

Chapter 8 : Race and ethnicity

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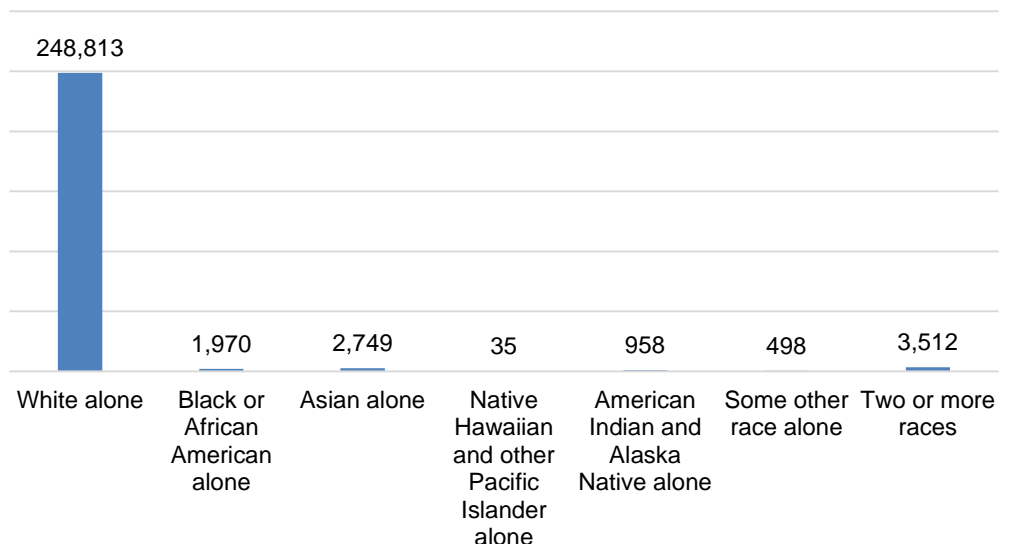
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Householder race

Vermont is among the least racially diverse states in the nation, with 96.2% of its households headed by someone who is white alone. Only Maine has a smaller share of non-white residents. In comparison, 77% of U.S. households are white.¹ Vermont is also ethnically homogenous, with just 1.8% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 18% nationally.² Of Vermont's 9,722 non-white households, the most common racial category is multiracial, followed by Asian households.

Figure 8-1: Estimated Vermont households by race of householder



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B25003A-G) from housingdata.org.

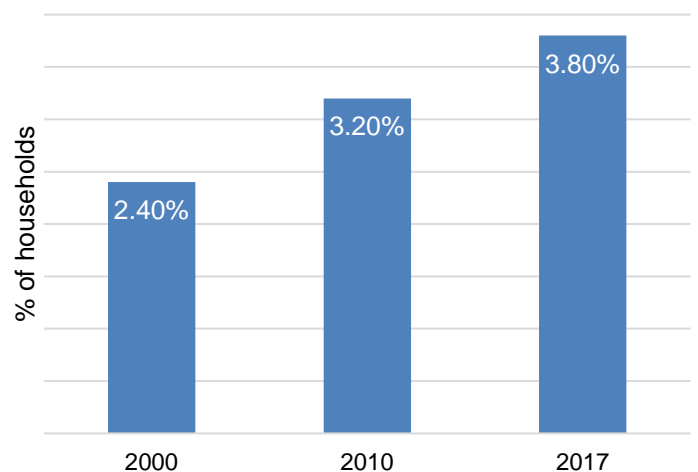
Although the number of non-white households is small, Vermont is slowly beginning to become more diverse, with non-white households increasing by 1.4% since 2000.

Vermont's youth population is more diverse, with 8.6% of children under the age of 17 identified as non-white.³ This suggests that Vermont will become more ethnically and racially diverse over time, although its youth population is still significantly less diverse than the U.S. as a whole.

Homeownership by race

Vermont has a disproportionately low homeownership rate among households that are not white-alone. Vermont's homeownership rate among white households is 71%, while black households have a rate of just 22%. Nationally, 69% of white households are homeowners and 42% of black households are homeowners.

