



# MINUTES

**Thursday – January 19, 2023**

**5:30 PM**

**The Barn at Monument Circle – Bennington**

Present: Walter Klinger, Bruce Lierman, Martha Cornwell, Rory Price, Dixie Zens, Dana Rozycki, Michael Fernandez, James Pullman, Catherine Bryars, Megan Herrington

Staff: Jim Henderson, Scott Grimm-Lyon, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Bill Colvin, Mark Anders

After enjoying a meal from Your Belly's Deli, the meeting was called to order at 6:04PM.

I. Minutes of November 2022 Meeting

Motion (Zens): Approve as presented. Second by Klinger. Passed unanimously.

II. Public Hearing to Confirm Peru Town Plan

Motion to open the hearing (Cornwell). Second by Zens. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Zens). Second by Lierman.

Ballot Results: Fifteen (15) municipal commissioners and four (4) special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Planning process for Peru was approved. Vote tabulations include votes by proxy in advance of the meeting.

III. Public Hearing to Confirm Act 174 Energy Compliance for Peru Town Plan

Motion to open the hearing (Rozycki). Second by Zens. No discussion. Motion to close the hearing (Zens). Second by Cornwell.

Ballot results: Fifteen (15) municipal commissioners and four (4) special purpose commissioners voted in the affirmative. No votes in the negative. Peru was deemed to be in compliance with Act 174 Energy requirements. Vote tabulations include votes by proxy in advance of the meeting.

IV. The Vermont Community Health Equity Partnership

Megan Herrington, District Director of the Bennington Office of Local Health, gave an overview of Health Department services (see attached presentation).

Rory Price, Public Health Specialist at the Bennington Office of Local Health, introduced the Vermont Community Health Equity Partnership (VTCHEP), a program funded by CDC money to advance health equity in the state. The BCRC is the local organization administering the program in Bennington County and working closely with the Office of Local Health (see attached presentation).

Bike Hub Board Member, Bruce Lierman, gave an overview of the Bike Hub and its educational programming funded by a subgrant from VTCHEP (see attached presentation).

V. Overview of the Municipal Health Equity Toolkit

BCRC Regional Planner, Callie Fishburn, gave an overview of the newly developed Municipal Health Equity Toolkit. This toolkit was developed by the state's 11 regional planning commissions to help municipalities incorporate health equity principles into local planning. To accompany the main toolkit document, a resource list and matrix with sample town plan and bylaw language were also developed. View the toolkit: [Health Equity Planning Toolkit - Lamoille County Planning Commission \(lcpcvt.org\)](https://www.lcpcvt.org/Health-Equity-Planning-Toolkit)

VI. Overview of the Homeless Health Equity Capacity Grant

BCRC staff members, Scott Grimm-Lyon and Jonathan Cooper gave an overview of the Homeless Health Equity Capacity Grant. The grant was received by Greater Bennington Community Services (GBCS), which has partnered with the BCRC and a steering committee of over a dozen organizations to undertake a 2-phase study: the first phase is an unaccompanied youth needs assessment which is largely complete. The second phase, which is about to begin, will involve working with a consultant to develop a feasibility study for a wellness hub in downtown Bennington (see attached presentation).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

