



CHAMPLAIN VALLEY OFFICE
OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

annual report 2020



255 South Champlain Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802 862 2771

www.cvoeo.org



Dear Friends,

I was recently with our weatherization team at the home of an older couple who built their house by themselves years before. As the couple aged and with the onset of medical conditions the home had fallen into disrepair. In spite of the intensive work that needed to be done, the house maintained a vibrant energy of a life and home created by hard work and love. While we were there assessing the work the couple repeatedly apologized for asking for help until one of our efficiency coaches turned and quietly said, “We are all in this together.”

I have often wondered how we will get through this pandemic with so many people in need, including our staff members who have their own lives and families to consider and protect. Today, I realize we are getting through with strength and deep compassion, and we are thriving as a community.

Think about it: **With help from our community CVOEO served 21,117 people. 5,140 of that number were children under the age of 17. 1,970 people were 65 years of age or older.**

1,143 of that number were people experiencing homelessness and 3,983 of that number were people of color. These aren't just numbers to us they are people like “Peg” who lives at our emergency housing shelter while working part time to secure permanent housing, and “Ruth” whose furnace wouldn't start and called worried that her dog would be cold if it didn't get fixed. Look deep into these numbers and we will each see a reflection of ourselves.

Since the pandemic, our food shelves have provided more than 15,000 pre-packed boxes of food.

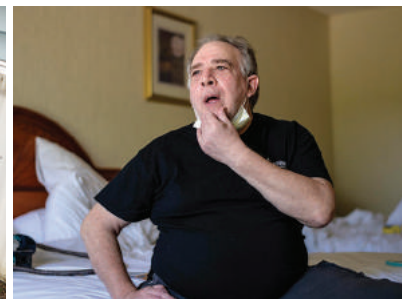
We have opened up the State's largest emergency housing program and housed over 270 people. Our Financial Futures program implemented a New American Hotline, hosted by our Community Ambassadors, so New Americans can reach someone who speaks their own language to navigate the financial and health challenges of the pandemic. Voices against Violence served 513 victims/survivors and 68 children and received 1,633 hotline calls. CVOEO hired a Director of Racial Equity to meet the challenge of racial injustice including health disparities that are intensified during this pandemic. Our Housing and Head Start programs quickly adjusted and leveraged technology to advocate for people's housing needs and to educate young children.

It would be difficult to find an organization in the nonprofit or for-profit sector with so many programs that can adapt, deliver and excel during the hardest of times. We do this work for the family of three who were sleeping in their car until we housed them the night before Thanksgiving. We do this work for the community because you lift us up, and we do it for ourselves because in others we see our reflection.

It is community that supports and energizes us, and together with your help we accept this historic challenge. Indeed, we are all in this together.

We are forever grateful for your support.


Paul Dragon, *Executive Director*



CRYSTAL FAMILY NEW HOPE AWARD

This year's two awards of \$1,000 each were granted to Mohamed Jafar and Omar Biladi, recognizing their contributions, accomplishments and potential within the community.



MOHAMED JAFAR is originally from the Somali community, and now an American citizen. For the past year, Mohamed has been advocating on behalf of the non-English speakers in our community to create needed translated materials in their native spoken languages. Mohamed spearheaded the creation of the website newamericansinvermont.com. Mohamed's initiative has had a positive impact on the lives of New Americans, and contributes to fortifying the community as a whole.



OMAR BILADI arrived in the US from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2019. As a single father of 6 children, he works hard to strike the balance of raising children in a new culture with unexpected social pressures, while being the sole income-earner in a single-parent home. He shares what he has learned from his own experience as an advocate for more recently arrived Swahili-speaking families, including keeping them informed during the pandemic. He is a model of leadership and parenthood in the community.

“Diversity has always existed; it starts within our households. Whether we live with our partner only, our children, or our siblings, all these individuals are unique, each with different features, personalities, and ambitions. We have to learn to tolerate these differences, while learning to love and live with them. Let us extend this tolerance to a state and national level to build a stronger, more diverse and inclusive community.”

