

ANNUAL REPORT

2011

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Contents

Letter from the Executive Director	1
Addison Community Action	2
Chittenden Community Action	2
Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action	3
Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf	4
Voices Against Violence	5
Champlain Valley Head Start	6
Vermont Tenants	7
The Mobile Home Project	7
The Fair Housing Project	8
Champlain Valley Weatherization Services	8
Financial Futures Program	9
The impact of CVOEO programs	10
What has changed in the last five years?	11
Finances	12
Board Members & Directors	13
Thank you	14

Change, hope, new individuals and families to serve, program expansions and staff additions have inspired our days at CVOEO this past year.

Change, anxiety, new programs, budget cuts, staff cuts and changes have challenged our days at CVOEO this past year.

One of our core funding sources, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) continues to be threatened as never before. We mirror the tectonic shift in the global community and lead the effort to care for our own in our local community.

Roofs were collapsing from the heavy snow that fell in the winter and mobile home frames were twisted and destroyed from tropical storm Irene. We fought for funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP. Many more people were served through the WARMTH, Shareheat and Crisis

Fuel; however they received less money to heat their homes and restore their electricity. Behind the weather and strained federal and state funding are the faces of people that come through our doors and the panicked phone calls that offices receive.

The focus and energy for the work we do is epitomized by one of our Community Action Advocates. She was in an impossible circumstance working with a woman who endured the psychological strain associated with mental illness and the physical hardship

of homelessness. This advocate directed her time and time again to the present and her personal goals. "What did she need to do next?" was the question. "What could she do right now?" "Where did she want to be tonight?" This Advocate was unyielding in focus and at the same compassionate in her care. Throughout the conversation trust was built and plans were made. This was not a soft exchange but it was filled with truth and options for the present. It was an astounding experience. She and all other CVOEO staff work for the over 25,000 low-income Vermonters that

live in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle counties and who have been served by CVOEO programs. They give with strength, truth and compassion.

The work is ever more difficult and demanding – and yet never more important.

My best to you,



Jan F. Demers
Executive Director



Addison Community Action

Addison Community Action (ACA) administers a large variety of programs to assist residents with basic human needs. We have a dedicated staff ready to offer advocacy and support while navigating various state and local programs.

ACA has a housing advocate who works to educate area residents and landlords about the eviction process and tenants' rights. We participate in the Volunteer Income Tax program (VITA), preparing federal and state taxes for low-income and disabled Vermonters. We are here to assist those needing help with emergency needs of hunger, crisis fuel and safety net services.

We are fortunate to have a food shelf located in our office. Staying warm

and needing food frequently walk hand and hand. Loyal local donors help us keep the shelves stocked. Many businesses hold annual food drives and many go to extremes to stock our shelves. The employees of Cyclewise are an example of one extreme. They issued a challenge to collect 750 lbs. of food. If the challenge was met, they would fully shave their heads. The employees exceeded their goal – then held a party to shave their heads. That is dedication! Dedication is also the mother who came to our office with her two young children. Every year, the children save their allowance and donate it to ACA. This year, they proudly handed us rolls of pennies and other coins totaling \$52. These are just two examples of the continued support we have in our community.



Volunteers collect donations for the ACA food shelf

Chittenden Community Action

Chittenden Community Action (CCA) offers a broad range of services for low-income residents of Chittenden County. Emergency services include fuel/utility assistance, housing assistance, transportation, general and emergency assistance, and help obtaining the identification needed to find employment.

We began helping people apply for the State of Vermont's Emergency Assistance/General Assistance (EA/GA) program in July of 2011. CCA is the Front Door of the program. The Front Door EA/GA staff assists people in providing a complete application to the State of Vermont's General Assistance Work Unit (GAWU). The program addresses emergency needs of housing, dental and prescription requests. Under very specific guidelines households are able to apply for personal needs income, minimal rental assistance, and help with current utility amounts.

During the spring and summer, we distribute Farm to Family Coupons, vegetable seeds, plants and compost, and determine eligibility for garden plot scholarships from the City of Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation.

CCA also distributes vouchers for furniture and essential household goods, bus passes, tickets to local shows and events, and admission to the Shelburne Museum and the Leahy Center at the ECHO Lake Aquarium. We also provide advocacy services, information and referrals, assistance with forms and applications, and free tax preparation services from IRS-certified volunteers through the Volunteer Income Tax program (VITA).

Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action

FGICA celebrated our first full year in our new space in April 2011. The 5 Lemnah Drive site continues to provide better parking, more space for confidentiality, and simply better working conditions overall for our staff and clients. In addition, we are able to provide space for staff from Financial Futures to work and see clients. We have hosted multiple nutrition education trainings and cooking demonstrations, courtesy of the UVM Extension Service.

The giving season of fiscal year 2011 (October - December 2010) was another good season for the FGICA food shelf; for the third year in a row our local St. Albans Hannaford's sold more Helping Hands boxes than any other Hannaford's in the multi-state region! Our office, and the people who depend on our food shelf services, are truly blessed to live in such a caring and generous community. We received over 3,000 boxes of groceries, a \$30,000 value, and as a result of winning the multi-store competition our food shelf also won a cash prize of over \$3,000. And



The FGICA food shelf

why wait to share more good news? As of the writing of this annual report narrative, we again won this challenge for the fourth year. Hannaford's sold over 3,400 grocery boxes this year.

There have been challenges as well; funding cuts at the federal level resulted in the loss of a 20-hour staff

position at the start of the current fiscal year, and forced each FGICA staff member to take two weeks unpaid leave to help balance out our budget during the 2011 fiscal year. Our office has been very, very busy, and there have been many changes in how clients access services. Community Action has taken on a greater role, a more formal one, in

helping clients access state services, which has lead to some confusion among clients as to who they are asking for help when they come to Community Action. As advocates, we continue to simply do our best to help those in need understand the process of applying for assistance and the limitations on what services are available.



The Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf (CEFS) works to alleviate hunger by feeding people and cultivating opportunities. As the largest direct service emergency food provider in Vermont, CEFS serves over 12,000 people each year.

In the 2011 fiscal year, The Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf saw another year of higher demand for hunger relief services. The Food Shelf workers and volunteers provided groceries for visitors

and people who are homebound, hot meals to people who are homeless, and culinary job training and job placement for underemployed Vermonters.

We continue to provide food to seniors, people with disabilities, the homeless, and working families who cannot make ends meet. And there are many more new visitors who have lost their jobs. A woman named Becky visited the Food Shelf for the first time with her five-year-old son and infant during the

holidays. Becky's husband was laid off from work and their family was having a hard time putting food on the table. She was hesitant to accept our help because she felt others might need it more desperately. But as she left with a five-day supply of groceries she commented that she was relieved that her children would not go to bed hungry. Becky is one person among the growing thousands that are in need of food assistance in Vermont but are reluctant to ask for help.

As the largest direct service emergency food provider in Vermont, the Food Shelf serves over 12,000 people each year.



Groceries for those in need



Culinary job training

Voices Against Violence

Voices Against Violence celebrated its 30th anniversary of providing services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their children in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Voices has faced many challenges and growing pains along the way but has steadily evolved into an organization that embraces survivor-defined advocacy in our work with survivors, children who witness, community and statewide partners, schools and systems.

A commitment to responding to and being guided by a survivor's priorities and goals has always been central to how we operationalize our work. It is different for each victim we work with whether they leave, stay in contact, remain in the relationship, or come and go. But a renewed focus on this type of partnership has enhanced our ability to provide services to a wide spectrum of families. To this end our accomplishments during this past year include our first ever training with our local judges, the continued refinement of our Transitional Housing Program, expansion of the DIVAS Program (support and advocacy for incarcerated

women), and more focused outreach to people with limited access to services. Additionally, we are able to better articulate our role within the coordinated community response in addressing systems issues. Challenging *and* rewarding all at the same time.

The work we do is challenging enough; now add to it the state of our economy, and the burden grows ever heavy. People who have not reached out for assistance before are doing so now as we see increased numbers of people who are homeless, financially devastated and traumatized due to abuse and violence in their lives. Voices has served more people this past year than ever before – an increase of over 8% at a time when funding and other resources are shrinking. We need to be more creative than ever to help people get their needs met. Doing more with less is the new normal!

The work continues to be challenging but also rewarding as Voices dedicates itself to making this community a better place in which to live and work by helping one victim at a time.