324 MAIN

STATE OF VERMONT  
DOWNTOWN STATE OFFICE BUILDING

# Vermont Department of Health Office of Local Health

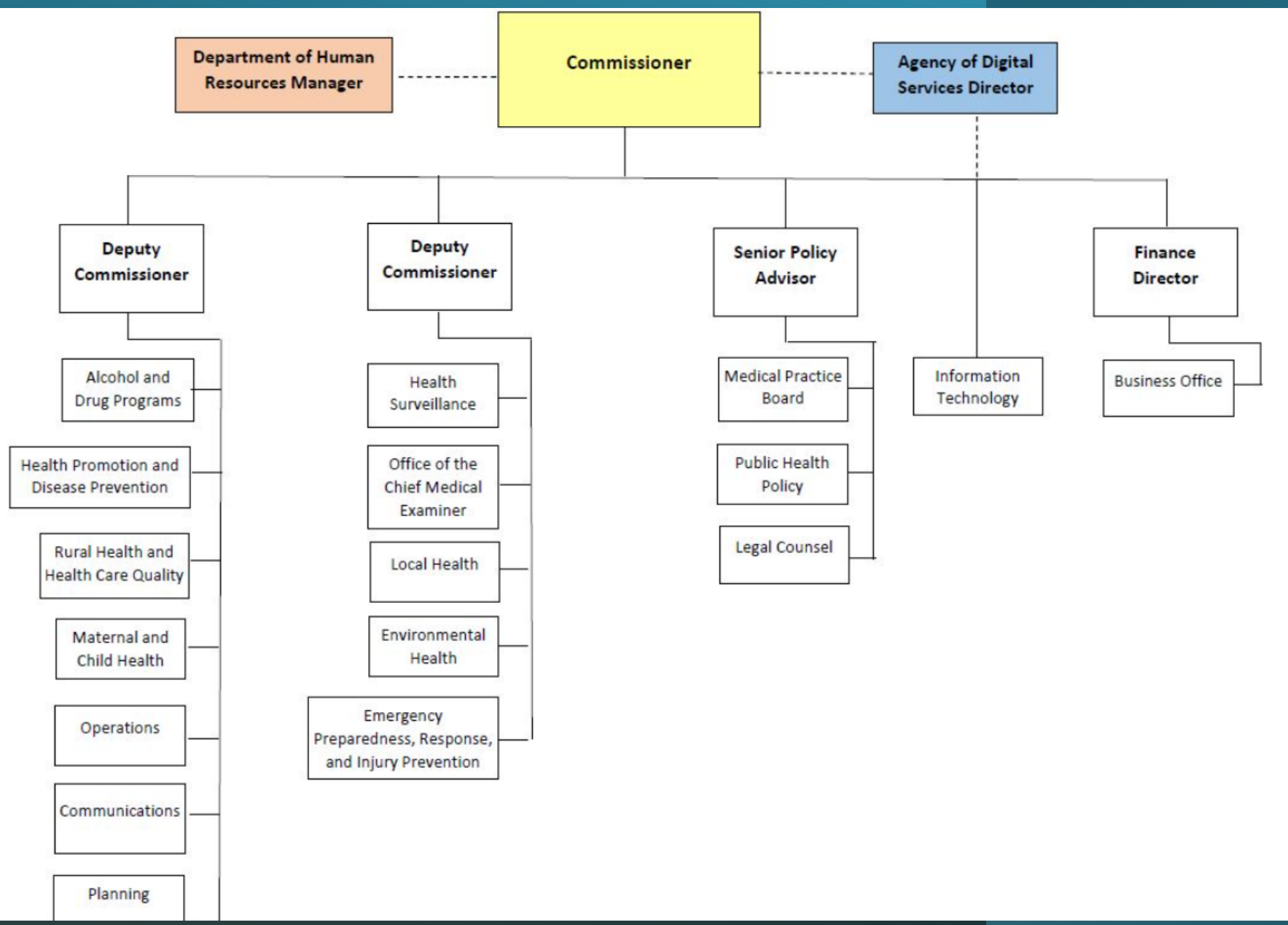
Bennington District Office

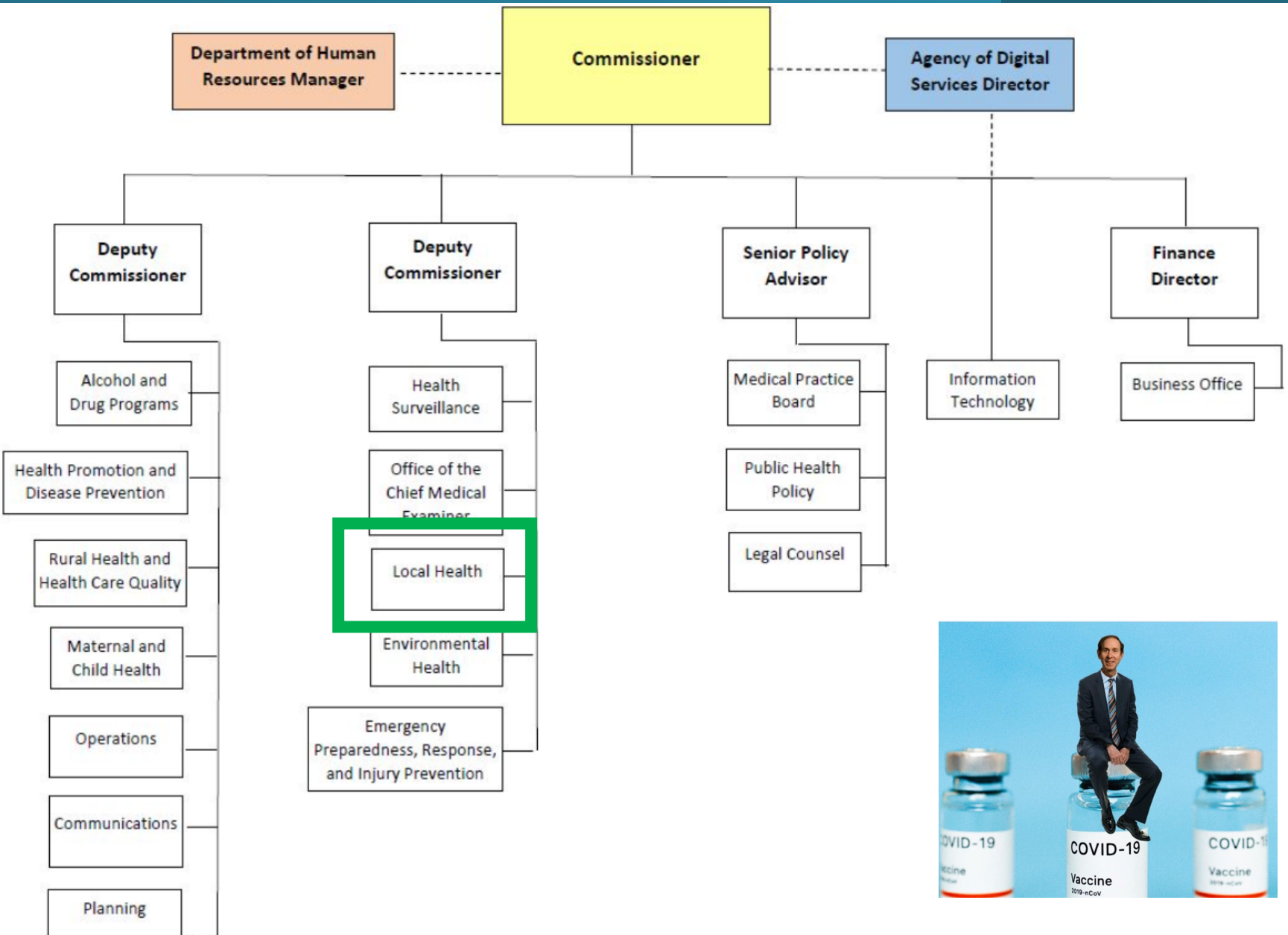
Megan Herrington, MPH  
Public Health Services District Director  
1/19/2021



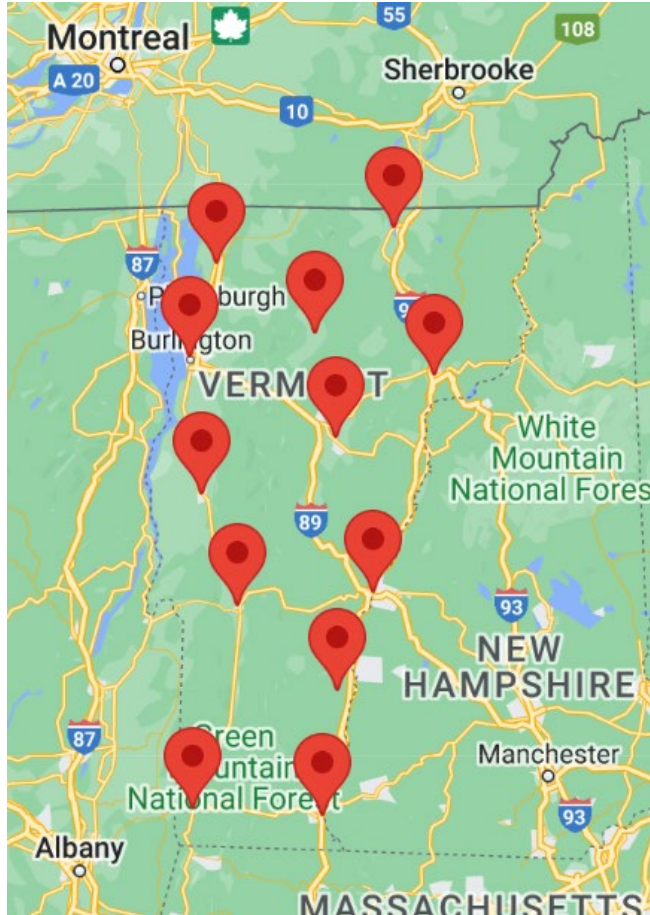
# Vermont Department of Health is one of six departments under Vermont Agency of Human Services

- Department of Children & Families (DCF)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Department of Aging & Independent Living (DAIL)
- Department of Health (VDH)
- Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA)





# 12 District Offices



- Centralized Public Health structure
- Execute programs, deliverables at local level with central office support
- Respond to local public health emergencies
  - PFOAs
  - Infectious Disease Outbreaks
  - COVID-19
  - Weather Events

# Office of Local Health Programs

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program

Infectious Disease Investigation and Surveillance

Immunizations

Oral Health

Chronic Disease and Tobacco Prevention

School Health

Healthy Communities

Emergency Preparedness

Healthy Homes & Lead Poisoning Prevention



# Local Health: Cross-Cutting Themes and Goals

Public Facing

Data Driven

Health Equity and Systems Change

Innovation

Upstream Initiatives

Community Partnerships

Gap Filling – Preventive Health Services

**Thank You!**

**Questions?**

**[Megan.Herrington@vermont.gov](mailto:Megan.Herrington@vermont.gov)**

**802-355-3833**





# Vermont Community Health Equity Partnership (VT CHEP)

## Bennington District

Rory Price, Chronic Disease Program Specialist

January 19, 2022



“

## VT CHEP Goal

Mobilize partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health as they relate to COVID-19 health disparities among populations at higher risk and that are underserved.

”

“

## Health Equity

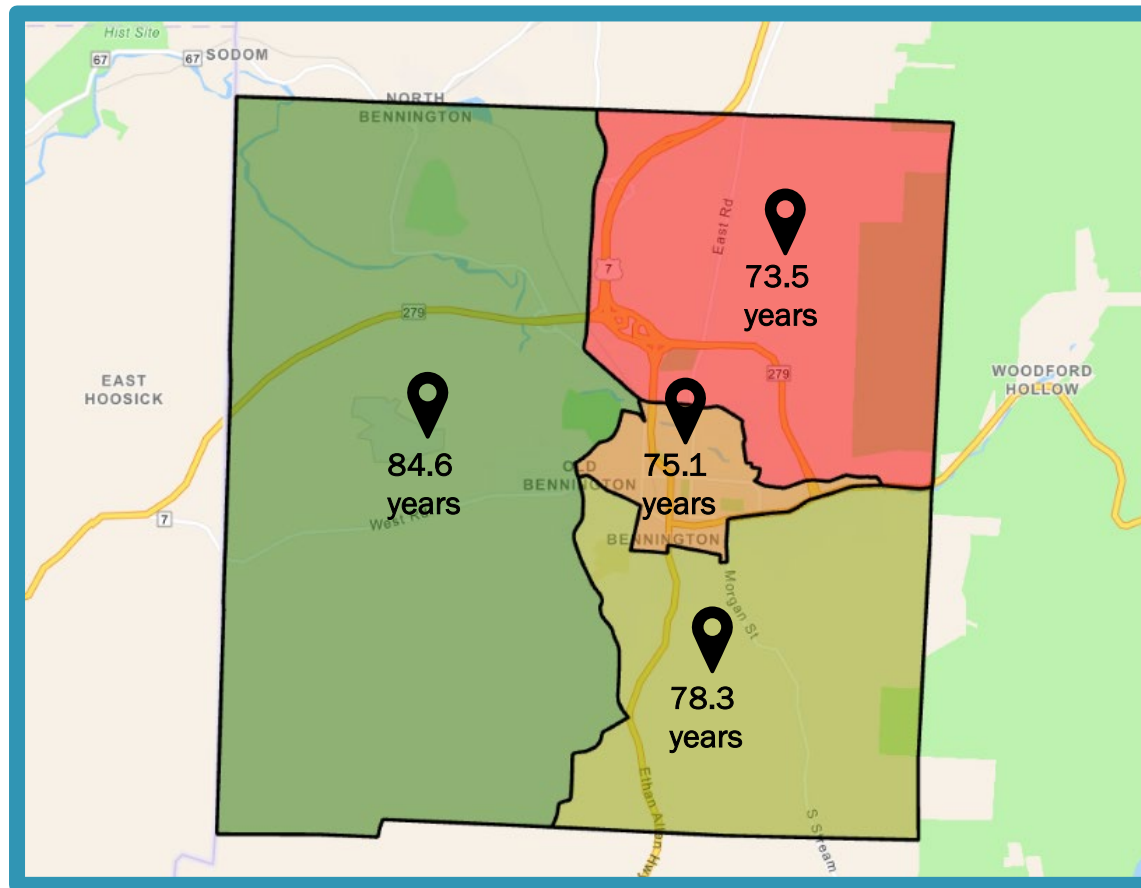
Health equity exists when all people have a fair and just opportunity to be healthy, especially those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice, and other avoidable systemic inequalities that are often associated with social categories of race, gender, ethnicity, social position, sexual orientation and disability.

