

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal public health nutrition program administered in Vermont by the Department of Health. The program serves income-eligible pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding/chestfeeding people, and infants and children up to age 5. The following is a report of demographic characteristics (age, maternal education, race and ethnicity and preferred spoken language) of WIC participants.

Age

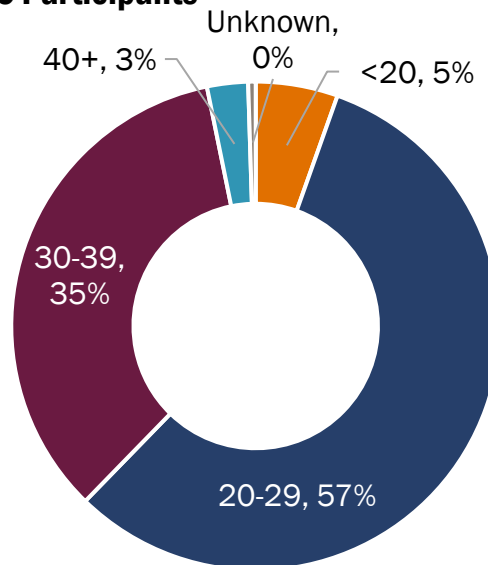
Adults

Over half of pregnant and postpartum WIC participants are 20-29 years old. This is the largest age group of participants across the state, although there are some regional differences. For example, adult participants in the Burlington District Office area tend to be older, with 47% being 30 years of age and older. In Newport, only 30% of adult participants are 30+.

KEY POINTS

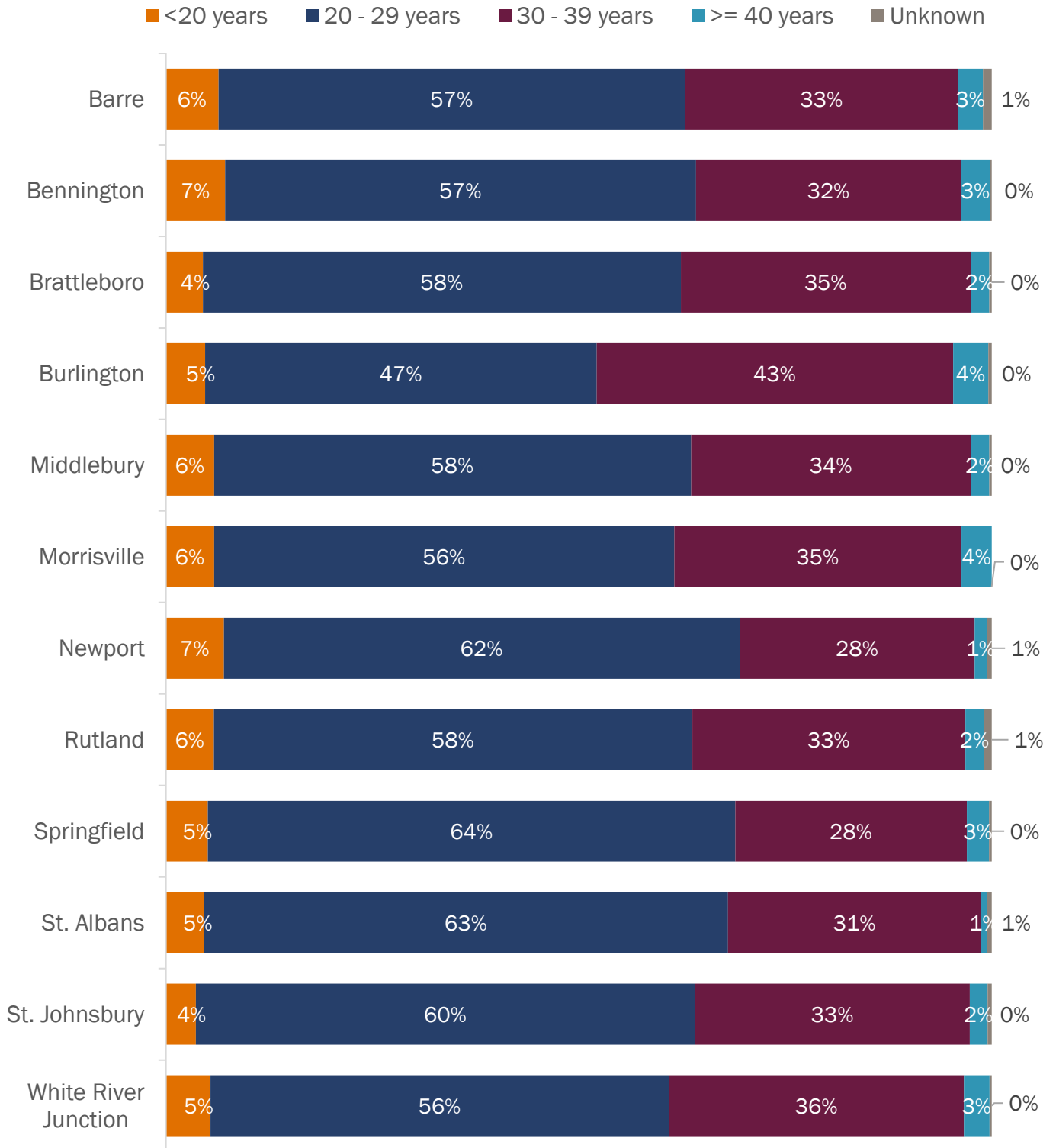
- There are almost twice as many infants participating in Vermont WIC than four-year-olds.
- Educational background of participants varies by region.
- Racial and ethnic diversity in the WIC program has been increasing over time.
- There are at least 29 different languages spoken by families.

