

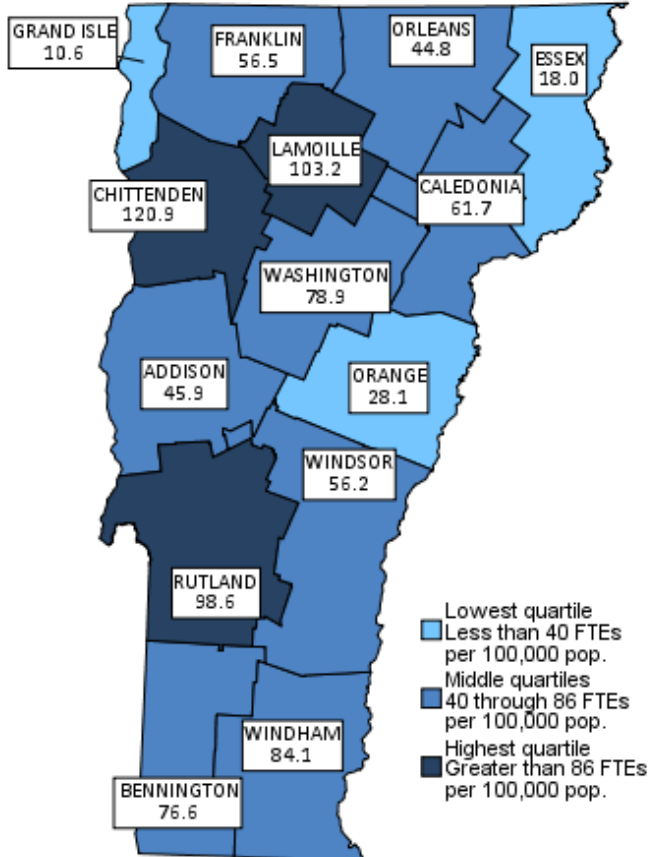
## Overview

This dental assistant census is part of the Vermont Department of Health's healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time. Vermont dental assistants are relicensed every two years. Data for this report were obtained during the September 2015 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Dental assistants work under the direct supervision of a dentist. They perform a variety of tasks ranging from patient care (including tooth polishing, patient education, taking impressions and assisting the dentist during procedures); to laboratory functions (including creating casts models and instrument sterilization); to administrative tasks such as placing orders for dental supplies.

Vermont has 3 levels of dental assistants. *Traditional Dental Assistants* primarily receive on the job training. *Certified Dental Assistants* have completed coursework and passed their Dental Assistant National Board exam. *Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDAs)* have additional training allowing them to complete "reversible" procedures such as filling teeth prepared by the dentist.

*Full Time Equivalents to 100,000 population ratio by county*



## In Brief

### Workforce

Survey period – September 2015  
 Response Rate: 98.0%  
 Licenses Renewed: 648  
 Active in VT: 596  
 Full Time Equivalents: 493.2

### Type of Assistant

% Traditional: 81.5%  
 % Certified: 9.9%  
 % Expanded Function (EFDA): 8.6%

### Demographics

% Female: 98.5%  
 Median Age: 44  
 % 60 or older: 10.1%

### Education and Training

% On the job training: 38.7%  
 % Technical school: 24.4%  
 % Certificate: 25.9%  
 % Educated in Northeast: 94.2%

### Current Employment

% Working in a dental office: 91.6%  
 % Working full-time at one site: 22.1%  
 % Working at multiple sites: 10.7%  
 % Planning to reduce hours or stop working: 3.6%  
 % Planning to retire: 0.3%

### Geographical Distribution

(Full time equivalents to 100,000 pop. ratio)  
 Highest: 120.9, Chittenden county  
 Lowest: 10.6, Grand Isle county

## Workforce

- 648 dental assistants renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 635 of them completed the workforce survey for a response rate of 98.0%
- Out of the 635 respondents, 596 (93.9%) indicated that they were actively working as dental assistant professionals in Vermont.
- Of the 39 respondents reporting a non-active status, 9 (23.1%) indicated they were planning to start working as a dental assistant in Vermont within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 596 dental assistants who reported being actively working as a dental assistant professional in Vermont.

