

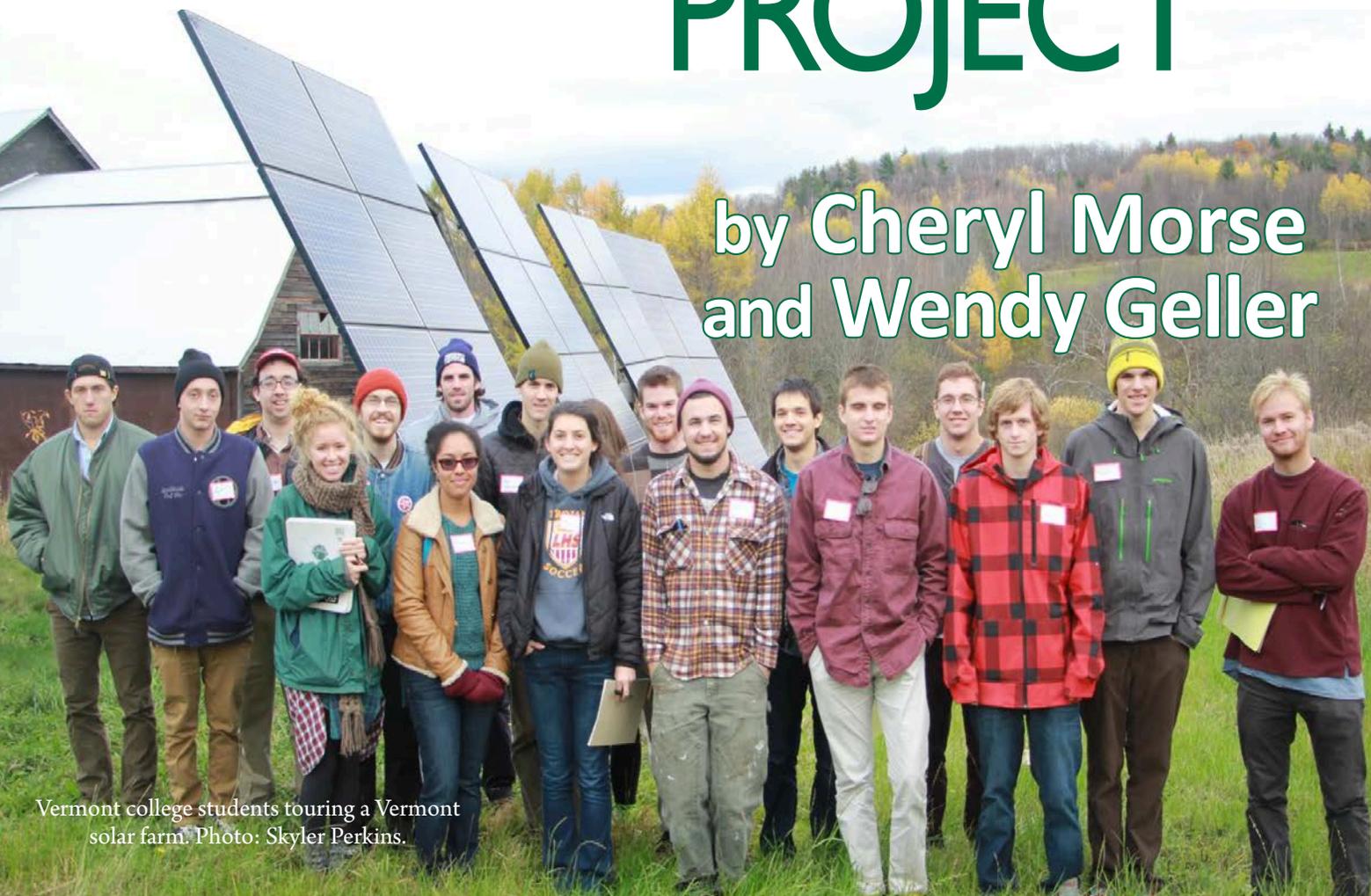


The University of Vermont
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON VERMONT

VERMONT RESEARCH REPORT SERIES

The VERMONT Roots Migration PROJECT

by Cheryl Morse
and Wendy Geller

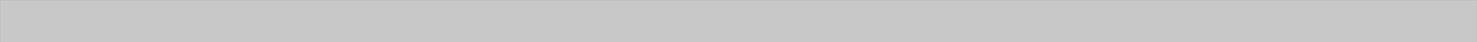


Vermont college students touring a Vermont solar farm. Photo: Skyler Perkins.

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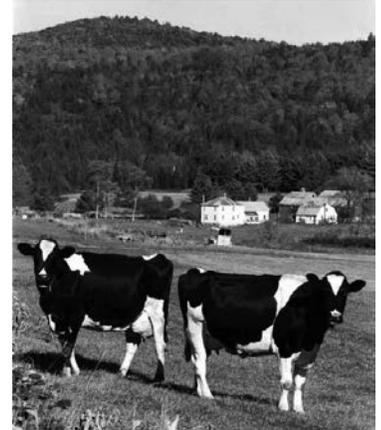
Summary

What makes people choose to stay, leave, or return to Vermont?