Age of Adult WIC Participants



Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Age of Adult WIC Participants by District Office



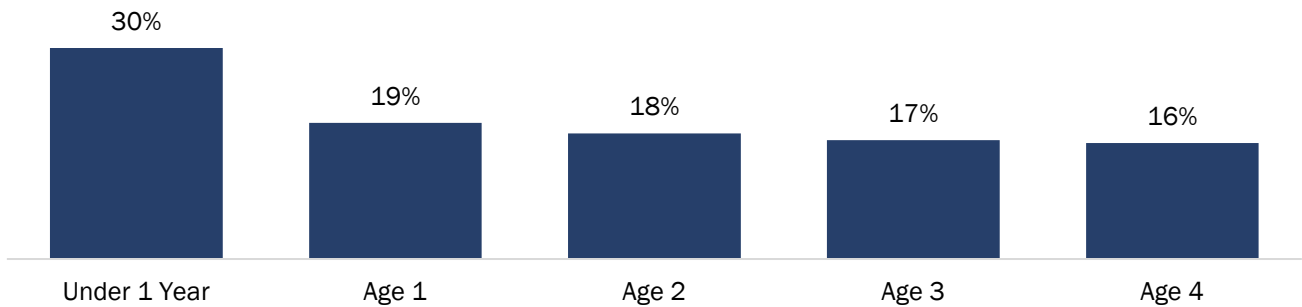
WIC Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System, 2019-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Infants and Children

In the infant and children group, around one-third are under 1 year of age, dropping to 19% among one-year olds and slightly decreasing thereafter. This trend is consistent across regions, with slight variations.