Figure 8-2: Percentage of non-white Vermont households



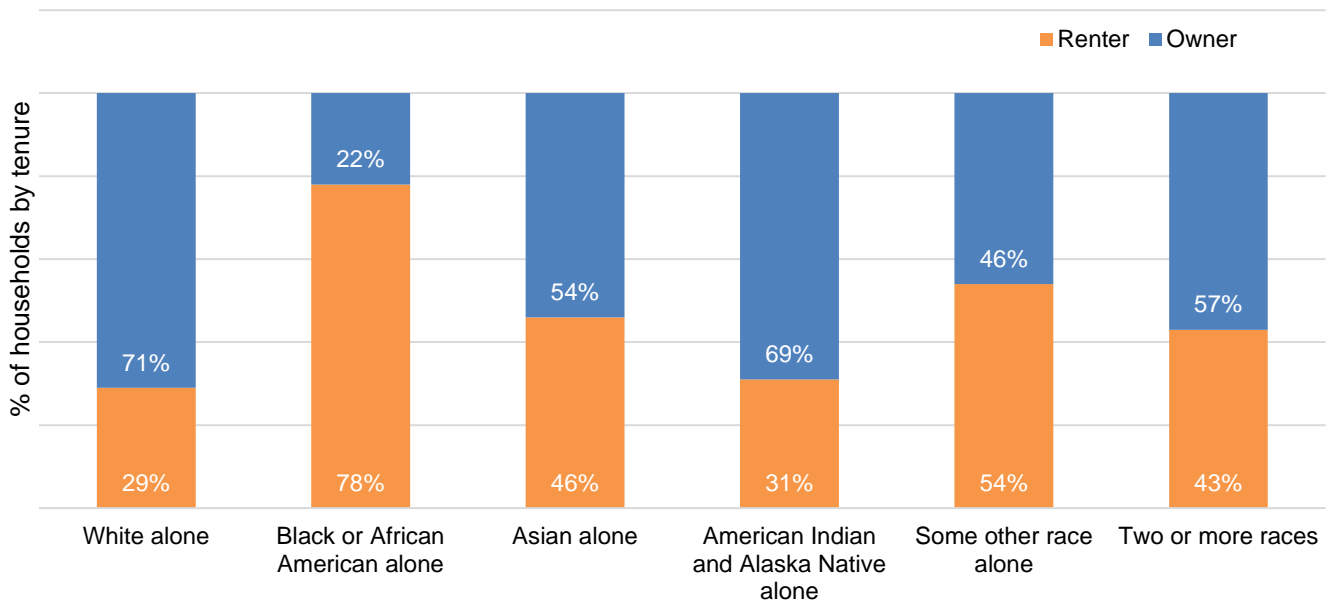
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B25006), U.S. Decennial Census, 2000-2010 (Table H014).

¹ U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B25006)

² U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B03003)

³ U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B01001, B01001A)

Figure 8-3: Percentage of Vermont homeowners and renters by race of householder



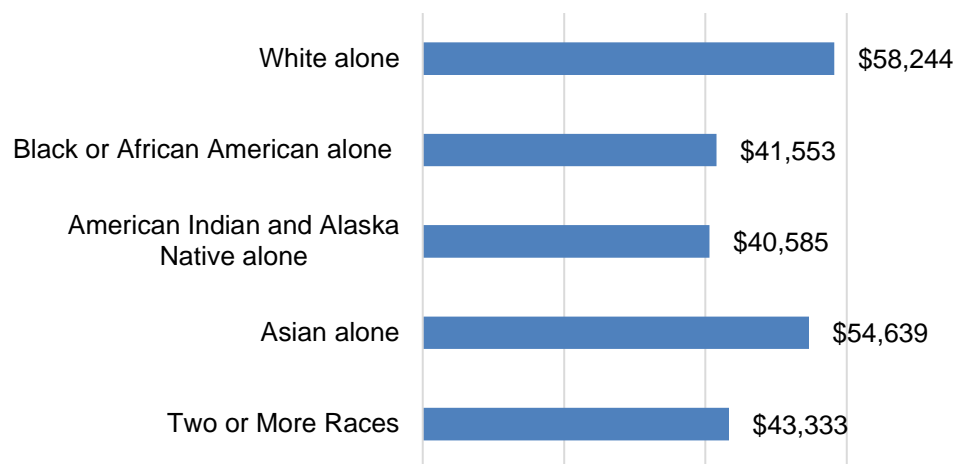
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B25003A-G) from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org). The homeownership rate among “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders alone” is not included here due to a high margin of error.

