

Health Care Workforce Census

Social Workers, 2024

June 2025

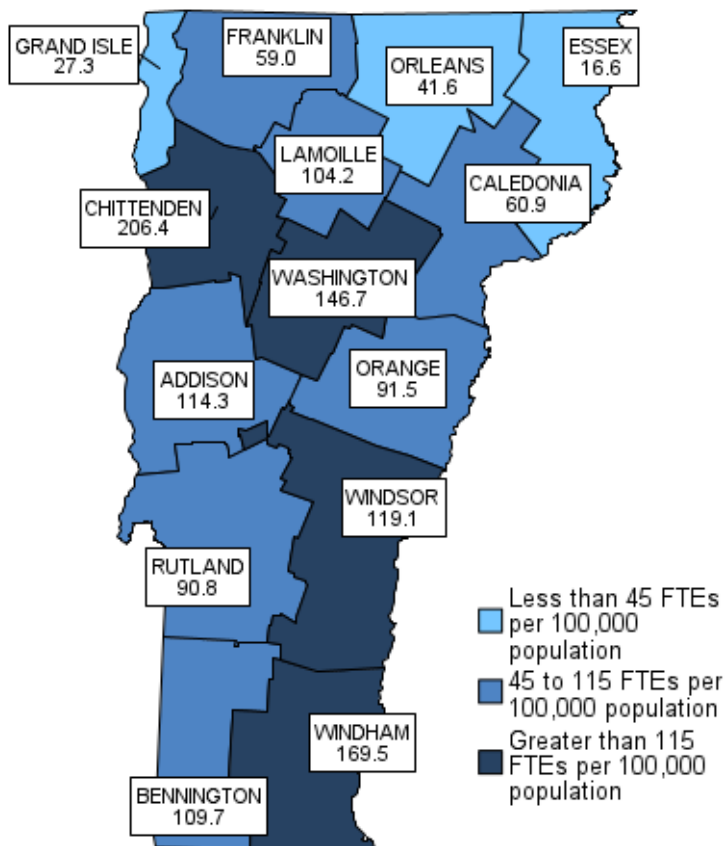
Overview

This Social Workers 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 Vermont over time. Vermont Social Workers, including Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW) and Licensed Master's Social Workers (LMSW), are relicensed every two years. Data for this report were obtained during the January 2024 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Social workers help individuals and families function in their environment, navigate relationships, and solve personal and family problems using special knowledge of social resources, human capabilities, and social behavior theory.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov.

Social Workers FTEs per 100,000 population by County



In Brief

Workforce

Survey period: January 2024
Response Rate: 100%
Licenses renewed: 1,656
Active in VT: 1,096
VT Full-time Equivalents: 860.8

Demographics

% Female: 82.2%
Median Age: 48
% 60 or older: 27.0%

Education and Training

% PhD: 0.9%
% Educated in VT: 31.9%
% Educated in Northeast: 79.5%
% ABE certified: 52.3%

Main Specialties

Mental Health: 82.0%

Current Employment

% Accepting new patients: 82.4%
% Full-time at main site: 40.2%
% Full-time at all sites: 42.4%
% Planning to reduce hours: 2.8%
% Planning to retire: 0.6%

Geographic Distribution

FTEs per 100,000 population
Statewide: 132.9
Highest: 206.4, Chittenden County
Lowest: 16.6, Essex County

Trends in Statewide FTEs

2024: 860.8
2022: 859.9
2020: 795.3
2018: 685.8
2016: 635.5

Workforce

- 1,656 social workers renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 1,656 of these completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 100%.
- Of the 1,656 respondents, 1,096 (66.2%) indicated they are actively practicing in Vermont.
- 287 social workers are providing direct patient care in Vermont via telehealth but are located out of state. These 287 social workers are excluded from the rest of this report because their Vermont-specific full-time equivalents cannot be determined.
- Of the 273 respondents reporting a non-active status, 94 (34.4%) indicated they are planning to start work as a social worker in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 1,096 social workers who reported actively working in Vermont.
- The 1,096 active social workers encompass two licensing types:
 - 1,060 Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers
 - 36 Licensed Master's Social Workers

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)

- 1,096 social workers provide 860.8 total FTEs.
- 203.4 FTEs, or 23.6% of total FTEs, are provided by 296 social workers aged 60 or older.
- 40.2% (441) of social workers work 40 or more hours per week at their main site.

