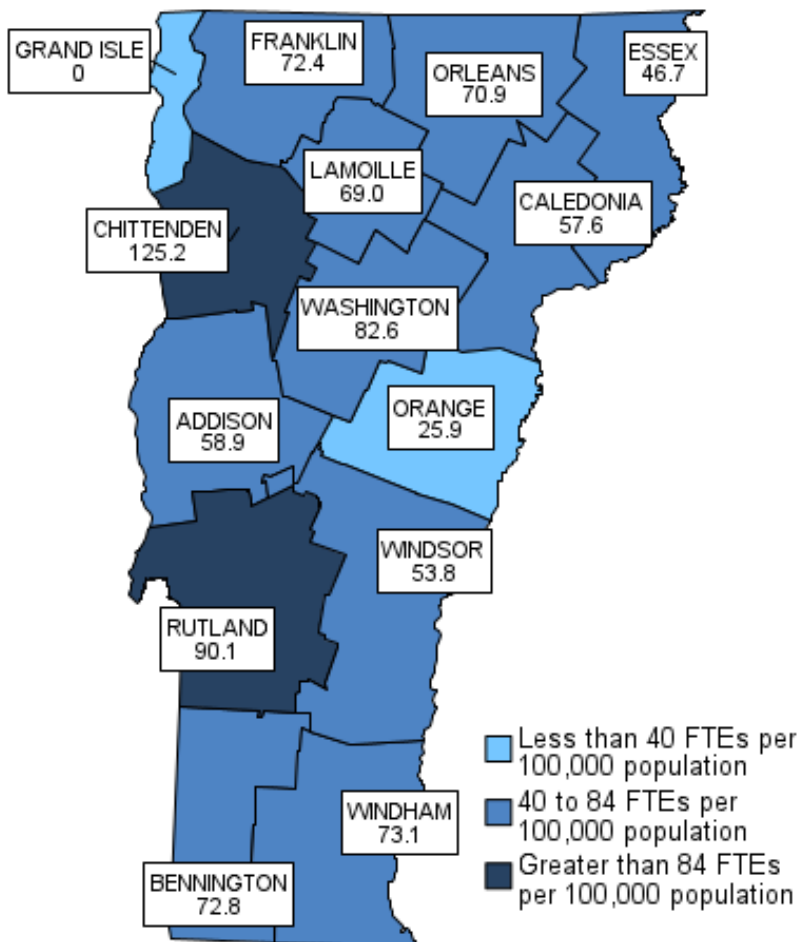


### Overview

This dental assistant census is part of the Vermont Department of Health’s healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time. Vermont dental assistants are relicensed every two years. Data for this report was obtained during the September 2023 relicensing period and represents a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Dental assistants work under the direct supervision of a dentist. They perform a variety of tasks ranging from patient care (including tooth polishing, patient education, taking impressions and assisting the dentist during procedures); to laboratory functions (including creating casts models and instrument sterilization); to administrative tasks such as placing orders for dental supplies.

### Dental Assistants FTEs per 100,000 population by county



### In Brief

#### Workforce

Survey period: September 2023  
 Response Rate: 98.6%  
 Licenses renewed: 719  
 Active in VT: 654  
 VT Full-time Equivalents: 532.6

#### Type of Assistant

Traditional: 82.7%  
 Certified: 17.3%  
 Expanded Function: 10.7%

#### Demographics

Female: 95.1 %  
 Median Age: 37  
 60 or older: 11.0%

#### Education and Training

On-the-job training: 52.3%  
 Educated in Northeast: 95.7%

#### Current Employment

Works in a dental office: 87.5%  
 Works full-time hours at one site: 23.2%  
 Works at multiple sites: 11.9%  
 Plans to reduce hours: 1.5%

#### Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)  
 Highest: 125.2 Chittenden County  
 Lowest: No FTEs reported in Grand Isle County