This report presents preliminary results from the Vermont Roots Migration Project, conducted by researchers at the University of Vermont and several other institutions in 2014. The project used social media and online data collection tools to conduct an online survey of people who attended high school while residents of Vermont. The survey questions centered on their residential choices and the factors that led them to reside permanently in, migrate out of, or return to live in the state.

The survey was distributed through social media networks during a 3-week period in March and April. It yielded 3,692 completed surveys from people ranging in age from 15 to 91 years. The survey captured demographic information, geographic data, and open text responses, as well as quantitative data on key factors that influence residential choice.

Over half of the respondents were people who permanently left the state (51.5%), nearly one-third were people who have remained in the state (30.5%) and the remainder (18%) were people who lived outside of the state for at least one year and returned to Vermont to live.



Key Findings

- Those who left the state identified a **range of factors for leaving**, with no single factor achieving higher than 38%. Pull factors outside of the state included **jobs, ability to earn higher wages elsewhere, and more culturally diverse communities**. They were **most likely to move to another place in the Northeastern region of the US**.
- There was a **statistically significant relationship between education level and residence choice**. Those who left Vermont to live elsewhere were more likely to hold advanced degrees (masters level and higher). Those who remained in Vermont were more likely to have a few years of college or lower levels of education.
- Among those who remained in Vermont or returned to Vermont, there was a **trend of moving into Chittenden County** and to a lesser degree, to Washington County from other parts of the state.
- Those who returned to live in Vermont placed a **high value on landscape, family connections, Vermont's culture, and the small size of communities**.
- A very high percentage of those who left Vermont **expressed homesickness for Vermont**, even if they did not plan to return to the state.
- 58% of respondents offered their contact information so that they could be reached for further discussion or questions, suggesting that **they were eager to share their migration decision-making experiences**.

Background and Context

Like most states, Vermont's demographics shift over time and in diverse ways. However, interest in outmigration from Vermont has a long history, and a concern about young people leaving the state persists.

For example, it is estimated that in each decade between the years 1850 and 1900, 40% of native-born Vermonters left the state.⁽¹⁾ However, between 1930 and 1950, the population of 1-29 year olds grew by 82,038 people,⁽²⁾ while more recently, between 2000 and 2010, the number of Vermont residents in the 35-54 year age categories decreased.⁽³⁾

In each decade between the years of 1850-1900, 40% of native-born Vermonters left the state.

The Vermont Roots Migration Project is a response to the need for a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence migration, specifically of the youth population, in Vermont. While researchers and state leaders have shown concern about youth outmigration, there are few analyses that attempt to identify the specific factors people cite for their migration decisions.⁽⁴⁾

To speak to these concerns in an empirically sound way, the original goal of the Vermont Roots Migration Project was to collect the personal narratives of people who grew up in Vermont in order to explore their migration decisions. Due to the unexpectedly high number of responses, the survey yielded a rich set of quantitative and qualitative data that paint a complex picture of the factors that influence residential choice-making.

Methods and Data Analysis

The researchers used LimeSurvey®, a cloud-based software program, to administer the survey. The survey was designed for people who were residents of Vermont when they attended high school—including out-of-state high schools that serve students from Vermont towns, such as Hanover High School in New Hampshire.

The survey was not restricted to high school graduates. Those who attended only some years of high school in Vermont were eligible. The survey was available online from March 20-April 15, 2014, and was anonymous, with optional opportunity for respondents to indicate whether they would be willing to share their contact information and participate in follow-up research.

Each researcher posted the survey link on her or his own social media networks, including *Facebook*, personal email lists, and Front Porch Forum community listserves. As each team member is an alumnus/a of a Vermont high school and as their high school graduation dates spanned the years 1985-2008, their social networks extended to people in their mid-twenties through early fifties in age. The researchers invited their social networks and respondents to share the link to the survey on their own pages or with others who lived in Vermont when they attended high school.

By using this method, the researchers received 3,692 completed surveys—50 times more than anticipated.

At the conclusion of the open survey period, the data collected in LimeSurvey® were downloaded into the SPSS statistical program. The researchers analyzed the data for descriptive results and conducted between-group comparisons using chi square tests.

In addition, a representative subset of responses (n=100) was analyzed in detail, using “hand coding” to code the narrative responses participants offered. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the larger data are ongoing, including a second survey of a subset of Leavers.

This follow-up survey is focused on a deeper investigation of the connections that Leavers maintain with the state and their perceptions of the state. The survey will be made available to participants who volunteered their contact information in order to take part in further research.

The survey drew 50 times more responses than anticipated.

Research Limitations

While the sampling strategy produced far more responses than expected, this was not a completely random sample. All respondents self-selected into the survey. The online delivery of the survey excluded those who did not have access to, or did not use online technologies. Women and highly educated people were overrepresented in the total set of responses.

