



2017 POINT IN TIME COUNT REPORT

VERMONT'S ANNUAL STATEWIDE COUNT OF THE HOMELESS

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness &
Chittenden County Homeless Alliance

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LETTER FROM AHS SECRETARY GOBEILLE

We know that when a person loses their home, any challenges they faced prior are immediately amplified. For someone struggling financially, homelessness can make finding and keeping that next job harder. Similarly, homelessness places more stress on family dynamics, making parenting harder. Kids are more likely to miss school or transfer frequently between schools putting them behind their peers academically and developmentally. The trauma associated with homelessness can exacerbate underlying health and mental health issues. Along with homelessness comes a loss of privacy, dignity, and even within the friendliest communities, stigma persists. Homelessness is a profoundly destabilizing condition.

Ending homelessness requires us to come at the problem from multiple angles. Our strategies in Vermont are built around three components: helping to make rents more affordable; providing the right supportive services at the right time; and increasing access to housing. The departments of AHS are well-positioned to play key roles, but as with any entrenched social issue, we know it requires a whole community approach. AHS, alone, will not be able to solve the problem of homelessness. There are major roles for private and non-profit partners as well as other state agencies and the federal government.

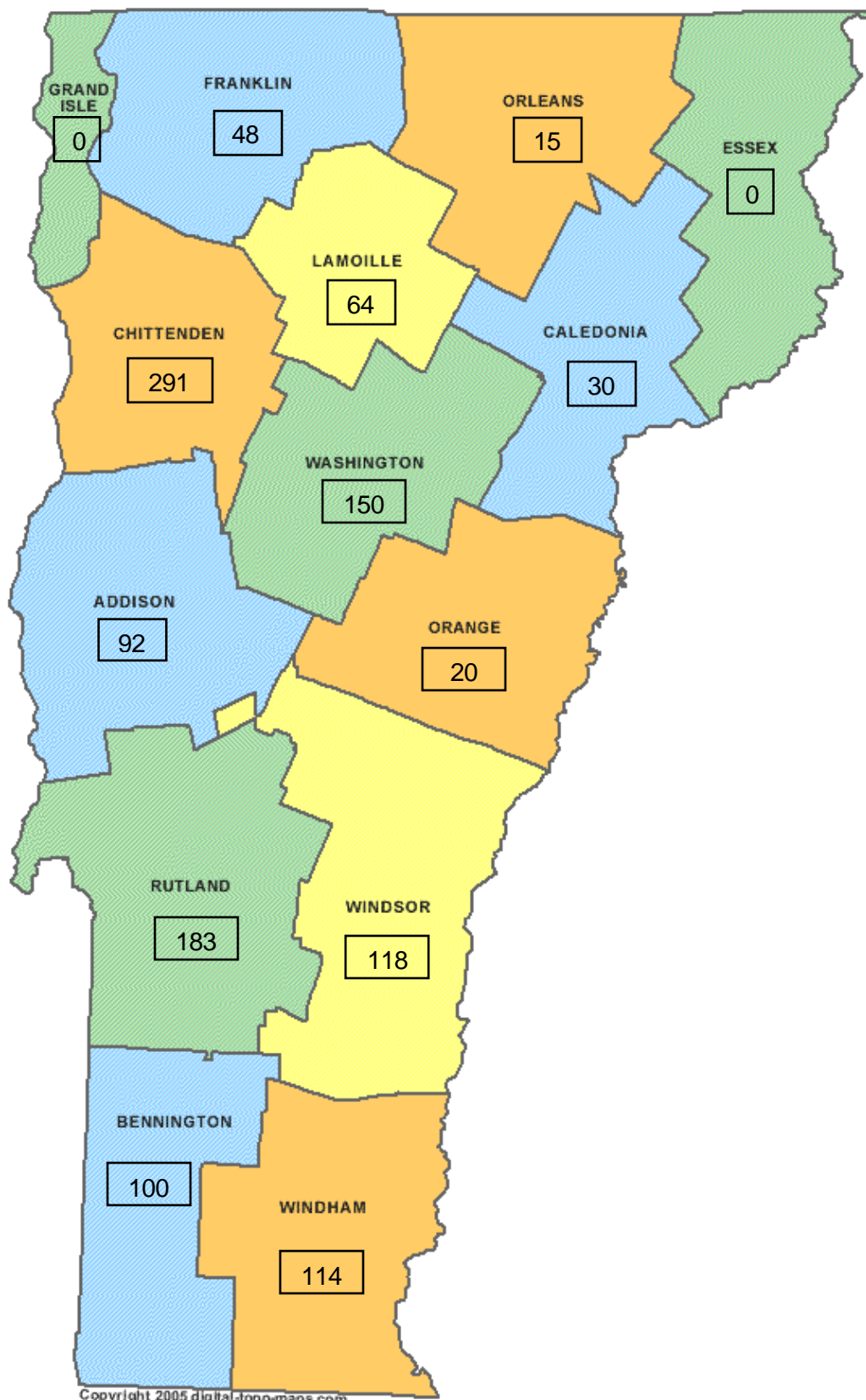
This report features both hopeful news from regions that are documenting a sustained reduction in homelessness, and more sobering news from parts of the state where more people are without housing this year than last. I applaud the creativity and perseverance I see in all communities and organizations that are working to reduce and end homelessness in Vermont! Every year brings a better understanding of the factors that cause people to lose housing and the interventions that are best suited to address them.

As you read this Point in Time Report, I encourage you to remember two more points which may not be evident in the trends or graphs from a one-night count: First, that through the work of local communities, thousands of Vermonters who became homeless last year, found a safe place to stay and the resources to get back into stable housing. Those numbers aren't included here, but those struggles and ultimate successes were real. And, secondly, that even in areas that showed tremendous improvements this year, we clearly have work to do. Too many Vermonters are without a place to call home tonight, but through strong state and local partnerships that bring together those critical components of subsidies, services and housing, we can help create new paths to opportunity, success and housing stability.