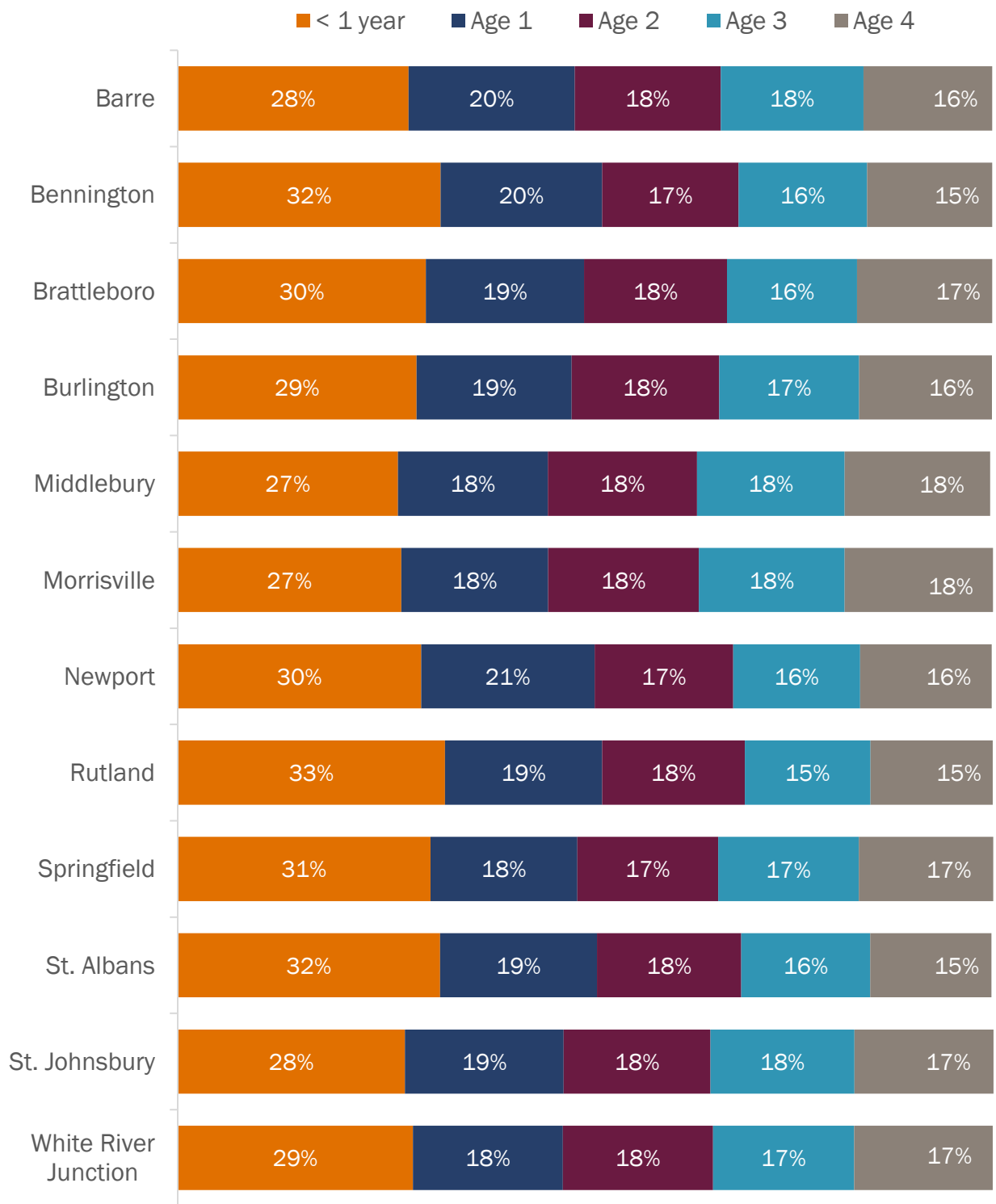
Child Age of WIC Participants



WIC Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, 2019-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Child Age of WIC Participants by District Office

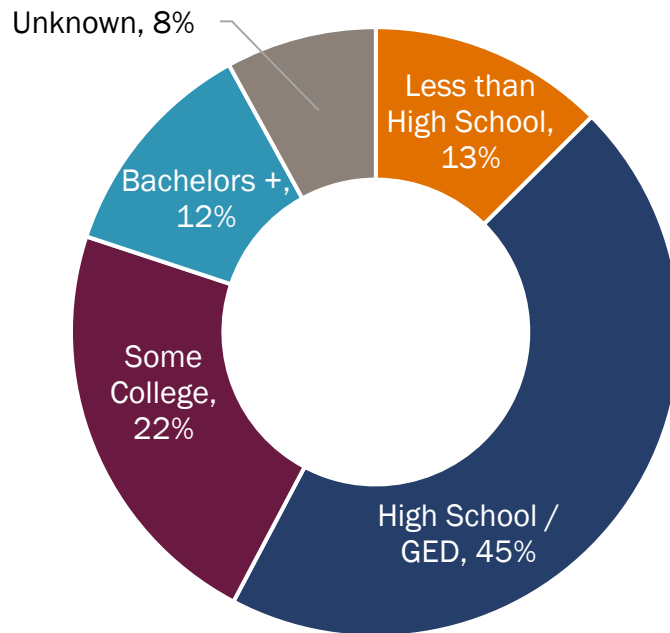


WIC Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, 2019-2022

Maternal Education

Almost half (45%) of WIC households have a maternal education level of high school or GED, with the next highest group having some college education (22%).