The survey was not designed to be representative of the Vermont population as a whole. However, because the total number of responses was high, statistical tests to determine correlations are possible. Subsets of data that are representative of the Vermont population in terms of gender, age, racial, sexual orientation, and level of education can be used to perform additional analyses in the future.

Results and Analysis: Demographics of Survey Responders

The responses to this survey fell into three main categories:

Stayers – those people who have lived in Vermont since high school, with the exception of schooling, military service, or living outside of the state for less than a year at a time.

Leavers – those people who left the state to live elsewhere and have not returned to live in Vermont.

Returnees – those people who left the state to live elsewhere for a year or longer, then returned to Vermont to reside.

A slight majority of the respondents to the survey were Leavers (n= 1902), while less than a third were Stayers (n=1129) and just under 20% were Returnees (n=661).

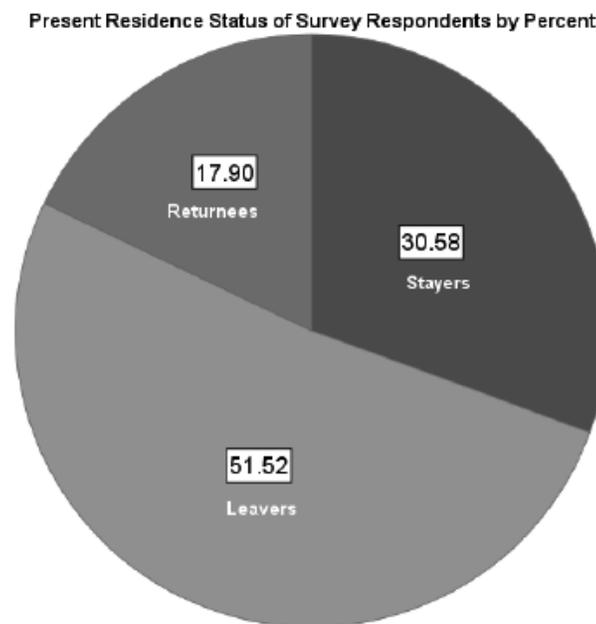
Gender

Women were overrepresented in the survey results; comprising two-thirds of the respondents (67%, n= 2478). Men comprised 32% of respondents (n=1,188), while less than one percent of respondents preferred not to answer this question or categorized themselves as “other” (n=26).

Age

The survey yielded responses from people aged 15 to 91 years. The average (mean) age was 41.1 and the median age was 38. These figures are in rough alignment with Vermont’s median age of 42.5, reported in 2013 American Community Survey data.⁽⁵⁾

Figure 1. Survey Respondents by Present Residence Category, as Percent of all Respondents

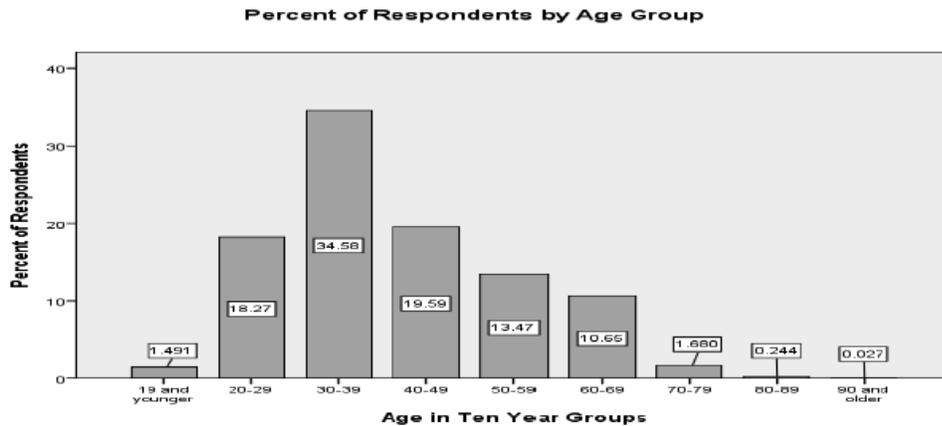


The highest percentage of respondents were aged 30-39 (35.6%). The second highest percentage were aged 40-49 (19.6%), and the third highest, ages 20-29 (18.3%). This is an interesting breakdown given that people aged 30-39 accounted for just 11.2% of Vermont’s population in 2013, while 40-49-year-olds accounted for 13%, and 20-29s for 12.9%.⁽⁶⁾

Two-thirds of respondents were women, and the average age of respondents was 41.1 years.

Figure 2. Survey Respondents by Age Categories, as Percent of Respondents

Figure 2. Survey Respondents by Age Categories, as Percent of Respondents



Race and Ethnicity

A very high percentage of the respondents to this survey self-identified as “white” (95.8%), closely matching the percentage of Vermonters who identified as white in the most recent US Census (95.3%).⁽⁷⁾ It is noteworthy that more people identified as “Mixed Race” or preferred not to answer this question (2.2%) than identified as any race or ethnicity other than white.