#### Trends in Statewide FTEs

2017: 484.8  
 2019: 528.0  
 2021: 540.0  
 2023: 532.6

# Dental Assistants 2023

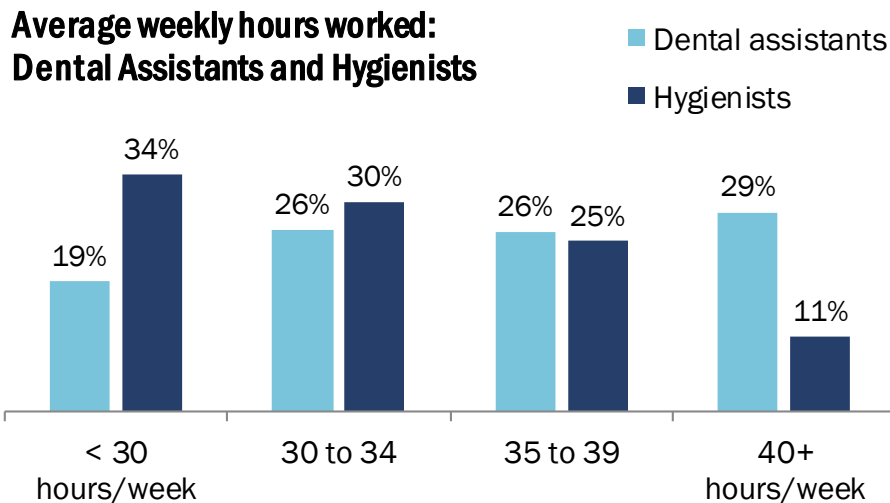
Vermont has three levels of dental assistants. Traditional Dental Assistants primarily receive on-the-job training. Certified Dental Assistants have completed coursework and passed their Dental Assistant National Board exam. Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDAs) have additional training allowing them to complete "reversible" procedures such as filling teeth prepared by the dentist.

## Workforce

- 719 dental assistants renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 709 of these completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 98.6%.
- Out of the 709 respondents, 654 (92.2%) indicated they are actively practicing as dental assistants in Vermont.
- Of the 55 respondents reporting a non-active status, 21 (38.2%) indicated they are planning to start working as a dental assistant in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 654 dental assistants who reported actively working in Vermont.

## Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

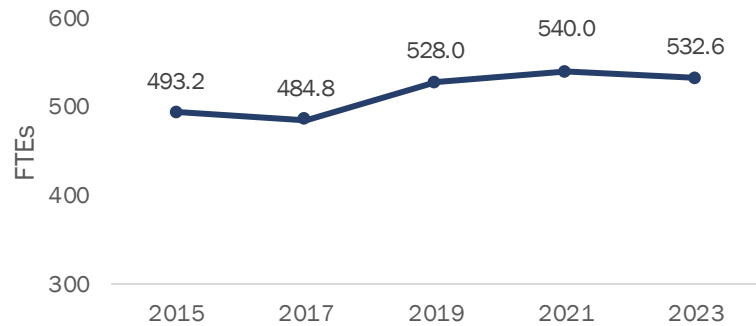
- 654 dental assistants provided 532.6 total FTEs.
  - 541 traditional dental assistants provided 438.1 total FTEs
  - 113 certified dental assistants provided 94.5 total FTEs.
- 51.5 FTEs, or 9.7% of total FTEs, are provided by 72 dental assistants aged 60 or older.
- 28.9% (188) of dental assistants work on average 40 or more hours per week across all work sites.
- Dental assistants worked more hours per week compared to dental hygienists who were surveyed separately during the same time period. The average weekly hours for dental assistants were 32.8, while the average weekly hours for hygienists was 29.2.



## Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Dental assistant FTEs increased by 39.4 from 493.2 in 2015 to 532.6 in 2023.
- From 2021 to 2023, FTEs decreased by 7.4 from 540.0 in 2021 to 532.6 in 2023.

### Dental Assistants FTEs by Year



## Demographics

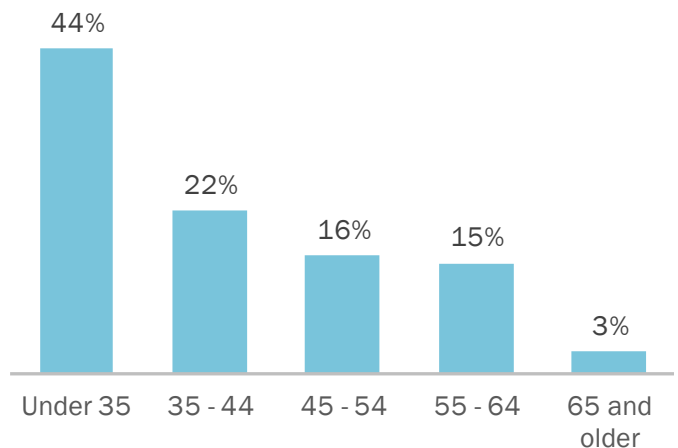
### Gender

- 95.1% of the dental assistants in Vermont (618) are female.
- 2.6% (17) are male.
- 2.3% (19) prefer not to answer.

### Age

- 44.0% (288) are under 35 years of age.
- 38.7% (253) are between 35 and 54 years of age.
- 17.3% (113) are 55 years of age and older.

### Age Distribution of VT Dental Assistants



### Race and Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to select their race and could select multiple responses or choose not to answer. Therefore, numbers may not equal the total number of dental assistants.