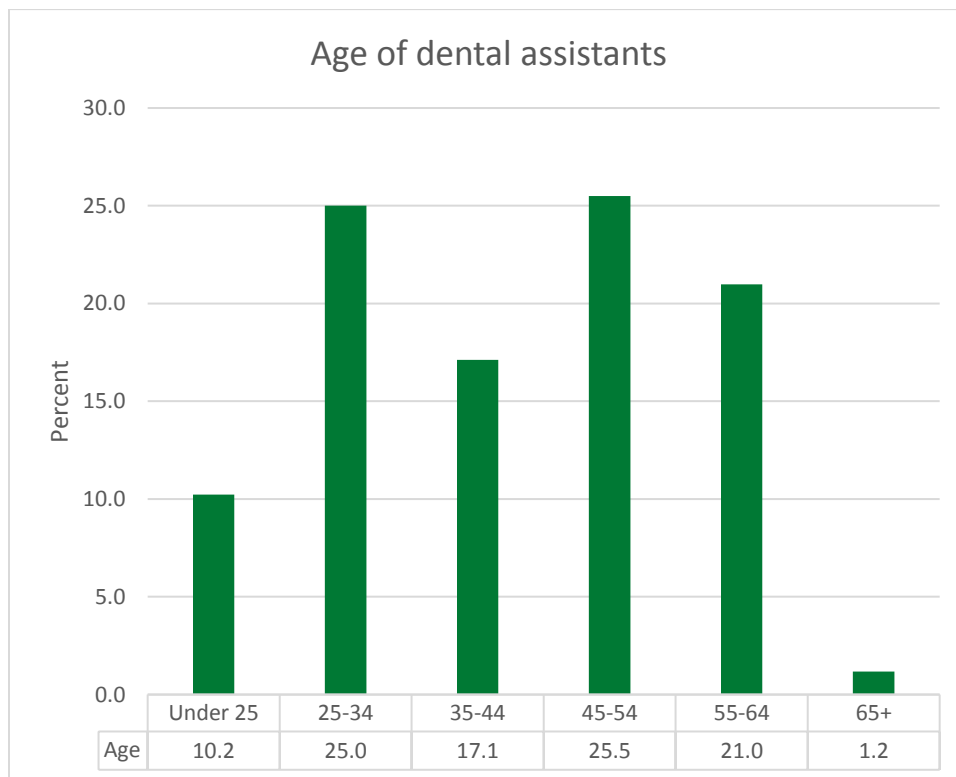
## Demographics

### Gender

- 98.5% of active dental assistants were female.

### Age

- 35.2% (210) of dental assistants were under 35 years of age.
- The lower number of assistants in the 35-44 group reflects overall employment patterns in the state.



## Education and Training

- When reporting their highest degree or certificate relevant to their dental assistant practice, 39% identified on the job training, 50% technical school training or a certificate/diploma, and 11.0% an Associate or higher degree.

Highest earned degree or certificate related to this license?	Number	Percent
On the job training	229	38.7
Technical School	144	24.4
Certificate/Diploma	153	25.9
Associate degree	46	7.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	19	3.2

- 80.5% of dental assistants received their training in the Vermont; and 13.7% in other Northeast states.
- Certified dental assistants can complete additional training to become expanded function dental assistants (EFDAs). 46.4% (51) of the certified dental assistants had completed the training.

## Practice Characteristics

- 89.3% of the assistants worked at a single location, 9.9% worked at 2 locations and 0.9% worked at 3 or more locations.
- Most dental assistants work in dental offices rather than other locations.