Relationship Status and Children

Close to 60 percent of respondents to this survey were married or in a civil union (58.7%). Note that respondents were able to select more than one category for this question. These figures are similar to the aggregate proportion of Vermonters who are married (roughly 50%) according to the most recent census data.⁽⁸⁾

Table 2. Respondents by Relationship Status, as Percentage of Total Respondents

Present Relationship Status	Percent
Single	18.9
Married or Civil Union	58.7
Long-term Relationship	14.8
Divorced	7.2
Widowed	1.9

Children

In terms of family characteristics, respondents were evenly divided: 41.7 percent of participants reported having no children, while roughly the same proportion had one to two children (41.8%).

Sexual Orientation

Most survey respondents (90.5%) identified as heterosexual or “straight.” Another 3.8% identified as “Gay/lesbian/homosexual.”

Table 4. Sexual Orientation of Respondents, as Percent of Respondents

Sexual Orientation	Percent
Straight/heterosexual:	90.5
Gay/lesbian/homosexual	3.8
Bisexual	3.1
Prefer not to answer:	2.5

Family Connections to Vermont

Most respondents, regardless of where they currently lived, had family members living in Vermont. Stayers and Returnees were more likely to have family in Vermont than were Leavers. Literature about migration frequently explores this concept of connectedness to family networks as a tangible means of feeling “rooted” to a place. How this concept plays out for Vermont in particular will be a key focus of this project going forward.

Stayers and Returnees were more likely to have family members living in Vermont than Leavers.

Table 5. Respondents who Have Family Members Living in Vermont, by Percentage of Total Respondents and by Residential Category

Have Family Members Living in Vermont	Percent
Stayers	98.5
Leavers	88.5
Returnees	97.0
Total Respondents	93.1

Educational Background

Vermonters in general have higher levels of educational attainment compared with wider U.S. averages. For example, the most recent American Community Survey data from 2013 reports that 91.5% of Vermonters are high school graduates or higher, versus just 86.6% of the wider U.S. population. Some 16.9% of Vermont’s total population has some college but no degree. This proportion is higher at 21.1% for the U.S., but the 35.7% of the population in Vermont having a bachelor’s degree or higher stands out against the wider U.S. proportion of 29.6%. Finally, 14.3% of Vermonters have a graduate or professional degree, while the broader U.S. figure is 11.2%.**(9)**



The characteristics of this survey’s respondents align fairly well with the wider state trends, but do show that survey participants were more educated on the whole than the wider Vermont population. Twenty-one percent (21.1%) of the survey respondents had some college or fewer years of education. Thirty-eight percent (38.1%) of respondents had a bachelor’s degree and 28.9% had a master’s degree or higher.

Table 6. Education Level Attainment, as Percentage of Respondents

Data Analysis

Highest Education Level Obtained	Percent
Some High School	.2
High School Diploma	6.4
Some College	14.5
Associate’s Degree	7.2
Bachelor’s Degree	38.1
Professional Training	2.5
Master’s Degree	24.8
Doctorate	4.1

There were no statistically significant differences in respondents’ residential choices (Stayers, Leavers, Returnees) according to gender or sexual orientation. For those who stayed in Vermont, there was no statistically significant difference between level of education and the county in which they lived.

However, there was a statistically significant difference between education levels amongst Stayers, Leavers, and Returnees. Additionally, women in the data set were more likely to hold advanced degrees and men were more likely to have some college or less.

Educational Attainment and Residential Choice

Returnees fit the “norm” for the survey, showing roughly the same educational levels as the survey averages. However, Stayers were more likely to have some college or less, and Leavers were more likely to have a master’s degree or higher ($p = .000$).

Leavers were more likely to hold advanced degrees, while most Stayers had some college or less.

It is important to note that the Stayers who responded to this survey had higher educational attainment than the Vermont norm. Additional research is required to investigate the relationship between educational attainment and residential choice.



Educational Attainment and Gender

Women who took this survey had significantly higher levels of educational attainment than did the male respondents ($p = .0001$). Amongst the survey respondents, 31.7% of women held a master’s degree or higher, while 25.6% of men held a master’s degree or higher. Male respondents were also more likely to report having had some college or less than did female respondents.

Male and female respondents held bachelor’s degrees at roughly the same rate.

Motivations of Stayers, Leavers, and Returnees

Why Stayers Remain in Vermont: Landscape, Family, Culture, and Small Communities

The survey asked Stayers to select all of the factors that influenced them to remain in Vermont from a list of potential factors. Respondents placed a very high value on landscape, family connections, Vermont’s culture, and the small size of Vermont’s communities.

“I enjoy Vermont’s landscape” received the highest number of responses; 70% of Stayers selected this factor. The second most selected response was proximity to family members; 62.8% said this was a factor in their decision to remain in Vermont. Also cited as important were Vermont’s culture and community (56.2%) and Vermont’s small size (54.2%).