”

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/about-us/our-vision-mission/health-equity>

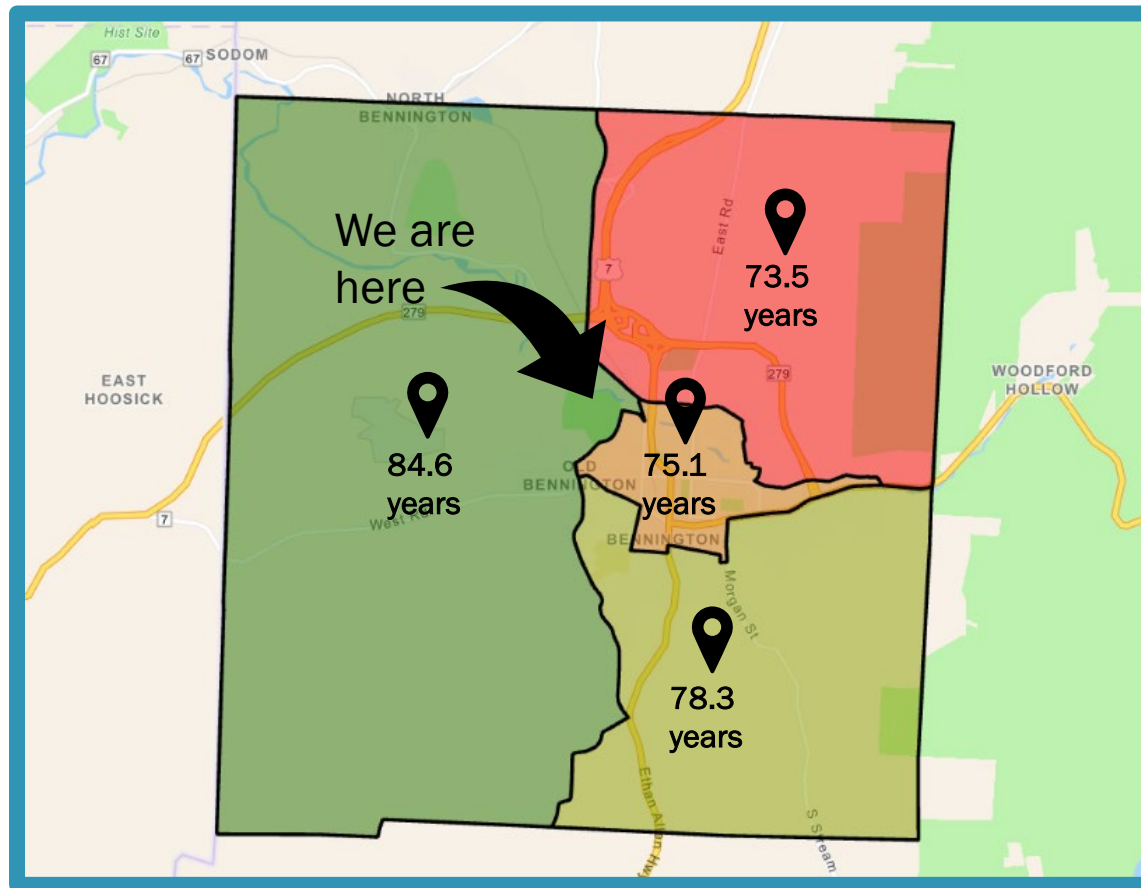
# Life Expectancy at Birth, Bennington

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>



# Life Expectancy at Birth, Bennington

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>



# Collective Impact

- 1 Common Agenda
- 2 Shared Measurement
- 3 Mutually Reinforced Activity
- 4 Communication
- 5 Backbone Organization





# Values



- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Reliability
- Efficiency
- Stewardship
- Humility

# Community Engagement

- Interviews and community forums held in multiple locations
- Stipends for participation
- Feedback synthesized with quantitative data

# Request for Proposals



- Tailored application for those with little grant-writing experience or capacity
- Verbal applications allowed
- Technical assistance available

# Grantee Selection Process



- 11 applications received
- 7-member selection committee
- Stipends available  
time invested

## **Greater Bennington Community Services, Inc.**

We would like to engage the organization, Rural Area Medicine (RAM), to offer a pop-up clinic in the Bennington County area. We are hopeful that this pop-up clinic will attract and serve a population of individuals for whom our current structures and systems are not serving. The services provided will be free of cost and we would provide educational and referral materials for individuals.



## Alliance for Community Transformations

The Take Care Project is a community-driven initiative that aims to increase awareness of hygiene and period poverty; and support the health and well-being of our youth by helping them get the essential items they need to be healthy and thriving students and community members.

## Mount Anthony Union Middle School

Expanding the garden established at the middle school to include perennial fruiting shrubs and trees arranged in permaculture-style guilds holds great possibility to increase student learning, give them access to food and to support these students in developing a beautiful relationship with that food. I have seen evidence of students being empowered by their work and believe that growing fruit will add to their sense of accomplishment and agency in feeding themselves.



## Bennington County Open Arms

The stress of meeting financial needs when refugees first arrive is enormous ...Helping to fund these needs will relieve some of that pressure in a population that is dependent on community kindness, forgiving landlords, and the hard work of volunteers and community professionals to help them to start their new lives.






## The Bike Hub, Inc.

We propose a three-part cycling initiative focused on those suffering from socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice and other systemic inequalities that are often associated with social categories of race, gender, ethnicity, social position, sexual orientation, and ability type. Our project will increase access, competence, and confidence for our neighbors relative to cycling.



# Looking Ahead

- 
- Continued support of grantees
  - Communication and sharing of opportunities with non-funded applicants
  - Additional community engagement efforts
  - Incorporation of data and findings into other projects

# Thank you

Rory Price  
802-447-6461  
[rory.price@vermont.gov](mailto:rory.price@vermont.gov)



Creating a vibrant, healthy  
community by making cycling  
accessible and affordable for all.



160 Benmont Ave, Bennington, VT

[info@ourbikehub.com](mailto:info@ourbikehub.com)

[www.ourbikehub.com](http://www.ourbikehub.com)

802-445-4000

## Our Vision

The tri-state region around Bennington, Vermont will have a dynamic cycling community where bikes are accessible to all, where health and wellness are celebrated, where young people are empowered, and where cycling is a lifelong activity.

## Our Mission

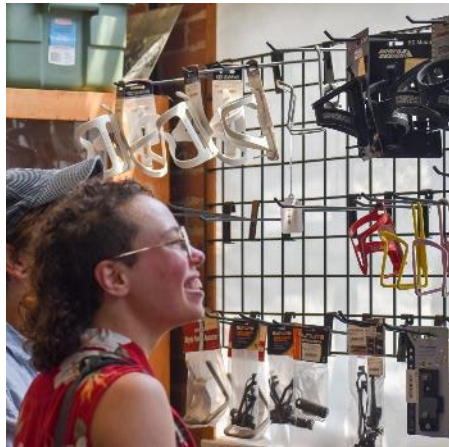
- Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Empower youth through building skills, confidence, and independence.
- Make cycling accessible and safer for all.
- Build a strong cycling culture and community.
- Encourage the use of bicycles for transportation as well as fun, fitness and adventure.



# PLAN



## Retail



## Service



## Community Projects



## Education



# PROGRESS

**Purchased inventory** and assets of Highlander with donations (\$50k).

Soft open Aug 6, 2022.

Business is growing.

Building and refreshing inventory.

Exceeded start-up capital campaign, >\$40,000 in donations!  
BCRC funding was leveraged for donor matching.

Huge pent-up demand for service.

Exceptional capabilities in John and Andrew.

