying off old bills. They also began working through some of the painful issues of trauma and loss with the shelter’s licensed clinician. Slowly, they began to gain confidence.

After much hard work by this family, advocacy by those around them, and paying down back debt, this family moved into their beautiful two-bedroom apartment this month. They are connected with a local case manager in Chittenden County so they will have the support they need as they become successful renters, workers, and parents. The future may not be easy, but Mark and Alicia have success they can build on as they reshape their lives.

Additional Information on Vermont’s Goal and Strategies for Ending Family Homelessness Available at:

humanservices.vermont.gov/end-family-homelessness