Just over 35% of Stayers said their work kept them in the state (35.3%).

A small percentage of respondents (12.4%) said they would like to move out of Vermont but have not yet had the right opportunity to do so.

Table 7. Factors That Influence Stayers’ Decision to Remain in Vermont

Factor	Percent
Enjoy VT’s landscape	70.1
Stayed to live near family	62.8
Appreciate VT’s culture/community	56.2
Like VT’s small size	54.2
Wanted to raise children in VT	45.2
Work in Vermont	35.3
Never wanted to live outside state	31.3
Decided VT is best place for me	25.6
Partner did not want to leave	14.1
Activities that don’t exist elsewhere	14.8
Would like to leave ...but haven’t had opportunity	12.4
Needed to care for family	10.1

Among Stayers, “I enjoy Vermont’s landscape” was the most common reason for staying in Vermont.

Why People Leave Vermont: A Complex Mix of Factors

No single factor explains why a majority of Leavers chose to move out of Vermont. Work, higher salaries, increased cultural diversity, and a desire to live in an urban area were the most frequently selected factors. However, no factor was chosen by more than 38% of respondents.

This suggests that there are a range of circumstances, personal preferences, and conditions that influence a person’s decision to leave Vermont. More research into the details of these factors is underway as the research team is conducting a second survey of a subset of Leavers from this survey.

Work, higher salaries, and desires for cultural diversity and an urban environment were key reasons why Vermonters chose to leave.

**In their words:
“Why did you choose to stay in Vermont?”**

The survey asked respondents to explain in their own words why they decided to stay in the state. The survey yielded hundreds of written comments, which will be further analyzed; below is a small sample.

“Until my children reach an age that they can decide where they want to live, I plan to stay in my hometown; give them roots to always come home to and where they can say ‘I used to walk to grandma’s house.’”

“I am a 6th generation Vermonter. When my daughter was born, there were 5 generations (on maternal side) that were alive at the same time. We were all together quite often. How could I leave a great situation like that?”

“It’s home; I’ve never found any place I’d rather be.”

“Freedom and Unity.”

-“I never felt the need to live elsewhere.”

“I was born here and, if I’m to die, I aim to do that here too.”

“Want to leave VT, but stuck here right now.”

“It’s the only place that feels like home. I left only to confirm that I wanted to be here. I choose to be here and have found a way to make a living that is fulfilling and enables me to live comfortably here.”

“Vermont is like a family with its own flag.”

“Family, rural country life, community, landscape... The Democrats are not the reason I love it here.”

Table 8. Factors Explaining Why Leavers Choose to Live Outside of Vermont, as Percentage of Leavers

Reason	Percent
My work is located outside VT	37.9
I can earn more money outside of VT	37.2
Want to live in area w/greater cultural diversity	26
Prefer to live in a larger urban area	23.5
VT's cost of living is too high	18.7
VT's cold weather is intolerable	18.3
It would not be possible to do my work in VT	14.1
Partner does not want to live in VT	14.1
Extended family lives outside VT	6.4
I never enjoyed living in VT	5.5
Can't do my favorite recreational activities in VT	3.2

How Leavers Maintain Connections to Vermont

The survey asked Leaver respondents to identify the kinds of attachments and connections they maintained with the state of Vermont, or to people living there. Many reported returning to Vermont to visit family and friends. Only a very small percentage of Leavers (4.2%) had not visited in a long time and did not plan to visit. Very few plan to retire in Vermont.

- 79% visit family
- 47.3% visit friends from time to time
- 30% have considered moving back, but have made no serious attempts
- 21.7% occasionally vacation in Vermont
- 19.7% have considered moving back but don't have the right opportunity yet
- Almost 10% own a second home or camp
- 8.7% say they would like to retire in Vermont
- 1.2% return to Vermont to hunt

In their words:
“Why did you choose to move out of Vermont?”

The survey asked Leavers to explain in their own words why they decided to live outside of Vermont. Analysis of this data is ongoing and a small selection of the responses follows below:

“Vermont is expensive relative to wages earned, homogeneous, and lack, in most areas, ethnic and cultural diversity.”

“I am more of a city girl.”

“There is a big amazing world out there, I would feel like I lost out if I didn't get out and see it.”

“I only miss summer, frankly. Vermont is not a place with many opportunities in general.”

“Exposure to different cultures, different ideas, better weather, and ocean.”

“Job opportunities and the potential for professional growth are greater outside of Vermont unfortunately.”

“Greater opportunity for employment, more diversity, and larger urban environments with lower costs of living are available elsewhere.”



In their words: What Leavers Miss About Vermont

"All of it."

"Autumn, rural towns, snow."

"Beauty, kind people, pride in Vermont."

"Being able to say I'm from Vermont."

"Family."

"I will always consider myself a Vermonter. I am very proud that I was born and raised there. I am very grateful for growing up in the country. I have a great love of nature. I miss the seasons. I miss sugaring, foliage, the smell of cow and horse manure, the smell of a just-hayed field, the smell of red clover. I could go on and on."

