

2	0
1	8

# EQUITY REPORT



THE **CITY**  
OF **BURLINGTON**



## FOREWORD FROM **MAYOR WEINBERGER**

**There is a management principle that says, “What gets measured gets done.” With this important adage in mind over the last two years, the City has changed how operations are managed by institutionalizing a performance measurement practice known as BTVStat and used it to create the City’s first-ever Equity Report.**

Modeled after successful efforts in other communities and adapted specifically for Burlington, BTVStat brings together the entire City leadership team to review performance measures in detail for three or more City departments each month. The lively discussions allow City leadership to collectively identify challenges, make operations more transparent, control costs, track progress, hold each other accountable, and find new opportunities to collaborate.

This year and going forward, City leadership also has focused on evaluating “equity” within our departments’ services and programs. This term is defined fully within the report, and our efforts have focused in this first year primarily around equitable provision of City services and equitable access to City services. Prioritizing data collection and analysis along these two tracks has led to recommendations for improvement in City operations. Several of these recommendations are included in the Findings and Recommendations section of our new Equity Report. As with any new effort, the Equity Report’s structure and focus will continue to evolve in the years to come. I invite you to weigh in with your thoughts about how we as a City can improve the metrics we have

identified, establish new benchmarks, and/or add new areas of focus.

Burlington remains, as the City’s first mayor, A.L. Catlin, said in 1865, a place of “natural beauty not equaled in any part of the country.” I believe it also remains the best place in Vermont to find a job or start a business, to have a family, or to begin a new life in the United States. Keeping Burlington as the open door of opportunity for all our residents and strengthening that access to opportunity where it is lacking are foundational responsibilities of our City administration. The regular, institutionalized, and systematic evaluation of our progress with these important responsibilities in mind is an important step. I hope you will join me in reviewing and improving upon our work.

Warmly,

MIRO WEINBERGER, MAYOR

# 2018 EQUITY REPORT

A BASELINE MEASUREMENT FOR ENHANCING EQUITY IN BURLINGTON

## What Is the Purpose of This Report?

- 1. PRESENT A PROFILE**  
*of Burlington and provide a snapshot of where our community stands on a variety of population-level and city-wide indicators*
- 2. CONNECT THE WORK**  
*of the various City departments with these broader indicators to prioritize data collection and evaluate the impact of different City practices through an equity lens*
- 3. IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS**  
*to identify areas where the City can take important steps with the community in a measurable and meaningful way to help address the challenges we face*

BTVStat is a performance management system that brings City leadership together monthly to review several departments' progress against important goals and metrics.

## EQUITY DEFINED AND HOW IS IT MEASURED IN THIS REPORT

Drawing from the advocacy organization PolicyLink and other sources, including the 2018 Vermont State Health Assessment, this report **defines equity as the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.** PolicyLink and the 2018 Vermont State Health Report emphasize the importance of equity for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice, and other systemic inequalities often associated with social categories of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, social position, sexual orientation, disability, or other groups of individuals that experience disadvantage or injustice based on their social identity.<sup>1</sup>

---

**“To ensure that our City government is properly oriented toward achieving progress for all members of our community, in the year ahead we will be focusing BTVStat on equity.”**

MAYOR MIRO WEINBERGER, STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS IN 2018



# 5

## DOMAINS

The population-level equity indicators span across five thematic areas or domains

# 5

## DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

The report highlights measures related to five demographic groups

### EQUITY REPORT STRUCTURE

The report links services and programs provided by the City to population-level indicators in an effort to begin assessing comprehensively how and where the City can identify gaps and enhance operations to equitably serve the community. Population-level indicators are measures of community health or activity that extend far beyond anything the City can definitively change alone—the City is one player in the remarkable ecosystem that makes up a community. Two assumptions of the report, however, are that: 1) City policy choices can nevertheless influence broader social trends; and 2) the City should consciously assess its services and programs in order to make Burlington more just and fair, such that all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential when pursuing community opportunities.

The population-level equity indicators provide a window into Burlington across five different domains (or thematic areas), using a variety of data sources. These domains include: Economic Well-Being; Housing; Community and Natural Resources; Education and Workforce Development; and Public Safety and Community Health.<sup>2</sup>

Within each of these domains, the report highlights related City department operations and associated metrics alongside the population-level indicators. This first Equity Report focuses on collecting new

data types and establishing baseline metrics; future Equity Reports will include refined and improved metrics and data collection efforts as well as establish benchmarks where possible that help provide context for Burlington's progress relative to other cities. Across each domain, readers are particularly encouraged to provide feedback on the Equity Report that answers the following questions: What other measures would be helpful to review? Which metrics should the City focus on improving? What else is missing from this first-ever Equity Report? How could the Equity Report be restructured?

The report also highlights measures related to five demographic groups. Unfortunately, because of Burlington's small population, disaggregated data is often not readily available. The highlighted groups in this report include women, people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, people living with disabilities, and individuals of lower socioeconomic status.<sup>3</sup> The focus on these demographic groups follows the model of the 2018 Vermont State Health Assessment, plus an additional group (women). Using disaggregated data to examine unique experiences of these and other various groups is integral to eliminating inequities—because once inequities are highlighted and understood, they are more likely to be addressed.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



DEMOGRAPHICS // 2



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING // 4



HOUSING // 6



COMMUNITY AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES // 8



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT // 10



PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
COMMUNITY HEALTH // 12



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS // 14

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## BURLINGTON GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS



**27**

### MEDIAN AGE

12.7% of the total population is under the age of 18. The Vermont state median age is 42.8 years.



**30%**

### HAVE BACHELOR'S DEGREE+

Educational attainment by race varies.



**80**

### MEI INDEX SCORE

Compared to the national average of 58 out of 100. The 2018 Human Rights Commission's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are for the LGBTQ community.