Household income by race

Vermont’s non-white households have lower median household incomes than white households.⁴ While household incomes for Asian households approached that of white households, black and American Indian households were considerably lower.

Vermont’s non-white households are also more likely to have low incomes than white-alone households. Sixty three percent of American Indian households and

Figure 8-4: Vermont median household income by race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B19013A-G). The median household incomes among “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders alone” and “Some other race alone” are not included here due to high margins of error.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B25119) from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org).

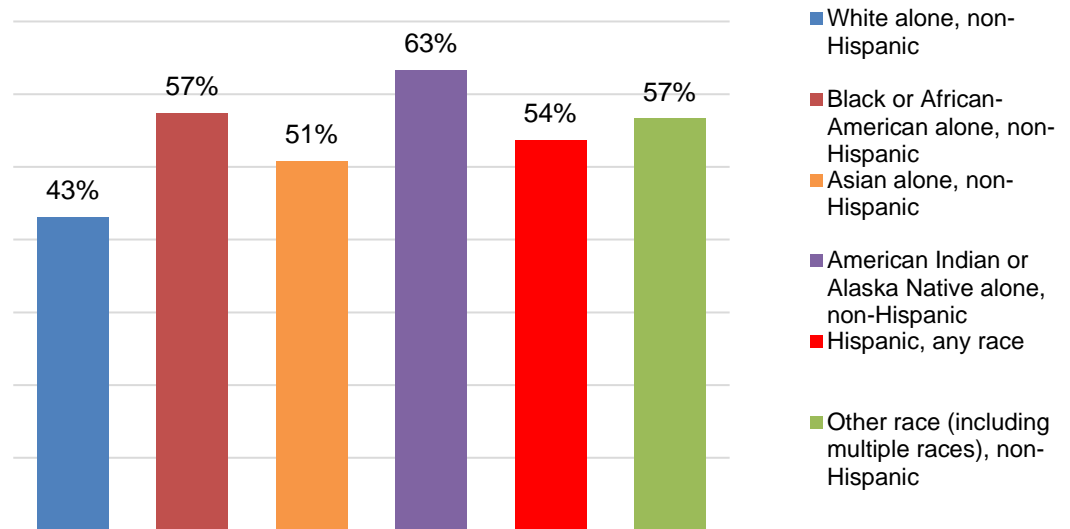
57% of black or other race households were earned less than 80% of area median family income⁵, far more than the 43% of the white-alone households.

New Americans

Vermont has 28,213 residents that were born outside the United States, a little under 5% of its population.⁶ Of these, an estimated 5,731 have entered the country in 2010 or later. While these New American households are from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, they are much more likely to be non-white than Vermont as a whole. Just 37.4% of New Americans are identified as white, compared to 98.6% of all Vermonters. Asian was the most common racial group of Vermont New Americans.

