



2024 IMPACT REPORT

Who We Are

United Way's Working Bridges is an innovative program in partnership with local employers, designed to improve job **retention, stability** and **advancement** by supporting employees and students with community resources.

Using the workplace to connect with employees directly, Working Bridges helps working Vermonters to reach stability and thrive while supporting human resource departments, reducing employee turnover, and increasing productivity.



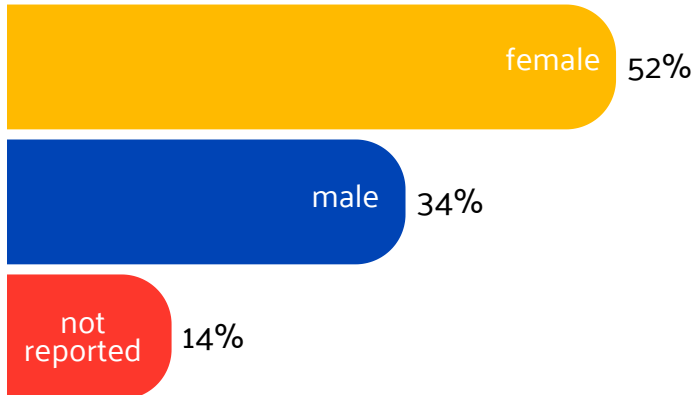
Did you know?
For every \$2 paid by employers for service, United Way leverages \$1 in philanthropic support to sustain Working Bridges.

Resource Coordination: Who We Served

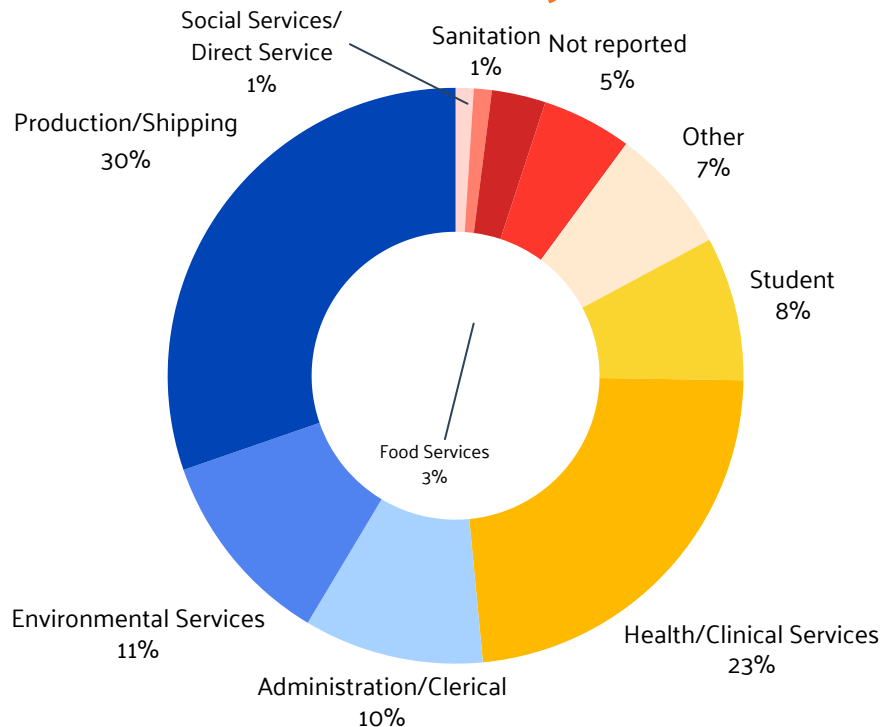
1620 individuals served across Northern Vermont

6107 total interactions

Gender



Individuals served by their role



How did individuals contact their Resource Coordinator?