"It's home."

"It's not something I can put into words."

"The landscape and its people."

"The way it used to be."

"The intense year round color of the sky, the smell of the woods, the intellectual stimulation, outdoor habits, environmental stewardship, focus on things other than mall crawling, cold streams, clear water, Fall, Spring, Winter, Summer, dark earth, dirt roads, good water, and of course, Vermonters, oh and covered bridges, riding bicycles, sugaring, sharing potlucks with real pies, cemeteries with headstones, and all of my friends and and and and."

Homesickness and Nostalgia

Eighty-five (85%) of the Leavers stated that they miss or feel homesick for Vermont. When asked to describe what they missed, they named family, friends, landscape features like mountains, hills, woods, lakes, the seasons, and the Vermont people. A follow-up survey of Leavers will explore this topic in more depth.

Returnees listed family, landscape, and Vermont's culture and community as top reasons for coming back.

Why Returnees Move Back to Vermont: Family, Landscape, Culture

Returnees expressed multiple reasons for moving back to Vermont. Three factors—family, landscape, and Vermont's culture and community—were cited by more than 40% of Returnees.

Employment—defined by a new job or an existing job—was not a primary reason that survey respondents returned to the state. Further analysis of these patterns is ongoing.

In their words: Leavers reminisce about Vermont

"I hardly ever go, but dream of going back every day."

"I still call Vermont 'home,' even though we haven't lived there in years!"

Table 9. Factors Explaining Why Survey Respondents Chose to Move Back to Vermont, as Percentage of All Returnees

Reason	Percent
Missed my family	49.5
Missed the VT landscape	45.2
Missed VT culture/community	43.7
Appreciate VT's small size	39.8
Always wanted to return	38.9
Wanted to raise children in VT	36.6
Enjoy VT's recreational activities	26.2
Viewed my time away from VT as temporary	25.9
New job opportunity allowed me to move back	17.4
Missed friends	15.3
Things didn't work out in previous location	12.3
Partner wanted to move to VT	11
Returned to care for a family member	10
Work brought me back	7.7
Wanted to retire to VT	5.2

**In their words:
Why Returnees Moved Back to Vermont**

Below is a selection of comments that Returnees wrote in response to the question "Explain in your own words why you moved back to Vermont."

Analysis of the written response data is ongoing.

"I wanted my children to live near my parents."

"Partner wanted to return."

"Because I am a Vermonter. I love it here."

"Cost of living and quality of life while raising our children."

"Family."

"It was time to come home."



Returnees’ Future Residential Plans

The survey asked Returnees if they planned to remain in Vermont or move away in the future. About half of the Returnees said they planned to remain permanently in Vermont. Just over one-quarter of Returnees reported that they would prefer to live part-time in Vermont, while nearly 20% said they would like to move away permanently, either now or in the future.

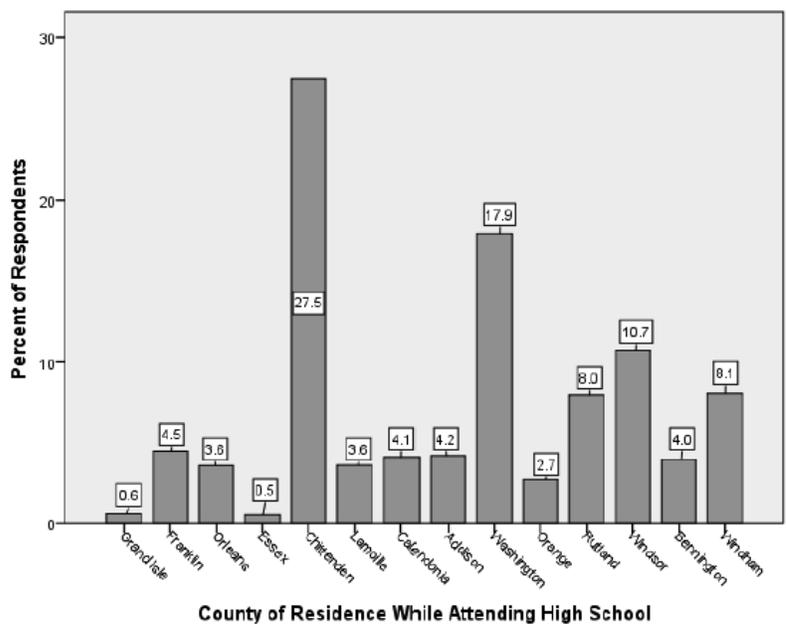
Many Returnees may regard themselves as mobile—not permanent, full-time Vermonters.

The results suggested that many Returnees may regard themselves as mobile and not as permanent, full-time residents of Vermont. Note that respondents were able to select more than one response to this question.

