

# JUST GETTING BY

A documentary film by Bess O'Brien



## What you can do!

**GIVE TIME:** Volunteer at a shelter or food shelf. Go to the VT Food Bank site to find your local food shelf.

**GIVE IN-KIND:** Donate items like warm clothing, socks, toiletry and /hygiene items to local nonprofits.

**SHOW SUPPORT:** Repost news stories or content from trusted sources on social media to help raise awareness.

**WRITE LETTERS** to the editor to back progressive state and local policies that support our unhoused neighbors.

**DONATE DOLLARS** to your local social service/ housing and or food shelf.

**READ THE VERMONT FOOD SECURITY ROADMAP 2035** you can find this at the Farm to Plate website.

**JOIN YOUR REGIONAL HUNGER COUNCIL** to network and learn about achieving food security for everyone who lives in Vermont — go to Hunger Free Vermont for more info.

**HOST A SMALL HOUSE PARTY** for the Housing and Homeless Alliance of Vermont to help raise awareness and get neighbors involved!

**LEARN ABOUT 3SQUARESVT** and get help applying: call 1-855-855-6181, email [3SVT@vtfoodbank.org](mailto:3SVT@vtfoodbank.org), Food supports for eligible adults over 60 <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/share-food/csfp>.

**SHARE YOUR VOICE WITH LOCAL LEGISLATORS** and tell them why you care about food and housing security or call the Sargent at Arms office and leave a message: (802) 828-2228.

**VOLUNTEER AT CHURCHES** to help with food kitchens, free meals and free clothing.

**SHARE FOOD AND CLOTHES AT LOCAL SCHOOLS** — often schools have ongoing food donations/drives .

**FOOD CO-OPS** - there are many and most if not all of them in Vermont have some sort of program already in place to donate food. Just have to call and ask them what their systems are and you can contribute.

**OFFER TO BUY HOMELESS PEOPLE A SIMPLE MEAL** or take them out to eat instead of giving money.

*(Personal story....when I (Angie) was a kid about once a month my parents would engage with a random homeless person asking for money and offer them a meal instead - we'd usually take them to a buffet restaurant. It was a pretty impactful experience as a kid to see my family doing this and participate. My dad would always explain that anyone could be that person through just pure bad luck and circumstance.)*

**DONATE UNWANTED HOME ITEMS** to places like the Resource or the Restore, Goodwill, etc - even if someone is homeless they still highly utilize stores like this for clothes and basic supplies.

**PUT TOGETHER A HYGIENE KIT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.** The idea is to make baggies of items that could be useful (toothbrush and toothpaste, tissues, feminine hygiene products, gloves, snacks, etc. )You can hand these out to folks you meet on the street!

**USE YOUR VOICE, TALK ABOUT THIS MOVIE,** talk about what you learned! Get people to show the movie in their towns!

**DONATE OR VOLUNTEER AT A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT**

**CONSTRUCT AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT!**

Go to <https://accd.vermont.gov/adu>

**SHARE YOUR HOME @ HOME SHARE VERMONT.ORG!**

**OFFER HARD SKILLS LIKE GRANT WRITING,** community outreach, administration to local food and housing non-profits

**HELP TO, DRIVE AND PICK UP FOOD FOR FOOD SHELVES.**

**LEARN ABOUT UVM'S EFNEP PROGRAM.** They offer six sessions to educate families, teens/children, and pregnant women how to cook/shop for nutritious meals while on a tight budget. Great way to build out knowledge within households that can be passed down to future generations.

**Join the Poor People's Campaign!**

Remember the last line of the movie where Colby says:

**“We’re not burdens. We’re People.”**

# Creating a Vermont that works for all

We want a state that keeps the promises we make in law to ensure every Vermonter has “*health, housing, dignified work, education, food, social security, and a healthy environment.*” [-32 V.S.A. § 306a](#)

## Too many Vermonters struggle to afford housing.

In the wake of the pandemic, the share of unhoused individuals and families in Vermont ballooned, and we now have one of the highest per-capita shares in the nation. Rent prices jumped, as did the cost of primary homes. It’s both a supply problem and a cost problem.

## Families of all types can’t meet their basic needs.

More than half of single-adult households couldn’t cover the cost of food, housing, and other necessities, whether they had kids or not. Even with two earners, many households struggled to cover the costs of those basic needs.

## We have the resources to solve these problems.

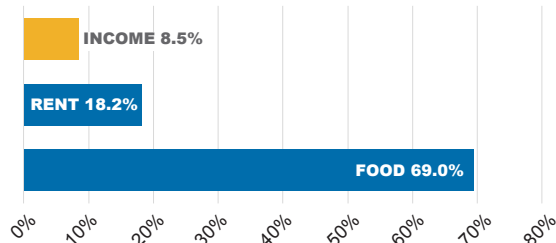
Increasing income inequality and an unfair tax system are driving these challenges. Wages at the low end have not kept up with inflation. At the same time, more and more wealth is accumulating at the top and not subject to taxes.

## So how can we change any of this?

We know what works. It’s time to work collectively as a state to meet the needs of Vermonters like Kassim and Elysia and their families. Public investments like the policy changes described below would help ensure the economic security of all Vermonters.

## Vermont renters’ incomes haven’t kept up with their food and housing costs

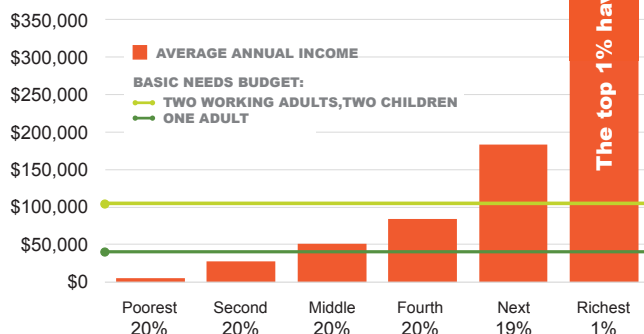
Growth in median renter income, median rent and food, 2001-2023



Data sources: ACS Community Survey, 2001-2023, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis ©2024 Public Assets Institute

## Many low- and middle-income Vermonters fall short of their basic needs, but the top 1% have over \$1 million left

Average annual adjusted gross income by quintile and basic needs budget, 2022



Data sources: Vermont Joint Fiscal Office; Vermont Department of Taxes ©2024 Public Assets Institute

Idea	Status	Result
Anti-poverty refundable tax credits	Child Tax Credit & Earned Income Tax Credit enacted, but could be expanded	\$78M to Vermont workers & families in 2022
Increased childcare subsidies	Halfway enacted, but more to go	Childcare cheaper for 7,500 VT families, but many still need help
Investments in affordable housing (rental subsidies, rehab existing units, build new units)	A 10-year plan passed the House in 2024 but not enacted	Hundreds of Vermonters kicked out of shelter since 2023
Paid family and medical leave	Multiple attempts, either stalled in the Legislature or vetoed by the governor	2/3 of Vermont workers lack paid leave
A fairer tax system where the wealthy pay their fair share	New tax bracket on high-income Vermonters passed the House in 2024 but not enacted	The current system is unfair and inadequate to meet the needs of Vermonters

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