Al Gobeille, Secretary
Agency of Human Services

HOMELESS PERSONS BY COUNTY

2017 POINT IN TIME COUNT



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SUMMARY

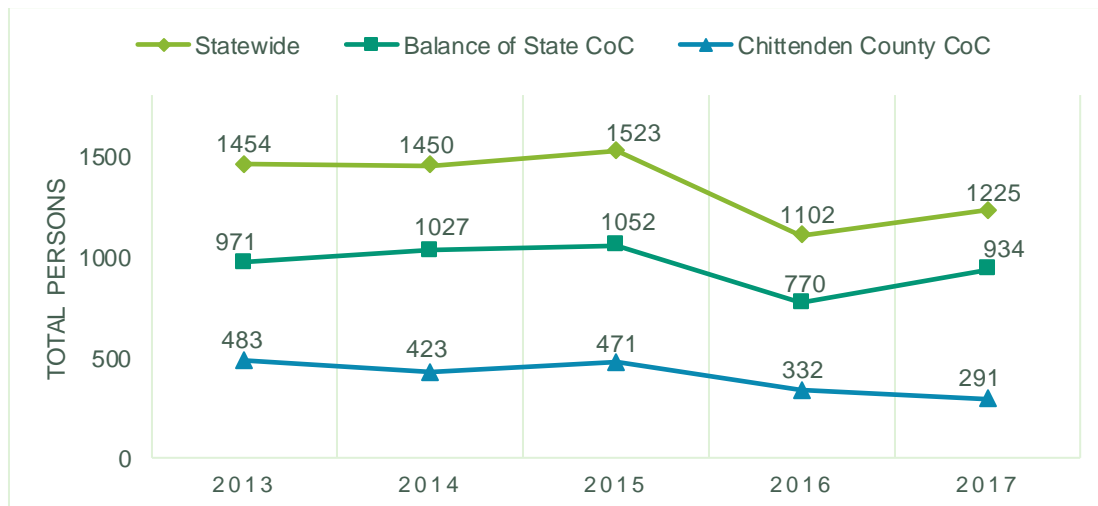
This report chronicles the landscape of and changes in overall homelessness, as well as breakdowns by location of homelessness, household type, subpopulation, and county. The Annual Point in Time (PIT) Count is an unduplicated statewide count of persons experiencing literal homelessness on a single night in January. Vermont's two Continua of Care (CoC)—Balance of State and Chittenden County—are the backbone organizers of the statewide effort.¹ These CoCs, along with 11 local CoCs that fall under the Balance of State, are comprised of service & housing providers, state agencies, those with lived experience, and other partners in Vermont's health, homelessness, and low-income systems of care.

- During the one-day count in January, 1225 Vermonters experienced literal homelessness, an increase of 123 people, or 11%, compared to the 2016 one-day count.
- A total of 852 households were counted, an increase of 59 households, or 7%, from 2016.
- 306 were children, representing 25% of the entire homeless population counted.
- While the one-day count showed an overall increase, some areas saw striking regional differences, including decreases in Chittenden (-12%) and Franklin (-17%) counties.
- The number of unsheltered persons counted was 134, a 14% decrease from the 2016 PIT Count.

The Point in Time Count data is compiled in a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Agencies using HMIS can quickly and accurately input, review, and submit data; entities not using it miss out on these benefits. It is strongly recommended that the State of Vermont mandate that the General Assistance Motel Vouchers and the Vermont Rental Subsidy programs use HMIS for increased efficiency, uniformity, and accuracy in data entry, collection, and analysis.

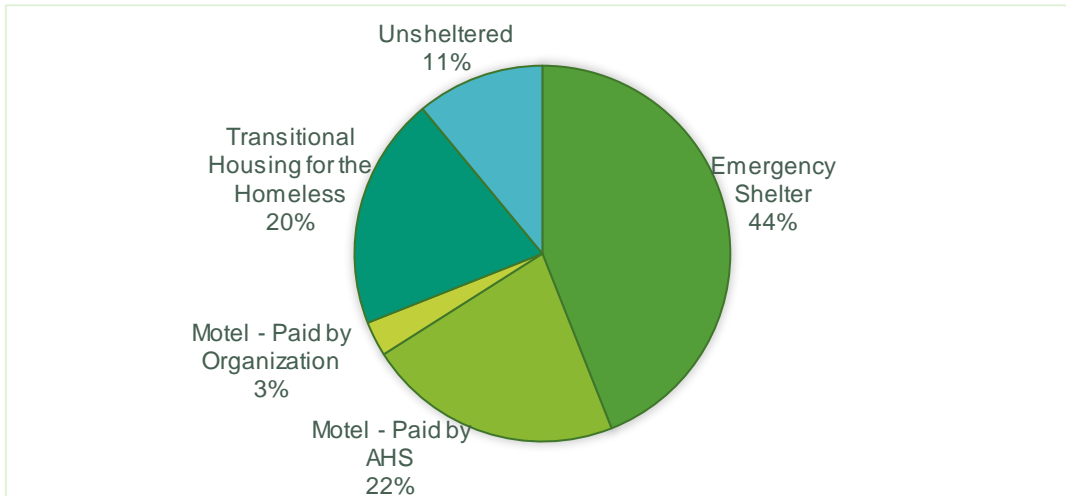
The Count provides a valuable measure of Vermont's homeless population; the data is used to assess and identify housing service gaps and needs. Capturing the most vulnerable homeless population, those "literally homeless," it does not include those at risk of becoming homeless or those who are "couch surfing." Insufficient affordable housing units, housing subsidies and capacity to provide services that fit the complex needs of persons who are homeless continue to burden homelessness prevention and intervention efforts. The \$35 million housing bond proposed by the Governor and passed by the Legislature will help immensely. However unparalleled budget cuts proposed by President Trump, which includes elimination of entire programs, would increase homelessness greatly.

ANNUAL VT POINT IN TIME COUNT OF HOMELESSNESS: 2013-2017

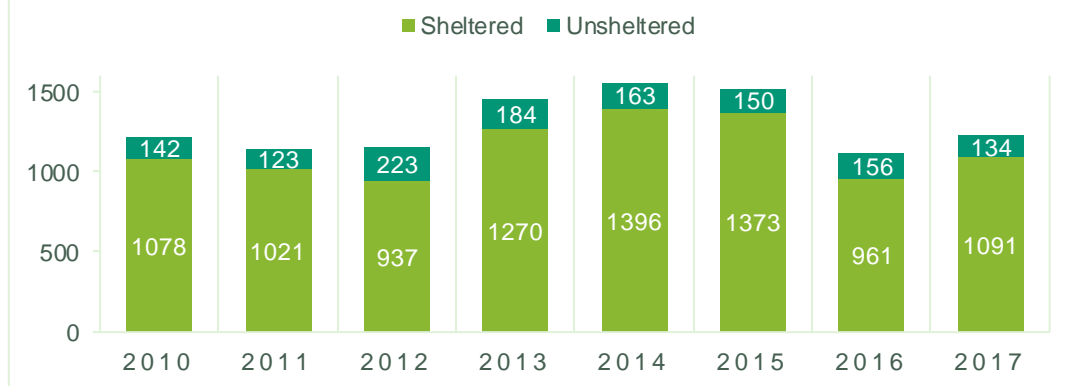


¹ Chittenden County CoC is known as the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance. The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness includes both CoC.

LOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS



TOTAL PERSONS SHELTERED VS. UNSHELTERED

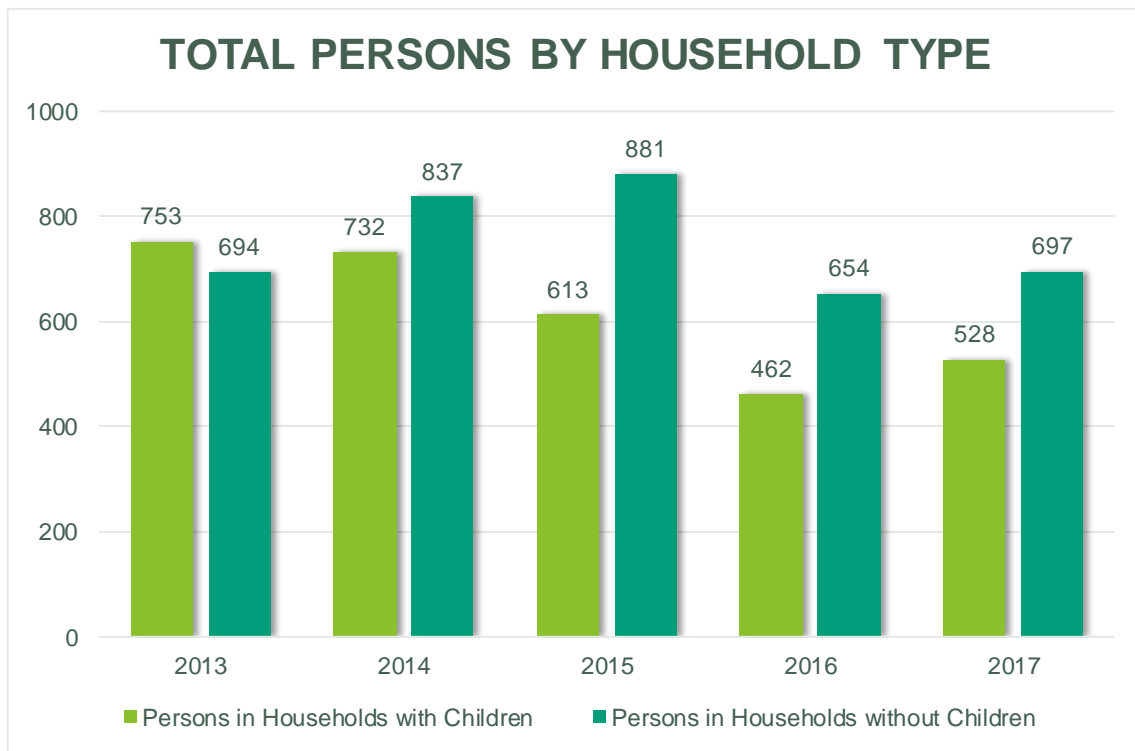


KEY FINDINGS

- The majority (89%) of homeless persons resided in an emergency shelter or transitional housing for the homeless, but just over 1 in 10 (11%) of the homeless population was unsheltered.²
- Although the statewide number of unsheltered persons decreased by 14% from the 2016 one-day count, the number of sheltered persons increased by the same percentage. A higher number of sheltered persons is the result of a greater need for and usage of state-funded motel vouchers due to adverse weather conditions, including a winter storm, occurring on the night of the 2017 count. In addition, new seasonal shelters were opened in 2017 to address local need.
- Five counties experienced Cold Weather Exception conditions on the night of the Count, which relaxes eligibility requirements for motel vouchers when temperatures drop below 20 degrees, or 32 degrees with snow or freezing rain.
- Lamaille County, which does not have a general emergency shelter, saw a drastic increase (2 to 36 households) in motel voucher usage this year, even without a Cold Weather Exception.

² Living in a place unfit for human habitation, such as in the woods, on the street, or in a car.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

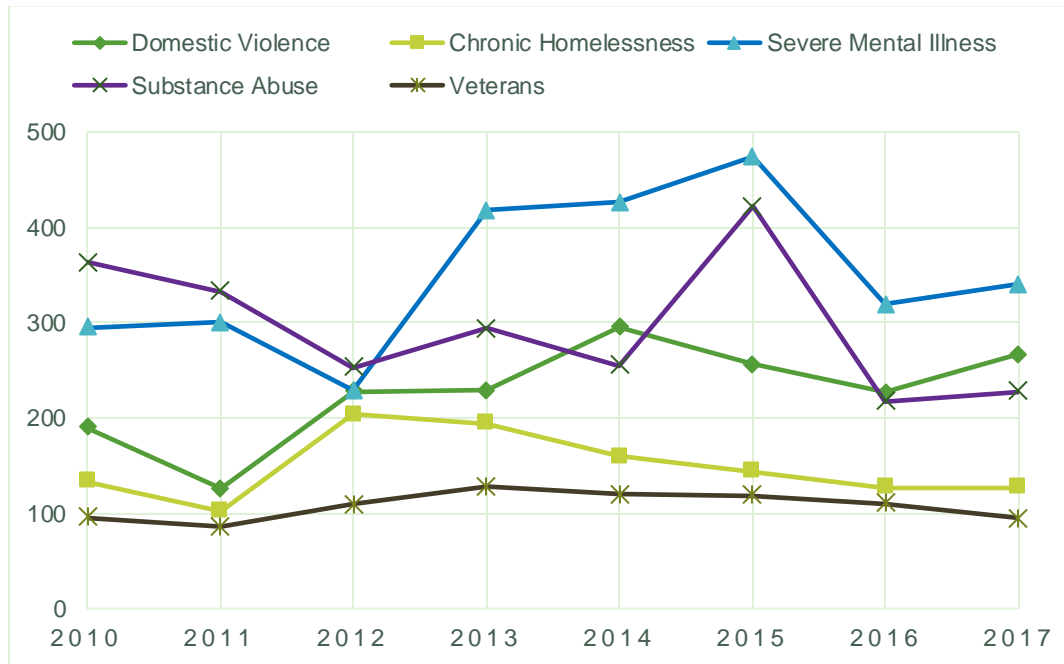


KEY FINDINGS

- 43% of the persons experiencing homelessness during the 2017 PIT Count were persons in households with children, while 57% were persons in households without children.
- 2017 saw a 14% statewide increase of persons in households with children and a 6% increase of persons in households without children, in comparison with 2016 numbers.
- There were two unaccompanied minor households, meaning households made up children under the age of 18 who are unaccompanied by guardians.

SUBPOPULATIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

For the following data, persons may fall under multiple subpopulation categories.



KEY FINDINGS

- A 24-person decrease in Chittenden County's chronic homeless³ count, coupled with a 24-person increase in the rest of Vermont, produced a count of chronically homeless persons equal to last year: 127 persons. This means 1 in 10 persons (10%) counted were chronically homeless.
 - In contrast, 16% of persons reported that they had been homeless for less than one month, 14% for one to three months, and 17% for one month to one year.
- Just under half of persons (47%) were homeless for the first time.
- 267 persons⁴ (22%) reported as survivors of domestic violence, which is a 40-person increase from 2016. This year, three service providers for survivors of domestic violence distributed emergency housing motel vouchers on behalf of the state.
- The population of homeless veterans has declined steadily since the 2013 Count, when it peaked at 128. 2017 saw a continuation of this downward trend; 94 veterans were counted, a 15% decrease since 2016. The coordinated efforts of veterans' service providers across Vermont to move this number towards functional zero⁵ is worthy of special recognition.
- A significant portion of those who were homeless reported having a disability:
 - 340 persons reported having a severe mental illness, or 28% of total persons.
 - 228 persons reported having a substance abuse disorder, or 19% of total persons.