Top 3 Referrals



Financial

Income Advance Loans
Financial Coaching
Debt Management



Housing

Housing Counseling
Referrals to Local Housing
Trusts
Community Action Agencies

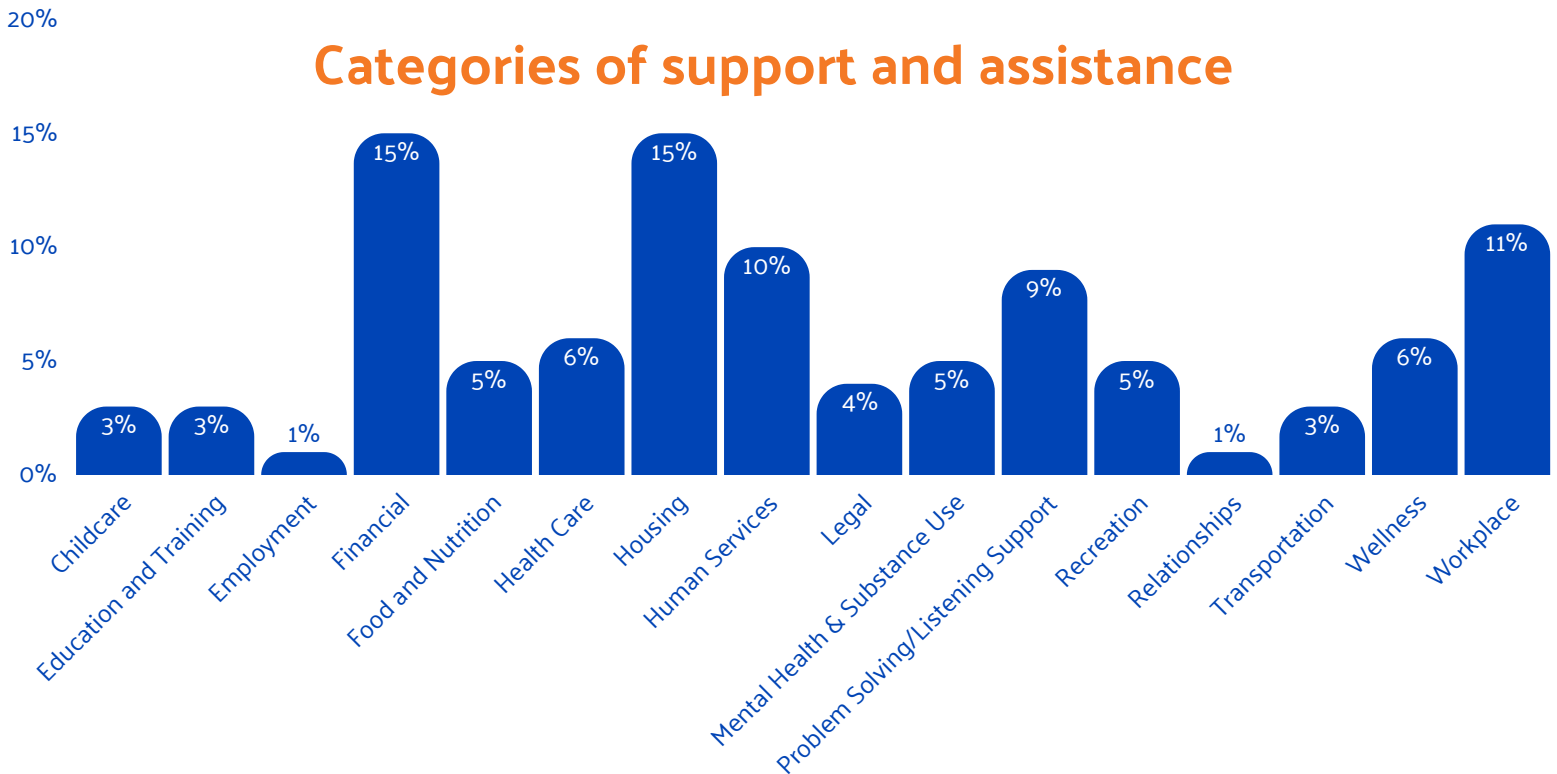


Human Services

Individual Advocacy
185 Bridge Fund (small dollar
fund)
Goodwill Vouchers

Resource Connections

Categories of support and assistance



Primary referral sources

Walkabout (28%)	Flyer/Bulletin board (5%)
Returning client (20%)	Peer/Coworker (4%)
Training/Presentation (8%)	Other (4%)
Human Resources (7%)	Unknown (4%)



Training, Education, Advocacy & Innovation

29

Training
Sessions

600+

Employees
Trained

How innovation happens

Employer partners tackled challenging workforce issues in 2024 through quarterly innovation labs, designed to help partners learn about the issues getting in the way of employee retention, advancement, and workforce stability. Labs are the catalyst for networking, relationship-building, sharing best practices, and leveraging resources to design and test new strategies. Topics this year included conversations about Vermont's Caregiver crisis, substance misuse prevention, recovery at work, and information about VT Network's Uplift VT, a new workplace public information campaign to disrupt the current culture of violence.



