

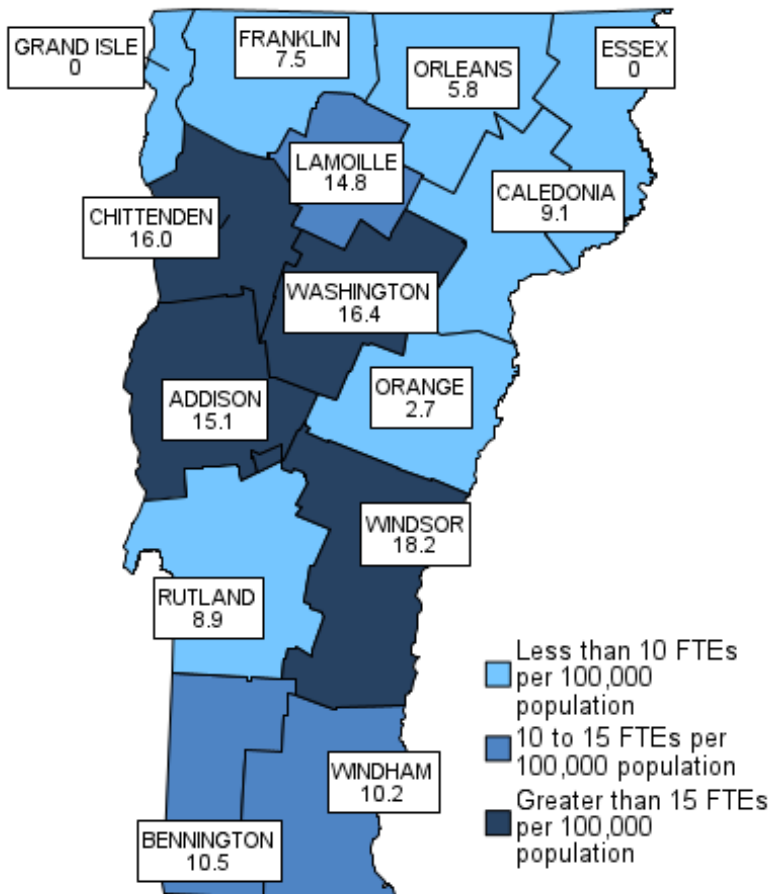
## Overview

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 2022 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

An optometrist is a healthcare professional who has earned the 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 2022  
 Response Rate: 100%  
 Licenses renewed: 137  
 Active in VT: 102  
 VT Full-time Equivalents: 81.2

### Demographics

Female: 44.6 %  
 Median Age: 48.5  
 Age 60 or older: 29.4%

### Education and Training

Educated in Vermont: 2.0%  
 Educated in Northeast excluding VT: 65.0%

### Specialties

Primary eye care: 90.2%  
 Ocular disease: 4.9%

### Current Employment

Full time hours at main site: 36.3%  
 Works at multiple sites: 17.6%  
 Plans to reduce hours: 8.0%  
 Plans to retire: 1.0%

### Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)  
 Highest: 18.2, Windsor County  
 Lowest: 0, Essex and Grand Isle Counties

### Trends in Statewide FTEs

2016: 78.8  
 2018: 82.4  
 2020: 82.7  
 2022: 81.2

## Workforce

- 137 optometrists renewed their licenses during the 2022 survey period, and all of these completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 100%.
- Of the 137 respondents, 102 (74.5%) indicated they were actively practicing as optometrists in Vermont.
- Of the 35 respondents reporting a non-active status, 12 (34.3%) indicated plans to start or resume work as an optometrist in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on 102 optometrists who reported actively working in Vermont.

## Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

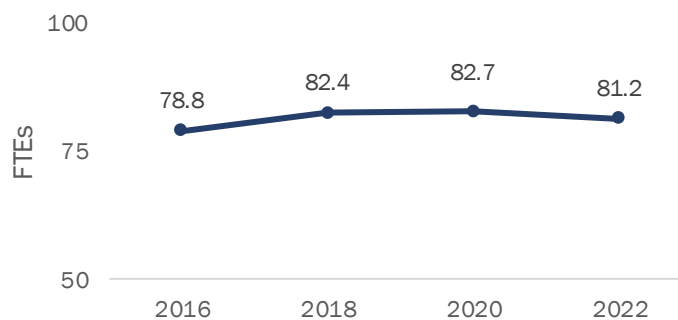
- 102 optometrists provide 81.2 total FTEs.
- 36.3% (37) of optometrists work 40 or more hours per week at their main site.
- 23.2 FTEs, or 28.6% of total FTEs, are provided by 30 optometrists aged 60 or older.