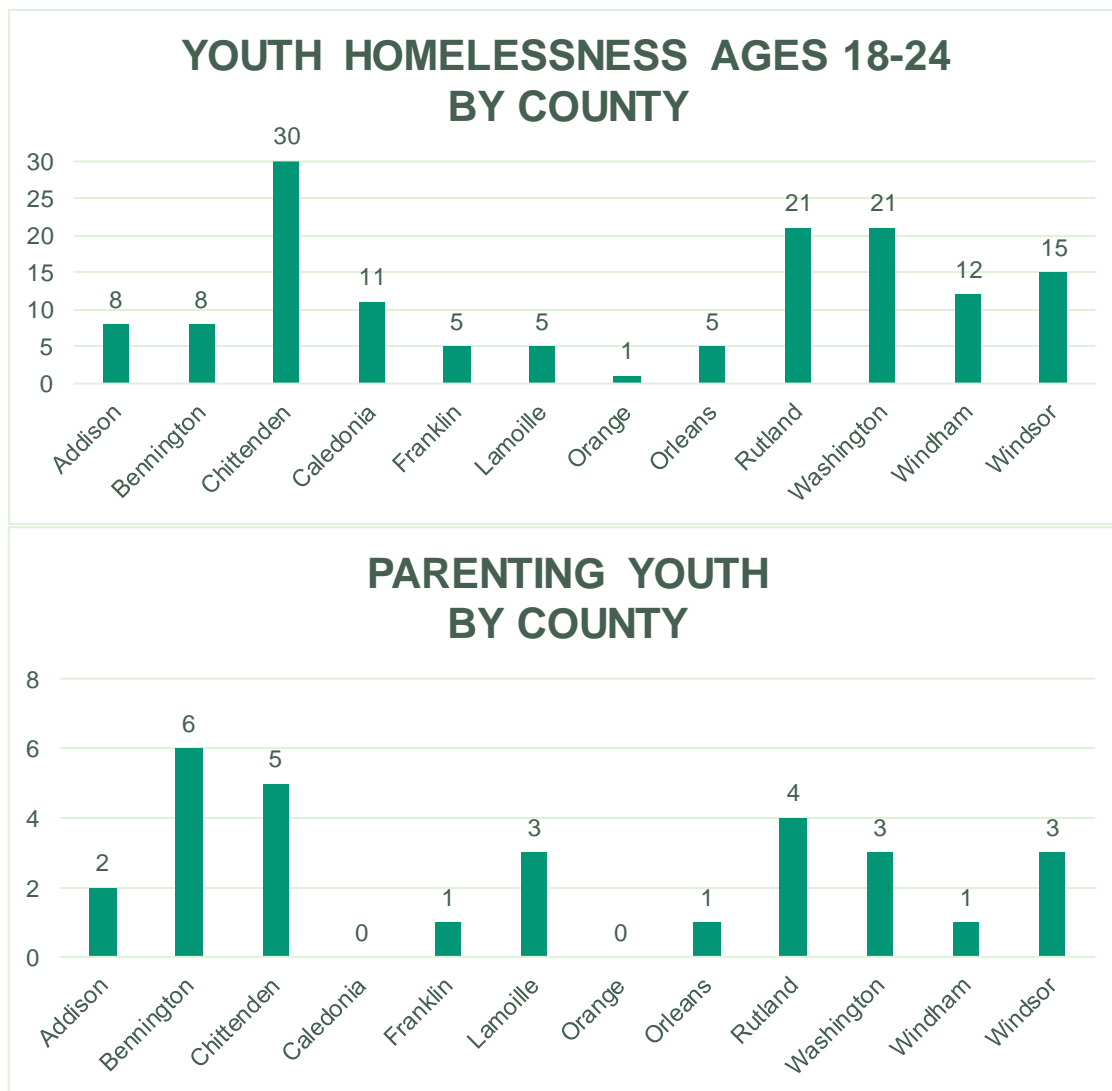
³ Comprised of persons with a disability who have experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years (cumulative of at least 12 months).

⁴ This does not include children affected, as domestic violence is defined as between intimate partners.

⁵ Defined as the number of veterans who are homeless being no greater than the monthly housing placement rate for veterans.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

This year, youth service organizations devoted more resources to the Point in Time Count, with 2017 serving as a baseline year for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to track progress towards ending youth homelessness.⁶ Thus the increase in youth homelessness may reflect more outreach, aimed at providing an accurate baseline measure. Essex and Grand Isle Counties are not included in the graphs because they had a count of zero homeless persons.