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Champlain Valley Head Start

Champlain Valley Head Start (CVHS) and Early Head Start are federally funded, national child and family development programs that provide comprehensive services for pregnant women, children from birth to age five, and their families. Services for children promote school readiness, and include early education, health, nutrition, mental health, and services for children with special needs. Services for parents promote family engagement, and include parent leadership and social service supports.

CVHS offers center-based and home-based services to 365 eligible families in various locations throughout Franklin, Grand Isle, Chittenden and Addison Counties in northwest Vermont. Our mission is to provide high quality services to help children and families to thrive and to reach their full potential. CVHS promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of children, and maintains strong collaborative partnerships to meet the changing needs of children, families

and communities. Our collaborative partnerships with schools and childcare programs adhere to Federal Head Start Performance Standards as well as State of Vermont Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations, and ensure the highest quality services for program participants.

CVHS strives to provide innovative services above and beyond standard program requirements to meet the needs of children and families in northwest Vermont. These CVHS “Special Initiatives” include the Vermont Head Start/Early Head Start Tooth Tutor Dental Access Program, an oral health initiative for children; the Head Start Tobacco Cessation Initiative for Parents, an initiative to support parents in quitting tobacco use; and the Head Start Early Learning Mentor Coach Program, an initiative to support Head Start staff around professional development, enhanced teaching practice, and improved outcomes for children.



Two of the faces of Head Start

Vermont Tenants

Vermont Tenants (VTI) has experienced a year of both setbacks and successes. In March we lost one of two full-time staff members due to budgetary restraints. As we went down to one employee, calls to our hotline for assistance climbed to record high numbers. By the end of the summer the effect of tropical storm Irene on rental properties especially in southern Vermont pushed VTI to its limits. Yet amidst such an unprecedented demand for services, we are proud to have been instrumental in many success stories; helping to save 44 units of affordable housing at Wharf Lane in Burlington is one example. Expanding our outreach and education services for new tenants, forming new working partnerships with local agencies, and beginning to design a Renter Responsibility Education Program are a few other Vermont Tenants success stories.



Mobile home destruction from Tropical Storm Irene



New mobile homes arrive after the storm

The Mobile Home Project

The Mobile Home Project has seen significant progress in the past year. While we continue to provide information about the rights, responsibilities and legal mechanisms for our clients, we are also moving into the creation of resident-owned cooperatives and disaster preparedness. Tropical storm Irene had devastating effects on mobile home communities throughout the state and the Mobile Home Project has taken a lead role in the recovery effort, hoping to push the discussion about the future of mobile home parks and affordable housing in the state.

The Fair Housing Project

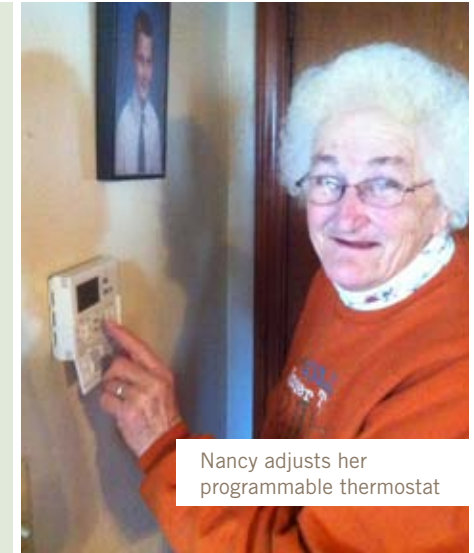
The Fair Housing Project trained over 150 municipal officials, planners, property managers and landlords about their rights and responsibilities under the federal Fair Housing Act and state law over the past year. In addition, we provided education and referral services to approximately 200 clients via our fair housing hotline. Building on a strong relationship with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, we collaborated to host six focus groups around the state in order to identify potential impediments to fair housing choice. We also started an initiative to identify and educate individuals who post discriminatory content in online rental advertisements. This initiative provided fair housing advertising guidance to approximately 225 people in the past year. In total, our programs educated several thousand Vermonters about their right to fair and equitable housing choices.