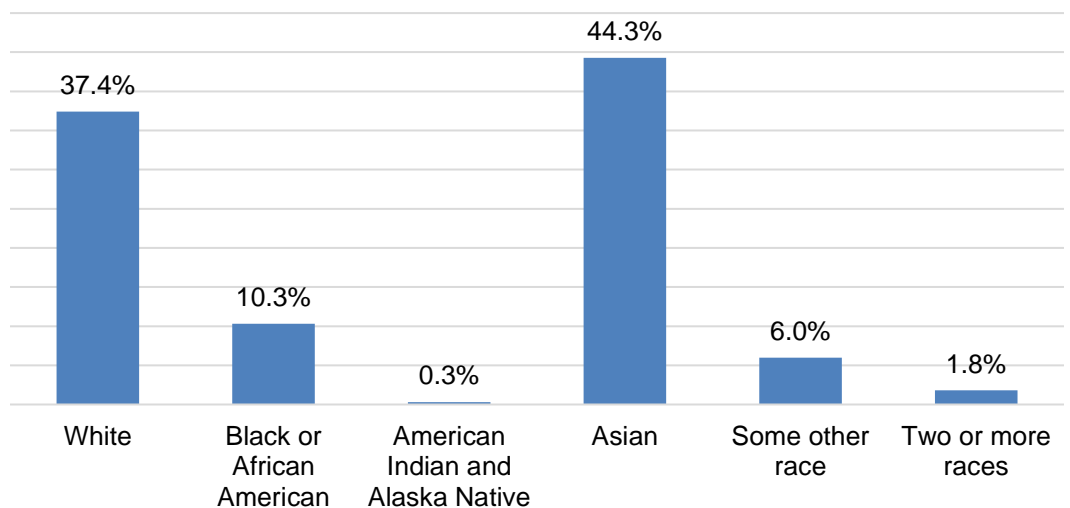
Correspondingly, 55% of Vermont’s New Americans were born in Asia—more than any other country.

Figure 8-5: Percentage of Vermont households below 80% of median family income



Source: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2012-2016. The homeownership rate among “Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic” is not included here due to a high margin of error.

Figure 8-6: Race of foreign-born Vermont population that entered U.S. in 2010 or later



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S0502)

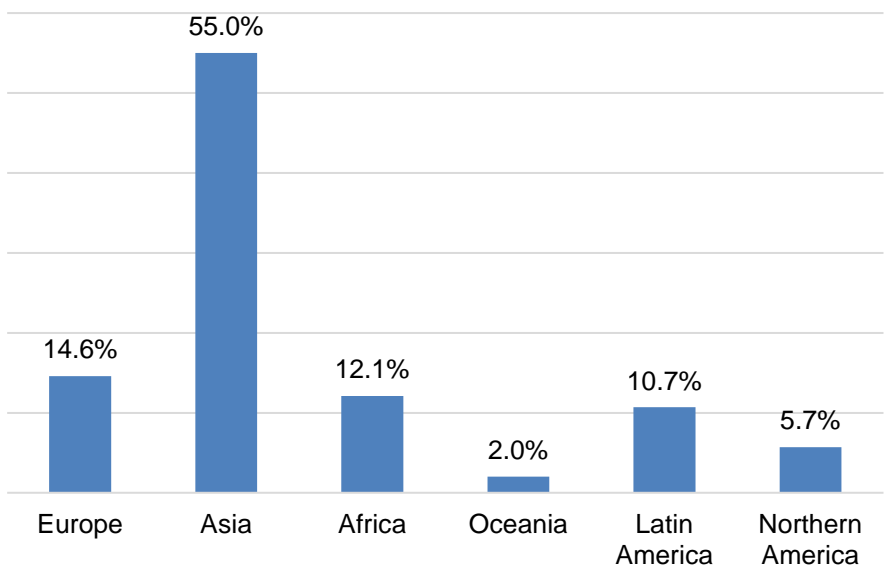
⁵ HUD’s area median family income for 2016 was \$84,030 for the Burlington-South Burlington MSA and less than that amount for the remainder of the state.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S0502).

Vermont's New American households earn less than the state's residents overall. With an estimated median household income of \$45,884, compared to \$54,276 statewide. Vermont households led by someone born outside the United States are less likely to own their own homes than other Vermonters, with 37.9% renting compared to 29.5% of native-born residents.

Attracting immigrants to Vermont could potentially help reverse Vermont's long-term trend towards population decline. New Americans have been cited as an important sector of the workforce by many Vermont employers.⁷ However, media outlets have reported several instances of New Americans leaving the state, often citing the high cost of housing in Vermont.⁸

Figure 8-7: Region of birth of foreign-born Vermont population that entered U.S. in 2010 or later



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table S0502)

A recent national study on refugees found that those who left their initial resettlement site for a different state tended to move to places with larger ethnic enclaves or with greater economic opportunities.⁹ The study did not find a strong connection between migration choices and state policy, including the availability of welfare benefits.