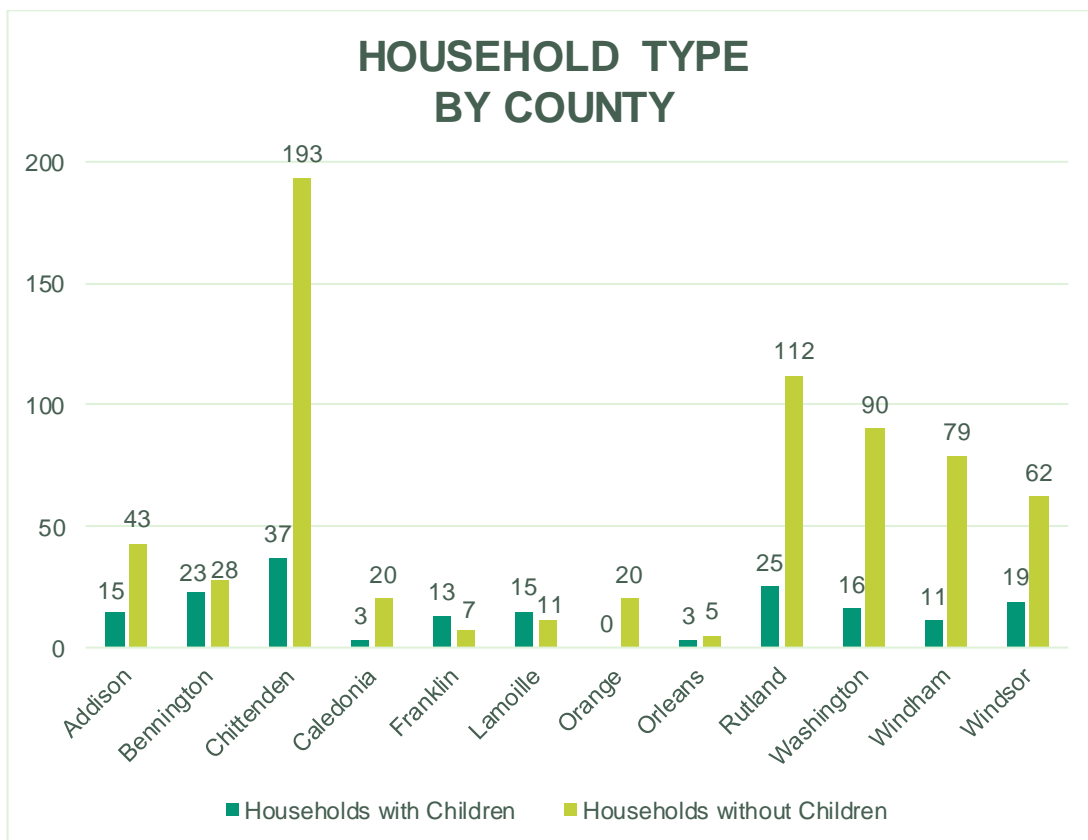
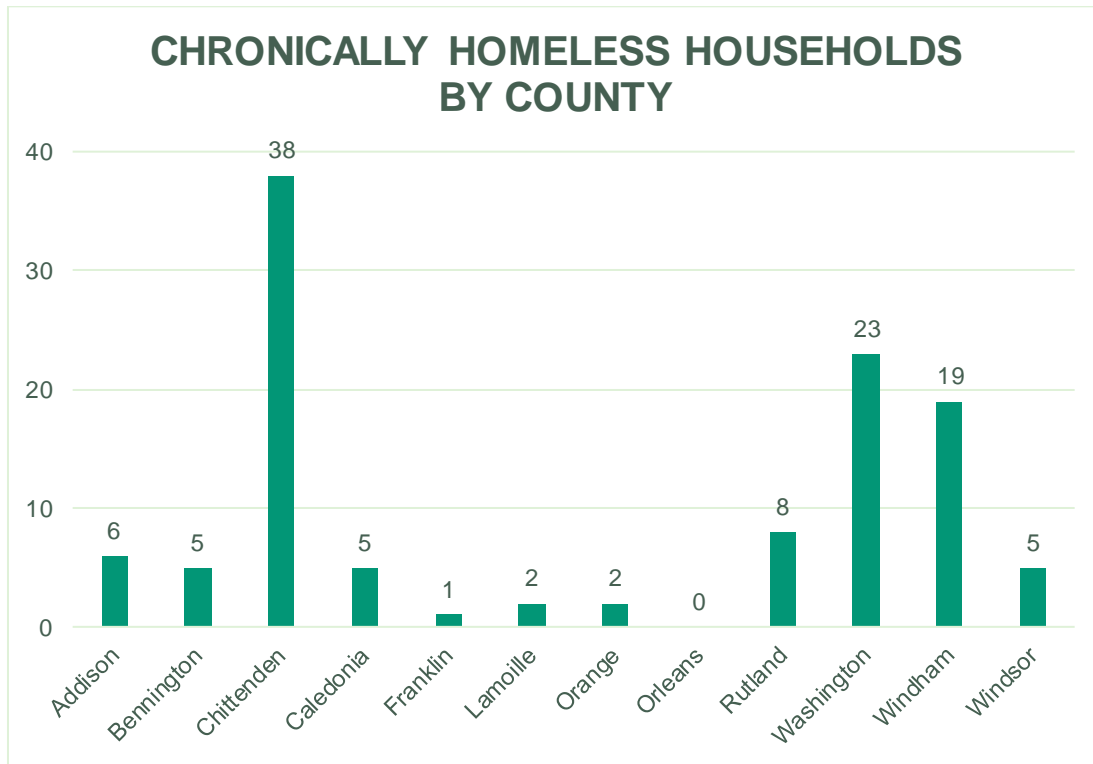


- The number of youth ages 18-24 who were homeless was 142, up from 120 in 2016. This represents an 18% increase.
- Half of youth ages 18-24 counted were in three counties: Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington.
- 42 youth, or 30%, reported chronic health conditions: 4 had a physical disability, 15 a developmental disability, 18 a severe mental illness, and 5 an “other chronic health condition.”
- There were 29 parenting youth households, compared to 36 in 2016.

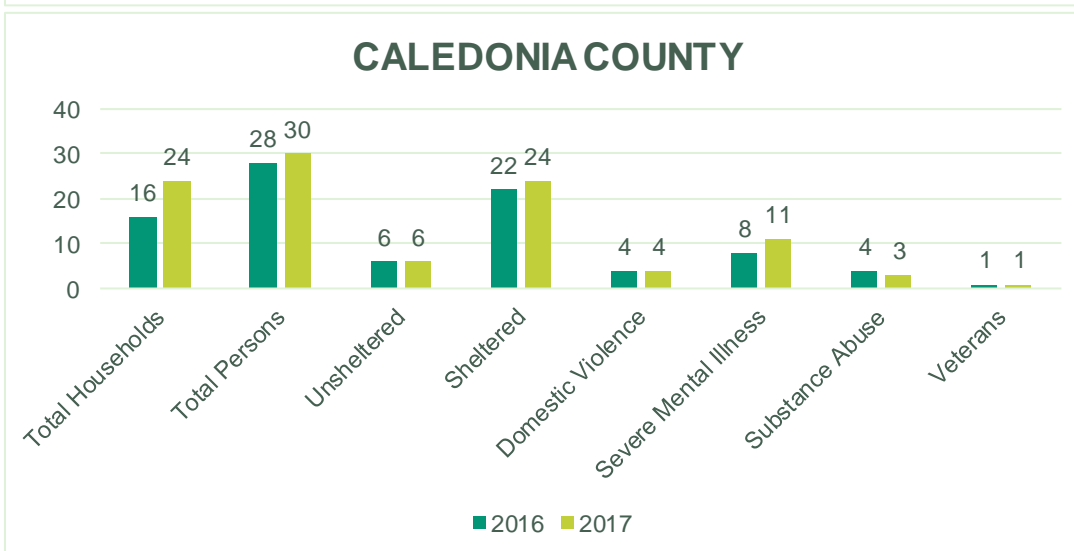
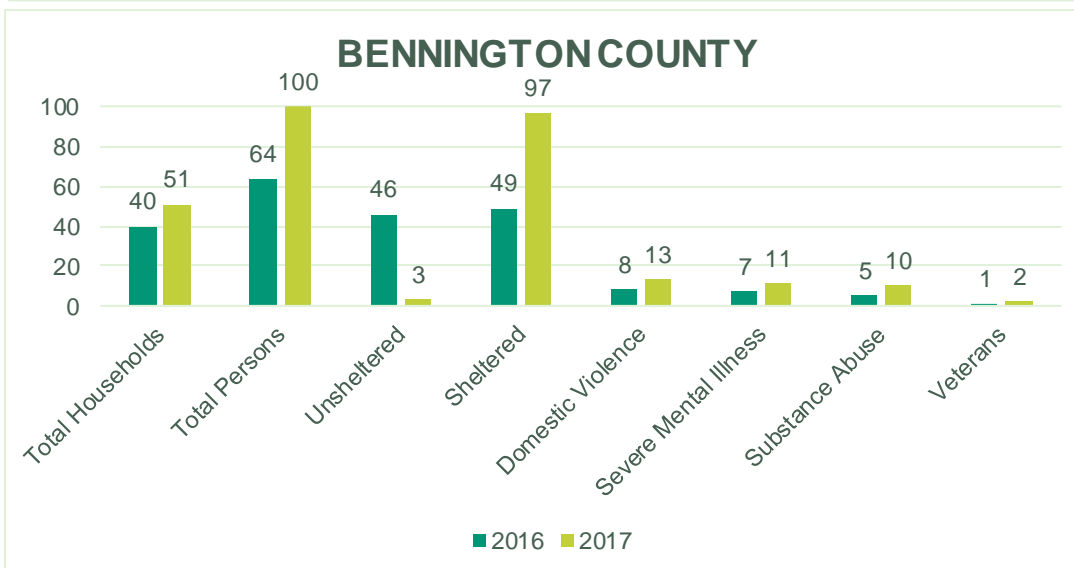
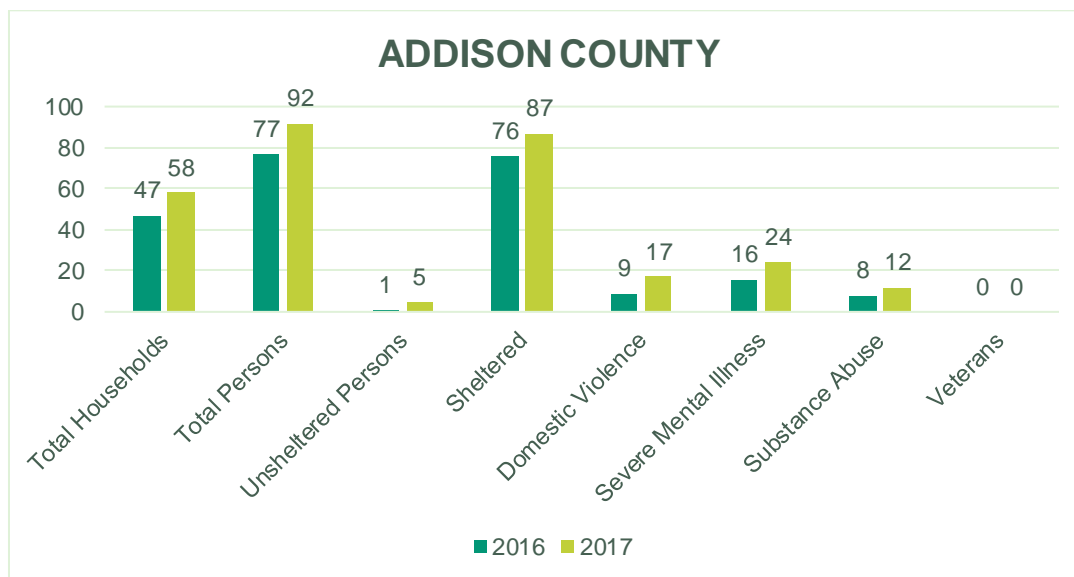
⁶ Refers to youth between the ages of 12 and 24 who are unaccompanied by guardians.