Strong Volunteer crew to refurbish donated bikes for low cost offerings.

Traditional and e-Bike service.

**Bicycle donation** and renovation program is very active.

Received first programming grants, \$28k. Bikes helmets, lights, racks, programs.

**Community Bike program** rebirth with Town.

*Started January 2022*

First grant will support staff wages and other expenses for winter education series.

Have created the scaffolding for educational program growth.

**Established CBL partnership** with MAUHS.

## Retail



## Service



## Community Projects



## Education





## VT Community Health Equity Partnership Grant

Aug 2022 – May 2023

\$24,000

### GOAL

People who currently  
lack transportation  
gain access  
to health services, nutritious food, and  
employment  
through cycling.

### SCOPE

People on bikes – give-away, discounted  
Safety gear (free helmets, lights, locks, hi-viz)  
Educational workshops: riding, bike 10 1, safety  
Expand bike parking





## VT Community Health Equity Partnership Grant:

### Partnerships

Community Based Learning Partnership with MAUHS  
Establishing connections with Rec Center, UCS Head  
Start, Housing Org's, and more.

### Staff:

Ed & Outreach Manager

### Events:

3 station Bike 10 1, Women's Bike 10 1, CycleSavvy

### Gear:

helmets, lights, locks, vests give-aways

### Bike Parking:

Identifying locations for spring installs.

### Funding Leveraged

Climate Catalyst Funding (VCRD)

>\$40k in donor funds



We are on our way, want to come along?

## How you can help...

**Are you a cyclist?**

We would love to help with repairs, upgrades, or whatever you may need.

**Do you want to cycle more?**

Be on the lookout for our upcoming winter workshop series.

**Do you have a skill to offer?**

We can use the help. Everything from turning wrenches to turning on computers.

**Can you make a financial contribution to support our programs?**

Our education and community programs need your support.

**The Bike Hub**

160 Benmont Ave, Suite 36

info@ourbikehub.com

www.ourbikehub.com

@ourbikehub (fb, ig)

802-445-4000





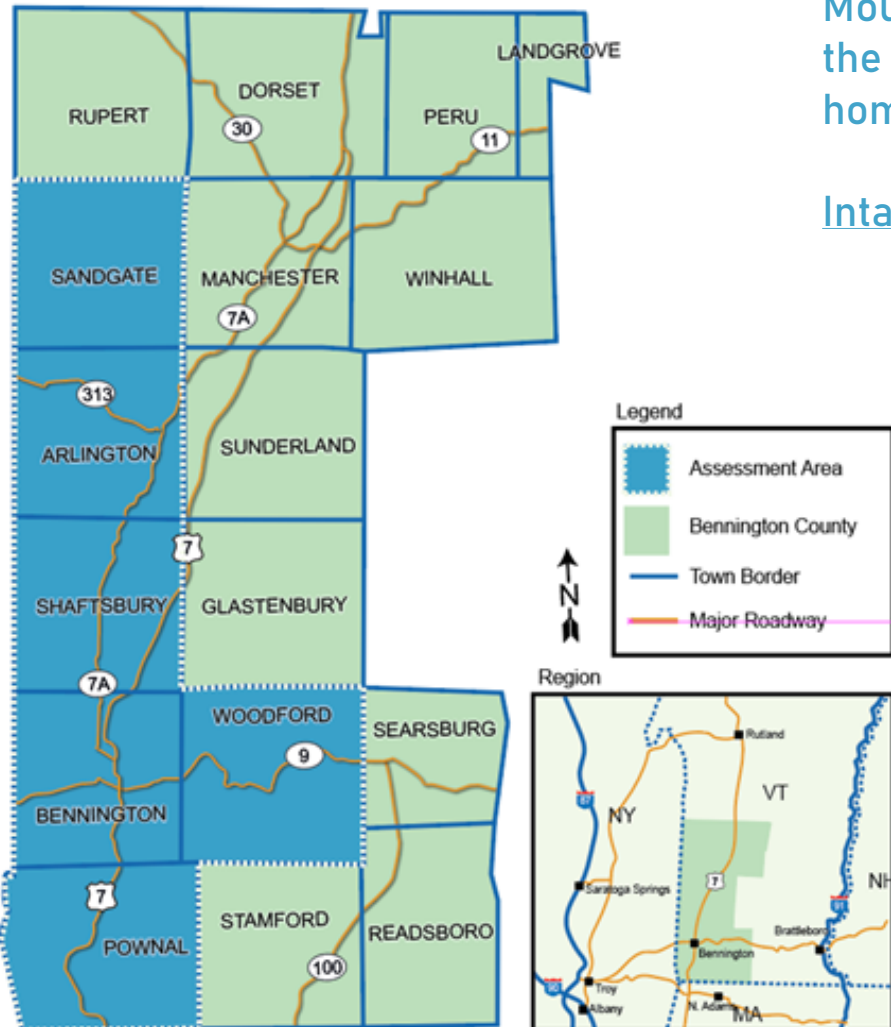
Needs Assessment Report

# Bennington County Unaccompanied Youth



## Needs Assessment Catchment Area

Bennington County Vermont  
Towns and Major Roadways



2021: Greater Bennington Community Services (GBCS) & Mount Anthony Union High School identified an increase in the number of 15-to18-year-old youth experiencing homelessness.

Intake increased from 8 in 2020 to 18 in 2021

### *Steering Committee:*

1. Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless
2. Bennington County Center for Restorative Justice
3. Greater Bennington Community Services
4. Mount Anthony Union High School
5. Pathways Vermont
6. Shires Housing
7. Southwestern Vermont Medical Center- Vermont Blueprint
8. Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union
9. Sunrise Family Resource Center
10. The Collaborative
11. Vermont Department of Children and Families, Family Services
12. Vermont Department of Health - Office of Local Health
13. United Counseling Services

## Research

Unaccompanied Youth (minors): Ages 13-17  
Young Adults ages 18-24

**Interviews: Service Providers**  
13 participants (12 Organizations)

**Survey: Service Provider Surveys**  
20 participants (16 organizations)

**Survey (Outreach): Youth & Young Adults  
Experiencing Homelessness Survey**  
10 participants (5 Youth, 5 Young Adult)



"We have a **chronic homeless population** in Bennington County that **includes youth**, dependent on the family dynamic. "

"When you have repeated request for help and support and **it feels like there's nothing you can do**, that is a crisis."

"Youth who are a little bit older are **harder to place** into a foster home."

Quotes from Service Provider Interview Process

# Research Results

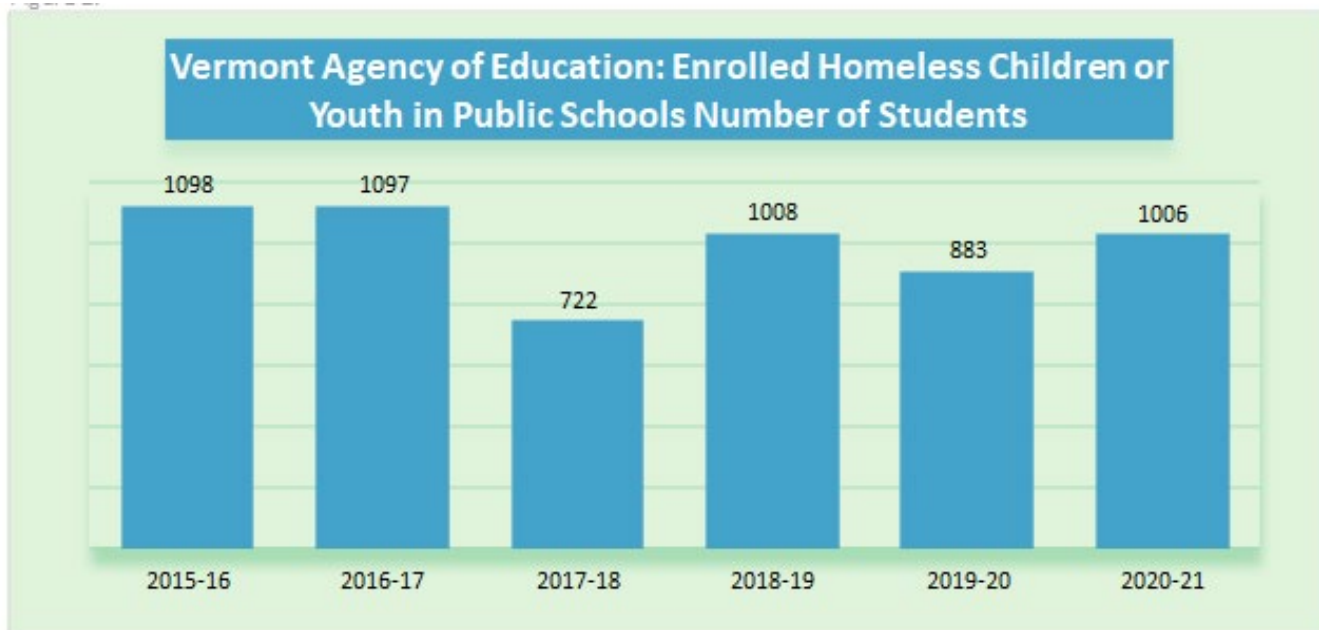
Bennington  
County

Unaccompanied  
Youth Study

Youth Homelessness in rural areas occurs at the same rate as in urban areas

Youth experiencing homelessness in rural counties were twice as likely to live with others instead of in shelters or on the streets as their counterparts in medium and large-population counties.

