

History of Howard Center

1865	Home for Destitute Children founded to provide a home for orphaned daughters of Civil War veterans. It soon expanded to serve neglected and destitute children and orphans.
1868	Permanent Fund established to be invested and the income used to support the Home and extend its services.
1873	Ladies Aid Society founded.
1882	Ladies Aid Society renamed Howard Relief Society in appreciation for a gift from John P. Howard.
1884	Howard Relief Society chartered “to ameliorate suffering providing a friend in need to the destitute, more especially to aid any poor man in his efforts to give his children an education in the public schools”.
1893	Fire destroyed the Home, 71 children left doubly-homeless by the disaster. New building dedicated December 8, 1898.
1945	Home for Destitute Children renamed The Children’s Home to reflect the change from an orphanage providing long-term substitute care to a treatment-oriented institution serving children with special needs.
1950	Superintendent replaced by the Home’s first Executive Director, Mr. Leland Horne, and first professionally trained social worker added to staff.
1951	The Howard Relief Society was asked by the Burlington Community Council of Social Welfare to undertake a professional marriage and counseling service.
1952	The Howard Family Service Center was established and a psychiatric social worker was employed. The center received funds from the Community Chest, a predecessor of the United Way of Chittenden County.
1957	The Family and Children’s Counseling Services (of Howard Family Service Center) was formed in cooperation with the Division of Mental Health of the Vermont Department of Health.
1960	The Children’s Home renamed the Josephine B. Baird Children’s Center to go along with the completion of a new facility better suited to the needs of emotionally disturbed children. New facility is current location on Pine Street.
1966	Use of live-in child care staff was discontinued reflecting the knowledge that the job of The Baird Center was not to replace parents but to provide a professional staff to work intensively with children to prepare them for a rapid return home.
1966	Howard Family Service Center was designated by the Vermont Department of Mental Health as the community mental health agency for Chittenden and Southern Grand Isle Counties.

Color Key Coding for Timeline Items: Baird Center for Children and Families | Howard Center | Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services | Merged into one organization



1971	Agency name changed to Howard Mental Health Services.
1971	North Country Counseling Services and Alcohol Information and Referral Services begin providing clinical services in Chittenden County.
1972	One of the Baird Center residential units was converted to a day treatment unit.
1976	The major source of funding for the Baird Center shifted from DCF to the Department of Mental Health.
1982	The Baird Center launched home-based services, now called Intensive Family-Based Services.
1982	With the guidance of the Vermont Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, these two agencies (North Country Counseling Services and Alcohol Information and Referral Services) merge to form Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services (CDAS).
1983	CDAS starts Green Mountain Teen Institute week-long programming retreats focused on substance use prevention.
1983	Josephine B. Baird Children's Center was renamed The Baird Center for Children and Families.
1983	CDAS begins providing employee assistance services.
1986	CDAS begins providing alcohol treatment services within the Chittenden County Correctional Center, the first structured program of its kind in Vermont.
1986	CDAS opens ACT 1.
1988	CDAS, in partnership with other agencies, including Howard Mental Health Services, develops a successful proposal for federal funding for the Homeless Health Project. CDAS provides drug and alcohol outreach services.
1989	CDAS begins providing services to intravenous drug users in Chittenden County.
1992	CDAS initiates a specialized intensive outpatient program for adolescents called Kaleidoscope. To become Centerpoint in partnership with NFI and Otter Creek.
1993	Howard Mental Health Services changes name to Howard Center for Human Services to better reflect the wide array of services provided by the agency.
1994	Howard Center merges with The Baird Center for Children and Families and Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services to bring the strengths of their boards, staffs, and service delivery systems to the combined organization. Services are provided through four major divisions: Howard Community Services, Community Counseling and Support Programs, the Baird Center for Children and Families, and Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services. Howard Center continues as a member agency of the United Way of Chittenden County.