Maternal Education in WIC Households



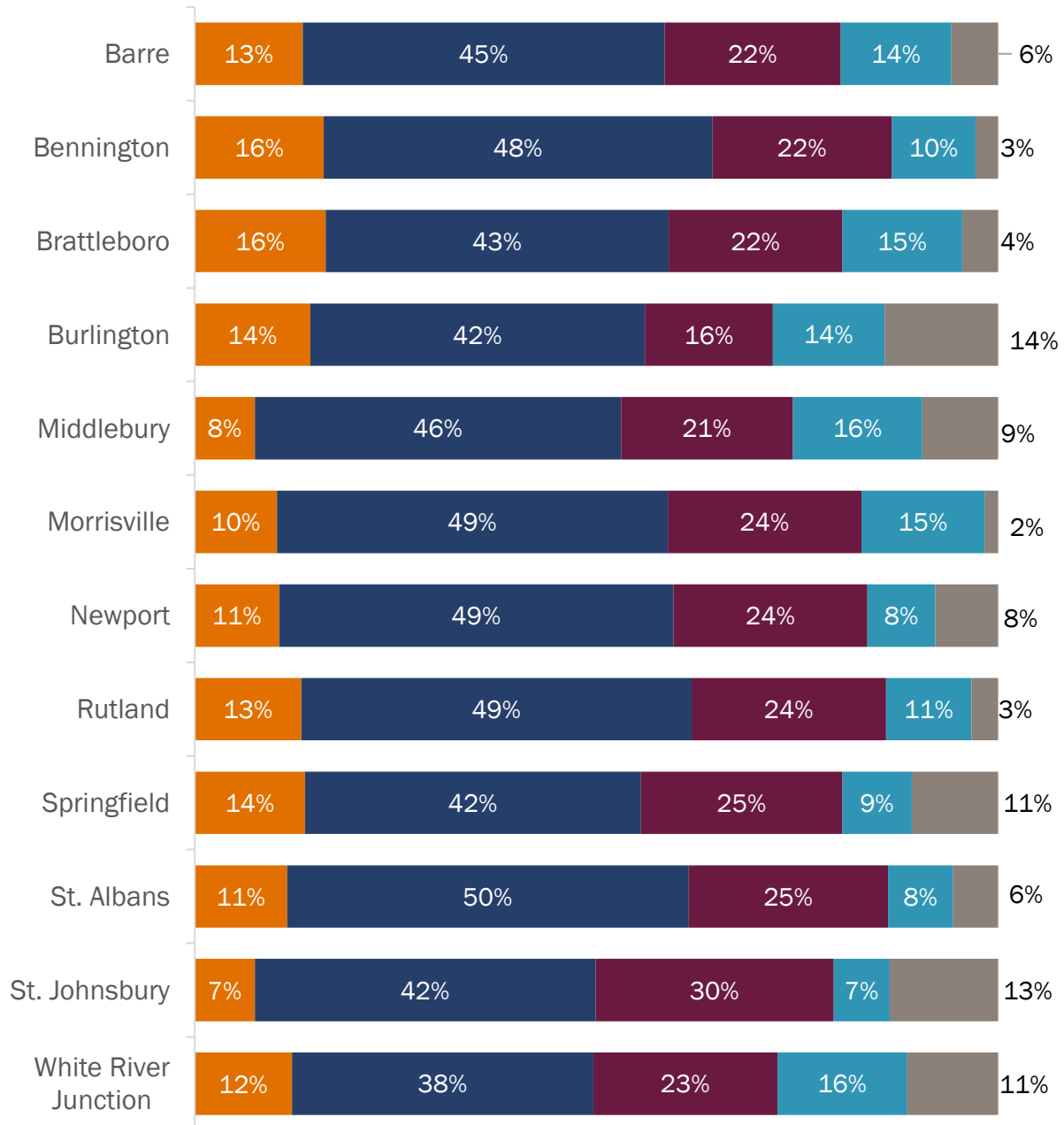
WIC Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System, 2019-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

There is some regional variation around the state. For instance, in the Morrisville and White River Junction areas, around 39% of households have either some college education or a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, Burlington's percentage in these categories is 30%. There is an option to select "unknown" for education within the WIC system. The proportion of households marked "unknown" vary, from a low of 2% in Morrisville to a high of 14% in Burlington.

Maternal Education in WIC Households by District Office

■ Less than High School
 ■ High School / GED
 ■ Some College
 ■ Bachelors +
 ■ Unknown