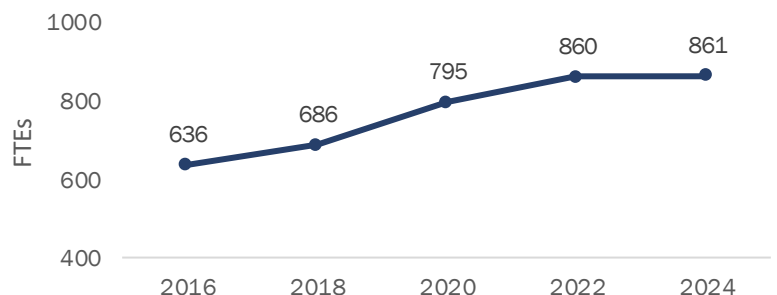
**Just under one quarter
(24%) of FTEs are provided
by social workers aged 60
or older.**

Average weekly hours – at all sites	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	174	15.9%
20-39 hours	457	41.7%
40 hours or more	465	42.4%

Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Social worker FTEs increased by 224.4 from 635.5 in 2016 to 859.9 in 2022.
- From 2020 to 2022, FTEs increased by 64.6, but there was no increase between 2022 and 2024.

Social Worker FTEs by Year



Demographics

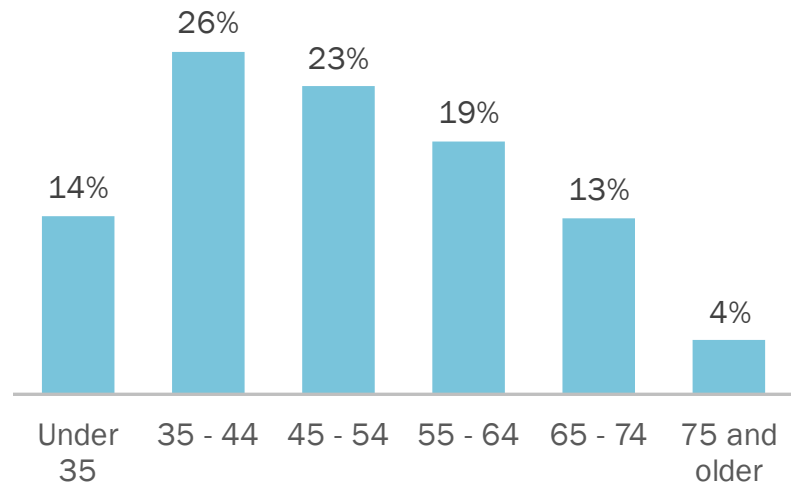
Gender

- 82.2% of social workers in Vermont (861) are female.
- 15.9% (167) are male.
- 1.9% (20) preferred to self-describe their gender.
- 48 preferred not to answer or were missing data for gender.

Age

- The median age of social workers is 48, meaning about half of social workers are aged 48 and older.
- 13.6% (149) are under 35 years of age.
- 49.5% (543) are between 35 and 54 years of age.
- 36.9% (404) are 55 years of age and older.

Age Distribution of VT Social Workers



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 social workers.

- 1,001 social workers are White (97.6%), 0.6% are Black, 0.9% are Asian, <0.5% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, and <0.5% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. 17 social workers preferred to self-describe their race (1.7%). 70 social workers preferred not to answer or were missing data for race.
- 21 social workers (2.1%) are Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and 1,003 (97.9%) are not. 72 social workers preferred not to answer or were missing data for ethnicity.