Age barriers make many services and resources inaccessible to youth under 18 years of age without them being explicitly designed for them



“Having to have an adult with you, somebody over the age of 18, that's a barrier. The housing companies that I've connected with, you have to have credit, and you need references to get a place to live, which obviously if you're 15 you don't have those things.”

# Survey Results: Providers

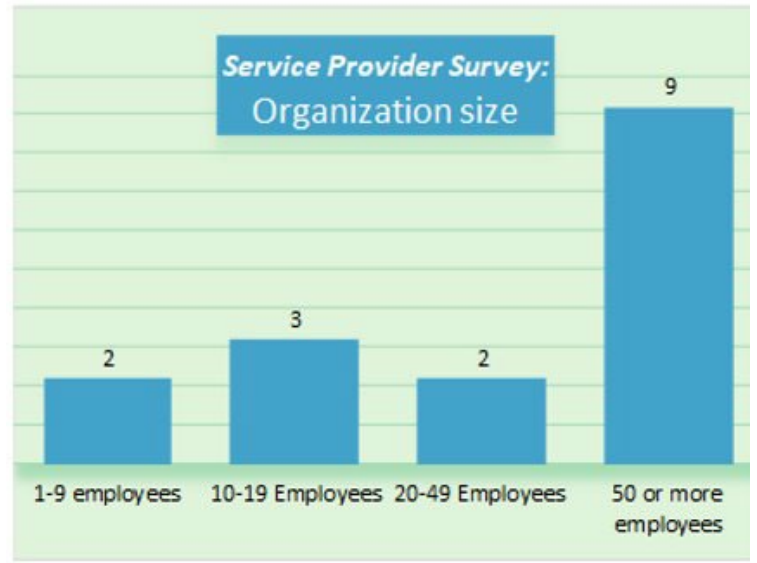
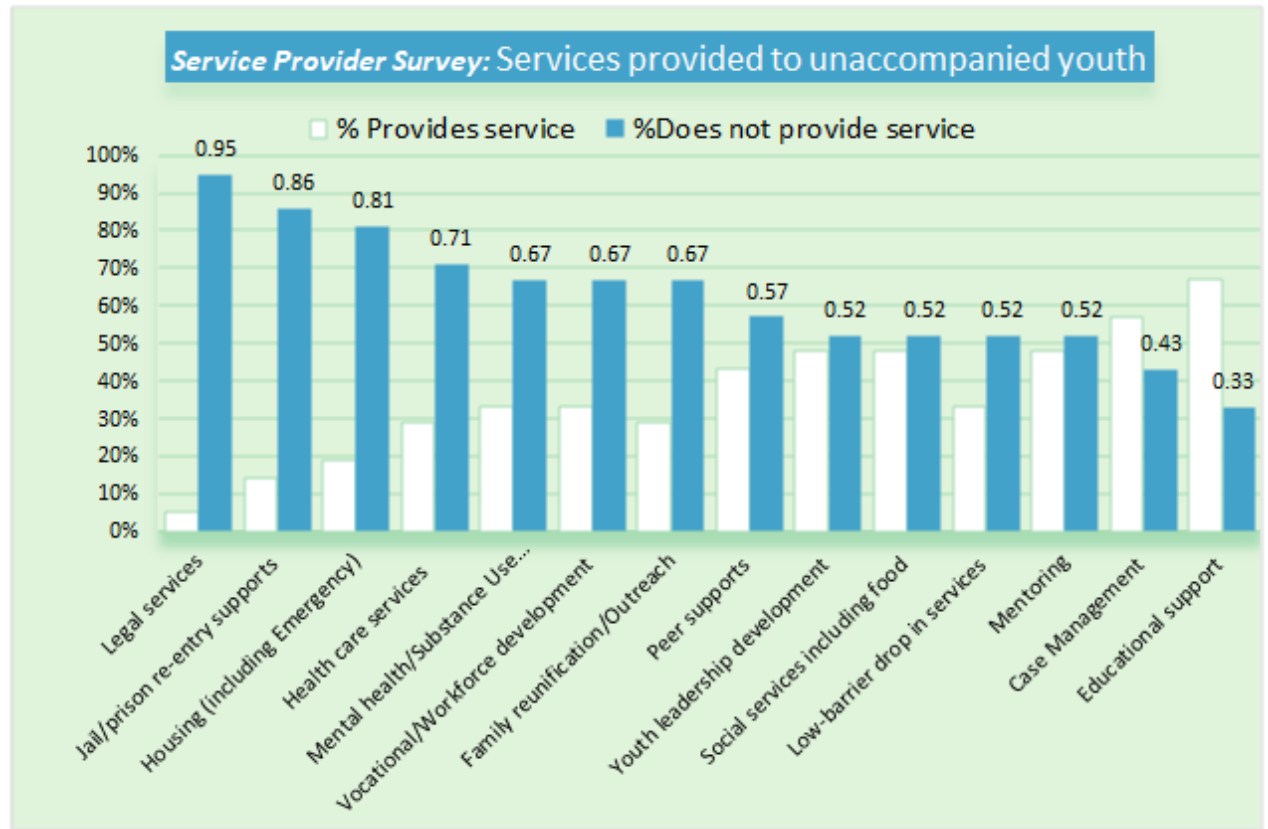
## Services Needed Locally (Unaccompanied Youth)

- Legal services
- Re-entry (post incarceration)
- Housing, including emergency shelter and/or host homes

## Limited Services Provided Locally (Unaccompanied Youth)

- Mental health
- Substance use treatments

"It's a **prime time to self-medicate...** if you don't have resources and you are in pain, for whatever reason, it seems like a viable option."