Welcome to
Viriginie Diambou,
formerly of the
Republic of Congo,
CVOEO's Racial
Equity Director



ADDISON COMMUNITY ACTION FOOD SHELF

881 individuals visited	42,696 pounds of food donated	\$16,413 worth of food purchased
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NORTHWEST FAMILY FOODS, ST. ALBANS

5,320 individuals visited	369,998 pounds of food donated	\$24,093 worth of food purchased
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FUEL ASSISTANCE

1,211
households
served through
Crisis Fuel Program

1,306
households
served through
WARMTH Program

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

520
individuals
served

97%
individuals
remained stably
housed
after 90 days

To learn more about Community Action, contact:

Travis Poulin, Director, Chittenden County
tpoulin@cvoeo.org

Karen Haury, Director, Addison County
khaury@cvoeo.org

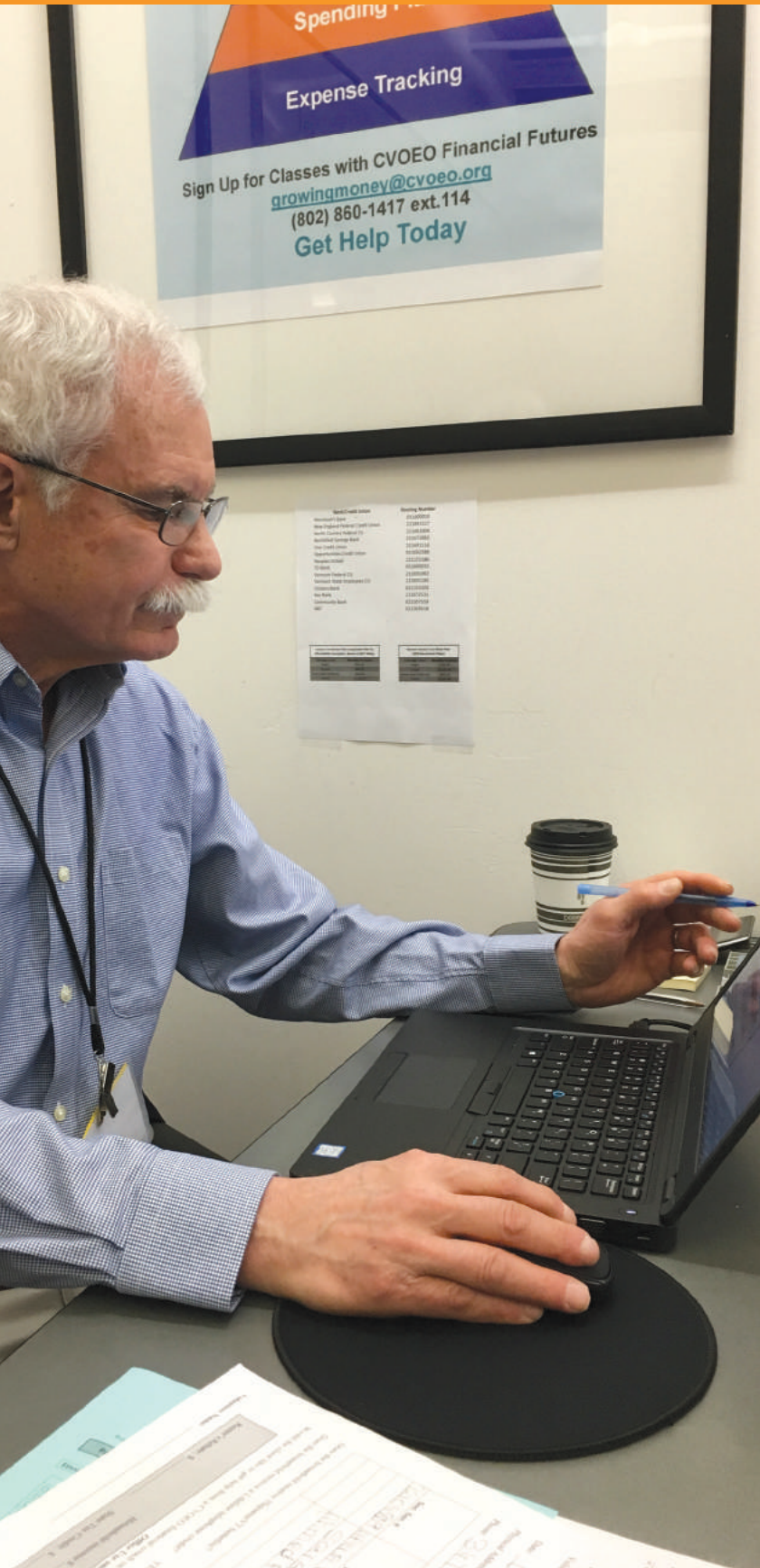
Robert Ostermeyer, Director, Franklin/Grand Isle
rostermeyer@cvoeo.org

“CVOEO helped me get a roof over my head. They have given me food, mittens, etc., but the biggest thing is a home.”