Housing problems by race and ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) creates special tabulations of American Community Survey (ACS) data to estimate the number of households with housing problems. This can include that the housing unit lacks complete kitchen facilities, that the housing unit lacks complete plumbing, that the household is overcrowded, and/or that the household is cost burdened. A household is categorized as having a housing problem if it has any one or more of these four problems.¹⁰ Cost-burden is the most common housing problem.

⁷ [Seven Days](#), "Vermont Senate Seeks to Tear Down Employment Barriers for New Americans", February 20, 2019.

⁸ [Seven Days](#), "As New Americans Leave Vermont, State Seeks Ways to Be More Hospitable", January 15, 2020.

⁹ Mossad, Nadwa and Ferwerda, Jeremy and Lawrence, Duncan and Weinstein, Jeremy M. and Hainmueller, Jens, *In Search of Opportunity and Community: The Secondary Migration of Refugees in the United States* (September 24, 2019).

¹⁰ Overcrowding is defined here as having more than 1 person per room of the unit. Cost burdened is defined as monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceeding 30% of monthly income.

In Vermont, although the majority of the households that have housing problems are white alone, housing problems are far more prevalent among non-white households. While a little over one third of white households have housing problems, around half of all black, Asian, American Indian or “other race” households have housing problems.

Figure 8-8: Housing problems by race and ethnicity

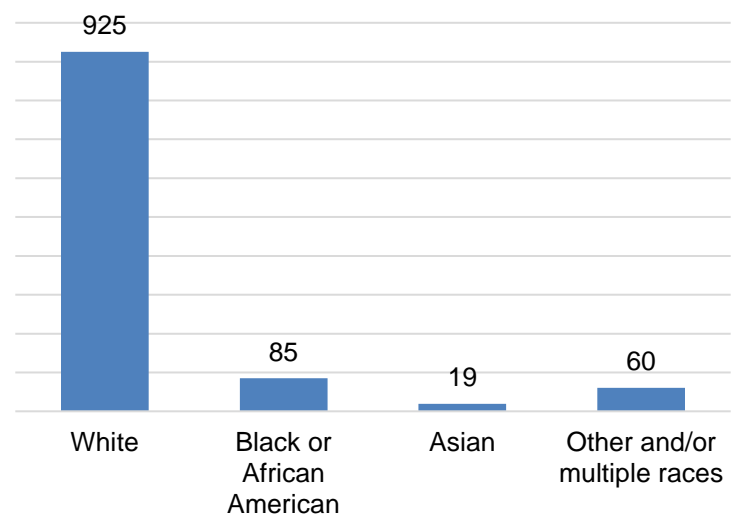
Race/ethnicity	Vermont households with housing problems	All Vermont households	Percentage of households
White alone, non-Hispanic	85,230	245,475	35%
Black or African-American alone, non-Hispanic	899	1,693	53%
Asian alone, non-Hispanic	1,270	2,595	49%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone, non-Hispanic	409	818	50%
Hispanic, any race	1,279	3,089	41%
Other race (including multiple races), non-Hispanic	1,693	3,412	50%

Source: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2012-2016. The homeownership rate among “Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic” is not included here due to a high margin of error.

Homelessness

Vermont also has a disproportionate number of non-white individuals who are homeless. Fifteen percent of homeless individuals identified by the 2019 Point in Time Count¹¹ were non-white, compared to 5% of the total population.¹² Homelessness among black Vermonters was particularly high, accounting for roughly 8% of the homeless population while making up just 1% of the total Vermont population.