WIC Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System, 2019-2022

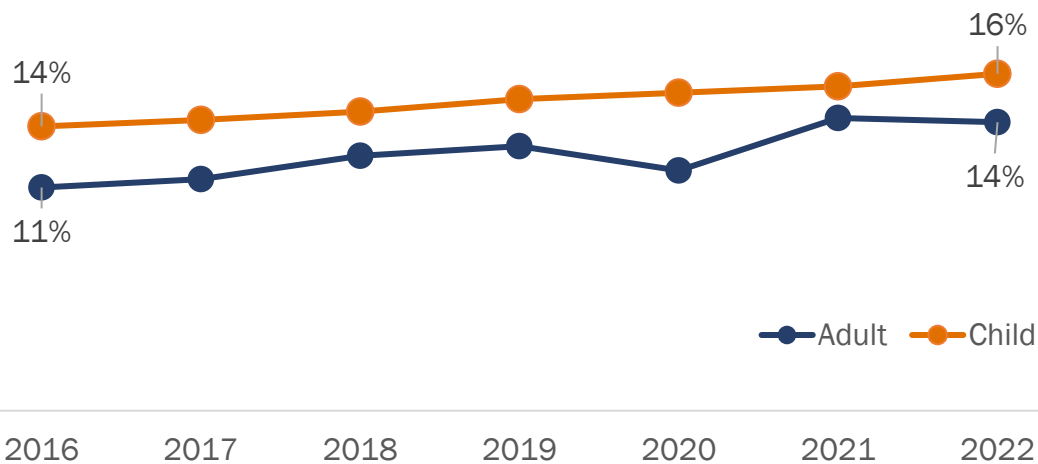
Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Race & Ethnicity

Vermont WIC collects race and ethnicity of participants. The options in the WIC system for race are: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and white. Multiple races can be selected. The system also records if a participant is Hispanic/Latino or not. At times, these categories will be aggregated into two groups, white non-Hispanic and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color) in order to compare program enrollment by race and ethnicity while protecting the anonymity of participants. We acknowledge that this grouping may obscure meaningful differences in participation among Persons of Color in Vermont.

The percentage of BIPOC participants in Vermont WIC has been increasing over time for both adult and child participants. In 2011, BIPOC adults and children represented 11% and 14% of enrollment, respectively. In 2022, 14% of adult participants were BIPOC and 16% of children were BIPOC.

The Percent of Vermont WIC BIPOC Participants is Increasing

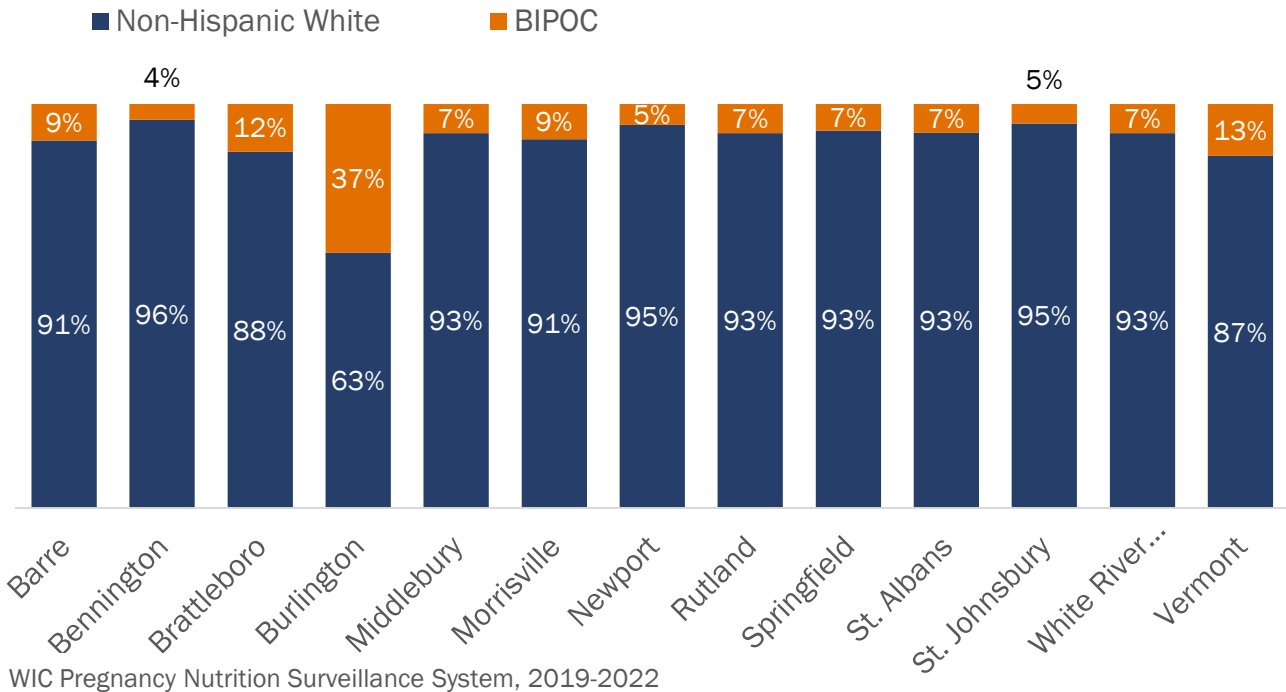


WIC Pregnancy and Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, 2016-2022

On average between 2019–2022, the Burlington District Office stands out as a region with more racial and ethnic diversity (37% of adult participants are BIPOC). Non-Hispanic Black participants make up the majority of BIPOC participants in this region at 20%, followed by non-Hispanic Asian at 11%, 4% Hispanic, and the remaining other races.