**24%**

### LIVE BELOW POVERTY

Nearly double the national average of 12.3%. When the high number of students enrolled in college and graduate school are taken into account, the non-college student adjusted poverty rate in Burlington is closer to 16%.<sup>5</sup>



**35**

### HOMELESS POPULATION

The number of chronically homeless in Burlington has fallen from 101 in 2015 to 35 in 2018.<sup>6</sup> The January 2018 point-in-time count totaled 359 homeless people in Burlington.<sup>6</sup>



**235**

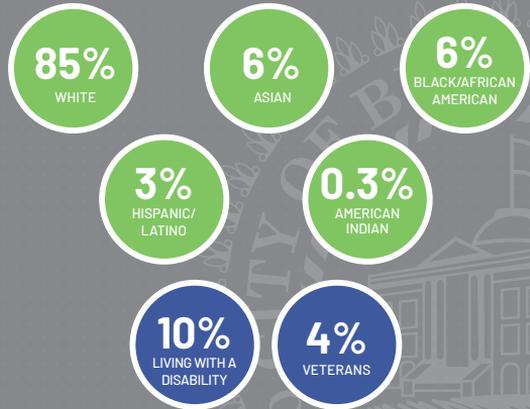
### NEW REFUGEES IN 2017

A 39% decrease from 2016. More than 5,000 refugees have resettled in this area over the last 30 years. These populations have distinct needs, capacities, and contexts.

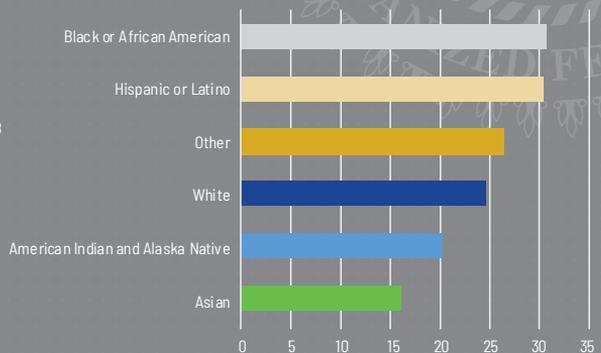
**42,453**

### TOTAL POPULATION LARGELY UNCHANGED SINCE 1970

12.9% of the population is foreign born; 14.7% speak a language other than English at home<sup>4</sup>



PERCENT OF PEOPLE LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL BY RACE (2017)  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE



## CITY WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

**~1,000**  
EMPLOYEES

**\$57,075**  
BASE PAY: MEN



**\$57,295**  
BASE PAY: WOMEN

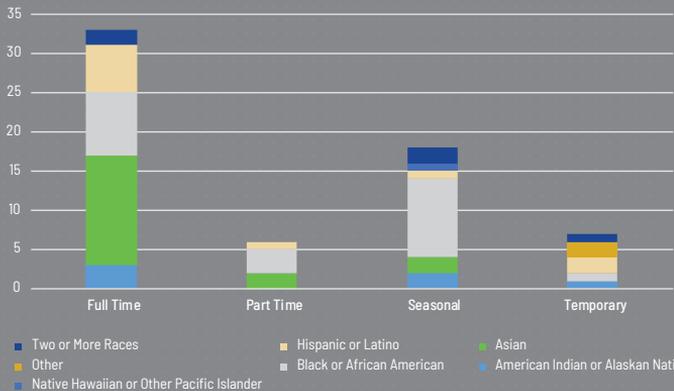
While positive, these base pay figures do not tell the whole story. They represent a small majority of City employees who are paid on the City's "Willis" system (about 53%), and base pay does not take into consideration overtime potential. The City employs about 1,000 people (71% full or part time and 28% seasonal or temporary), 36% of whom are women and 63% men.



**7%** OF CITY EMPLOYEES  
ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR

Compared to 15% of the overall population.  
45% of employees of color hold seasonal or temporary positions.

PEOPLE OF COLOR EMPLOYED BY CITY PER JOB TYPE  
HUMAN RESOURCES



## DIVERSITY OF LEADERSHIP

### BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS LEADERSHIP



**33%** **67%**

### CITY DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP



**32%** **68%**

### CITY COUNCIL LEADERSHIP



**33%** **67%**

■ Women ■ Men



## NEXT STEPS

- Assessing the state of equity is difficult to do without including regional context and data. How can collaboration with surrounding municipalities enhance future reports?
- What are the implications and opportunities if much of the diversity in Burlington resides with our youth?
- What pathways to career development exist for seasonal and temporary staff?



# ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

CITY PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WELL-BEING

Burlington is the economic engine of Vermont, but there are barriers that limit residents from participating in its thriving marketplace. In Burlington, median household income of the estimated 16,067 households is \$47,140 (a 5.5% increase since 2015), which is about 23.2% less than the national median household income of \$61,372.

The City can influence a resident's economic stability in a number of ways, including keeping taxes and costs for municipal services low; enforcing livable wage

contracts; prioritizing work with businesses led by women or people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans (also known as “minority owned” or disadvantaged business enterprises”); attracting investment to support future job creation; removing economic barriers for low-income residents to make City services and programs accessible to all; and investing in basic infrastructure—water mains, wastewater infrastructure, streets, sidewalks, fire trucks, and parks—that makes a city livable, accessible, and healthy.