PROGRAM RECIPIENT



community action: volunteer income tax assistance (VITA)



1,016
households
served

\$2,720,274
returned to the Vermont
economy in state and federal
refunds and tax credits

*This program was shut down a month early
due to the pandemic.*

**To learn more about
Chittenden Community Action, contact:
Travis Poulin, Director, tpoulin@cvoeo.org**

**“I hate doing
my own
taxes, but
I love doing
this! I can
really see
the impact
it has on
people.”**

VOLUNTEER TAX PREPARER

“With what COVID-19 has done to the economy, we’re having to second guess what’s more important – if we’re not able to pay the mortgage or the rent or the utilities, how are we going to eat? Feeding Chittenden has been here for me through it all.”

PROGRAM RECIPIENT

10,596
individuals accessed the
food shelf

2 million+
pounds of
food distributed

61,952
meals served by the Morning Meal Program
and Emergency Meal Delivery Program

200
households were delivered groceries each month by
the Homebound Delivery Program and
Emergency Grocery Delivery Program

11
individuals graduated from the
Community Kitchen Academy

To learn more about Feeding Chittenden, contact:
Rob Meehan, Director, rmeehan@cvoeo.org



mobile home program

81

households assisted
via hotline

252

residents in 3 parks
assisted

Conducted a survey funded by United Way of Northwest Vermont to determine impact of COVID-19 on mobile home park residents, and to design a program recovery plan addressing residents' needs and issues.

**To learn more about the
Mobile Home Program, contact:**

Sandrine Kibuey, Director
Housing Advocacy Programs skibuey@cvoeo.org
www.cvoeo.org/mobile-home

“I feel the Mobile Home Park Program is so very much needed, and should be supported especially because of the need for affordable housing, and helping communities to thrive.”

PARK RESIDENT



fair housing project

720

people attended workshops on housing discrimination, federal and state fair housing law, and the importance of planning for inclusive, affordable communities

274

individuals participated in activities celebrating home and community during April Fair Housing Month

3,596

people connected with the Thriving Communities campaign
www.thrivingcommunitiesvt.org

To learn more about the Fair Housing Project, contact:

Jess Hyman, Associate Director,
Housing Advocacy Programs, jhyman@cvoeo.org
www.cvoeo.org/fhp

“Fair housing laws are so important, but can sometimes be complex to understand for those not familiar with legal jargon. I appreciate how the presenters talked about these in a way that could be easily understood and digested.”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Megan J. Humphrey, 2020 Fair Housing Month HeART & Home Art Exhibit





financial futures

591

clients in
four counties

90

personal finance and business
development classes

1,161

financial and
business coaching
sessions

5

interpreted Financial
House Parties for
New Americans

New programs to address financial crises due to COVID-19: \$247,970 distributed through 52 EMBRACE grants to micro businesses to help them survive COVID-19 and pivot their business models to sustain success moving forward.

120 hours of phone support to New Americans in six languages via new Financial Hotline

To learn more about Financial Futures, contact:
Kathryn Baudreau, Director, kbaudreau@cvoeo.org

“The EMBRACE grant has allowed me to purchase the tools needed to create a new paradigm as a performing artist. I have spent the funds wisely on my new home recording studio in my upstairs loft.”

WOODY KEPPEL, Creator & Co-Founder, Festival of Fools

877

individuals assisted
via hotline

348

participants in 96
Rent Right Classes

COVID-19 Outreach

Identified trends via our hotline to address tenants' most pressing and recurring housing issues during the pandemic – landlord access and evictions

Produced short YouTube videos interpreted by our CVOEO Financial Futures Ambassadors in 5 different languages to be posted on CVOEO website and social media platforms

Funding allocated by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) COVID-19 through the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC)

To learn more about Vermont Tenants, contact:

Sandrine Kibuey, Director
Housing Advocacy Programs
skibuey@cvoeo.org
www.cvoeo.org/vermont-tenants

“I wish I’d known all this before I ever rented – I wouldn’t be where I am now if I had.”