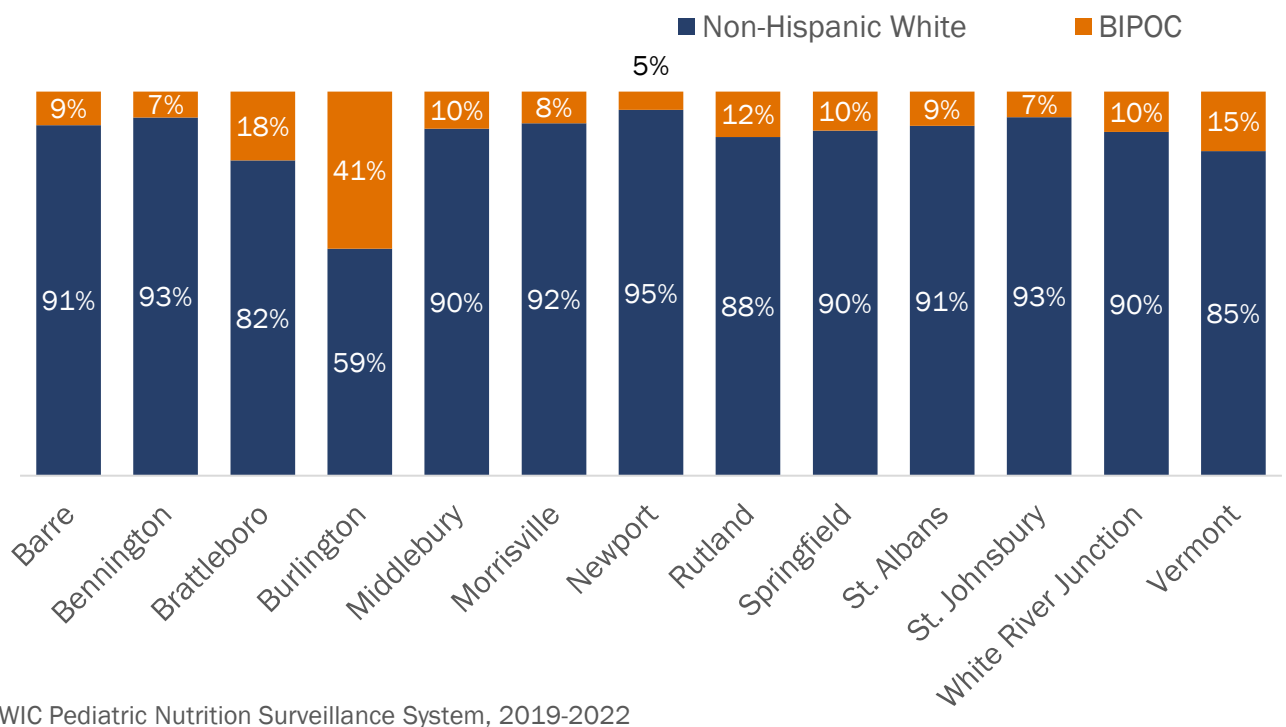
Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Vermont WIC Adult Participant Race and Ethnicity by District Office



Similar demographic patterns are seen among infant and child WIC participants, with white participants making up 85% of participants and BIPOC 15%. The highest percentage of BIPOC participants is in the Burlington District Office region (41%), followed by Brattleboro (18%).

Vermont WIC Child Participant Race and Ethnicity by District Office



Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

The table below shows the race and ethnicity breakdown among BIPOC infant and child WIC participants. Like the trends seen among the adult participants, the percentage of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic Asian people is highest in the Burlington District Office region, making up 19% and 13%, respectively, of the population. The Brattleboro, Springfield, and Middlebury District Office regions have the highest proportion of Hispanic infant and child participants. To ensure the anonymity of participants in categories with few respondents, certain rates have been suppressed and denoted with an asterisk.

