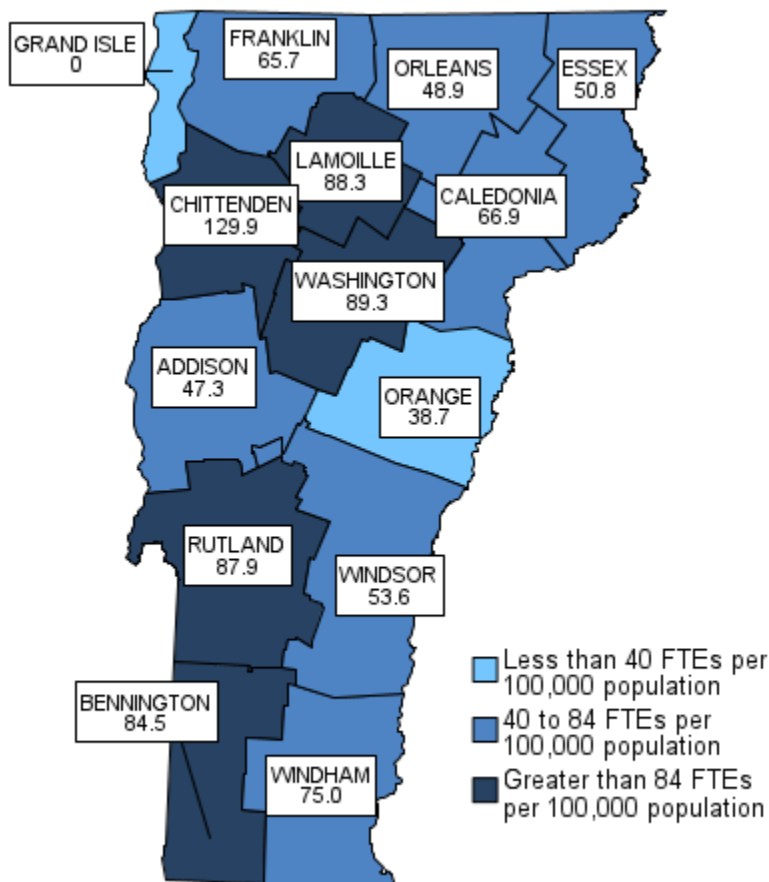


Overview

This dental assistant census is part of the Vermont Department of Health’s healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time. Vermont dental assistants are relicensed every two years. Data for this report was obtained during the September 2019 relicensing period and represents a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Dental assistants work under the direct supervision of a dentist. They perform a variety of tasks ranging from patient care (including tooth polishing, patient education, taking impressions and assisting the dentist during procedures); to laboratory functions (including creating casts models and instrument sterilization); to administrative tasks such as placing orders for dental supplies.

Dental Assistants FTEs per 100,000 population by county



In Brief

Workforce

Survey period: September 2019
 Response Rate: 97.4%
 Licenses renewed: 688
 Active in VT: 636
 VT Full-time Equivalents: 528.0

Type of Assistant

Traditional: 81.9%
 Certified: 18.1%
 Expanded Function: 9.0%

Demographics

Female: 98.1%
 Median Age: 39
 60 or older: 9.1%

Education and Training

On-the-job training: 45.8%
 Educated in Northeast: 96.1%

Current Employment

Work in a dental office: 89.3%
 Work full-time hours at one site: 26.1%
 Work at multiple sites: 9.8%
 Plan to reduce hours: 1.7%

Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)
 Highest: 129.9 Chittenden County
 Lowest: No FTEs reported in Grand Isle County

Trends in Statewide FTEs

2015: 493.2
 2017: 484.8
 2019: 528.0

Vermont has three levels of dental assistants. Traditional Dental Assistants primarily receive on the job training. Certified Dental Assistants have completed coursework and passed their Dental Assistant National Board exam. Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDAs) have additional training allowing them to complete "reversible" procedures such as filling teeth prepared by the dentist.