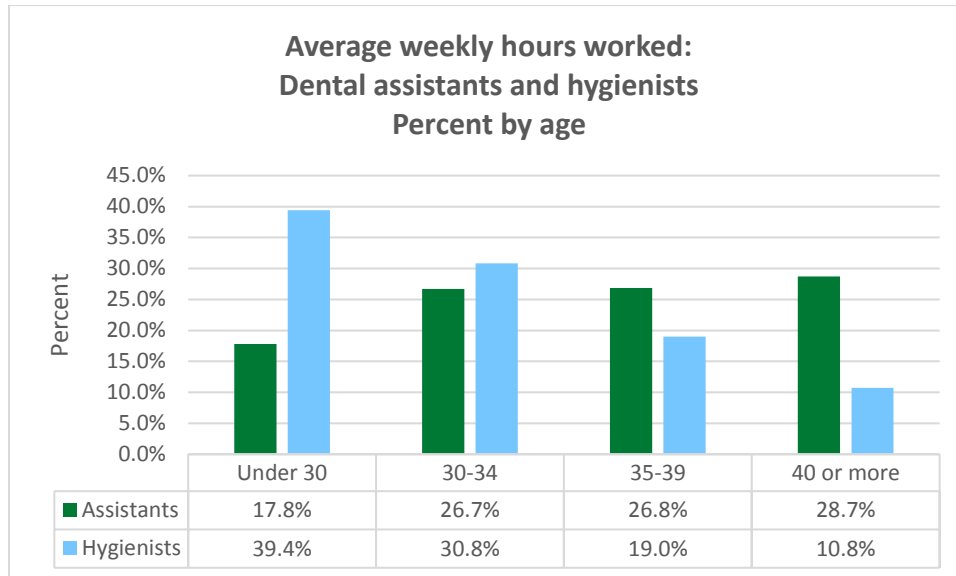
Main practice setting	Traditional	Certified	EFDA	Total
Solo practice	198 (41%)	21 (36%)	10(20%)	229 (38%)
2-dentist practice	129 (27%)	19 (32%)	14 (27%)	162 (27%)
3+ dentist practice	128 (26%)	10 (17%)	17 (33%)	155 (26%)
School / Head Start	25 (5%)	8 (14%)	8 (16%)	41 (7%)
Other	6 (1%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	9 (2%)

- A higher percentage of certified and EFDA assistants worked with a general practitioner than traditional assistants. A higher percentage of traditional assistants worked in orthodontics and oral and maxillofacial surgery than the other two groups.

Specialty of main location	Traditional	Certified	EFDA	Total
General practitioner	316 (65%)	49 (84%)	47 (94%)	412 (70%)
Pediatric Dentistry	11 (2%)	0	0	11 (2%)
Orthodontics	57 (12%)	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	60 (10%)
Periodontics	14 (3%)	0	0	14 (2%)
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	51 (11%)	3 (5%)	0	54 (9%)
Endodontics	15 (3%)	0	0	15 (3%)
Other	19 (4%)	4 (7%)	2 (4%)	25 (4%)