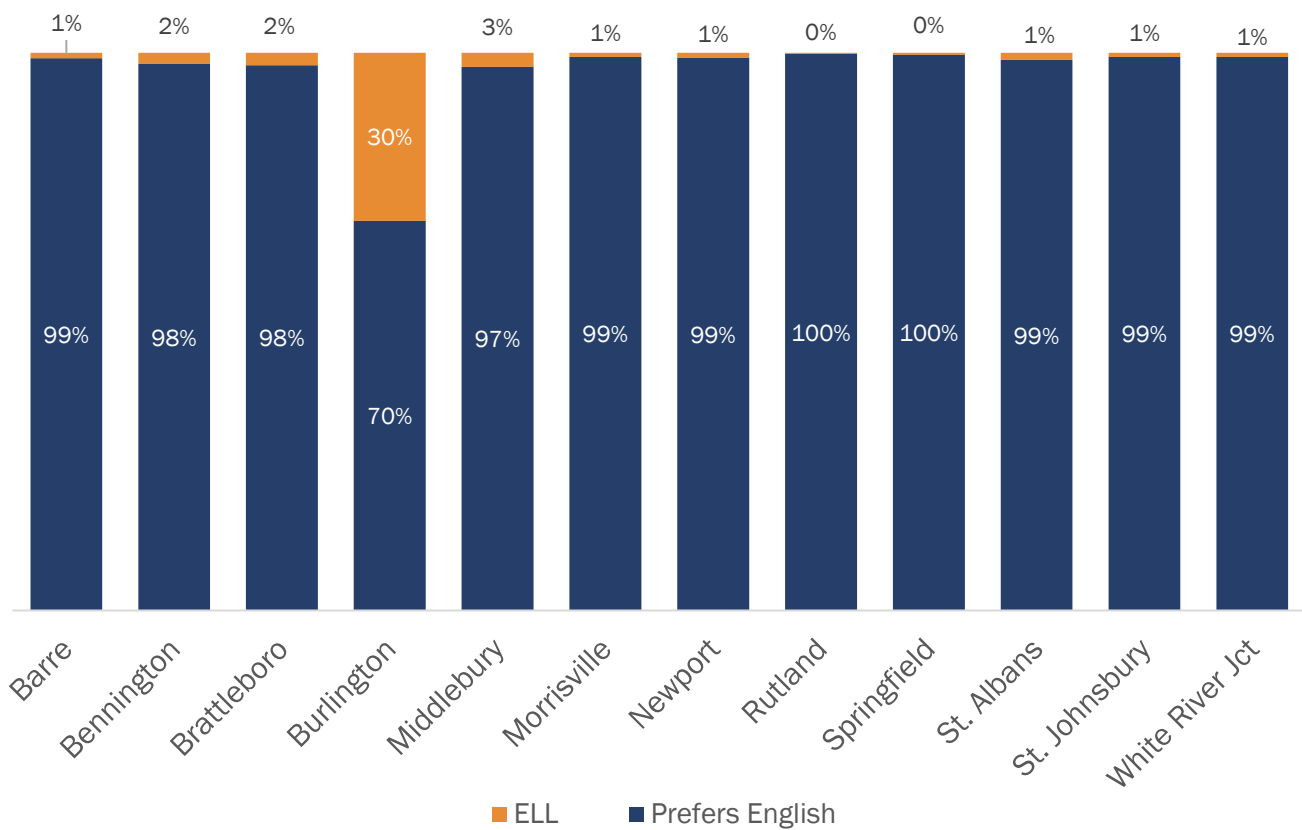
	Non-Hispanic Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic American Indian	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non-Hispanic Islander	Non-Hispanic Multiple
Barre	1%	3%	*	*	*	3%
Bennington	*	3%	*	*	*	*
Brattleboro	2%	7%	*	*	*	8%
Burlington	19%	5%	*	13%	*	5%
Middlebury	*	6%	*	*	*	2%
Morrisville	*	3%	*	*	*	4%
Newport	*	3%	*	*	*	*
Rutland	*	5%	*	*	*	5%
Springfield	2%	6%	*	*	*	2%
St. Albans	*	3%	1%	*	*	3%
St. Johnsbury	*	5%	*	*	*	*
White River Junction	*	5%	*	*	*	4%
Vermont	4%	4%	*	3%	*	3%

Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

Preferred Spoken Language

In an analysis conducted using all households actively enrolled in Vermont WIC from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, 94% of WIC households list English as their preferred spoken language and 6% had another language. This proportion, referred to as English language learning (ELL), is inclusive of households who use interpretation for WIC services and those who do not use interpretation. There are at least 29 different languages spoken by families participating in Vermont WIC. The five most used languages after English are Nepali, Somali, Spanish, French and Swahili. The Burlington District Office serves the highest percent of households with a preferred language other than English, with almost a third (30%) of households preferring a different language as shown below. Further, 85% of the state's caseload who prefer a language other than English accessed WIC from the Burlington WIC program.