PERSON EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

“Thank you so much for your tireless effort to insure my daughter got to safely spend time with me over the past years, and your assistance in progress to more normalized family contact.”

PARENT AT ALL ABOUT KIDS

513

victims/survivors served including 68 children

51

women sheltered including 20 children for 3,543 nights

10 adults and **10** children served in transitional housing

1,633

hotline calls received

106

calls received for shelter we were unable to accommodate due to full capacity

To learn more, about Voices Against Violence/ Laurie's House, contact:

Kris Lukens, Director, kluken@cvoeo.org

288

children from 269
families were served by
Head Start

83

children from 78
families were served by
Early Head Start

22%

increase in
math skills

14%

increase in
literacy skills

14%

increase in
language skills

16%

increase in cognitive
development

16%

increase in social and
emotional development

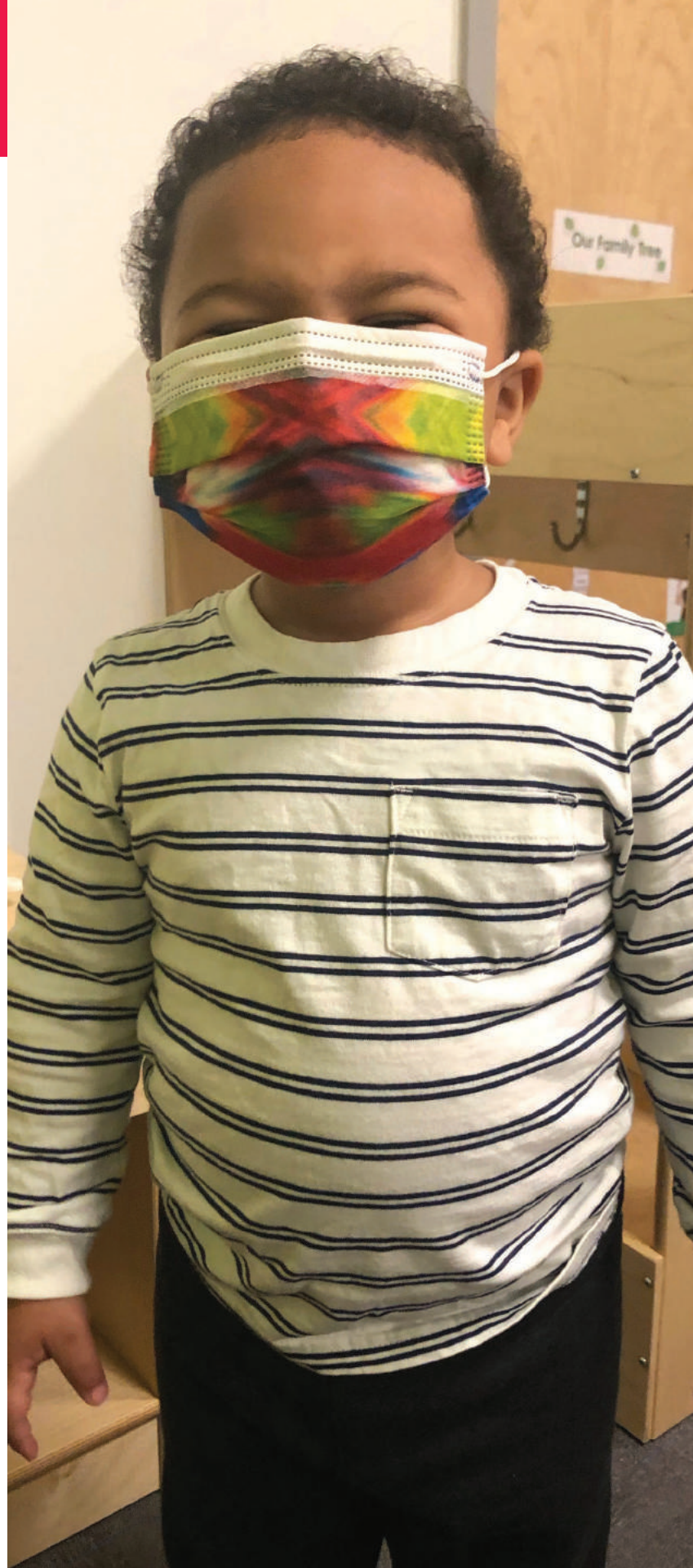
To learn more about

Champlain Valley Head Start, contact:

Paul Behrman, Director, pbehrman@cvoeo.org

“I knew Head Start would be good for my son. But I really didn’t know it would be good for me.”