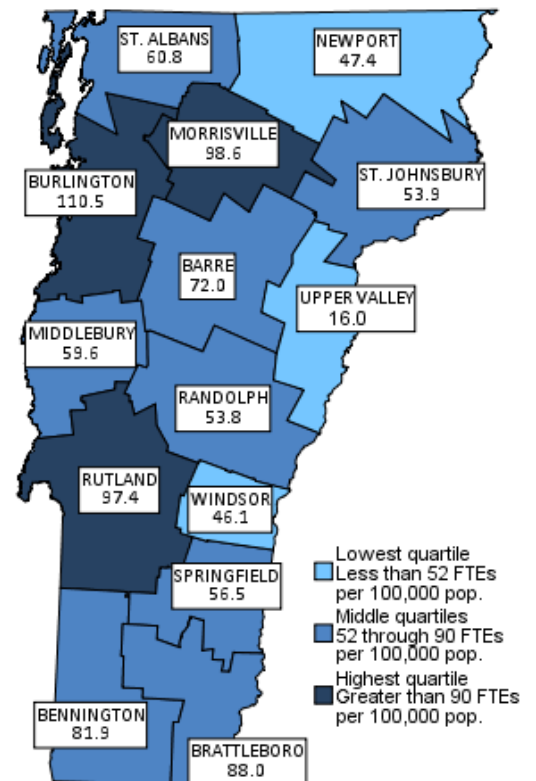
## Full Time Equivalent

- The 596 dental assistants provided 493.2 full time equivalents (FTEs).
- 171 (28.7%) of dental assistants worked an average of 40 or more hours per week.
- Compared to dental hygienists who were surveyed at the same time, dental assistants work more hours per week on average. The mean average weekly hours for dental assistants was 34.7, while the mean average weekly hours for hygienists was 28.8.



## Geographic Distribution

- The Health Care Areas in this report are those used by the Vermont Blueprint for Health, an initiative working to transform the way primary care and comprehensive health services are delivered and paid for (see <http://blueprintforhealth.vermont.gov/>).
- The area with the lowest ratio of dental assistant FTEs to population was the Upper Valley, with 16.0 assistant FTEs per 100,000 population. The area with the highest ratio was Burlington, with 110.5.
- Data are available for other regional definitions from the Division of Health Surveillance. See the contact information at the end of this report.



## Current Experience and Future Plans

- Median years dental assistants had been licensed in Vermont was 12 years.
- 21.0% (121) of dental assistants had been licensed for over 25 years.

### In the next 12 months

- 91.7% planned to continue working as they had been.
- 2.0% planned to increase their hours.
- 3.6% planned to reduce their hours or stop working as a dental assistant.
- 0.3% planned to retire.

## Observations

- Most dental assistants were female and received their training in Vermont.
- Dental assistants predominantly worked in dental practices.
- Most dental assistants (71.3%) worked less than 40 hours per week on average, and most planned to continue working the same number of hours for the next 12 months.

## Questions

For tables detailing these data or further information, contact:

Vermont Department of Health  
Division of Health Surveillance – Workforce Census  
108 Cherry Street, Drawer 41  
PO Box 70  
Burlington, VT 05402-0070  
Tel. 802-863-7300  
Email: [AHS.VDHPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov)

### Appendix

#### Active Dental Assistant

A dental assistant who reported working in Vermont as a dental assistant (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

#### Census

The census was taken during the biennial dental assistant relicensing process which ended on September 30, 2015. The data include all licensed dental assistants except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (July – September 2015), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of September 30, 2017. Census questions are available upon request.

#### Employment Data

Numbers of working Vermonters are from <https://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov/static/explore>.

#### Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. A dental assistant reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as *one* FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

#### Health Care Areas

The Health Care Areas in this report are those used by the Vermont Blueprint for Health, an initiative working to transform the way primary care and comprehensive health services are delivered and paid for. It disseminates information on healthcare expenditures, utilization, and care quality measures within these regions (see <http://blueprintforhealth.vermont.gov/>). Data are available for other regional definitions from the Division of Health Surveillance. See the contact information at the end of this report.

#### Main Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The main practice, site, setting, or specialty refers to the practice in which the dental assistant worked the greatest number of annual hours.

#### Map Quartiles

Map colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

#### Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus totals may vary from table to table.

#### Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2015 and were provided by the Department of Health.

### States

States were grouped into the following regions:

Northeast	Midwest	South		West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	North Carolina	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Oklahoma	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	South Carolina	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Tennessee	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Texas	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Virginia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Washington DC	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland	West Virginia	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi		New Mexico
	Ohio			Oregon
	South Dakota			Utah
	Wisconsin			Washington
				Wyoming

### Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours is based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours \* (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for a hygienist working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks), is 20.