Education and Training

Master's degrees are required to hold a Vermont license for social work. Becoming a LICSW additionally requires 3,000 hours of supervised practice.

- 0.9% of licensed social workers in Vermont have a doctoral level degree.
- 79.5% received their schooling in the Northeast, including 31.9% in Vermont.

Highest degree awarded in:	Number	Percent
Northeast	868	79.5%
Midwest	65	6.0%
South	75	6.9%
West	70	6.4%
Canada	11	1.0%
Other Foreign Country	3	0.3%
* Missing data from 4 individuals		

- 52.3% are certified as clinical social workers by the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work.
- 26.4% do not know their ABE certification status.

Practice Characteristics

Practice Setting

- 39.2% (430) of social workers work in private solo practices.
- 11.8% (129) work at a designated agency.
- 55.8% of social workers work at a site where supervision to train new social workers is available.

Main Setting	Number	Percent
Private Solo Practice	430	39.2%
Designated Agency	129	11.8%
Health Clinic/Outpatient facility	124	11.3%
School or College	112	10.2%
Hospital/Medical Center	98	8.9%
Private Group Practice	61	5.6%
Social Service Agency	48	4.4%
Other Setting	94	8.6%

Number of sites

- 91.3% (1,001) of social workers practice at a single practice site.
- 8.7% (95) work at two or more sites.

Specialties

- The most common primary specialty of social workers is mental health (82.0%), followed by health (4.1%).

Access to Care

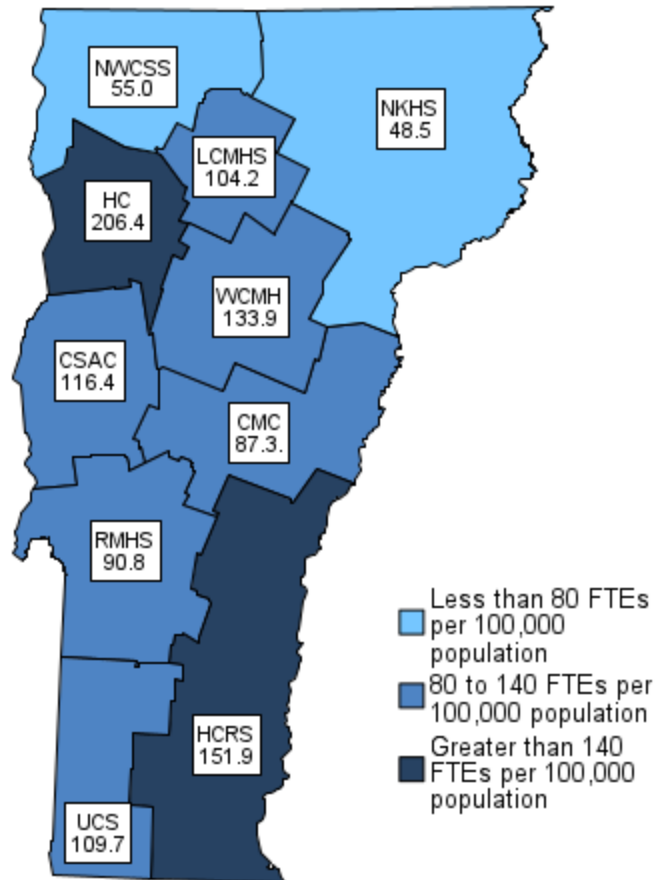
- 82.4% (848) of social workers are accepting new patients.
- 76.3% participate in Medicaid, and 67.9% accept new Medicaid clients.
- 56.4% participate in Medicare, and 49.5% accept new Medicare clients.

% of Social Workers that	Number	Percent
Accept new patients	848	82.4%
Participate in Medicaid	778	76.3%
Accept new Medicaid patients	677	67.9%
Participate in Medicare	558	56.4%
Accept new Medicare patients	483	49.5%

Mental Health Catchment Areas *(See Appendix for definition)*

- The highest ratio of social workers (206.4 FTEs per 100,000 population) is in the Howard Center (HC) catchment area, providing care to Chittenden County. The lowest ratio of social workers (48.5 FTEs per 100,000 population) is found in the Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) area.