Champlain Valley Weatherization Services

Champlain Valley Weatherization Services (CVWS) has successfully completed grant requirements by weatherizing 454 units for multiple funding sources including the VT State Trust Fund, the United States Department of Energy and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). As a result we have provided warmth, comfort and a platform for reduced energy bills through energy-efficient homes for low-income Vermonters. In an effort to expand service offerings, CVWS has administered additional grants as well as partnerships. One major grant through ARRA is known as SERC (Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumers) whereby we install solar hot air panels and solar hot water units while also providing energy efficiency coaching for our clients. Some other successful programs in conjunction with Efficiency Vermont include MARS (Major Appliance Retrofit Service) to replace old, inefficient major appliances and Smart Grid to allow the low-income community to get educated about this new technology. Committed to its mission, CVWS continually strives to creatively

collaborate with both internal and external partners in an effort to support the important work that weatherization provides for families, communities, and the environment.

Our efficiency coach Kristin Lyons recently met with an elderly woman named Nancy whose home was weatherized back in 2001. Kristin introduced herself and asked Nancy how she was doing; Nancy whispered “not so well.” They had an immediate connection...one that paved the way to a great conversation about how her household could save more on both fuel and electric consumption by making some simple changes in their habits. By the end of the visit, Kristin had installed a thermostat and taught them how to program it; had replaced the carbon monoxide (CO) detector (one Nancy admitted having purchased at a yard sale several years ago); and installed a new smoke detector, for which Nancy’s grandson took responsibility for changing the batteries during daylight savings time. Nancy told Kristin that she had worried about having inadequate smoke and CO detectors



Nancy adjusts her programmable thermostat

and was clearly relieved to have one less thing to worry about.

A solar panel had been installed in Nancy’s home a week prior, and she raved that it was blowing in hot air as soon as it was on the wall. News of the panel was rapidly spreading around the neighborhood. Nancy gladly took a stack of brochures to share with others who were interested in learning more. They were surprised to find out that only 500-600 of these panels were going to be installed statewide under the SERC grant. Nancy immediately offered to call our State Legislators to ask for more funding for this program. At the meeting’s end, Nancy got up and thanked Kristin, told her that she was really glad she came. The feeling was mutual.

Financial Futures Program

The Financial Futures Program helps people develop financial stability and assets. In FY 2011, the program provided essential financial and credit education and coaching to 500 individuals, with a record 237 free credit reports and scores pulled and reviewed. Eighteen individuals saved for self-employment or post-secondary education goals through our Individual Development Accounts, which matched their savings. Program business counselors created 24 full-time jobs by helping to start or expand 31 businesses, and by leveraging \$303,738 in business capital for participants. Further, the “Vermont Green” project counselor supported over 141 individuals from Northwest Vermont in obtaining training geared to greening-up their skills or advancing a green career. Finally, Financial Futures launched a two-year pilot in Franklin/Grand Isle to improve financial education and coaching support services for highly vulnerable people, and was invited to participate in a national project by the Aspen Institute that will study the impact of secured credit cards on increasing the credit score of low-income entrepreneurs.

Dog-walking the Talk

John Gelineau first approached Financial Futures’ Micro Business Development Program (MBDP) in March 2009 for help with starting a dog walking business. At the time, John was struggling just to make ends meet. Self-employment interested him because he wanted to find a way to get paid doing something for which he had passion. Initially referred by Vocational Rehabilitation, John began meeting with MBDP Business Counselor Simeon Geigel, who showed him how to write a business plan, develop marketing strategies, access funding and implement the start-up phase for his business, PetBuds of the Champlain Valley.

Simeon says, “John’s experience is a great example of how someone might make use of MBDP services. He arrived with a good idea, was eager to learn, had the motivation to improve his life and took advantage of several kinds of assistance over time.” In addition to receiving free business counseling



John Gelineau and a client

services, John participated in Growing Money classes on spending and credit management, and in 2010, he applied for and received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant for his business. In 2011, MBDP helped John obtain a secured credit card that we now offer as part of a national grant project. The card is a very safe and effective tool for self-employed people to build credit scores and position themselves for long-term access to business capital.

John happily reports that business has doubled in sales from year to year. He is now servicing over 65 home visits a month. The business provides him with 100% of his current personal income needs, and he no longer requires benefits from the state. John is presently working with MBDP to update his business plan to access additional financing to expand the business further.