COUNTY BREAKDOWNS

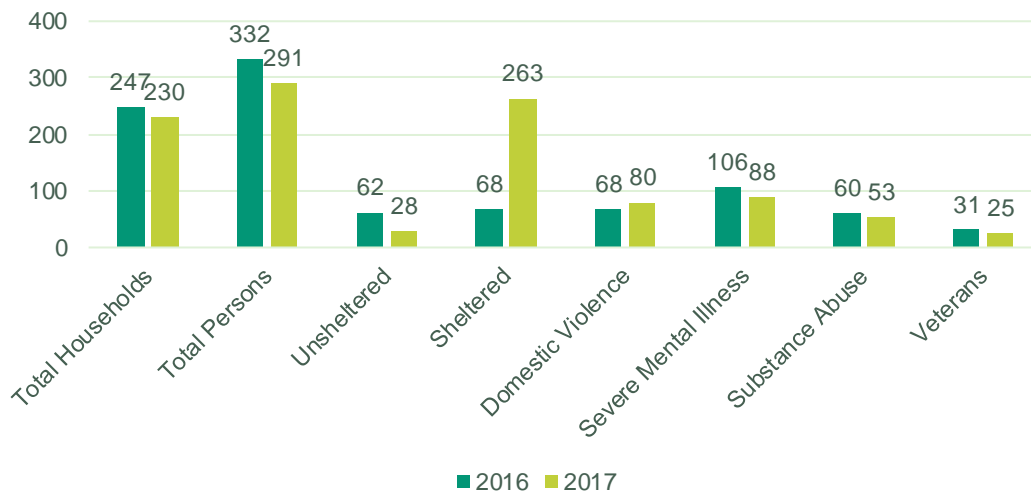
Essex and Grand Isle Counties are not included as they both had a homeless count of zero persons.



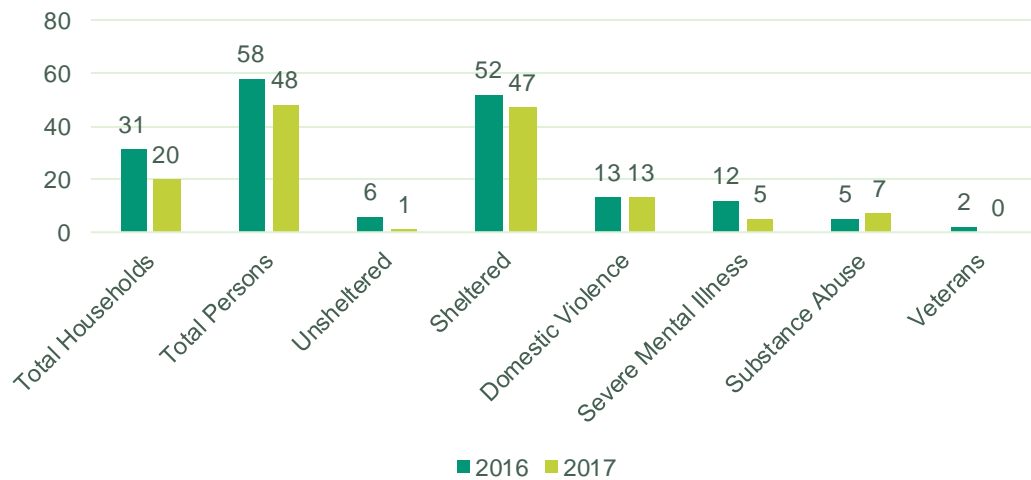
Unless otherwise noted, the following data represents the number of persons (not households) that experienced homelessness on the one-day January 2017 PIT count.