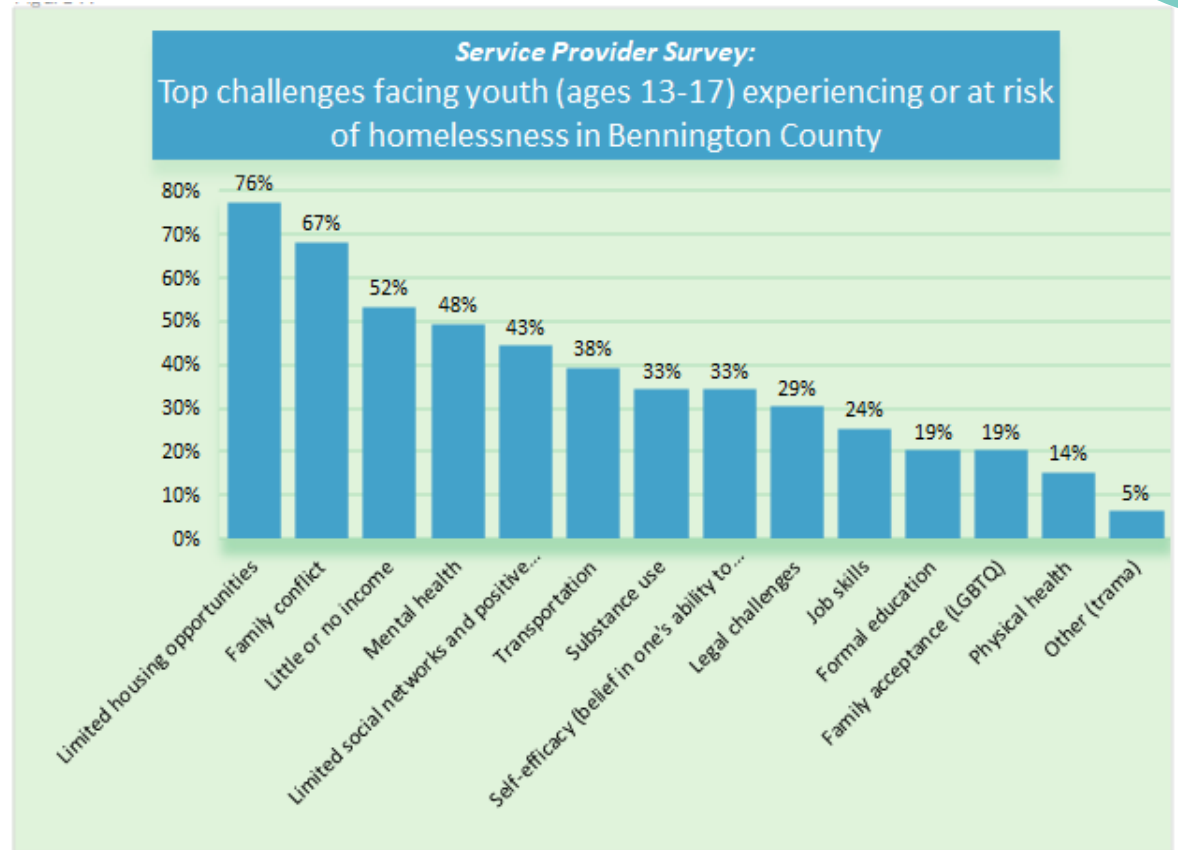
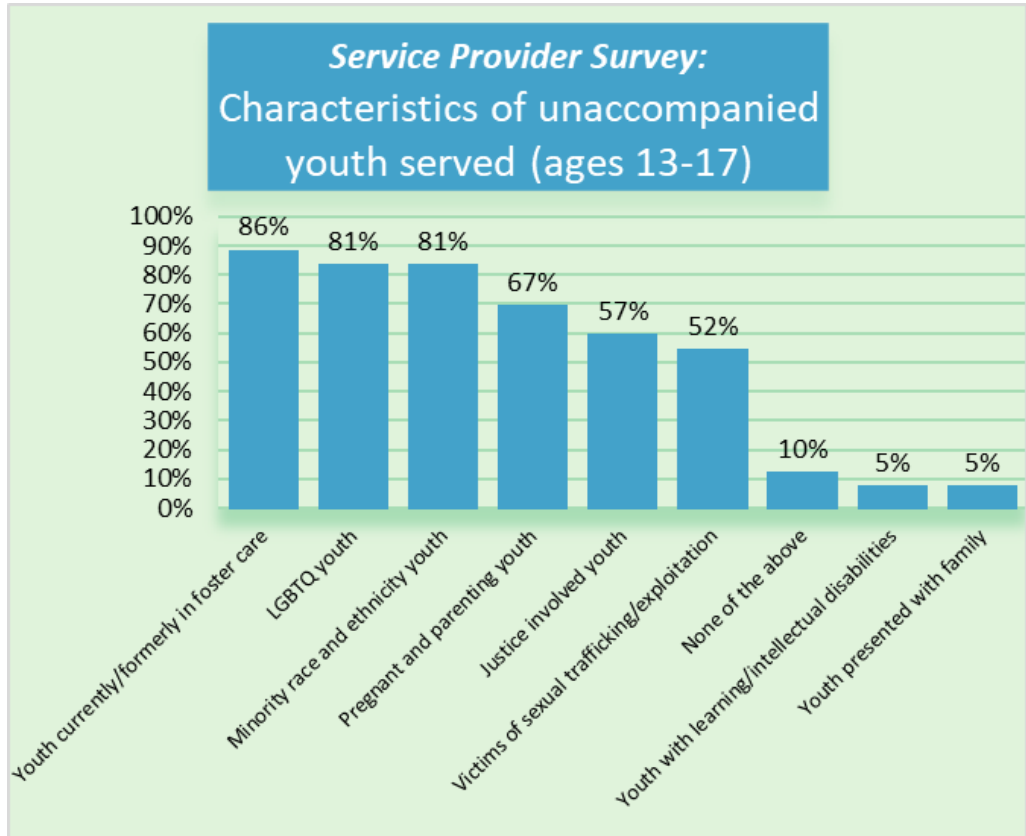
# Survey Results: Providers

Bennington County

Unaccompanied Youth Study

When asked for estimates of the number of unaccompanied youth (ages 13-17) experiencing or at risk of homelessness their organization served in the last 30 days, estimates ranged from zero to **684**

(the same youth may get multiple services may be counted multiple times).



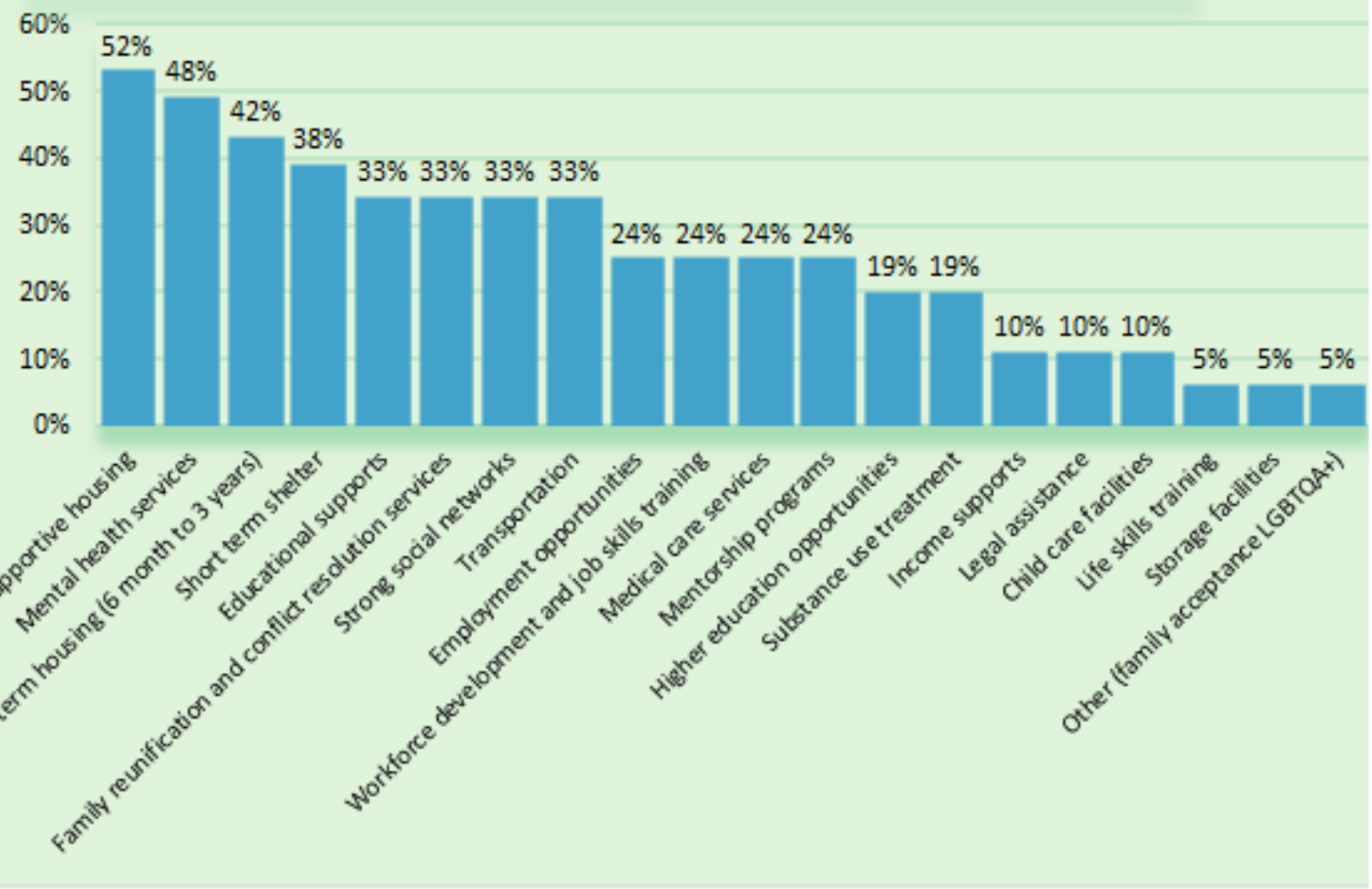


# Survey Results: Providers

Bennington County

Unaccompanied Youth Study

**Service Provider Survey:**  
Most significant resource needs for youth (ages 13-17) experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Bennington County

