

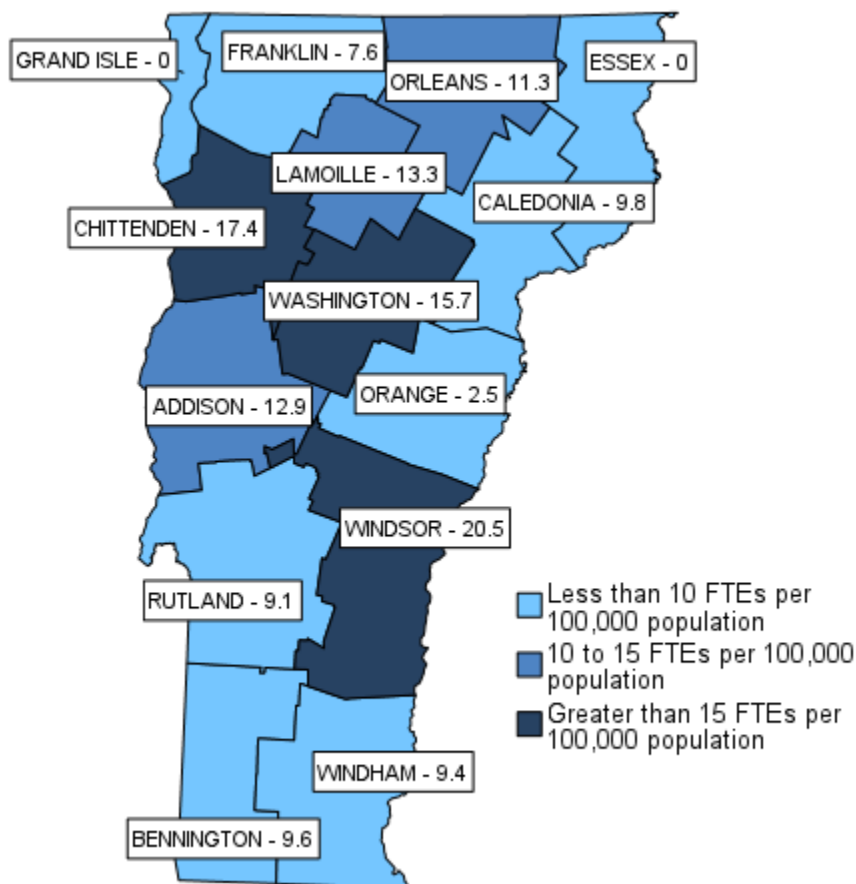
Overview

This optometry census is part of the Vermont Department of Health's health care provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time.

Vermont optometrists are relicensed every two years. Data for this report were obtained during the July 2020 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

An optometrist is a healthcare professional who has earned a Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree. Optometrists examine eyes for both vision and health problems and correct refractive errors by prescribing eyeglasses and contact lenses. Optometrists diagnose and treat some eye diseases with pharmaceutical agents.

Optometrist FTEs per 100,000 population by county



In Brief

Workforce

Survey period: July 2020
Response Rate: 99.2%
Licenses renewed: 119
Active in VT: 101
VT Full-time Equivalents: 82.7

Demographics

Female: 35.6 %
Median Age: 51
Age 60 or older: 33.7%

Education and Training

Educated in Vermont: 3.0%
Educated in Northeast excluding VT: 62.6%

Specialties

Primary eye care: 90.1%
Ocular disease: 5.9%

Current Employment

Full time hours at main site: 43.6%
Works at multiple sites: 19.8%
Plans to reduce hours: 8.9%
Plans to retire: 1.0%

Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)
Highest: 20.5, Windsor County
Lowest: 0, Essex and Grand Isle Counties

Trends in Statewide FTEs

2016: 78.8
2018: 82.4
2020: 82.7

Workforce

- 120 optometrists renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 119 of these completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 99.2%.
- Of the 119 respondents, 101 (84.9%) indicated they were actively practicing as optometrists in Vermont.
- Of the 18 respondents reporting a non-active status, 6 (33.3%) indicated plans to start work as an optometrist in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on 101 optometrists who reported actively working in Vermont.

Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

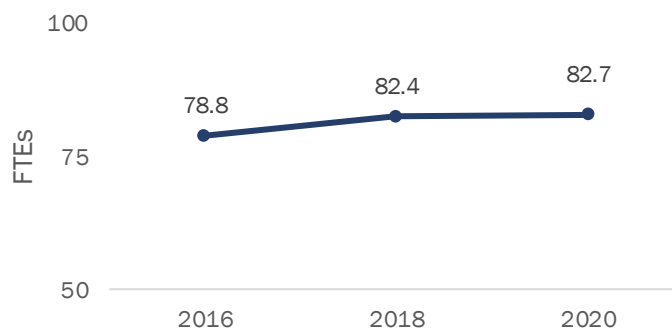
- 101 optometrists provided 82.7 total FTEs.
- 43.6% (44) of optometrists worked 40 or more hours per week at their main site.
- 28.5 FTEs, or 34.5% of total FTEs, were provided by 34 optometrists aged 60 or older.