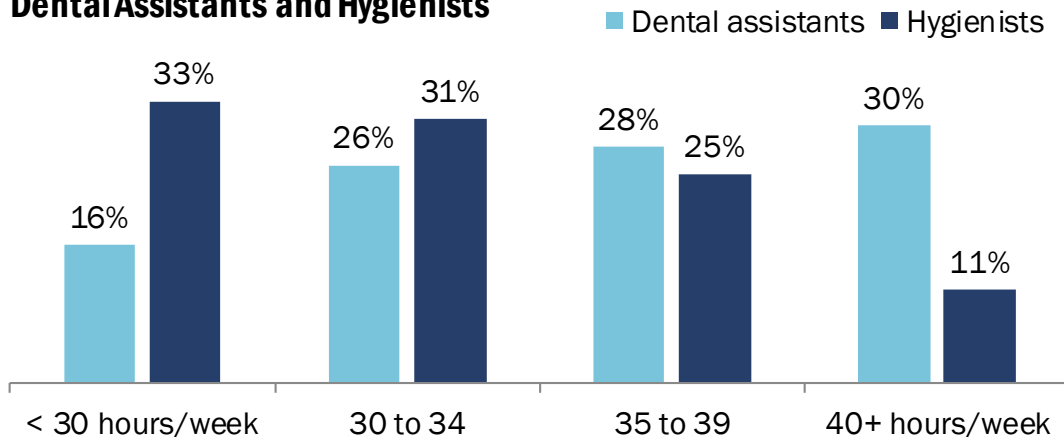
Workforce

- 688 dental assistants renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 670 of these completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 97.4%.
- Out of the 670 respondents, 636 (94.9%) indicated they are actively practicing as dental assistants in Vermont.
- Of the 34 respondents reporting a non-active status, 11 (36.7%) indicated they were planning to start working as a dental assistant in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 636 dental assistants who reported actively working in Vermont.

Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

- 636 dental assistants provided 528.0 total FTEs (one dental assistant was missing FTE data).
 - 521 Traditional dental assistants provided 430.8 total FTEs (one missing data).
 - 115 Certified dental assistants provided 97.2 total FTEs.
- 45.8 FTEs, or 8.7% of total FTEs, were provided by 58 dental assistants aged 60 or older.
- 29.1% (185) of dental assistants worked an average of 40 or more hours per week.
- Dental assistants worked more hours per week compared to dental hygienists who were surveyed separately during the same time period. The average weekly hours for dental assistants was 33.6, while the average weekly hours for hygienists was 29.3.

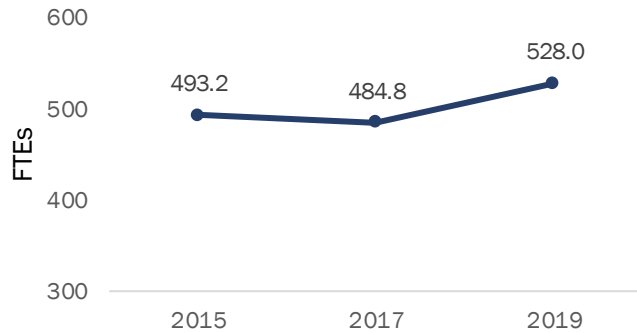
Average weekly hours worked: Dental Assistants and Hygienists



Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Dental assistant FTEs increased by 43.2 from 484.8 in 2017 to 528.0 in 2019.

Dental Assistants FTEs by Year



Demographics

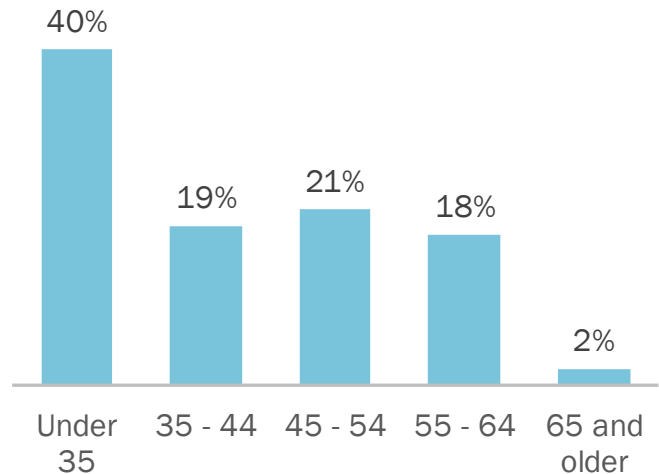
Gender

- 98.1% of the dental assistants in Vermont (620) are female.
- 1.9% (12) are male.
- 0.6% (4) did not answer the question.

Age

- 39.5% (251) are under 35 years old.
- 40.1% (255) are between 35 and 54 years old.
- 20.4% (130) are 55 years of age and older.

Age Distribution of VT Dental Assistants



Race and Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to select their race and could select multiple responses or choose not to answer. Therefore, numbers may not equal the total number of dental assistants.