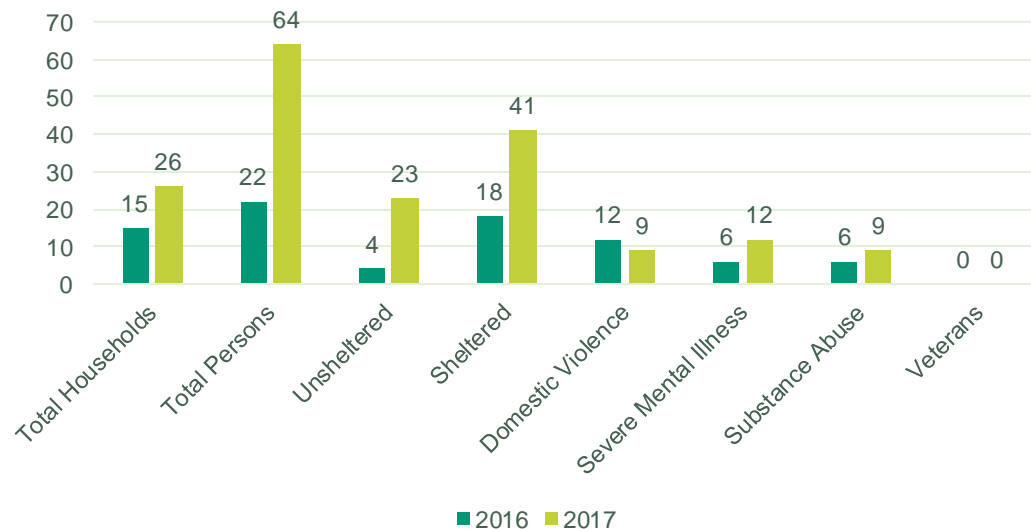
CHITTENDEN COUNTY

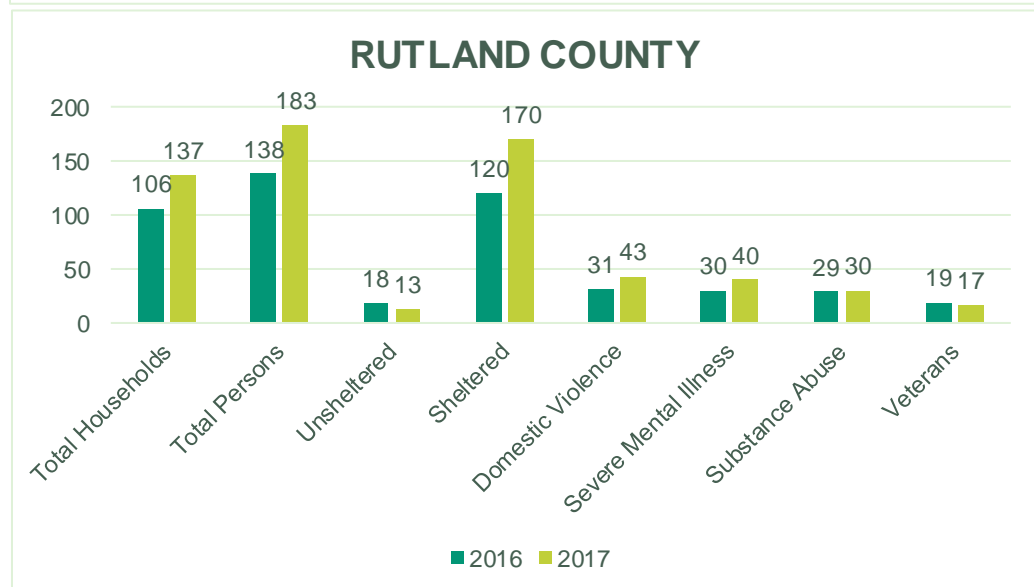
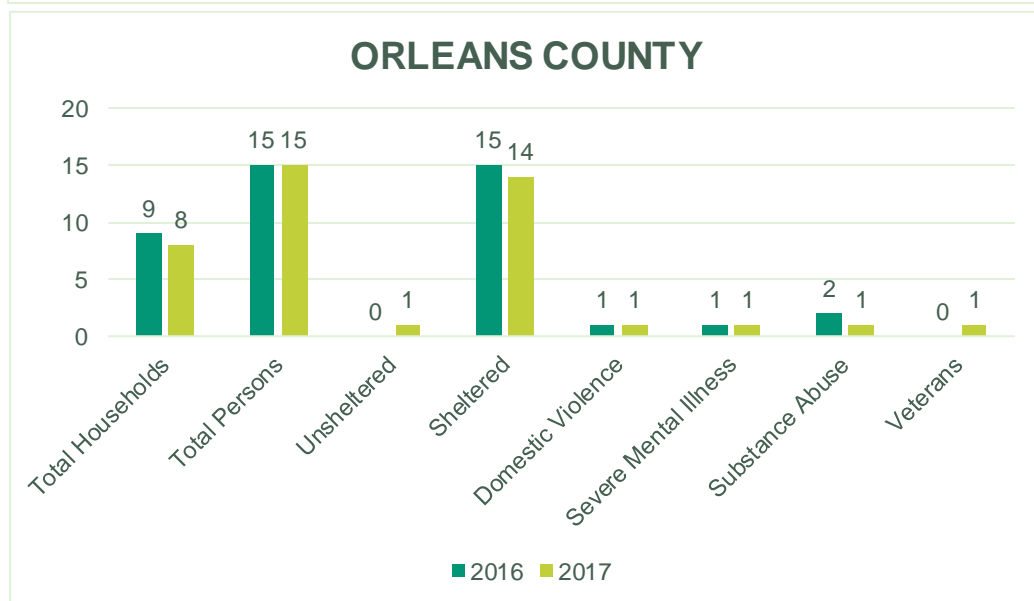
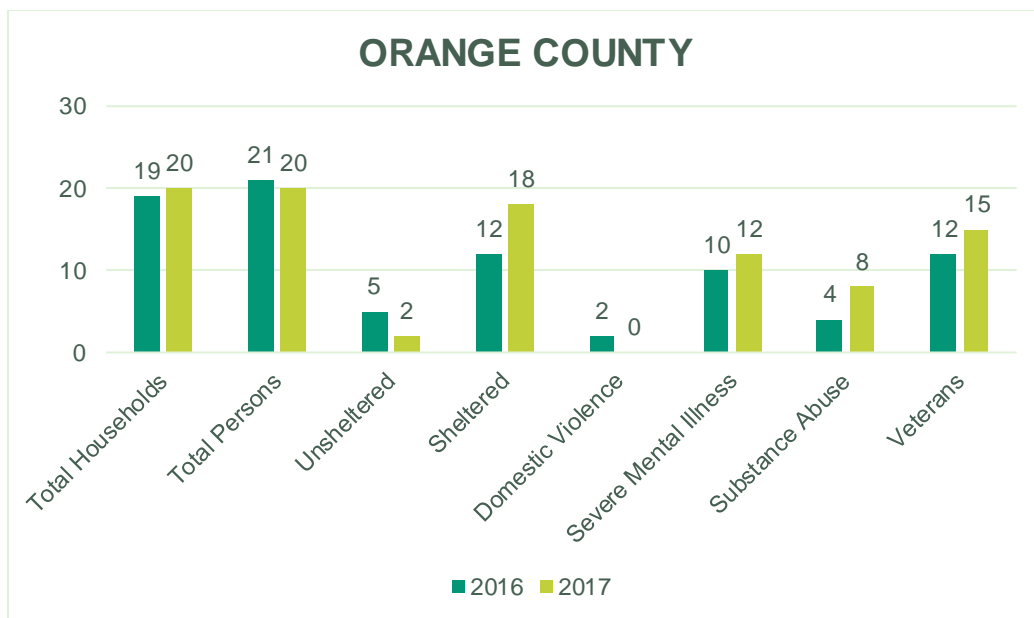