- 89.1% of dental assistants are white, 2.8% are Asian, 2.1% are Black, 1.2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, none selected Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 4 preferred to self-describe their race (0.6%). Forty-one preferred not to answer or were missing data.
- 15 dental assistants (2.3%) are Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and 598 (91.9%) are not. 41 preferred not to answer the question or did not answer the question.

## Education and Trainings

- When reporting their highest degree or certificate relevant to their dental assistant practice, 52.3% identified on-the-job training, 38.1% technical school training or a certificate/diploma, and 9.5% an Associate or other degree.
- 17.3% (113) of the dental assistants are certified dental assistants and 82.7% are traditional dental assistants.
- Certified dental assistants can complete additional training to become expanded function dental assistants (EFDAs). 70 of the certified dental assistants completed the training. 64 of them said they use that certification in their work.
- Most of the 654 dental assistants in Vermont in 2023 completed their training in the Northeast (95.7%) as seen in the table.

Region where training/educ. occurred	Number	Percent
Vermont	537	84.6%
New Hampshire	24	3.8%
Northeast excluding VT & NH	47	7.4%
South	12	1.9%
Central	4	0.6%
West	8	1.3%
Outside of US	3	0.5%
* Missing data from 19 individuals		

## Practice Characteristics

### Number of sites

- 88.1% of dental assistants (576) work at a single practice site.
- 11.9% (78) work at more than one site.

### Practice Setting

- Most dental assistants work in dental offices rather than a healthcare setting.

Main Practice Setting	Traditional	Certified (non EFDA)	Certified EFDA	Total
Solo Practice	176 (33%)	12 (28%)	19 (27%)	207 (32%)
Practice of 2 dentists	178 (33%)	13 (30%)	21 (30%)	212 (32%)
Practice of 3 dentists	131 (24%)	10 (23%)	12 (17%)	153 (23%)
Hospital/Clinic	6 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	7 (1%)
Health Center	47 (9%)	8 (19%)	16 (23%)	71 (11%)
Other setting	3 (<1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	4 (1%)
Total	541	43	70	654

# Dental Assistants 2023

## Specialties

- All three levels of dental assistants work primarily for general practitioner dentists.
- 65.2% (425) work for general practitioner dentists.
- 8.9% (58) work for dentists with a specialty in Orthodontics.

Specialty at main location	Traditional	Certified (non EFDA)	Certified EFDA	Total
General Practice	323 (60%)	37 (86%)	65 (93%)	425 (65%)
Pediatric Dentistry	22 (4%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	23 (4%)
Orthodontics	57 (11%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	58 (9%)
Periodontics	13 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (2%)
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	48 (9%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	50 (8%)
Prosthodontics	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)	0	1 (<1%)
Endodontics	19 (4%)	2 (5%)	0	21 (3%)
Multi-specialty practice	40 (7%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	42 (6%)
Public Health	8 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)	10 (2%)
Other	7 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	8 (1%)
Total	538	43	70	651

\* Missing data from 3 individuals

## Current Experience

- Median time since first licensed as a dental assistant: 8 years.
- 16.8% (108) of dental assistants started working in Vermont over 25 years ago.

## Future Plans

- 92.3% (602) plan to continue working as they had been in the next 12 months.
- 1.8% (12) plan to increase their hours in the next 12 months.
- 1.5% (10) plan to reduce their hours.
- 1.0% (6) plan to stop working in Vermont or seek a job in a different field.

## Key Takeaways

- Dental assistant FTEs have fluctuated, with an increase in FTEs from 2017 to 2021 but a slight decrease between 2021 and 2023.
- Relative to population, dental assistants are most common in Chittenden and Rutland counties.
- Dental assistants in Vermont are predominately female and relatively young, with a median age of 37.
- Most dental assistants received their training on the job.

For more information, contact: [AHS.VDHPHysicianCensus@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPHysicianCensus@vermont.gov)

## Appendix

### Active Dental Assistant

A dental assistant who reported working in Vermont as a dental assistant (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

### Census

The census was taken during the biennial dental assistant relicensing process which ended on September 30, 2023. The data include all licensed dental assistants except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (July - September 2023), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of September 30, 2025. Census questions are available upon request.

### Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. A dental assistant reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

### Main Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The main practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice in which the dental assistant worked the greatest number of annual hours.

### Map Quartiles

Map colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

### Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus, totals may vary from table to table.

### Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2022 and were provided by the Department of Health.

### Primary Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The primary practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice with the greatest number of reported annual hours per individual.

### Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours are based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours \* (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for a dental assistant working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks), is 20.