## POPULATION-LEVEL METRICS

**\$45,817**

MEDIAN EARNINGS OF MEN



**\$36,326**

MEDIAN EARNINGS OF WOMEN

**2.1%**  
CITY

**4.1%**  
NATION

**2.8%**  
STATE

UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE

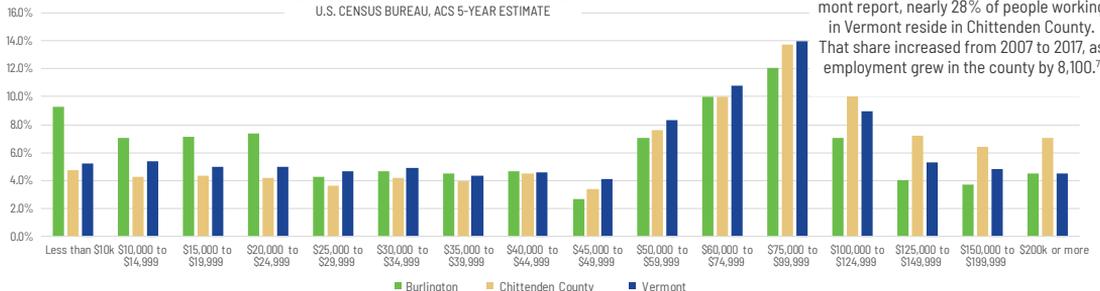
**24,084**

BURLINGTON RESIDENTS EMPLOYED

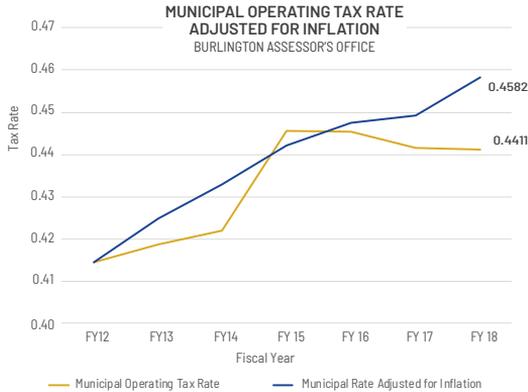
According to the State of Working in Vermont report, nearly 28% of people working in Vermont reside in Chittenden County. That share increased from 2007 to 2017, as employment grew in the county by 8,100.<sup>7</sup>

This finding highlights a continued need for increased focus on gender pay equity. Please note, these are city-wide community wage figures, not the City average salaries described in the prior section. The Burlington labor force has declined by 2.8% since 2011.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE



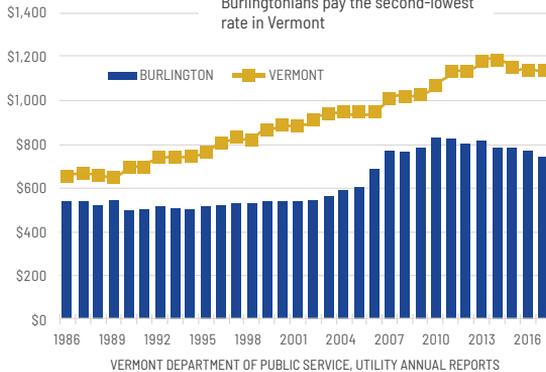
## CONTRIBUTING TO EQUITABLE GROWTH AND WELL-BEING



# \$744

**AVERAGE ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL  
ELECTRIC BILL (2017)**

Burlingtonians pay the second-lowest  
rate in Vermont



### NEXT STEPS

- Economic gains are not evenly distributed across the city, but limitations of census data and other sources prevent evaluation of population groups by area or demographic characteristics. What data should the City seek to gather this year to better understand the impact of the changing economy?

## LIVABLE WAGE

The Burlington City Council approved the livable wage ordinance in 2001, setting a minimum hourly wage to be paid by the City and by any company with a \$15,000 or higher annual contract with the City. The City has made livable wage compliance a major focus since 2012, securing nearly 100% of contractual commitments (up from 15% in 2012) and beginning proactive compliance checks.<sup>9</sup>

**\$14.52**  
PER HOUR

for employers that offer  
health insurance

**\$16.20**  
PER HOUR

for employers that do not  
offer health insurance

## DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES



**19%** OF CITY BUSINESSES  
ARE MINORITY OWNED

This is a slight increase from 16.5% in 2007. There are approximately 4,500 businesses in the city.

## BURLINGTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DBE GOALS

In 2018, the Burlington International Airport awarded more than \$2.5 million to small and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs). In addition, the airport provides ongoing training and mentorship.<sup>10</sup>

**7.3%**  
INTERNAL  
DBE GOAL

**5.53%**  
STATE MANDATED  
FOR DBE

**7.7%**  
DBE-AWARDED  
PROJECTS

## ACCESSIBILITY OF CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE AND THE DOWNTOWN AREA

All but two of the ground-floor businesses on Church Street are wheelchair accessible, and those that are not are making reasonable accommodations by providing portable ramps. In 2018, the Advisory Committee on Accessibility conducted two ADA 101 trainings for local businesses and an Accessibility Town Hall meeting.<sup>11</sup>



**6%** OF CITY RESIDENTS LIVE  
WITH AN AMBULATORY  
DISABILITY



# HOUSING

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY HOUSING

Housing costs can be a substantial driver of inequity, and Burlington has seen a shortage of quality homes and rental units drive prices out of the reach of many residents while also contributing to a decline in the overall quality of housing stock. Vermont has the seventh-oldest housing stock in the nation, with 47% of the units constructed before 1950. Between 2002 and 2013, for example, only 18 non-subsidized

rental units were built in the downtown area. The Chittenden County Housing and Neighborhood Survey reached over 700 residents, and although just under 87% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of housing they currently resided in, 51% of total respondents indicated that they had trouble finding safe, quality housing in a neighborhood that they could afford.

## POPULATION-LEVEL METRICS

**16,631**

TOTAL HOMES  
IN THE CITY



**10,200**

RENTAL HOMES  
IN THE CITY

**2-4%**

VACANCY IN  
CHITTENDEN  
COUNTY

**62%**

MULTIFAMILY

**34%**

SINGLE FAMILY

The rental vacancy rate in Chittenden County, which is measured every six months by the firm of Allen & Brooks, runs below the national rate of 7.1%.