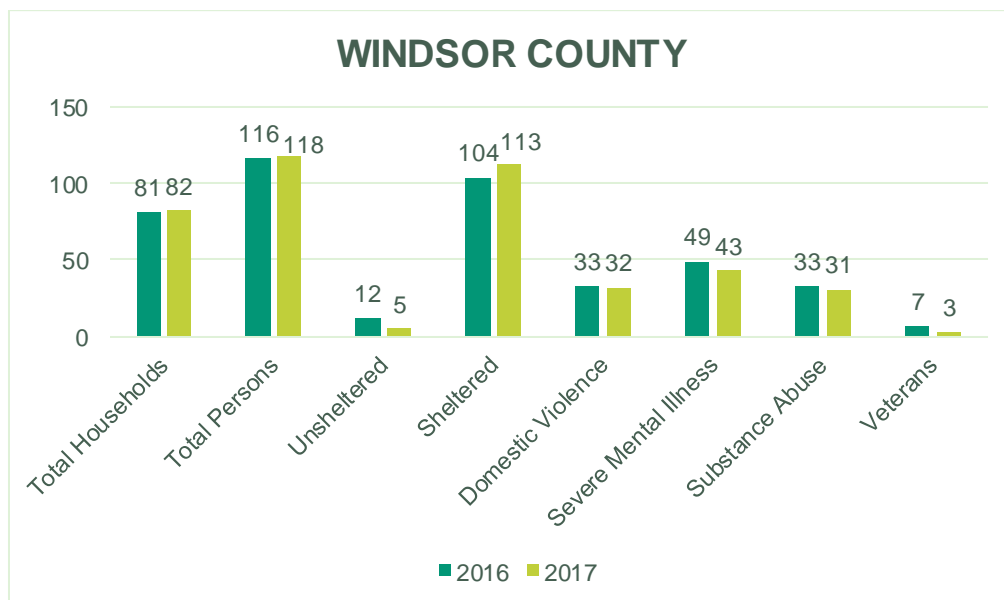
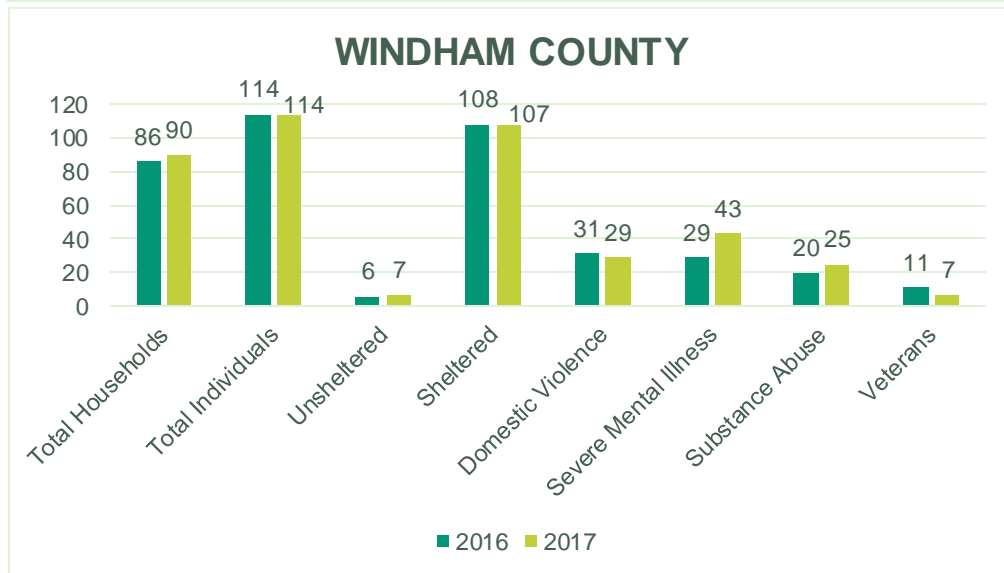
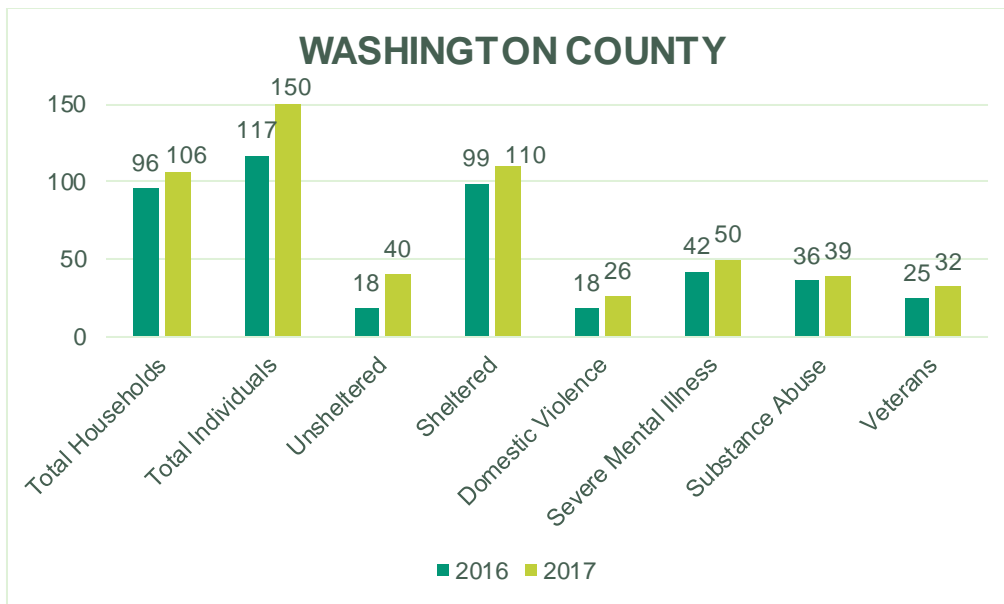
FRANKLIN COUNTY



LAMOILLE COUNTY







CONTACT INFORMATION

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Erin Ahearn, Safe Harbor Homeless Health Care Program of the Community Health Centers of Burlington

Addison County – Jeanne Montross, Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects

Bennington County – Chris Oldham, Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless
Maryann St. John, BROCC-Community Action in Southwestern Vermont

Caledonia & Essex Counties – Jan Rossier, Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Franklin & Grand Isle Counties – Holly Olio, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services County
Jen Stewart, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity

Lamoille County – Will Eberle, Agency of Human Services
Carole Pomeroy, Department for Children & Families

Orleans County – Kathy Metras, Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Rutland County – Ashley Greenfield, Homeless Prevention Center

Washington County – Liz Genge, Downstreet Housing & Community Development
Jackie Jones, Washington County Mental Health Services

Windham South – Sue Graff, United Way of Windham County

Windsor-North & Orange Counties – Linda Anderson, Capstone Community Action
Lynn Boyle, Agency of Human Services

Windsor-South & Windham North – Tara Chase, Windsor County Youth Services