The impact of CVOEO programs

Households served by CVOEO programs*

11,122



Each icon represents 100 households

Persons in households served by CVOEO programs*

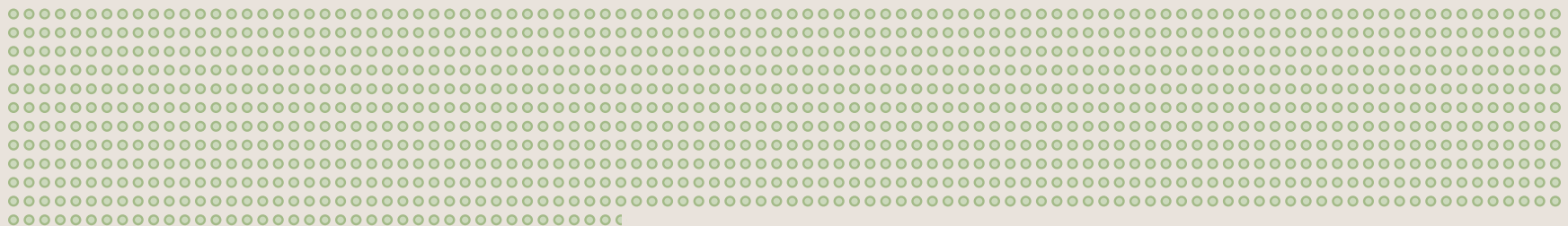
25,970



Each icon represents 100 people

Units of service*

113,937

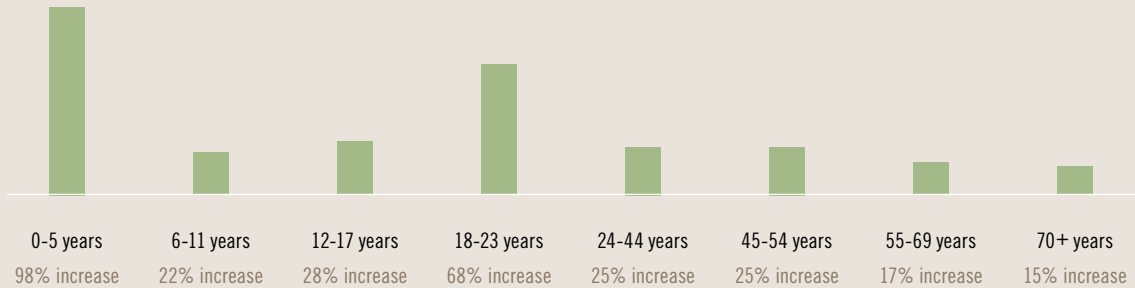


Each icon represents 100 units of service

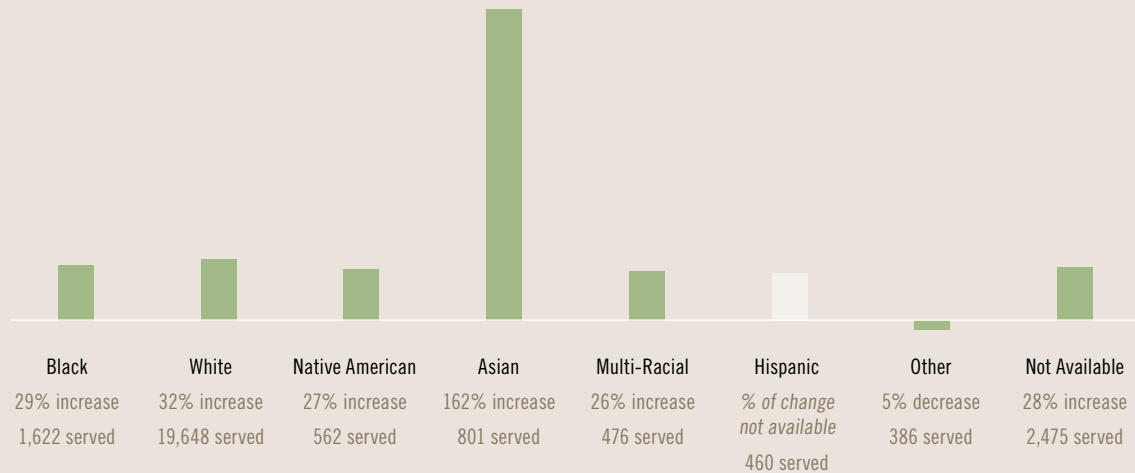
*CVOEO Programs illustrated here include only Community Action and the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf

What has changed in the last five years?