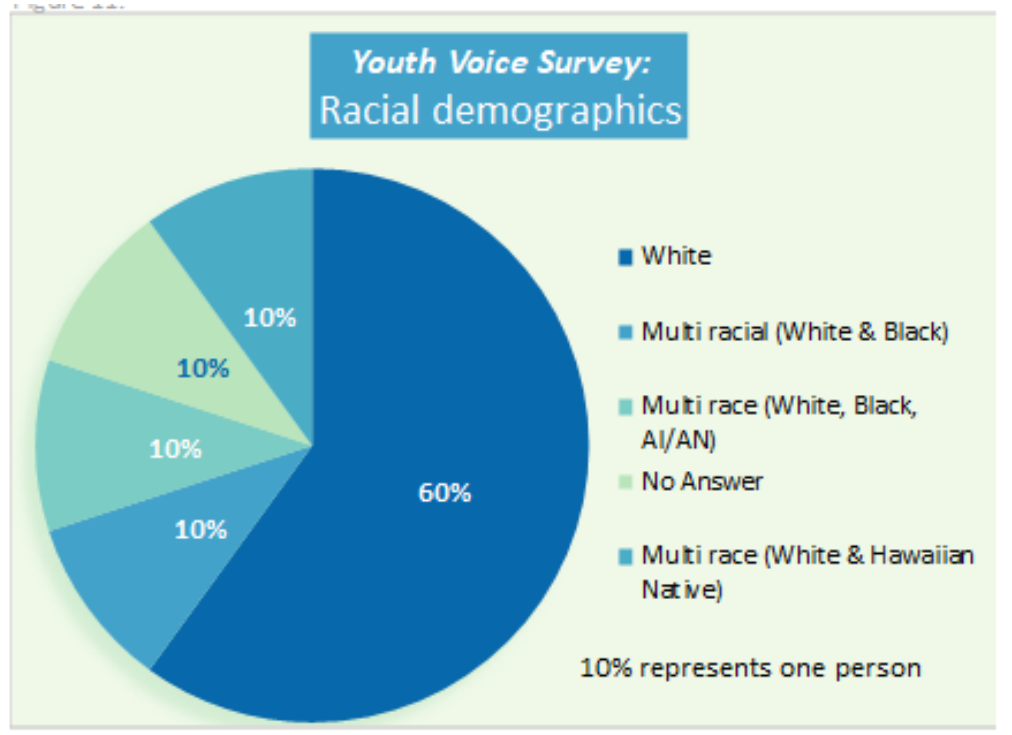
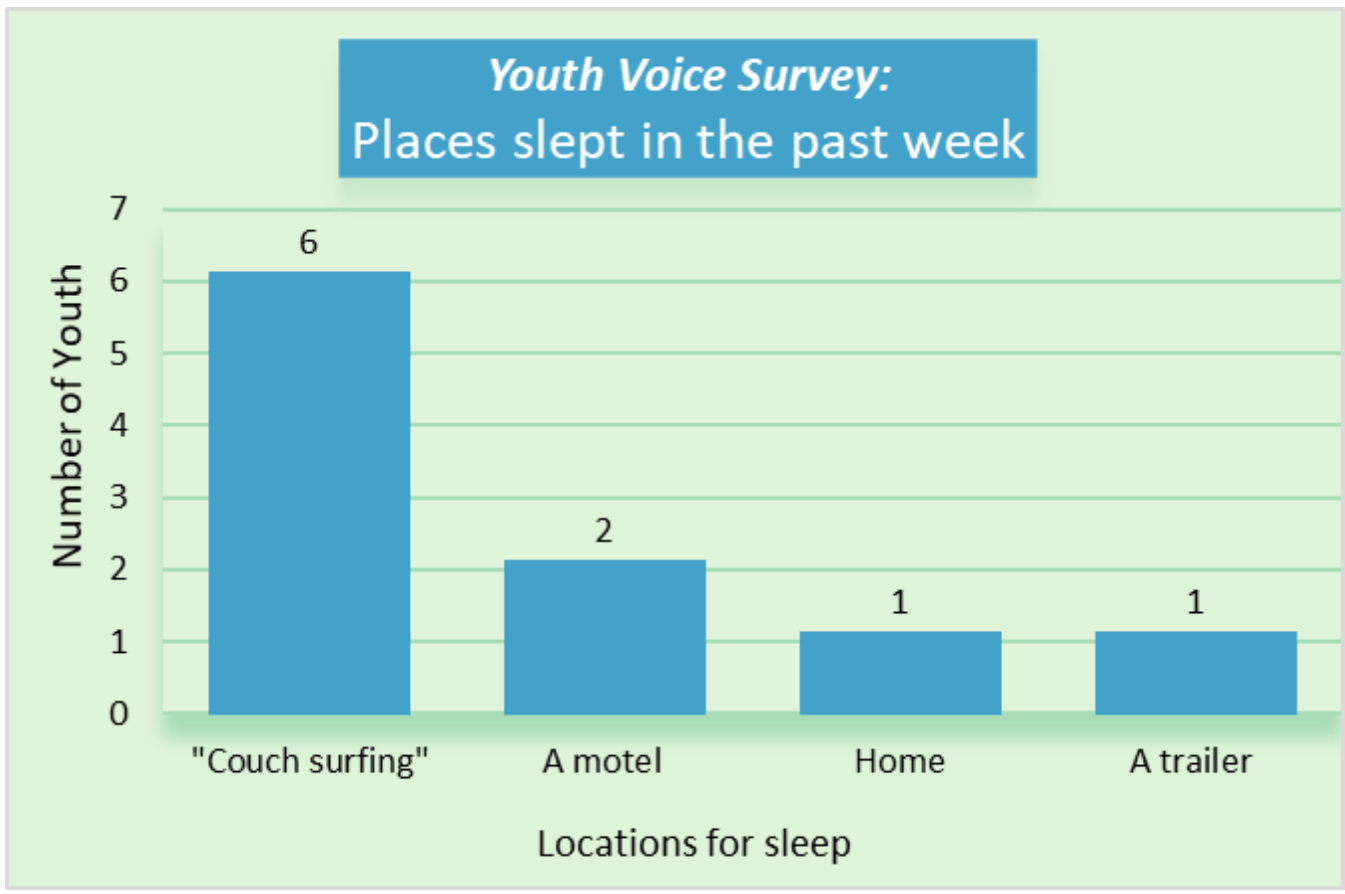


"I think we have a level of poverty in Bennington County that is very high, which makes our families transitory."