Proportion of WIC Households by Preferred Spoken Language

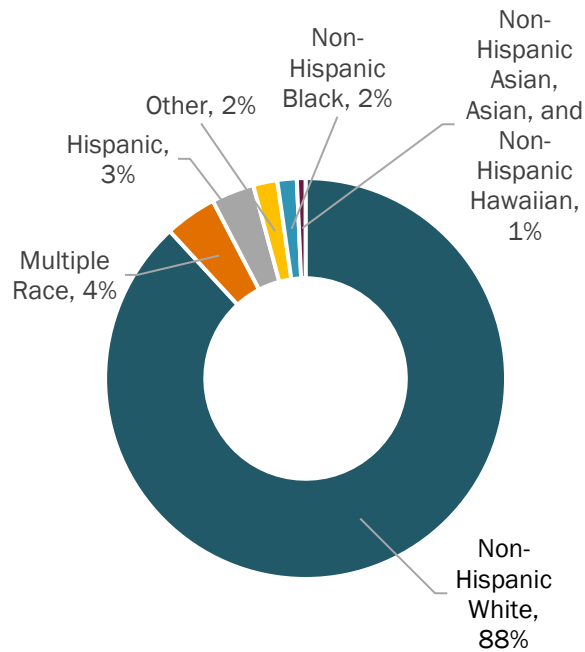


WIC Administrative Data, 2021-2022

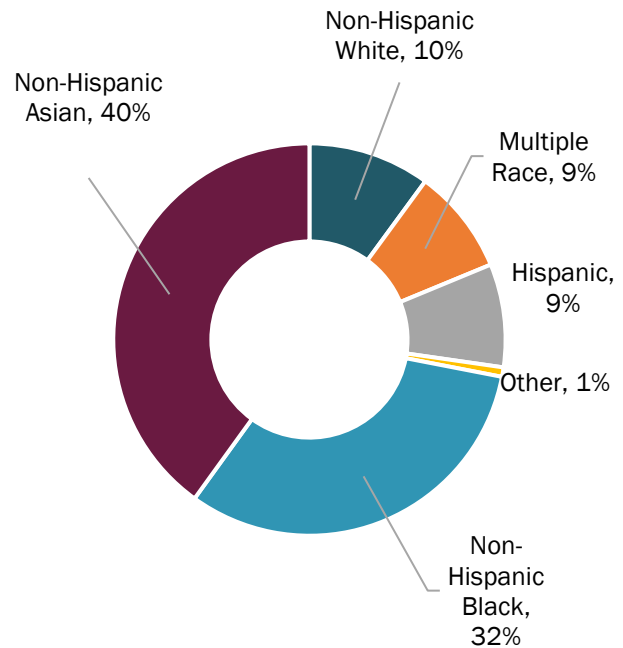
Vermont WIC Program Participant Demographics

ELL households were also more likely to be non-Hispanic Asian or non-Hispanic Black whereas English-speaking households were more likely to be Non-Hispanic white.

Race and Ethnicity Among WIC Households with English as the Preferred Spoken Language



Race and Ethnicity Among WIC Households with Another Preferred Spoken Language



WIC Administrative Data, 2021-2022

Key Takeaways

The Vermont WIC program serves a diverse population. Demographic characteristics include adult participants who are under 20 to over 40 years old and a range of educational backgrounds. The proportion of people who are non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and of multiple races participating in WIC has been increasing over time. There are many different spoken language preferences. These demographic characteristics are taken into consideration when planning marketing and outreach materials, modernization and technology improvement projects, and other program innovations. Understanding the populations served by WIC ensures the program is able to plan and provide services that are accessible for all participants.

The population of families participating in Vermont WIC is diverse.

Data Notes

Data are analyzed from the Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System (PNSS) and the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS). The PNSS provides prevalence and trends for nutrition, health and behavioral indicators in pregnant and postpartum people enrolled in Vermont's WIC program. This population is not representative of Vermont's pregnant and postpartum populations and findings reported here should not be generalized outside the population receiving WIC services.

The Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) provides data on prevalence and trends for nutrition related indicators for children (infants and children < 5 years of age) participating in WIC. This population is not representative of the Vermont child population and findings reported here should not be generalized outside the population receiving WIC services.

For more information: Please contact the Vermont WIC program at WIC@vermont.gov.