Figure 8-9: Homeless individuals in Vermont, 2019



Source: 2019 Point in Time Count from the [Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness](#)

¹¹ The annual Point in Time (PIT) count tends to under-represent homelessness in Vermont. The count does not include households that are at risk of homeless or living with friends and family out of necessity (i.e. doubled-up or couch-surfing). It also only captures a single period in time. The number of homeless individuals who receive services throughout the year are roughly three times the number counted by the PIT survey.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017 (Table B02001)

Racial and ethnic discrimination

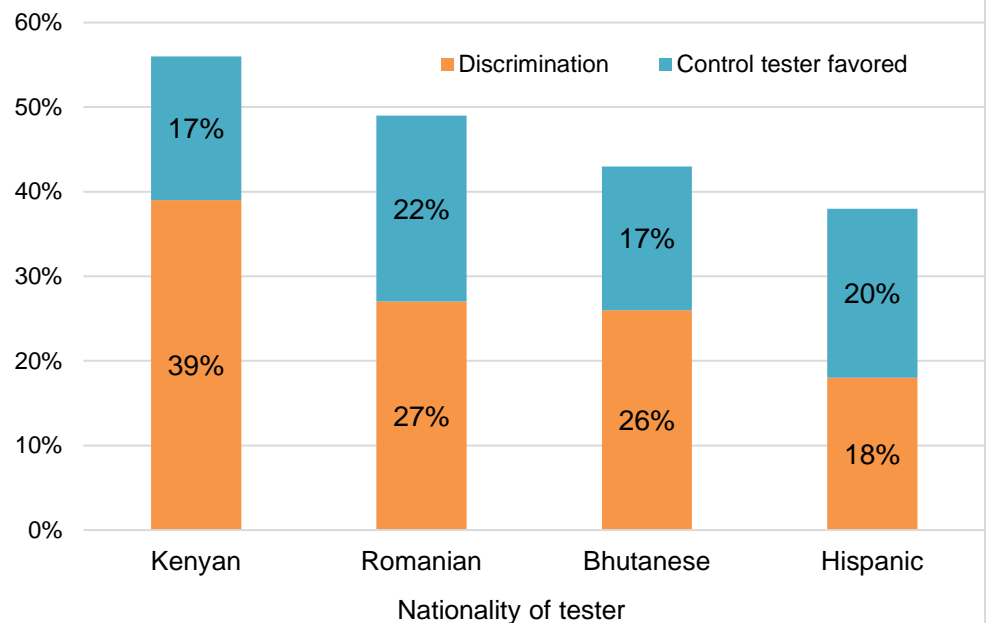
Both federal and state law prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin, among other characteristics.¹³ Formal complaints about housing discrimination registered with the Federal Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and/or the Vermont Human Rights Commission are rare. Between 2013 and 2016, 46 fair housing complaints were filed, with only three alleging discrimination on the basis of race or color.¹⁴ Disability was the most common basis of alleged discrimination.

The Housing Discrimination Law Project (HDLP) by Vermont Legal Aid has conducted fair housing testing audits to assess housing discrimination potentially faced by Vermont renters.¹⁵ In these tests, testers contacted housing providers via telephone to inquire about homes to rent. Testers who sounded white and of U.S origin over the telephone were paired as a control with a person who sounded non-white or of foreign origin.¹⁶ These interactions were rated based on whether the housing provider demonstrated discrimination¹⁷ or a preference for the control tester.

The results of the testing showed substantial discrimination against the subject testers, with 56% of housing providers showing some level of bias against the Kenyan subject.¹⁸

Vermont Legal Aid also conducted tests with actual visits of apartments, based on either complaints or systematic selection. Forty-eight percent of these tests found discrimination or a preference for the control tester based on national origin, while 36% found discrimination or a preference for the control tester with black subject testers.

Figure 8-10: Vermont Legal Aid discrimination testing results



Source: 2014 Rental Discrimination Report from vtlegalaid.org.

¹³ Under the federal Fair Housing Act and the Vermont Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act.

¹⁴ [Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice: State of Vermont 2017 Update](#)

¹⁵ [Rental Discrimination Report: Housing Discrimination in Vermont Rental Markets](#), Vermont Legal Aid, 2014

¹⁶ These veracity of impressions were verified by surveys, in which participants were asked to identify the race and national origin of the testers.

¹⁷ Evidence of discrimination in the tests included making openly discriminatory statements, responding immediately to the control tester and but never responding to the subject tester, or attempting to dissuade subject tester from renting the apartment while not doing so with the control tester.

¹⁸ Notably, both the Kenyan and Romanian testers were female, while the Bhutanese and Hispanic testers were male. The project could not determine if gender played a role in the testers' treatment.