**\$267,500**

MEDIAN VALUE OF  
OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES  
IN BURLINGTON

The national median property value is \$193,500.



**\$1,134**

MEDIAN GROSS RENT FOR ONE  
BEDROOM IN BURLINGTON

18% higher than the state median (\$945) and 14% higher than the national median (\$982).



**61%**

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOMES  
IN BURLINGTON

Compared to national rate of 36% and Vermont rate of 36%.



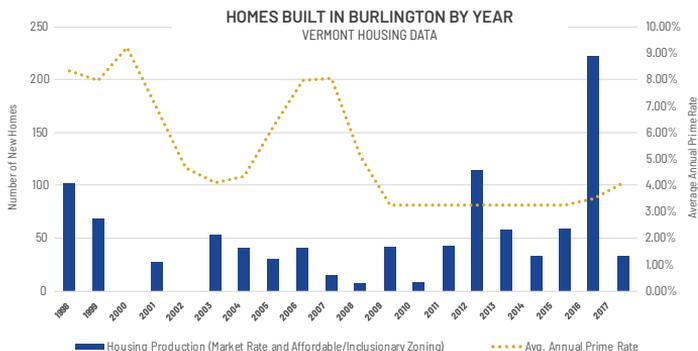
**17%**

ADDED COST OF HOME CONSTRUCTION  
DUE TO DOWNTOWN PARKING  
REQUIREMENTS

For those who do not own a car, this increase provides little value.

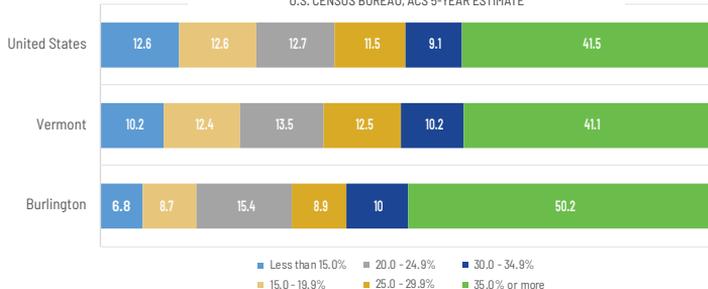
## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HOUSING

- Home Prices:** Median sale prices for single-family homes and condos in Burlington are trending upward again after a slight decline in 2016.
- Prioritizing Housing Production:** Over the past six years, the City has moved forcefully to create more housing options of all types with more than 500 new units created since 2012.
- Rental Housing:** The City provides Certificates of Compliance for rental housing it inspects that last one to five years, depending on the number of violations uncovered. Over the past two years, the Code Enforcement Office has rated about 94% of rental housing in good standing for three to five years, while about 6% of rental housing must be inspected again within two years.



### GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE



### GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Moderately burdened households are those that spend 30-50% of household income on rent, while severely burdened households are those that spend more than 50% of household income on rent. Research demonstrates that rent-burdened households have higher eviction rates, increased financial fragility, and wider use of social safety net programs compared with other renters and homeowners. In Burlington, approximately 60% of all renter households are cost-burdened, nearly 10% higher than the state and national rates.



#### NEXT STEPS

- Future reports will explore further available eviction data in Burlington, disaggregated if possible. They also will seek additional detail around the cost burden associated with housing across different demographic groups.



# COMMUNITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

BUILD CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS TO CITY ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Civic engagement, community connectedness, and accessibility are critical in fostering a strong sense of place and well-being. People (particularly youth) who feel connected to people and institutions in their communities may be buffered from other risk factors in their lives, such as anxiety, stress, substance abuse, isolation, and depression.<sup>16</sup>

Residents enjoy access to Lake Champlain and to more than 44 parks. Burlington became the first City to source all its energy from renewables in 2014. In addition to the environmental benefit of that

achievement, it also helps insulate residents from wild swings in energy market prices. In order to ensure equitable access to city amenities, the City also continually strives to remove financial barriers to accessing city amenities by offering scholarships and reduced or eliminated fees for people with economic hardships and by working with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront (BPRW) to remove physical barriers and improve ease of access to streets, waterways, parks, and community gardens for people with disabilities.

## POPULATION-LEVEL METRICS



34

MEDIAN AGE OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN BURLINGTON

After the 2018 Annual City Election in March and the General Election in November, the Clerk Treasurer's Office conducted a voluntary survey of election workers. Of the 155 election workers who voluntarily submitted data (40% response rate), 92% were white and 63% were over the age of 65 (with roughly only 7% under the age of 38, far from representative of the 58% of total registered voters in that age demographic).



OF BED POWER COMES FROM RENEWABLE GENERATION

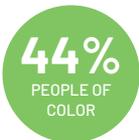
The Burlington Electric Department (BED) now sources 100% of its power from renewable generation, and the City is embarking on a visionary effort to become net-zero across the ground transportation, heating, and electric sectors.



HIGH SCHOOLERS AGREE THAT THEY MATTER TO PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

According to the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 61% of high school students agree or strongly agree that in their community they matter to people. Significantly fewer LGBT students (39%) feel as if they matter to people in their community compared to heterosexual/cisgender students.<sup>18</sup>

## PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY CONNECTION, AND ACCESS TO CITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



### RECREATION PROGRAMMING UTILIZATION

Of the more than 2,000 summer youth program participants, an estimated 56% were white and 44% were people of color. When BPRW isolated paid summer programming, 81% of participants were white and 19% were people of color.<sup>12</sup>



# FIRST

UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE  
PLAYGROUND OPENED IN  
BURLINGTON IN 2018

# 84%

OF RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN A  
10-MINUTE WALK TO A PARK

That is significantly higher than the  
national average of 54%.