Table 10. Returnees’ Future Residential Plans, as Percentage of Total Returnee Respondents

Plan to remain in VT	50.7
Would like to live part-time in VT and part-time elsewhere	25.9
Likely more outside of VT but return again	12.1
Would like to retire outside of VT	11.2
Plan to move permanently	10.3
Would like to move out of VT now, but don’t have the opportunity	8.6

Figure 3. Respondents’ County of Residence While Attending High School as a Percentage of Total Respondents



Geographies of Staying, Leaving, and Returning

The survey captured the towns in which respondents lived while attending high school—and, for those who left Vermont (both Leavers and Returnees), where they lived after leaving the state. Further, the survey asked Stayers and Leavers to identify the town in which they presently live. These geographic data informed an analysis of migration patterns within Vermont, and also shows the most popular residential destinations for those who leave the state.

Total Respondents by County during High School

While responses came from people who lived in all fourteen of Vermont's counties, the greatest percentage (27.5%) lived in Chittenden County while attending high school; the second highest percentage (17.9 %) lived in Washington County, and the third highest percentage (10.7%) lived in Windsor County.



Migration Patterns Within Vermont

An analysis of Stayers' and Returnees' home counties compared to their present county of residence yielded two patterns: migration from outside of Chittenden County into Chittenden County, and migration from outside Washington County into Washington County.

A total of 1007 Stayers provided both their town of residence while in high school and their present town of residence. Of the 395 Stayers who currently lived in Chittenden County, 55.6% lived there while in high school, while 44.3% moved into the county from elsewhere in Vermont. This pattern of movement into Chittenden County was also evident among people who attended high school in Vermont, left the state, and later returned.

There was a total of 573 Returnees who listed both their town of residence in high school and their present town of residence. Of these, 203 (35.4%) currently lived in Chittenden County. Of these Returnees who resided in Chittenden County, 51.7% had lived in the county when attending high school, while 48.3% lived in another Vermont county when attending high school, and moved into Chittenden County when they returned to Vermont after a period of time living outside the state.

There was a similar pattern of migration into Washington County, although less pronounced. Of the Stayers, 145 currently lived in Washington County, yet only 101 (70%) of Stayers lived there while in high school. Thirty percent (30%, n=44) of the Stayers who currently lived in Washington County had moved there from another county in Vermont. The pattern was slightly more pronounced among Returnees. Nearly seventeen percent (16.8 %) of returnees currently lived in Washington County (96 respondents). Of these, 60.4% had lived in the county when attending high school, but 39.6% did not live there during high school yet moved into the county when they returned to Vermont.

Thus, there appears to be a fairly clear picture of migration toward Chittenden and Washington counties from other areas of the state and among those who left the state and returned.

Regional Migration

The survey tracked all locations where Leavers and Returnees had lived outside of Vermont. The most popular destination for former residents of Vermont was the Northeast US (Returnees 72.6%, Leavers 69.7%). The second most popular location is the Southern US (Returnees: 30%, Leavers 31%). Of note are the percentage of respondents who had lived outside the US and Canada.

Nearly twenty percent (19.4%) of Returnees and fifteen percent (15%) of Leavers had lived in countries other than US and Canada including: France, Armenia, Vietnam, Kenya, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Colombia, Brazil, Germany, Qatar, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Thailand, India, Ireland, Australia, Taiwan, Morocco, Spain, China, Ecuador, and Norway. When Canada is included with other countries outside of the US, 17.9% of Leavers, and 21.5% of Returnees have resided in an international location.

Indeed, in this data set, it was more likely that a respondent who had moved out of Vermont had lived outside the country than in the Midwest or Southwest of the United States.

It was more likely that a respondent who had moved out of Vermont had lived outside the country than in the Midwest or Southwest.