- 93.2% of dental assistants were white, 1.6% were Asian, 1.6% were Black, 1.3% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, <0.5% were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 2.5% preferred not to answer. Six preferred to self-describe about race (0.9%).
- 12 dental assistants (1.9%) were Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and 603 (94.8%) were not. 3.3% (21) preferred not to answer the question.

Education and Trainings

- When reporting their highest degree or certificate relevant to their dental assistant practice, 45.8% identified on the job training, 41.7% technical school training or a certificate/diploma, and 7.4% an Associate or other degree.
- 18.1% (115) of the dental assistants were certified.
- Certified dental assistants can complete additional training to become expanded function dental assistants (EFDAs). 63 of the certified dental assistants completed the training. 57 of them said they use that certification in their work.
- Most of the 636 dental assistants in Vermont in 2019 completed their training in the Northeast (96.1%).

Region where training/educ. occurred	Number	Percent
Vermont	514	83.6%
New Hampshire	30	4.9%
Northeast excluding VT & NH	47	7.6%
South	9	1.5%
Central	5	0.8%
West	9	1.5%
Outside of US	1	0.2%
* Missing data from 21 individuals		

Practice Characteristics

Number of sites

- 90.3% of dental assistants (574) worked at a single practice site.
- 9.8% (62) worked at two or more sites.

Practice Setting

- Most dental assistants work in dental offices rather than a healthcare setting.
- Traditional dental assistants make up the majority of dental assistants.

Main Practice Setting	Traditional	Certified (non EFDA)	Certified EFDA	Total
Solo Practice	179 (34%)	14 (27%)	11 (17%)	204 (32%)
Practice of 2 dentists	139 (27%)	22 (42%)	16 (25%)	177 (28%)
Practice of 3 dentists	154 (30%)	11 (21%)	21 (33%)	186 (29%)
Hospital/Clinic	3 (1%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	6 (1%)
Health Center	41 (8%)	3 (6%)	13 (21%)	57 (9%)
Other setting	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	5 (1%)
Total	520	52	63	635
* Missing data from 1 individual				

Dental Assistants 2019

Specialties

- All three levels of dental assistants work primarily for general practitioner dentists.
- 67.0% (423) work for dentists with a specialty in general practice.
- 9.7% (61) work for dentists with a specialty in orthodontics.

Specialty at main location	Traditional	Certified (non EFDA)	Certified EFDA	Total
General Practice	326 (63%)	41 (80%)	56 (89%)	423 (67%)
Pediatric Dentistry	15 (3%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	16 (3%)
Orthodontics	56 (11%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	61 (10%)
Periodontics	12 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (2%)
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	49 (9%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	52 (8%)
Prosthodontics	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	5 (1%)
Endodontics	13 (3%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	15 (2%)
Multi-specialty practice	21 (4%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	24 (4%)
Public Health	8 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	9 (1%)
Other	13 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	14 (2%)
Total	517	51	63	631

* Missing data from 5 individuals

Current Experience

- Median time since first licensed as a dental assistant: 11 years.
- 19.3% (119) of dental assistants started working in Vermont over 25 years ago.

Future Plans

- 94.2% (598) of dental assistants planned to continue working as they had been in the next 12 months.
- 0.9% (6) planned to increase their hours in the next 12 months.
- 1.7% (11) planned to reduce their hours.
- 1.4% (9) planned to retire, stop working in Vermont, or seek a job in a different field.

Key Takeaways

- Dental assistant FTEs increased by over 40 between 2017 and 2019.
- Relative to population, dental assistants are most common in Chittenden and Washington counties.
- Dental assistants in Vermont are predominately female and relatively young, with a median age of 39.
- The most common settings for dental assistants are dental offices.

For more information, contact: AHS.VDHPPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov

Appendix

Active Dental Assistant

A dental assistant who reported working in Vermont as a dental assistant (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

Census

The census was taken during the biennial dental assistant relicensing process which ended on September 30, 2019. The data include all licensed dental assistants except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (July - September 2019), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of September 30, 2021. Census questions are available upon request.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. A dental assistant reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

Main Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The main practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice in which the dental assistant worked the greatest number of annual hours.

Map Quartiles

Map colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus, totals may vary from table to table.

Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2019 and were provided by the Department of Health.

Primary Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The primary practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice with the greatest number of reported annual hours per individual.

Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours are based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours * (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for a dental assistant working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks), is 20.