

Vermont Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: March 2025

State Population (2023 Census estimate)

under 1 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

under 3,000

- Adoption assistance caseload — 2,510
- Guardianship assistance caseload — 38
- Total — 2,548

State Administration Type

State administered

Pre-Service Training

Ten hours of online Foundations Training for Kin, Foster and Adoptive Families is a licensing requirement for all families providing foster care to children and youth in custody, including relative caregivers. Vermont collaborates closely with the University of Vermont's Child Welfare Training Partnership (CWTP) to orient prospective caregivers and move them into the Caregiver Foundations training. Once a new foster parent completes the online classes, they are invited to the Foundations Learning Network Sessions (nine hours offered virtually), which must be completed within the first year of a placement. These sessions encourage caregivers to interact with each other as they engage in the content.

Families Forever is a 3.5-hour classroom or online course for families who will be adopting through the foster care system. It is recommended for all adoptive parents and is required for those who will be receiving adoption assistance.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

The State of Vermont contracts with three private provider agencies to provide trauma-informed, adoption-competent post-permanency services for adoption and guardianship families. All families formed through adoption or guardianship who live in Vermont can access post-permanency services at no cost to them.

Supports offered include:



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- **Pre-permanency supports** — Pre-adoption finalization work is completed by Project Family, a public-private partnership between Lund and the Vermont Department for Children & Families. Project Family workers complete a timeline of the child's trauma-related events and an assessment of the prospective family to determine post-permanency supports.

All families who are moving toward finalizing an adoption or guardianship receive [*The Continuing Journey of Children and Families: An Informal Guide for Those Parenting by Adoption or Guardianship*](#). This document includes information common to adoptive and guardianship families with a particular focus on the impact of trauma and developmental stages.

- **Assessment** — When families will be receiving in-home services, post-permanency workers begin the process by completing a formal assessment of family strengths and challenges using the required Post Permanency Assessment. The assessment is based on risk and protective factors to evaluate the potential for disruption. If a family is open for services after one year, a re-assessment is completed.
- **In-home services** — Post-permanency workers provide information on the role that trauma plays and the unique experiences of adoption and guardianship families. Post-permanency staff are trained to respond to the specific needs of relative adoption and guardianship families. Post-permanency workers are required to complete one in-home contact, and one collateral contact each month. Though contacts are generally face-to-face, virtual meetings may be conducted.
- **Consultation** — Any post-permanency family residing in Vermont who does not receive ongoing post-permanency services may have a one-time consultation with a post-permanency worker to discuss specific service or resource needs. In addition, other community professionals may consult with post-permanency staff on issues related to post-permanency.
- **Information and referral** — When needed, post-permanency staff make referrals for counseling and other community resources. They also provide general information on adoption and guardianship. The Vermont Consortium for Adoption & Guardianship maintains an extensive collection of resources that can be checked out in person, online, or by phone.
- **Support groups** — The program hosts numerous support groups for parents, including some that meet in person and others that are virtual. Specific groups are offered for interracial families, families of color, and kinship and guardianship families. The Burlington area has a group for adoptees ages 12 to 16.





Support groups are facilitated by post-permanency service providers or other community professionals. There are also parent-led groups throughout the state. There are also virtual support groups that serve families without a local support group.

- **Educational advocacy** — Post-permanency staff advocate for children and parents with school officials. They prepare parents to interact with educational staff and support parents by attending school meetings.
- **Training** — The post-permanency program offers regular training for families, mental health professionals, child welfare professionals, school faculty and staff, and adoption/guardianship professionals. Topics covered may include adoption competency, transracial/ transcultural parenting, trauma-informed parenting, and more, based on community interests and needs.
- **Respite services** — The agencies determine how respite dollars will be used. Enrichment activities may be included as respite. A family may request a respite support through their adoption subsidy if there is a documented need approved by the Department for Children and Families. Respite services cannot be funded under both post-permanency services and subsidy.
- **Crisis Intervention** — Families experiencing a crisis are referred to the Vermont Department of Mental Health. Mobile Crisis of Vermont has a 24/7 response.

The State of Vermont, through three contracted post permanency service providers, served 398 families in 2023.

For more information on post-permanency services in Vermont, visit the Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship at <https://www.vtadoption.org>

Geographic Area Covered

Vermont contracts with agencies that provide services across all regions of the state. The agencies offer the same services to all adoptive and guardianship families throughout Vermont.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

- All families who adopted from the state's foster care system
- All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
- All families who adopted through intercountry adoption
- All families who adopted through private adoption
- All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
- All families who have guardianship of child not through foster care





Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

None

Outreach and Engagement

An informational sheet on the availability of post-permanency support services is given to all families by their Project Family worker prior to finalization. Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship's [website](#) has program information about available post-permanency services.

Project Family staff conduct a check-in with all adoptive families statewide at 3, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months after adoption finalization. A check-in is generally a phone conversation with the family designed to identify challenges that may be addressed through support or service provision to decrease the risk of discontinuity. Families also receive the Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship newsletter. The newsletter has information on resources, supports, and training that are available to Vermont families.

Vermont is in the final stages of a planned expansion of family post-finalization check-ins. Created with the [Vermont QIC-AG project](#), a database of risk and protective factors has been developed. The state will begin check-ins with families with an assessment of risk and protective factors, specific to each child and family, determining the frequency and type of outreach.

Outreach efforts related to check-ins are tracked on a spreadsheet, including any support given or referrals made.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

Through contracts or grants with multiple private agencies that offer mostly the same set of services, each operating in a different region

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

The state contracts with three private agencies each serving a specific geographic area:

- Lund provides services in the Burlington, Brattleboro, Middlebury, Newport, and Springfield Districts.
- Easter Seals provides services in the Barre, Bennington, Hartford, Morrisville, St. Johnsbury, and Rutland Districts.
- Northeast Family Institute provides services in the St. Albans District.

All three agencies provide the same post-permanency services.





Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

Adoptive parents can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement anytime there is a change in the family's circumstances or the needs of the child that are related to the need for which the adoption assistance was granted. Requests for changes to the adoption assistance agreement must be in writing to the Post Permanency Program Manager or the Permanency Program Planning Manager and be signed by the adoptive parent(s). To request an increase in adoption assistance, the adoptive family must first make use of any and all available community supports and substantiate the need for the increase. Supporting documentation regarding changes is required.

Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

The Family Services Division (FSD) maintains a spreadsheet to track custody episodes of children who have received adoption or guardianship subsidy. The tracking is updated regularly as custody episodes occur. The Post Permanency Manager reviews all intakes with adoptive caregivers to stay aware of adoptive families who have adopted privately or internationally and who have a child at risk of entering DCF custody. Children adopted from another state are included in the tracking as FSD becomes aware of their entry into care. A report is run annually to identify families open for services with an adoptive or guardianship caregiver. Families identified in the data run are added to the tracking.

Risk and protective factors present at the time of adoption or guardianship are analyzed to understand the overall level of risk present in these cases at re-entry. Vermont is working to expand this system to allow analysis of additional individual factors and demographic information.

FSD partners with the Department of Mental Health to support children and youth accessing residential care. The Post Permanency Manager reviews all intakes of children with adoptive caregivers. Post Permanency Service providers track and report to FSD any change of placement in families they serve.

Families receiving subsidies are asked to report any change in placement.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

\$1 – 1,999,999 million





Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2023)

1. Title XIX Medicaid funds
2. Title IV-B, Part 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families/PSSF)
3. Adoption/Guardianship Incentive Program Payments (AIPP)