# Survey Results: Youth (13-17)

Bennington  
County

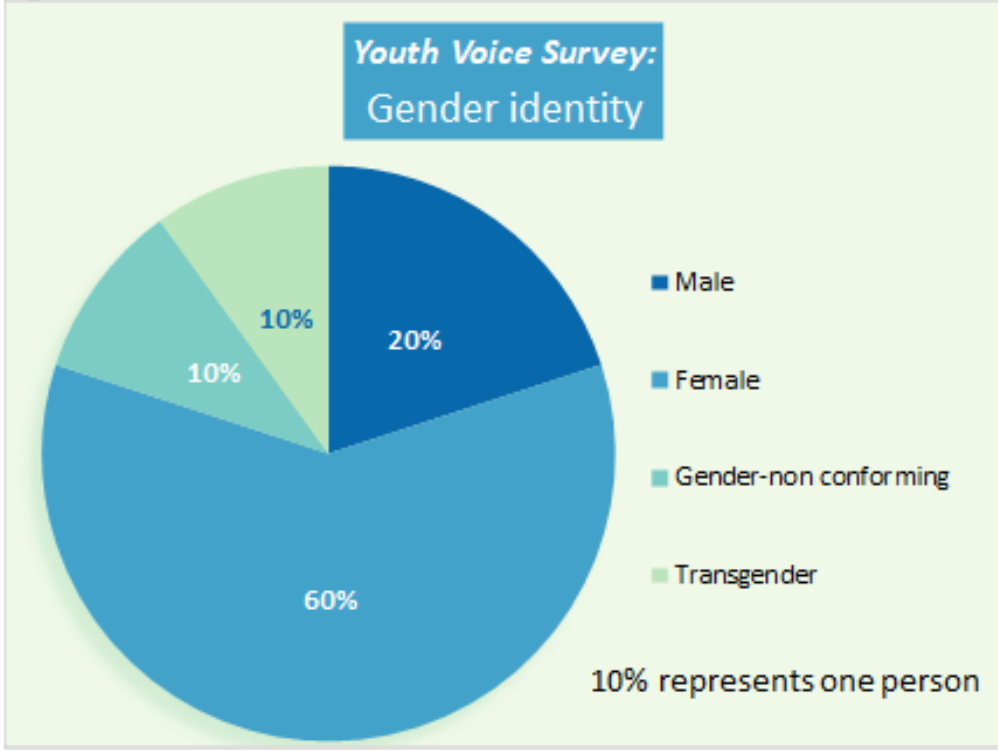
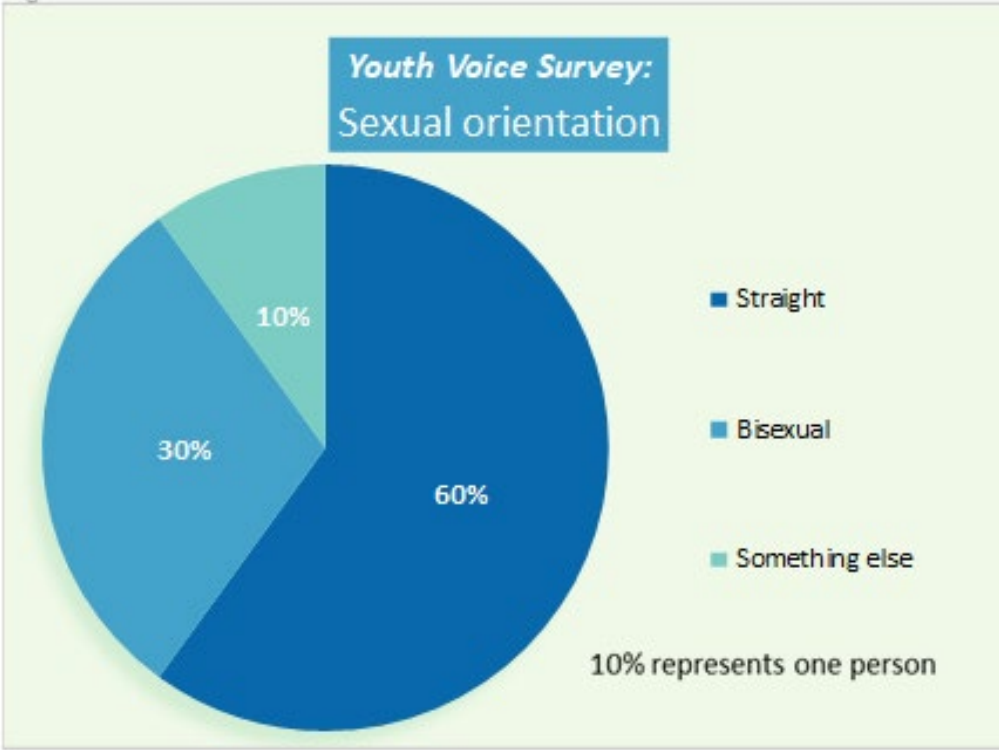
Unaccompanied  
Youth Study



# Survey Results: Youth (13-17)

Bennington  
County

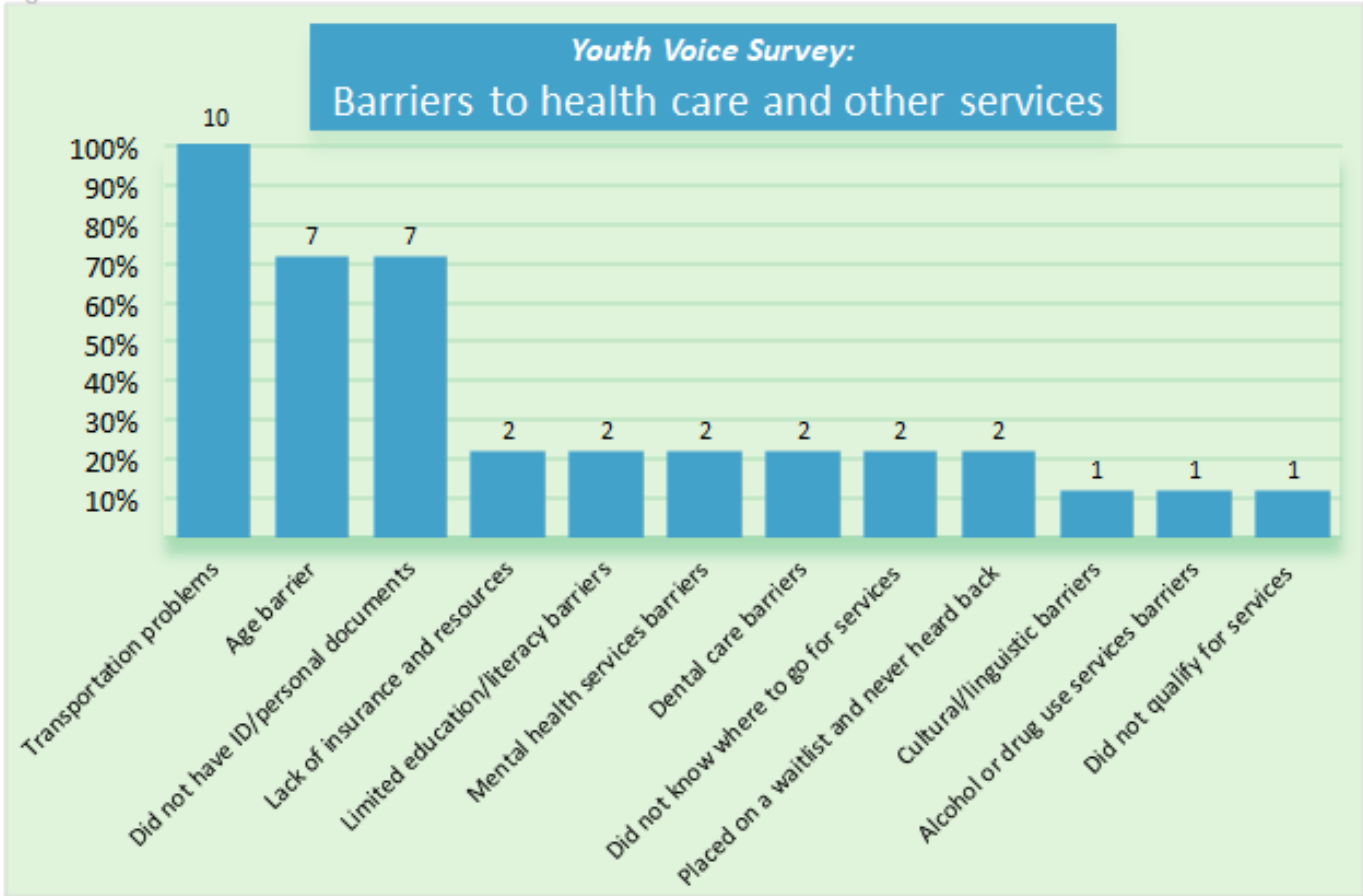
Unaccompanied  
Youth Study



# Survey Results: Youth (13-17)

Bennington  
County

Unaccompanied  
Youth Study



## Summary of Findings

Bennington  
County

Unaccompanied  
Youth Study

- **All: The number one need is stable affordable short-term and permanent housing**
- Service providers: **Improve awareness** of youth homelessness
- **Need a regional strategy** to for youth and young adults experiencing or at risk for homelessness
- Need for **increased professional training** for youth engagement
- Best relationships to build upon are **schools and family services systems**
- **Increase access to/remove barriers to:**
  - Medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment services
  - Transportation, hygiene needs, and food
  - School and community "well-being" programs including employment and income support
- **Funding** to enhance existing community organizations' capabilities
- **Include the margins**, including youth of minority race and gender identifications

# Summary of Recommendations

Bennington  
County

Unaccompanied  
Youth Study

- **Create a primary entry point for entry into the youth homeless.**
- Act on evidence and collect **evidence**.
- Approach the problem through a systemic lens.
- Take a **health equity approach** to improve outcomes.
- Break down approaching the problem from “silos” to a **collaborative effort**.
- Develop a plan for financial and **programmatic sustainability**.
- Develop a plan to ensure **seamless accessibility** to mental health services for transition-aged youth and young adults. Improve connections to efforts outside of the region.
- Seek **youth-specific** grant opportunities.

# Phase 2 – Homeless Health Equity Project

## Design Concept for Bennington Wellness Hub

- Convenings for input on needs and wishes for wellness hub with public sanitation facility and possible locations
- Develop scope of services for wellness hub
- Develop renderings and rough budget for possible wellness hub
- Final Report detailing:
  - Community concerns, barriers and benefits
  - Possible locations
  - Scope of services
  - Size, design and programming
  - Renderings
  - Approximate cost
  - Capacity to maintain and sustain such a facility



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