## DPW and BPRW Prioritize Accessibility

- In 2018 DPW removed obstacles from in front of seven accessible parking spaces in the downtown area and also moved the accessible signs to different areas to make them more visible.
- The City now allows vehicles with accessible parking placards to park anywhere in the downtown area without paying parking fees.
- The City has tripled its sidewalk budget and added an annual preventative maintenance program to trim heaved sidewalks to enhance accessibility.
- Construction of the Downtown Transit Center provided a heated waiting area for transit users. Prior to this, there was no heated waiting area in the downtown.
- At North Beach there is an ADA campsite, a full-access mat to the water, and floating chairs.
- The marina offers a hoist to provide ADA access from the dock to boats.
- BPRW also installed multilingual rules and regulations signage at all public beaches, City Hall Park, and Roosevelt Park.

## SeeClickFix

In 2008, the City launched SeeClickFix, a transparent web- and mobile app-based system used to collect, manage, assign, and monitor requests from residents. With more than 1,000 users, SeeClickFix is a way for residents to engage with City departments and other concerned residents around issues ranging from potholes to graffiti to zoning violations. For more information or to signup for SeeClickFix, please visit <https://en.seeclickfix.com/burlington.2>.

# 4,000

ISSUES REPORTED THROUGH  
SEECCLICKFIX IN 2018 WITH AN  
AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME OF 1.5 DAYS

**\$1,800**  
BED REBATE FOR  
ALL-ELECTRIC VEHICLES



**\$1,500**  
BED REBATE FOR  
HYBRID VEHICLES

BED is offering enhanced electric vehicle rebates for low- and moderate-income customers.



### NEXT STEPS

- Across summer recreation programming, an estimated 56% of participants were white. That estimate increases to 81% for paid summer programming participants. Despite limitations in data collection, this appears to be a significant difference, and the City is continuing to evaluate the accessibility and affordability of fee-based recreation programs.



# EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

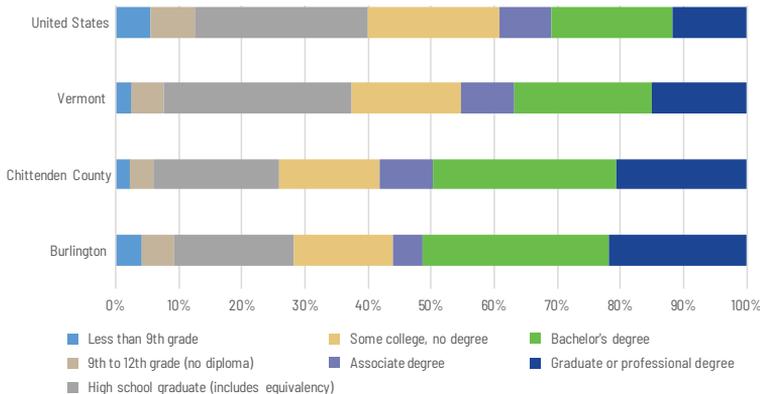
ACCESS TO THE BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Burlington is fortunate to have an outstanding school district as well as excellent centers of higher education in the University of Vermont and Champlain College. However, the 2018 Burlington School District (BSD) Equity and Inclusion Data Report identified an achievement gap among some of our most vulnerable students, and that inequity can continue after graduation.

City programs and services can help address that challenge and promote lifelong learning opportunities. In recent years, the City has complemented its scholarship programs for Burlington City Arts (BCA) and BPRW programming with a new initiative to increase the capacity of Burlington-based child care

providers and to make that care more accessible through a scholarship program slated to begin in the spring of 2019 (creating 62 new infant-toddler spots in high-quality centers over the next two years). The City has also begun a workforce development program in the construction trade intended to meet local labor demands and connect some of the City's more vulnerable residents to higher-paying technical jobs; expanded its internship program to provide skills and experience for local students; and implemented a new grant program in collaboration with the nationally recognized Kauffman Foundation to support local entrepreneurs with a focus on supporting women entrepreneurs in particular.

## POPULATION-LEVEL METRICS



### EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE

According to the 2018 Equity and Inclusion Data Report from BSD, the achievement gap in the United States refers to the observed, persistent disparity in measures of educational performance among subgroups of U.S. students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and gender. The data from BSD shows that significantly fewer students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and students of color perform at or above proficiency than do students who are white or qualify as higher income students. For more information, the Burlington School District Equity and Inclusion Data Report can be found here: <https://www.bsdrv.org/district/diversity-and-equity/datareports/>

## CREATING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES



# \$54,000

### IN SCHOLARSHIPS

awarded by the City in 2018, a 15% increase from 2017

- **Program Access:** Scholarships are a straightforward way to make City-run programming more accessible for people with limited financial resources. Over the past two years, both BPRW and BCA have increased the size of their scholarship programs.



# 150+

### INTERNS HAVE BENEFITED

from City Hall's internship program since 2013

- **Internship Opportunities:** In 2016, the City expanded its internship program to include the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. MBK is part of a national program that seeks to address opportunity gaps facing youth and particularly boys and young men of color.



# \$500,000

### IN FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BURLINGTON'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

in partnership with the Kauffman Foundation

- **Kauffman Grants:** In partnership with the Kauffman Foundation, the City secured funding to support the development of Burlington's entrepreneurial ecosystem. \$300,000 was awarded through a competitive process, with \$150,000 allocated to improve opportunities for women entrepreneurs.



# 100%

### PLACEMENT RATE OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

20 participants have secured full-time positions (with an average wage of \$16.30/hour)

- **Workforce Development Programming:** In collaboration with the Vermont Department of Labor and ReSOURCE, the Community and Economic Development Office (CEDCO) has organized a workforce development program designed specifically to help vulnerable residents with limited access to job opportunities. Due to the success of and interest in the pilot program, CEDCO will be applying for additional grant funds in 2019.