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1995	Kaleidoscope becomes Centerpoint.
1997	Agency management is restructured, creating Director of Operations position and combining Community Counseling and Support Programs and Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services into Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services for program management and administrative purposes.
1997	In partnership with CMC and WCMH, Howard Center expands its outpatient substance use disorder treatment services in Washington County, opening Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services (CVSAS) in Berlin, VT.
1999	In July the Board of Trustees votes to undertake a capital campaign – Campaign for a Caring Community – to raise funds for a new facility for Child, Youth & Family Services and for building and endowment funds for the entire agency.
2000	Street Outreach Program begins.
2001	Safe Recovery opens.
2002	Chittenden Clinic opens.
2004	Campaign successfully completed. New Baird Center building dedicated and agency endowment increased.
2005	Howard Center partners with WCMH and CMC to form Collaborative Solutions Corporation to open Second Spring, a Community Recovery Residence (CRR) in Williamstown, VT, followed in 2013 by a program in Westford, VT.
2007	Agency name changes to HowardCenter. All service areas and program names are identified as part of HowardCenter. Major service areas include administrative services; Child Youth and Family Services; Developmental Services; and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
2012	Agency implements electronic health records system after completion of two-year, large-scale project that prepares organization for state and national healthcare reform.
2013	Agency opens second Chittenden Clinic medication assisted treatment program in South Burlington.
2014	Agency name changes to Howard Center with tagline Help is here.
2015	Agency begins a two-year reorganization that integrates client care and services across the organization with the primary goals of ensuring responsiveness to client needs in a timely, engaged, and compassionate manner and simultaneously making Howard Center a rewarding and supportive place to work. Agency management is restructured to include a six person executive leadership team and a thirty person strategic leadership team.

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2017	As part of the Agency integration designed to improve the client experience and access to care, three separate and distinct mobile crisis teams (adult, children, and developmental services) merge into one team, as do three separate and distinct outpatient teams (adult, children/family, and developmental services) to further the mission of providing co-occurring and family-focused treatment. The new 24/7/365 mobile crisis service and hotline team is named First Call for Chittenden County.
2018	Community Outreach Team launched.
2018	Low Barrier Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) begins at Safe Recovery in October giving clients access to MAT on the day they request it, ensuring that when the person is ready, the system is ready.
2018	Chittenden Clinic UHC Campus MAT merges with the San Remo Drive Clinic Campus to unify care and create efficiencies in a single location.
2019	Agency launches an integrated Access and Intake service with one single phone number for people seeking information or services: 802-488-6000. In addition to improving accessibility, the service offers same day, next day, and mobile options for intake assessments and targeted outreach to underserved populations.
2019	<i>New culture code established: mission, vision, and values (see chart on last page).</i>
2019	Agency receives national award for “Excellence in Addictions Treatment” from the National Council for Behavioral Health conference in Nashville, Tennessee.
2020	Agency pivots to continue to provide services remotely via phone and video telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic that begins in Vermont in March. Residential and crisis in-person services remain in place throughout pandemic. Significant resources are required to facilitate the safety of clients and staff and to ensure that services remain available to the community.
2021	Agency and its partners close Northern Lights—a program to help women build healthy, productive lights after incarceration—in the historic Varney House in downtown Burlington. The Vermont Department of Corrections terminated funding support to shift to a new housing model.
2021	With funding from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA), Howard Center orders a specially equipped vehicle to deliver harm reduction and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) services in rural areas.
2022	Vermont experiences 239 fatal opioid-related overdoses; 93% involve fentanyl.
2023	Funding challenges force closure of Autism Spectrum Program center-based services for toddlers, Intensive Family Based Services supporting families toward the goals of stabilization and reunification, the public inebriate program in St. Albans, and the agency’s affiliation with the Centerpoint program, a provider of services for teens and young adults and their families.

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2023	Congressionally Directed Spending facilitated by Senator Patrick Leahy supports the construction of a new Lakeview House in Shelburne. First established on the grounds of the Roman Catholic Diocese on North Avenue, the community care home supports 16 individuals. The new home opened in April 2024.
2023	Four-year SAMHSA grant secured to help Howard Center meet criteria to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).
2023	Planning begins to establish a community-based mental health urgent care clinic in partnership with Community Health Centers, Pathways, and the University of Vermont Medical Center.

HOWARD CENTER'S CULTURE CODE

Mission * Vision * Values

MISSION	We help people and communities thrive by providing supports and services to address mental health, substance use, and developmental needs.
VISION	Howard Center is a national leader in the delivery of integrated and seamless community-based supports for individuals, families, and communities in need. Help is here.
VALUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients are at the heart of our decision making. • We are committed to individual and collective well-being and success. • We are responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us. • We are steadfast in our practice and pursuit of excellence.