HEAD START PARENT





157
households received
weatherization and
energy efficiency
improvements

48%
of households
weatherized previously
received fuel
assistance

31%
reduction in annual energy usage for
Vermont families receiving services

To learn more about Weatherization, contact:
Dwight Decoster, Director, ddecoaster@cvoeo.org
Tim Yandow, Associate Director, tyandow@cvoeo.org

“They have done a wonderful job on my old house. My husband would have loved to watch them at work. My son thought that the work was done great. He used to be a carpenter but is now a farmer.”

PROGRAM RECIPIENT

“Everyone here has been compassionate and understanding. They keep us from slipping through the cracks.”

HOLIDAY INN RESIDENT

200+
served since opening
in April 2020

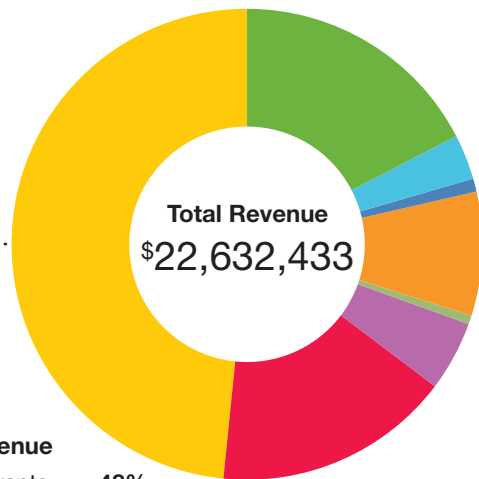
136
residents as of
December 2020

Services:
AA meetings
VT Tenants workshops
mental health counseling
and medical clinic

Partnerships:
Financial Futures
Housing Advocacy Team
Agewell
Champlain Housing Trust
Community Health
Center of Burlington
Howard Center
Turning Point, Burlington

27
moved to
permanent
housing



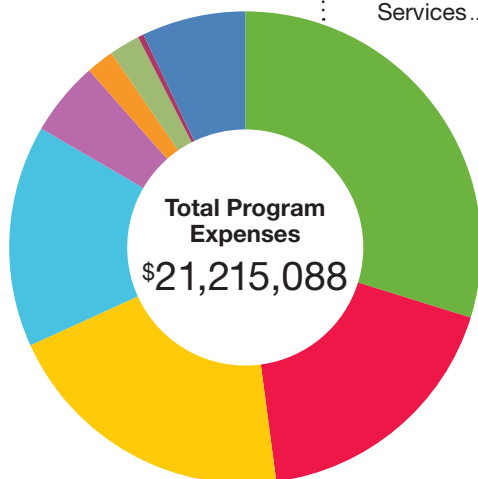


• **2020 Revenue**

- Federal Grants 48%
- Inkind..... 17%
- State Grants 16%
- Donations..... 9%
- Foundation/
Private Organizations
Grants 5%
- Program Income/Fee
for Service/Other..... 3%
- Local <1%
- United Way <1%

• **2020 Expenses**

- Head Start..... 30%
- Community Action.. 20%
- Chittenden Emergency
Food Shelf..... 18%
- Weatherization 15%
- Administration &
General Expenses.... 7%
- Voices Against
Violence 5%
- Financial Futures..... 2%
- Statewide Housing.. 2%
- Children’s Integrated
Services <1%



BOARD MEMBERS

- Nina Harrington, *President*, Chittenden
- Ricky Padgett, *Vice President/Treasurer*, Chittenden
- Kendall Hoechst, *Secretary*, Chittenden
- Mark Boudreau, Addison
- Ali Dieng, Chittenden
- Cody Fiala, Franklin/Grand Isle
- Elizabeth Madigan, Chittenden
- Efrain Rivera, Addison
- Kelsey Stavseth, Addison
- Laura Wilson, Franklin/Grand Isle