# \$750

### IN FORGIVEN FINES

as part of the pilot period in October 2018 where patrons were able to bring back overdue books to the library free of charge

- **Fine Amnesty:** Fletcher Free Library offered amnesty on overdue book fines for a limited time this year in order to reduce financial barriers to accessing library resources. For a pilot period in October 2018, library patrons were able to bring back any and all overdue books to the library free of charge.



### NEXT STEPS

- Library usage is up 7.4% since 2016 and youth circulation is up 21.5% over the same time period, in part because of the focus on curating more online resources. What else could the City do to make the library even more accessible and helpful for residents?



# PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

MAINTAIN, PROTECT, AND IMPROVE THE SAFETY & HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Burlington is a safe and relatively healthy city, with low crime rates and 95% health insurance coverage, compared to the national average of 88%. Like many broad measures, the city-wide statistics do not tell the whole story. The most recent data available indicates that while Vermont as a whole had roughly a 10% increase in accidental or undetermined opioid-related deaths among residents in 2018, in Chittenden County and Burlington the number of opioid-related deaths fell roughly 50%.

City services aimed at reduced crime and improved safety are a public good—the Police and Fire Depart-

ments respond quickly to all areas of the City in the event of an emergency, and the number of minor crimes and quality of life complaints are trending sharply downward with an overall reduction in criminal offenses down by nearly 20% from 2017. Over the past several years, the Code Enforcement Office has also dramatically improved its response time to complaints from renters about unhealthy living conditions. City programs also focus on the risk of lead in older housing stock and the provision of nutrition as part of BPRW summer programming.

## POPULATION-LEVEL METRICS



# 6,842

### INCIDENTS FROM TRACKED CALLS

Incidents of reported crime have continued to fall since 2015 with a 9% decrease from 2017. Incidents include common externally generated call types covering property, violent, and quality of life calls. Since 2014, mental health-related police incidents have been trending down.

# 2 DAYS

### AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME OF CODE ENFORCEMENT TEAM

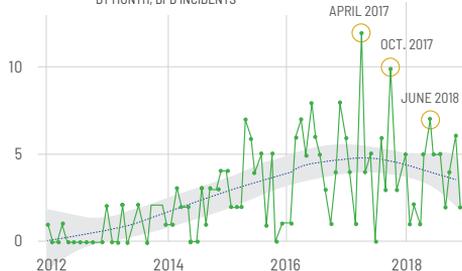
Code responded to 986 complaints in 2018 far more quickly than the required seven-day response.

# 23

### LEAD INSPECTIONS AND RISK ASSESSMENTS IN 2018

CEDO trained 53 people on the dangers of lead poisoning and prepared to utilize a new \$2.9 million grant to help abate lead in Burlington and Winooski homes.

OPIOID OVERDOSE WITH POLICE RESPONSE  
BY MONTH, BPD INCIDENTS



Includes overdose-, opioid-, or death-related calls marked with opioids involved or a narrative that included opioid keywords.



**10%**  
STRUGGLED WITH FOOD  
INSECURITY IN THE CITY

**12%**  
STRUGGLED WITH FOOD  
INSECURITY IN THE STATE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Research demonstrates the complexity of food insecurity. It does not exist in isolation, as low-income families are affected by multiple, overlapping issues like affordable housing, social isolation, health problems, medical costs, and low wages. Looking at participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a proxy measure of food insecurity in a community.<sup>15</sup>



**5,500**  
MEALS WERE SERVED TO  
STUDENTS DURING THE  
SUMMER MONTHS

To help address issues of food insecurity, especially during the summer months when students who might be receiving free or reduced lunches are out of school, BPRW, with support from CEDO and the AmeriCorps Program, run Recreation & Nutrition Drop-In Programs serving hundreds of meals across the city with no enrollment or fees. DPW is also working to develop an affordability program to ensure even more equitable access to safe, clean drinking water.

## PROMOTING EQUITY IN PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

PERCENTAGE OF POLICE SEARCHES YIELDING CONTRABAND  
BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



### POLICE SEARCHES YIELDING CONTRABAND

Racial disparities in the outcome of police traffic stops have been a focus of analysis in Burlington. Over the last several years, the Burlington Police Department (BPD) has increased training on interdiction techniques, added implicit bias training, and compared individual officer stop data with peer officers. The likelihood of finding contraband, given an officer's decision to conduct a search, is a key measure of possible implicit bias in policing. According to an April 2018 report, from 2016-18, "Burlington police officers were highly, and equally, likely to find contraband on white and black drivers when they made the decision to search a vehicle."<sup>17</sup>



**1,400**  
VICTIMS PROVIDED OUTREACH  
SUPPORT BY CEDO'S COMMUNITY  
JUSTICE CENTER

CEDO's Community Justice Center (CJC) plays an integral role in helping build and repair relationships and community networks. In fiscal year 2018, through Parallel Justice, which reaches victims of crime in Burlington whether or not an offender has been identified, over 1,400 people received services of support, compensation, and information and referrals. Through our Restorative Justice panels, 91% of victims (or impacted parties) referred to CJC engaged in some way, allowing the responsible party in the crime to hear the harm their choices caused. At the forefront of this work in restorative practices is the preventative educational initiatives conducted in partnership with BSD, providing training and consultant services for teachers, administrators, and students from pre-K through high school.



### NEXT STEPS

- Looking to next year's report, two areas the City would like to focus on are gathering more data around health care affordability and access across race, ethnicity, and age demographics and examining hate crime data to understand trends as well as how best to protect targeted or vulnerable populations.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first year of the report shows both successes and opportunities for further progress. The recommendations in this section fall into one of two categories. The first category focuses on recommendations based on the data collected and analyzed as part of the report, while the second category focuses on steps that can be taken to improve next year's Equity Report by identifying additional areas of collaboration with the community and ways to improve data.

## RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE EQUITY REPORT FINDINGS

- **Continue Housing Reforms to Improve Community Access.** High housing costs prevent people of all different backgrounds from living in the city. This trend of an undersupplied housing market in an area of relatively strong job opportunity describes Burlington but is not unique to it. According to the Obama White House in 2016<sup>15</sup>, the lack of supply in cities like Burlington "is jeopardizing housing affordability for working families, increasing income inequality by reducing less-skilled workers' access to high-wage labor markets, and stifling GDP growth by driving labor migration away from the most productive regions." One way to immediately begin making the community more accessible and reduce this housing cost burden would be to consider reforming the City's accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations. For homeowners, ADUs can provide additional income or more flexible living arrangements for multigenerational families including older adults interested in aging at home.
- **Better Coordinate City's Youth Programming Goals and Outreach Strategies.** BPRW's review of paid relative to free recreation programming indicates significant differences in the various youth populations accessing City programs. Funds for scholarship programming have increased substantially in recent years and are instrumental in reducing economic barriers to participation. Along with reviewing potential additional increases in scholarship funding, BCA, BPRW, and the Fletcher Free Library should work together to identify opportunities for new programming or scheduling opportunities and to consider further expansions in youth outreach over the next year. The departments should work with CEDO where applicable and closely monitor outcomes of free and scholarship based-programming offered by the City.
- **Conduct Further Analysis of City Workforce.** The composition of the City's workforce differs substantially from the population characteristics of the city as a whole. The City should conduct further analysis of full-time, part-time, and seasonal employee data to better understand what accounts for varied demographic patterns and whether these patterns are a result of identifiable barriers. Various department efforts that are already underway, such as that of the Fire Department, to recruit more women should be supported and expanded.
- **Establish Community Liaisons and Reporting Structure.** Following the most recent update of the Human Rights Commission Report, the Mayor committed to establishing a new LGBTQ liaison program for the Mayor's Office and the Police Department. This concept of a liaison program should be expanded: The City should strengthen relationships with women's empowerment organizations, such as Change The Story VT, and CEDO's community engagement specialists should be regular attendees at

the City's Accessibility Committee meetings. These liaisons should help develop metrics in coordination with the Innovation & Technology Department that become an annual reporting feature within BTVStat.

- **Expand Library Amnesty Programming.** The Fletcher Free Library conducted a short pilot amnesty program for fine forgiveness this year. The early returns were promising and consistent with the library's mission of being an accessible institution for every community resident. While fines are a percentage of the library's budget, they can be a significant deterrent for some who use the library's services.

- **Finalize Language Access Plan and Streamline Translation Services.** The City has been developing a Language Access Plan to provide guidelines to City departments regarding both City goals and legal requirements for reducing language barriers for residents. In order to finalize and operationalize the Language Access Plan, the City should conduct a needs assessment and convene an interdepartmental team to coordinate a review of current department translations practices, services, and resources in place to meet existing needs, as well as how those needs are changing and how best to serve new populations. Based on findings from

the needs assessment, the City should look to streamline translation offerings across City Departments.

- **Conduct a Review of City Procurement Practices.** The City should continue to prioritize exploring opportunities to incorporate more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable practices in its purchasing and contracting policies as part of the ongoing review of current procurement processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING FUTURE EQUITY REPORTS

- **Establish Equity Report Advisory Committee to Provide Feedback on New Metrics, Benchmarks, and Recommendations.** Community input was valuable in shaping this first Equity Report. Creating a more formal advisory committee would allow and encourage interested organizations and individuals to participate at different levels in the creation of next year's Equity Report.
- **Establish an Equity Framework for City Departments to Help Institutionalize Equity Measurements.** In this first year of the Equity Report, different City departments had multiple, creative ways to identify areas of interest and potential metrics. This variety of ideas and approaches should be synthesized in one document to help other City departments identify new areas to consider and ways to measure and improve outcomes.