Age of those served



Race of those served



Family type of those served

Largest family type served:
Female single parent

Largest increase in family type served:
Male single parent – 60% increase

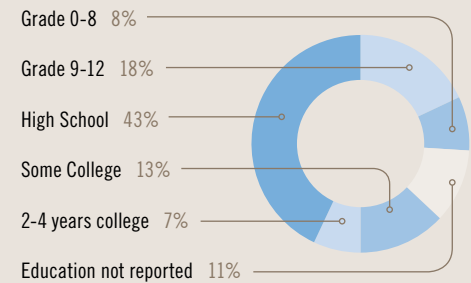
Income sources of those served

Largest group served:
Employed – 3,557 people

Largest increase in group served:
Receiving unemployment – 258% increase, 1,702 people

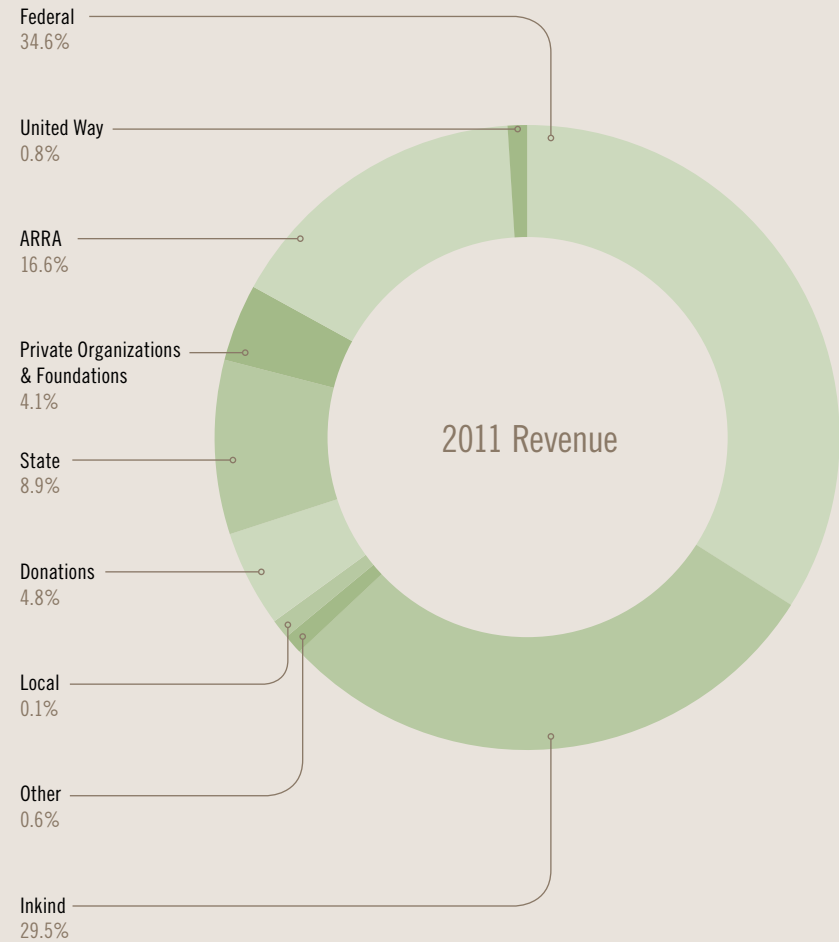
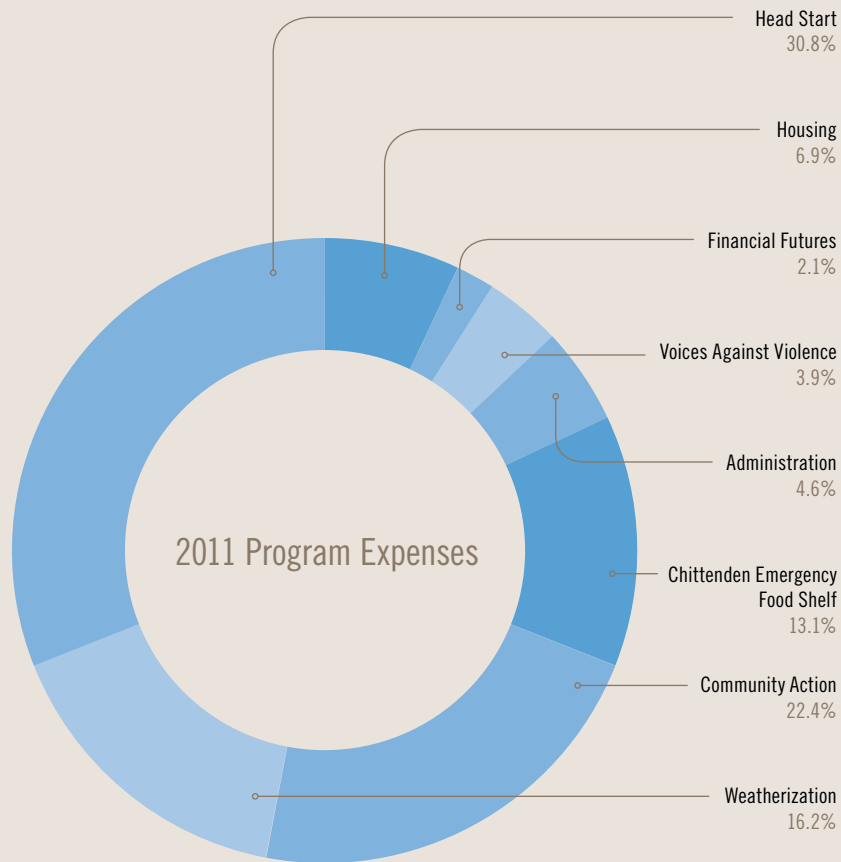
No source of income – 58% increase, 2,329 people