Examples of Innovation

- [Feed Every Need](#) - onsite, prepared meals to reduce food scarcity
- [Employer Guide to Substance Misuse Prevention](#)
- [Income Advance Loan](#)
- [Vermont's Caregiver Crisis - increase connection among employees who are also caregivers](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid and Community Mental Health Resource training for employees at work](#)
- [Mercy Connections "Developing Self" at work](#)

Training and education @ work

United Way's Working Bridges has a team of skilled facilitators and trainers. In 2024, the team hosted 29 training and education events for 639 employees. The training and education provided included:

- **Working Bridges Concepts** - supervisor/manager training about community resources and disrupting scarcity in the workplace.
- **Bridges Spotlights** - community education for employees about topics such as homeownership, renting in Vermont, advance care planning, green energy coaching, and the basics of tax withholding
- **Earn it, Keep it, Grow it** - onsite financial education for employees in a 4-part workshop focused on financial goal setting, tracking expenses, budgeting, credit building, and savings.
- **Mental Health First Aid** - a suicide prevention training at work.

32

Companies

120

Human Resource
Professionals

Advocacy

In 2024, United Way's Working Bridges team spoke with legislators at Vermont's annual nonprofit legislative advocacy day, sharing data and information about workforce needs. Additionally, Working Bridges provided housing testimony to support investments in affordable housing.



Nonprofit Legislative
Advocacy Day



Housing Testimony

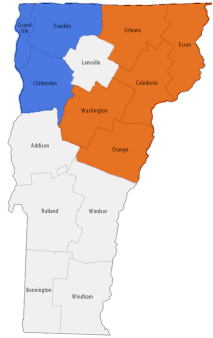
Training, Education, Innovation & Advocacy

185 Bridge Fund

The 185 Bridge Fund is a small-dollar grant fund that Resource Coordinators can access to help employees with financial emergencies, a last-resort fund to help employees retain employment while supporting financial stability. The fund exists because of the generosity of community donors, grants, and earned dividends on investment accounts.

 **111**
employees
supported across
8 COUNTIES

Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, Caledonia,
Essex, Orange, Orleans, and Washington



Behind the Scenes with Resource Coordinators

Building trust through active listening

“**Listening support is a data point that can’t truly be measured.** It’s developing trust enough for an employee to share a very bleak current financial picture or an older employee talking through the many thoughts they have about getting on a senior housing waitlist. Some days it’s **being present and listening** that allows an employee to ask how to get mental health support for the very first time, figure out who to connect with in regards to unexpected situations or **talking through the confusing steps** of planning for retirement. Ultimately, the resources available in our communities are vast. It’s the **listening support that can open doors** for an employee to get connected to what they need.”

-Kate Floyd, Resource Coordinator

Connection in the face of scarcity

“To keep good work, to advance in work, requires being able to consistently rely on essential community resources such as childcare, safety, housing, transportation, healthcare, relationships, and more. As a Resource Coordinator, I often engage with employees when resources are limited. **Even employed individuals can experience homelessness, hunger, barriers or stressful household changes.** The happy endings of finally finding housing after a difficult time makes for **strong connections when employees may feel they have few or none.**”

-Nicole Clements, Resource Coordinator

Asking for help is a key step in change

“In this work, I’ve grown an appreciation for stages of change. While important life changes don’t happen overnight, when someone asks for help and is met with **compassion and acceptance**, I believe that is **the moment when change becomes possible.** Positive change only happens when the person is ready and that can take time. That is why **building trusting, ongoing relationships is a cornerstone of our work.**”

-Maia Hanron, Senior Program Manager

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