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The 2018 Vermont State Health Assessment can be accessed here: <http://www.healthvermont.gov/about/reports/state-health-assessment-2018>. PolicyLink, a well-known national organization that focuses on equity issues, developed the definition, which was selected after a literature review of other U.S. cities' reports and measurements of equity. There is no universally accepted definition of "equity," and we welcome feedback on this definition for future reports. PolicyLink's homepage is <http://www.policylink.org/>.
- <sup>2</sup> These domains are based on social determinants of health. Social determinants of health are the "conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks" (World Health Organization CSDH, 2010). They are also based on a literature review of other reports evaluating measures related to equity completed by other U.S. cities, including Austin, TX; Pittsburgh, PA; New York, NY; Oakland, CA; and Sante Fe, NM.
- <sup>3</sup> LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning.
- <sup>4</sup> The population figures are drawn from the most recently published American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS, December 2018). Accurate, detailed data are an essential tool for ensuring equal opportunity and access to government institutions and resources for all people, but especially those who have been victims of discrimination historically. It's important to note the current census categories of race and ethnicity are limited in capturing how people self-identify. Census data have historically undercounted the Arab American population, and community leaders estimate the undercount to be by as much as two-thirds. While the community traces its roots to 22 countries, the majority of Arab Americans living in Vermont have ancestral ties to Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq. The U.S. Census defines Asian as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. Asian Americans come from more than 20 countries and are now the fastest-growing major racial or ethnic group in the United States. The Census Bureau allows each person to select as many as six race options, one of which is simply "some other race." Furthermore, "Hispanic/Latino" is not a race, but a characteristic tracked independently. In many instances we were unable to report on disaggregated data by sex, race, or income levels for Burlington due to high margins of error. Margin of Error or MOE is a measure of the possible variation of an estimate around the population value. Margins of error allow data users to be certain that at a given level of confidence, the estimate and the actual population values differ by no more than the value of the MOE. The Census Bureau uses a 90% confidence level as its standard.
- <sup>5</sup> While U.S. Census Bureau poverty estimates explicitly exclude people living in group housing—such as dorms, correctional facilities, or residential nursing homes—these calculations do include college or graduate students who live in off-campus housing. Because many postsecondary students have low incomes, they may contribute to high poverty rates in the areas where they live.
- <sup>6</sup> 2018 Point-in-Time Count numbers reflect HUD's definition of literal homelessness: individuals and families who live in a place not meant for human habitation (including the streets or in their car), emergency shelter, transitional housing, and hotels paid for by a government or charitable organization.
- <sup>7</sup> The labor force is a count of people age 16 and over available to work. It includes people employed—payroll employed as well as self-employed—and those that are officially unemployed, which means they're out of work but actively looking for a job.
- <sup>8</sup> Most recent data from the U.S. Census 2012 Survey of Business Owners.
- <sup>9</sup> Since 2013, the City and its Designated Accountability Monitor have responded promptly to complaints of non-compliance by eligible contractors. Where violations have been discovered, workers were provided with restitution and in one case, a contractor was both barred from doing business with the City for a certain period of time and had municipal tickets levied against it. Additionally, the City has in recent years begun performing compliance audits of eligible contractors to ensure compliance with the ordinance. These audits serve the purpose of checking ordinance compliance in a non-complaint generated situation to ensure that all workers are being appropriately compensated, not just ones that avail themselves of the complaint procedures in the ordinance.
- <sup>10</sup> The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers a wide variety of private businesses, as well as all the agencies of state and local governments. The ADA requires that these entities provide access to their programs, goods, and services. Businesses or buildings that are open or offer services to the general public are called "places of public accommodation" by the ADA. Places of public accommodation and buildings constructed by state or local governments must be fully accessible to people with disabilities if built after January 26, 1992.
- <sup>11</sup> When households are broken out by household type, the large college student population in Burlington affects the data, particularly for renter households. The approximately 6,000 college students living off campus principally show up in the "other" category of renters and inflate cost burden numbers.
- <sup>12</sup> The department followed the SOPARC methodology in gathering demographic data.
- <sup>13</sup> The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers a wide variety of private businesses, as well as all the agencies of state and local governments. The ADA requires that these entities provide access to their programs, goods, and services. Businesses or buildings that are open or offer services to the general public are called "places of public accommodation" by the ADA. Places of public accommodation and buildings constructed by state or local governments must be fully accessible to people with disabilities if built after January 26, 1992.
- <sup>14</sup> The SNAP program, funded by USDA's Food and Nutrition Services, provides monthly benefits to eligible low-income households to purchase food items at SNAP-authorized retailers. SNAP is available to all individuals who meet financial and nonfinancial eligibility criteria.
- <sup>15</sup> White House Housing Development Toolkit, September 2016, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Housing\\_Development\\_Toolkit%20f.2.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Housing_Development_Toolkit%20f.2.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> Every other year, since 1993, the Health Department and the Agency of Education sponsor the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The full 2017 Vermont YRBS Report can be accessed here: [http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CHS\\_YRBS\\_statewide\\_report.pdf](http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CHS_YRBS_statewide_report.pdf)
- <sup>17</sup> The full Burlington Police Department Report is available at: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/u585/TrafficMemo1.pdf>.

**This report is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of all data related to the City of Burlington and its residents, but rather a resource to help inform discussion, evaluation, and policy decisions that improve the provision of access to City services and programs. As such, the Equity Report concludes with a series of initial recommendations based on findings from the report and contains several requests for public feedback to improve continued efforts to examine the City's work through an equity lens.**

We would like to give special thanks to representatives from the Association of Africans Living in Vermont, the Burlington High School City-Lake Semester Class, the Burlington School District, the Champlain Housing Trust, Change the Story VT, Outright Vermont, and the Vermont Center for Independent Living for their feedback and support in developing this inaugural Equity Report.

As we prepare to begin collecting data for next year's report, community feedback on what would be most useful to see in future reports is critical to ensure all voices are heard and represented. For additional detail on the metrics reported here, please visit <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/equity>. Please send comments, suggestions, and feedback by email to [BTVStat@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:BTVStat@burlingtonvt.gov). You may also mail them to: City Hall, 149 Church Street, #34, Burlington, VT 05401. We look forward to connecting with you.

**BRIAN LOWE**  
INTERIM CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER

**CAROLYN FELIX**  
BTVSTAT ANALYST

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To compile this report, we drew upon an array of readily available public and private reports and data sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau's annual **American Community Survey**, the **2018 Vermont State Health Assessment**, and the **Burlington School District's Equity and Inclusion Data Report**, among others. Where possible, we have tried to disaggregate data by sex, race/ethnicity, or other demographic characteristics, but in many cases the sample size for a given population is too small to report with confidence.

Editorial: Brian Lowe, Interim Chief Innovation Officer; Carolyn Felix, BTVStat Analyst  
Design: My House of Design

Knowing where our community stands in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to evaluate whether the City is providing equitable access to resources and services to all residents. Following the Mayor's commitment in the State of the City Address, each department has measured its performance against new equity metrics, and those results are consolidated here in the City's first-ever Equity Report. Throughout this report readers are asked to evaluate these metrics and offer suggestions for refinements or additional areas of focus.

**Please send these comments to [BTVStat@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:BTVStat@burlingtonvt.gov).**

**For additional details on the metrics reported here, please visit: [burlingtonvt.gov/equity](http://burlingtonvt.gov/equity).**



**THE CITY**  
**OF BURLINGTON**

City Hall  
149 Church Street, #34  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Hours: M-F 8am-4:30pm  
(802) 865-7000

**Visit [burlingtonvt.gov](http://burlingtonvt.gov)** 