Average weekly hours – at main site	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	16	15.7%
20-39 hours	49	48.0%
40 hours or more	37	36.3%

## Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Optometrist FTEs in Vermont increased by 3.6 from 78.8 in 2016 to 82.4 in 2018 and increased slightly in 2020 to 82.7.
- FTEs decreased by 1.5 from 2020 to 2022, to 81.2.

**Optometrist FTEs by Year**



## Demographics

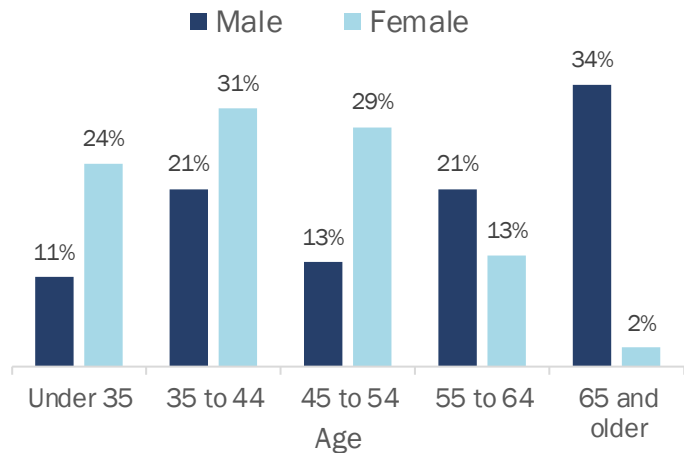
### Gender

- 44.6% of the optometrists in Vermont (45) are female.
- 55.4% (56) are male.

### Age

- 16.7% (17) are under 35 years old.
- 46.1% (47) are 35 to 54 years old.
- 37.3% (38) are 55 or older.
- The median age for females is 43 and for males is 59.

### 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.

- Most optometrists are white (87.3%), 5.9% are Asian, 2.0% are Black, and none are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. One identifies as a race not listed and three prefer not to answer the question about race.
- One optometrist identifies as Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin.

## Education and Training

- 96.0% (96) successfully completed a national examination administered by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBE0).
- Many of the 102 optometrists active in 2022 completed their degrees in the Northeast, including in Vermont (67.0%).

Region where training/ education occurred	Number	Percent
Vermont	2	2.0%
Northeast excluding VT	65	65.0%
Midwest	7	7.0%
South	16	16.0%
West	9	9.0%
Canada	1	1.0%
* Missing data from 2 individuals		

## Practice Characteristics

### Number of sites

- 82.4% (84) of optometrists work at a single practice site.
- 17.6% (18) also work at a second different site.

### Practice Setting

- 29.4% (30) of optometrists work in an independent solo practice, and 46.1% (47) work in an independent group practice.

Primary practice setting	Number	Percent
Independent Solo Practice	30	29.4%
Independent Group Practice	47	46.1%
Chain Optometry Clinic	9	8.8%
Ophthalmology Office	5	4.9%
Commercial Setting	3	2.9%
Other	8	7.8%

## Specialties

- Primary eye care is the main specialty for most optometrists (90.2%).
- 25.0% (25) of optometrists completed a residency program in an optometric subspecialty. About half of these completed their program in an ocular disease subspecialty.

## Access to Care

- 80 (80.0%) accept Medicaid patients at their main practice site
- 88 (88.9%) accept Medicare patients at their main practice site.

## Telehealth

- As a result of the Covid pandemic, 63.0% of optometrists (63) indicate that their hours stayed about the same and 22.0% (22) indicate that their total number of hours increased.
- More than half (52) indicate that the total number of patients seen in a day on average stayed about the same, while 20.0% (20) indicate that the number increased.
- More than three-quarters (79.0%) indicate that they do not offer telehealth (79).
- Six optometrists (6.0%) indicate that the percentage of patients they treat using telehealth has increased.

## Current Experience

- Median time since first licensed as an optometrist: 21 years.
- 30.4% (31) of optometrists started working in Vermont more than 25 years ago.

## Future Plans

- 84.0% (84) plan to continue working as they had been in the next 12 months.
- 3.0% (3) plan to increase their hours in the next 12 months.
- 8.0% (8) plan to reduce their hours.
- 1.0% (1) plans to retire.

## Key Takeaways

- Optometrist FTEs have been stable over time, with a total increase of 2.4 in FTEs between 2016 and 2022.
- Relative to population, optometrists are most common in Windsor, Washington and Chittenden counties.
- Optometrists in Vermont have a median age of 49 and more than half are male. However, males' median age is 59 and females' median age is 43.
- The most common settings for optometrists are independent group practices and independent solo practices.

For more information, contact: [AHS.VDHPPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov](mailto: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, 2022. The data include all licensed optometrists except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (May - July 2022), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of July 31, 2024. 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 2022 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.