Figure 4. Present County of Residence for Stayers, as Percent of Total Stayers

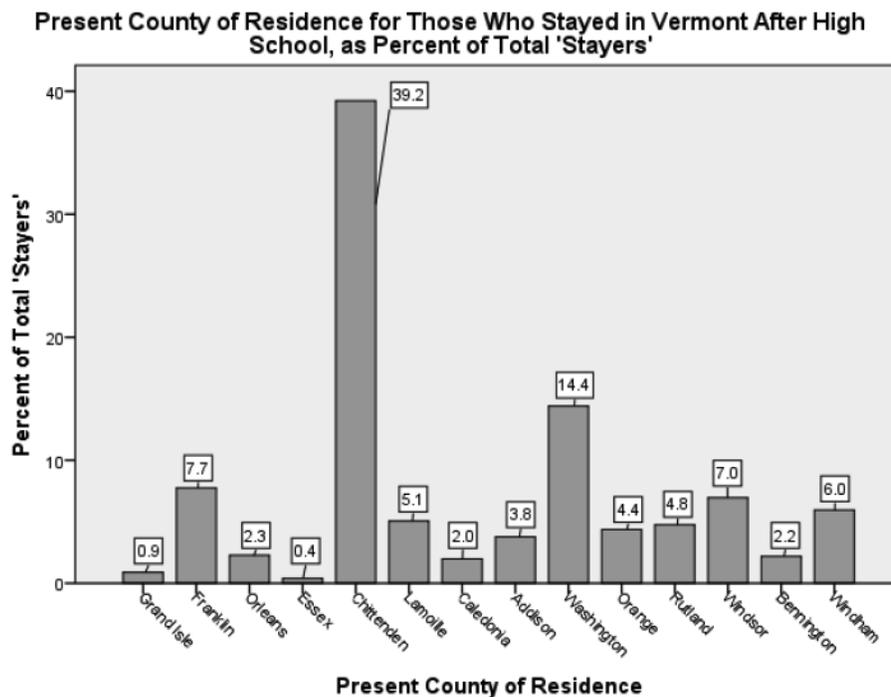


Figure 5. Present County of Residence for Returnees to Vermont, as Percentage of Total Returnees

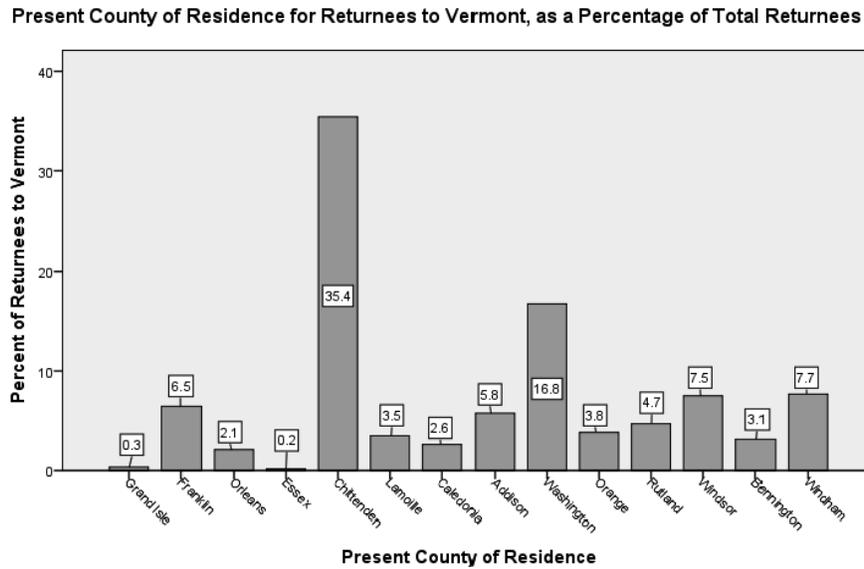


Table 11. Locations where Leavers have Lived Outside of Vermont, as a Percentage of Total Leavers

Location	Percent
Northeast United States	69.7
Southern US	31
West Coast US	21.5
Outside the US	17.9
Midwest US	16.5
Outside the US and Canada	15.1
Southwest US	12.1
Mountain West US	11.6
HI, AK, Puerto Rico, US territory	3.6
Canada	2.8

Table 12. Where Returnees have Lived Outside of Vermont, as a Percentage of Total Returnees

Location	Percent
Northeast United States	72.6
Southern US	30.0
Outside the US (including Canada)	21.5
Outside the US and Canada	19.4
West Coast	19.1
Midwest	12.5
Southwest	10.0
Mountain West	8.8
HI, AK, Puerto Rico, other US territories	3.0
Canada	2.1

Many respondents were interested and enthusiastic about sharing their migration experiences.

Willingness to Participate in Additional Research

Responses to the survey were anonymous. However, the survey included a section where the respondent could give their contact information if they were willing to be contacted in the future for further questions or additional research. Well over half of the respondents (58.1%) volunteered their contact information. This indicates a general interest and enthusiasm in the research topic.



What's Next? Questions for Future Research and Action

While the initial results of the Vermont Roots Migration Survey provide insight into the factors that influence Vermont youth to stay in, leave, and return to Vermont, they also raise additional questions. Some of these include:

- What is the relationship between educational attainment and residential decisions?
- Would Leavers return to Vermont if they had employment opportunities in their fields and at comparable levels of compensation?
- What are the connections between place identity and personal identity for people who grow up in Vermont?
- What kinds of material, social, and economic attachments do those who move out of Vermont maintain with Vermont?
- How do social and economic conditions when one is 20-30 years old impact out-migration?

The high response rate indicates the genuine interest that those who grew up in Vermont hold for their home state.

While some answers can be attained from further statistical and qualitative analyses of the data, additional research is clearly needed. Much of this additional research can be conducted with the respondents who generously provided their contact information. The high response rate indicates the genuine interest that those who grew up in Vermont hold for their home state.

The research team intends to expand upon these initial findings in several scholarly directions, including but not limited to:

- Policy implications
- Scholarly articles on the nature of place-based identity
- Further research into migration decision-making
- Analyses of migration on Vermont's viability from community, economic, and cultural perspectives .

There is more analysis to be done, both with the rich data the survey generated, and in pursuit of new research questions originating from these initial results. We thank survey respondents for sharing their stories and look forward to additional collaboration.



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