Social Worker Full-Time Equivalents per 100,000 population by Mental Health Catchment Areas



Current Experience and Future Plans

- Median years licensed in Vermont is 10.
- 22.5% of social workers have been licensed in Vermont for over 20 years.
- 87.1% plan to continue working the same number of hours in the next 12 months.
- 6.6% plan to increase their hours.
- 2.8% plan to reduce their hours.
- 1.5% plan to retire, seek a non-clinical job, or stop working in Vermont.

Years Licensed in VT	Number	Percent
0 to 5 years	334	31.2%
6 to 10 years	238	22.2%
11 to 15 years	155	14.5%
16 to 20 years	104	9.7%
21 to 25 years	85	7.9%
Over 25 years	156	14.6%
* Missing data from 24 individuals		

Key Takeaways

- The number of social workers practicing in Vermont increased steadily between 2016 and 2022 but saw little change from 2022 to 2024.
- The percentage of licensed social workers that are active in Vermont has decreased since 2020, while social workers providing care through telemedicine from outside of the state has increased greatly since 2022.
- Relative to population, social workers are most common in Chittenden, Windham and Washington Counties.
- Almost half of social workers are over the age of 48, and 27% are age 60 or older. Just under one quarter (23.6%) of all FTEs in Vermont are provided by social workers aged 60 and older, which may lead to a shortage in coming years as older social workers leave the workforce.
- The most common setting for social workers is private solo practice.
- Under 20% of social workers are men, which may limit access to services for those who feel more comfortable with male social workers.

For more information, contact: AHS.VDHPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov.

Data Acknowledgement

The Vermont Department of Health recognizes the many social, economic and environmental inequities which drive the data in this report. We are working to incorporate data reflective of these lived experiences among all Vermonters.

For this report, race and ethnicity are self-reported by participants. These questions are optional, asked at the end of the census, and multiple answers, write-in answers, and “prefer not to answer” answers are allowed. Hispanic ethnicity is asked about first, with options to answer “Yes”, “No”, or “Prefer not to answer”, followed by asking how participants would classify their race, with presented options being American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, White, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, prefer not to answer, prefer to self-describe (with space to write-in).

Appendix

Active Social Worker

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

Census

The census was taken during the biennial relicensing process which ended on January 31, 2024. The data include all licensed social workers except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (October – December 2023), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of January 31, 2026. Copy of census questions is 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. 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 social worker worked the greatest number of annual hours.

Map Quartiles

For county maps, 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.

Mental Health Catchment Areas

There are 10 designated agencies across the state of Vermont responsible for helping their local populations access mental health services among other things. When determining shortage areas for mental health care providers, the designated agency catchment areas are the dividing lines for Vermont.

Mental Health Catchment Area	Abbreviation
Clara Martin Center	CMC
Counseling Services of Addison County	CSAC
Howard Center	HC
Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont	HCRS
Lamoille County Mental Health Services	LCMHS
Northeast Kingdom Human Services	NKHS
Northwestern Counseling and Support Services	NWCSS
Rutland Mental Health Services	RMHS
United Counseling Services	UCS
Washington County Mental Health Services	WCMH

Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from percentages and tables. Therefore, totals may vary from table to table. Starting in May 2025, missing data and those who preferred not to answer for gender, race, and ethnicity are excluded from the denominator, which may affect comparisons with prior reports where missing data were included.

Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2023 and were provided by the Department of Health.

States

States are grouped into the following regions:

Northeast	Midwest	South		West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	North Carolina	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Oklahoma	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	South Carolina	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Tennessee	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Texas	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Virginia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Washington DC	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland	West Virginia	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi		New Mexico
	Ohio			Oregon
	South Dakota			Utah
	Wisconsin			Washington
				Wyoming

Weekly Hours

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