Education level of those served



28% increase in those served with 2-4 years of college – from 821 to 1,051 people

Finances



Board Members, Fiscal Year 2011

Vicki Smith
President, Chittenden

Jon Crystal
Vice President/Treasurer, Addison

Jeannie Bunzigiye
Chittenden

Pamela Dean-McCarthy
Franklin/Grand Isle

Kathy LaCross
Franklin/Grand Isle

Elizabeth Madigan
Chittenden

Jessica Oski
Chittenden

Adam Sartini
Franklin/Grand Isle

Karen Shearer
Head Start Policy Council, Chittenden

Colleen Smith
Addison

Ben Truman
Chittenden

Administrative & Program Directors

Jan F. Demers
Executive Director

Michael Gauthier
Fiscal Director

Carol Paul
Deputy Director

Paul Behrman
Director, Champlain Valley Head Start

Shaun Gilpin
Director, Mobile Home Project

Karen Haury
Director, Addison Community Action

Kris Lukens-Rose
Director, Voices Against Violence

Meg MacAuslan
Grants Manager

Robert Meehan
Director, Chittenden Emergency
Food Shelf

Travis Poulin
Director, Franklin/Grand Isle Community
Action

Kevin Stapleton
Director, Fair Housing Project

Terri Terreri
Human Resources Director

Peggy Treanor
Director, Community Services/Chittenden
Community Action

Jim White
Director, Financial Futures Program

Ted Wimpey
Director, Coordinated Statewide Housing

Jennifer Wood
Director, Champlain Valley Weatherization

Thank you

We can not do this work alone. There are some that go before us to pave the way. There are many behind the scenes that support, promote and make it possible for CVOEO to fulfill our mission. This is not a complete thank you list. It never could be.

Special thanks to:

New England Federal Credit Union and staff members Margaret Killough and Tim Mashrick

Manoj Sanghvi

Merchant's Bank

KeyBank

City of Burlington

Mary Kay Foundation

The Vermont Department of Economic, Housing & Community Development

The Vermont Human Rights Commission

Argosy Foundation

Green Mountain Power

Vermont Gas

Central Vermont Public Service

RunVermont

Gay & Lesbian Fund of Vermont

The Patrick Foundation

Jane B. Cook 1983 Charitable Trust

Shelburne Vineyard

One-Four-Three Charitable Lead Trust

IBM

People's United Bank

Sandy and Margie Zabriskie Fund

United Way of Chittenden County

United Way Franklin Grand Isle

Vermont Community Foundation

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

— John Fitzgerald Kennedy



www.cvoeo.org