Public programs lifted 3,000 Vermont kids out of poverty
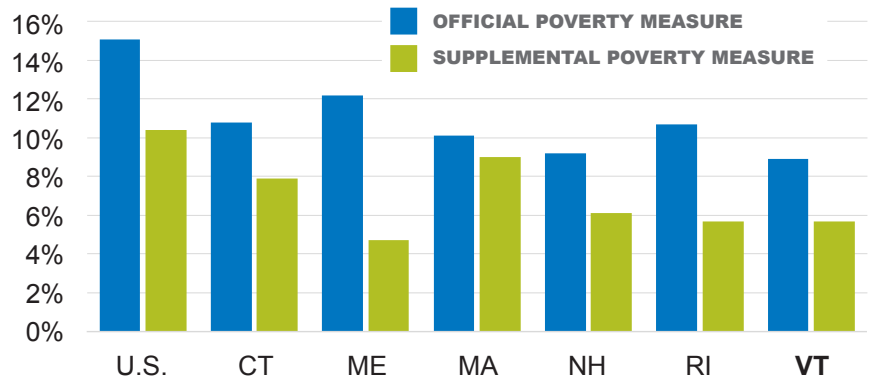
New Census data offer proof that federal and state governments can significantly reduce child poverty. Almost 9 percent of Vermont's kids lived in poverty, according to the three-year average of the federal official poverty measure for 2021-2023. However, the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)—which factors in state and federal government programs such as universal school meals, food and utility assistance, and the child tax credit—came in 3 percentage points lower, at less than 6 percent for the same period. The difference in poverty rates was evident across New England, where anti-poverty programs are generally strong. In Vermont, the 3-percentage-point difference between the two measures accounted for roughly 3,000 children.

Accurate measure shows New England's progress fighting child poverty Official and Supplemental Poverty Measures for childhood poverty, 3-year average, 2021-2023

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau
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The SPM is a more comprehensive and accurate measure of poverty than the official poverty level. While the latter is based only on cash income and food costs, the SPM includes cash income and noncash benefits such as tax credits, food assistance, and childcare and health care subsidies; the measure also defines the cost of living more broadly, including food, clothing, shelter, utilities, and medical expenses. When figuring in public programs, Vermont had the ninth-lowest childhood poverty rate in the nation between 2021 and 2023.

THIS MONTH

LATEST BLS DATA - OCTOBER 22, 2024			
	SEP 2024	AUG 2024	SEP 2023
Labor Force	357,965	357,983	352,501
Employment	350,031	350,241	344,754
Unemployment	7,934	7,742	7,747
Unemployment Rate	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Vermont's labor force—those working and those available for work—shrank in September for the first time in 47 months. But even with the slight dip, the workforce remains at levels the state has not seen in over a decade, last month totaling 357,965 workers.