Average weekly hours at main site	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	15	14.9%
20-39 hours	42	41.6%
40 hours or more	44	43.6%

Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Optometrist FTEs in Vermont increased by 3.6 from 78.8 in 2016 to 82.4 in 2018.
- From 2018 to 2020, FTEs increased by 0.3, to 82.7.

Optometrist FTEs by Year



Demographics

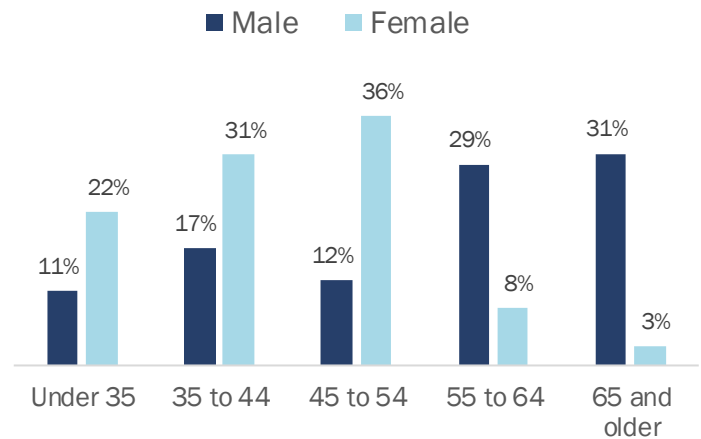
Gender

- 35.6% of the optometrists in Vermont (36) are female.
- 64.4% (65) were male.

Age

- 14.9% (15) were under 35 years old.
- 42.6% (43) were 35 to 54 years old.
- 42.6% (43) were 55 or older.
- Female optometrists were younger, with a median age of 44, while the median age for males was 58.

Age Distribution of VT Optometrists



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 optometrists.

- 89.1% of optometrists were white, 2.0% were Asian, 2.0% were Black, and none were American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Two identified themselves as a race not listed and six preferred not to answer the question about race.
- One optometrist (1.0%) identified as Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin. Eight preferred not to answer.

Education and Training

- 97.0% (97) successfully completed a national examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBE).
- Many of the 101 optometrists active in Vermont in 2020 completed their degrees in the Northeast (65.6%).
- 20.4% of optometrists (20) completed a residency program in an optometric subspecialty. Almost half of these (9) completed their program in an ocular disease subspecialty.

Region where training/education occurred	Number	Percent
Vermont	3	3.0%
Northeast excluding Vermont	62	62.6%
Midwest	9	9.1%
South	15	15.2%
West	9	9.1%
Canada	1	1.0%
* Missing data from 2 individuals		

Practice Characteristics

Number of sites

- 80.2% (81) of optometrists worked at a single practice site.
- 19.8% (20) also worked at a second site.

Practice Setting

- 35.6% (36) of optometrists worked in an independent solo practice, and 43.6% (44) worked in an independent group practice.

Primary practice setting	Number	Percent
Independent Solo Practice	36	35.6%
Independent Group Practice	44	43.6%
Chain Optometry Clinic	7	6.9%
Ophthalmology Office	7	6.9%
Commercial Setting	1	1.0%
Other	6	5.9%

Specialties

- Primary eye care is the main specialty for most optometrists (90.1%).

Access to Care

- 77 (78.6%) accept Medicaid patients at their main site
- 86 (87.8%) accept Medicare patients at their main site.

Current Experience

- Median time since first licensed as an optometrist: 24 years.
- 31.7% of optometrists (32) started working in Vermont more than 25 years ago.

Future Plans

- 78.2% (79) planned to continue working as they had been in the next 12 months.
- 8.9% (9) planned to increase their hours in the next 12 months.
- 8.9% (9) planned to reduce their hours.
- 1.0% (1) planned to retire.

Key Takeaways

- Optometrist FTEs have been stable over time, with a total increase of 3.9 in FTEs between 2016 and 2020.
- Relative to population, optometrists are most common in Windsor and Chittenden counties.
- Optometrists in Vermont have a median age of 51 and are predominately male. However, males' median age is 58 and females' median age is 44.
- The most common settings for optometrists are independent group practices and independent solo practices.

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

Appendix

Active Optometrists

An optometrist who reported working in Vermont as an optometrist (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

Census

The census was taken during the biennial optometrist relicensing process which ended on July 31, 2020. The data include all licensed optometrists except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (May - July 2020), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of July 31, 2022. 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. An optometrist reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

Geographical Regions

States were grouped into the following regions:

Northeast: VT, ME, MA, NH, RI, CT, NJ, NY, PA

Central: IN, IL, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD

South: DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX

West: AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA

Main Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The main practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice in which the optometrist 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 2020 and were provided by the Department of Health.

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 an optometrist working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks), is 20.