



FY24 Annual Impact and Outcomes Report

JULY 1, 2023-JUNE 30, 2024 | PLUS 2024 AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS



**HOWARD
CENTER**
Help is here.



**HOWARD
CENTER**
Help is here.

About Howard Center

Howard Center has a long and rich history as a trusted provider in the community. With a legacy spanning 160 years, we provide progressive, compassionate and inclusive, high-quality care and supports to those in need.

We offer an array of exemplary mental health, substance use, and developmental services across the lifespan. Our spring conference, numerous professional trainings, and free public education events help to improve care, connect with our community, and decrease stigma.

*Cover art: "The Road to Freedom" by Amjed Jumaa,
Howard Center Arts Collective.*

Photo: Howard Center mobile outreach staff.



OUR MISSION

We help people and communities thrive by providing supports and services to address mental health, substance use, and developmental needs.

OUR 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.**

OUR VALUES

- 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As of 6/30/2024

Kelly Deforge, *President*

Yves Bradley, *Vice President*

John McSoley, *Treasurer*

Cyndee Cochrane Sturtevant, *Secretary*

Heather Blackman

Daniel Calder

Andrew Collier

Kathy Connolly

Michael Couture

Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Ph.D.

Meg O'Donnell

Amanda Peden

Ann Pugh

Thato Ratsebe

Mat Robitaille

Rep. Trevor Squirrell

Gail Stevenson, Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Sandy McGuire, MBA, *Chief Executive Officer*

Catarina Campbell, M.Ed., *Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

Beth Holden, MS, LCMHC, LADC, *Chief Client Services Officer*

Matt MacNeil, Ed.D., *Director of Evaluation and Outcomes*

Steven Maneely, *Chief Financial Officer*

Simha Ravven, MD, *Chief Medical Officer*



Above: "Never Give Up" by Rafad Amjed Almulla

Here and throughout this report are samples of artwork by members of the Howard Center Arts Collective, which were featured in a group show, "Let the Fabric Speak," at the Fleming Museum in Burlington, Vermont.

Thank You Board Members

We thank outgoing board members **Andrew Collier, Jodi Girouard, Meg O'Donnell, George Philibert, Ann Pugh, and Cyndee Cochran Sturtevant** (left, top to bottom)

Welcome new board members **Joshua Barlow, Sen. Thomas Chittenden, Al Gobeille, Stephanie Judkins, and Karen Tyler** (right, top to bottom).



HONORARY COUNCIL

A network of supporters and friends

Mark Baglini
Elizabeth Bassett
Bob Bick
Sara Byers
Todd Centybear
Jack Dwyer
William Heaslip
Gretchen Morse
Karen O'Neill
Ernie Pomerleau
Pat Robins

Lisa Schamberg
Bill Schubart
Katherine Schubart
Michael Simoneau
Whit Smith
Lisa Steele
Debra Stenner
Marjorie Stern
Peter Stern
Hanneke Willenborg

Thank You Bob Bick

Last year, dozens of colleagues, clients, staff, friends, and family gathered at The Garden Barn at Lang Farms in Essex to celebrate Howard Center's outgoing CEO, Bob Bick. Throughout his 30-plus year career with Howard Center, Bob was highly regarded as a state and national leader, visionary, and innovator, dedicated to advancing care and treatment for mental health, substance use, and developmental services.





2024 all-agency staff event setup crew

SMRT

MENTAL HEALTH
URGENT CARE



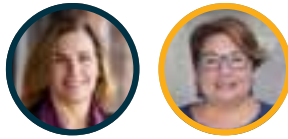
Mental Health Urgent Care under construction

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present our **FY24 Annual Report**, highlighting some of the wide-reaching, critical mental health, substance use, and developmental services and supports provided by 1,500+ Howard Center staff to over 19,000 Vermonters.

This past year includes numerous examples of our continued evolution to ensure we best utilize available resources to most effectively respond to the ever-evolving mental health, substance use, and developmental services needs of our communities. We celebrated the service and contributions of past CEO Bob Bick. We opened Mental Health Urgent Care (page 20) in Burlington and launched a mobile unit to provide substance use care in rural communities, reducing transportation and other barriers for those seeking services. And we were selected to participate in Vermont's CCBHC (Certified Community-Based Integrated Health Center) Medicaid Demonstration Program.

We also took the opportunity for a new CEO listening tour and heard from hundreds of Vermonters—clients, staff, board trustees, donors, and community partners—who generously offered their thoughts and feedback to help inform the agency's next steps. These conversations were timely, as while there



was much to celebrate in 2024, Howard Center is not exempt from the mounting pressures of growing needs outpacing the resources available to respond. The key themes that emerged from these conversations, prioritizing organizational and workforce sustainability, are the primary touchstones grounding our work as we continue our centuries-long journey to provide high quality, effective care and support within the limits of our resources. In addition, we remain committed to continuing our work with state leaders and healthcare colleagues to implement a holistic approach to healthcare transformation that decreases health inequities and increases investments in social determinants of health.

We hope you find this report informative and inspiring. With continued collaboration, community conversations, a diversity of voices, and with all of us working together towards our common goals, we are confident in Howard Center's tomorrow and so grateful to be doing this work in partnership with you. Together we help people and communities thrive.

With appreciation,

Sandy McGuire, CEO

Kelly Deforge, Board President








Howard Center By The Numbers



Individuals helped in FY24	19,000*
Total new clients in FY24	1,805
Howard Center locations	60+
Howard Center employees	1,500
When we provide service	24/7/365

* These numbers from FY24 include 9,760 individuals enrolled as clients and thousands of others who receive support and services from Howard Center, including our Community Outreach, Street Outreach, Safe Recovery, and crisis programs, without officially enrolling as clients.

People Helped By Service

	2,469 in Outpatient Services
	2,202 in Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Treatment
	1,217 in School-Based Services
	2,353 in Community-Based Support
	3,765 in Crisis Services
	948 in Residential Services
	500 in Employment Programs

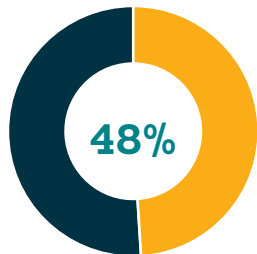
Total hours
of service provided

3,946,297

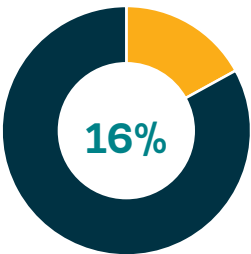
Total number
of services provided

715,418

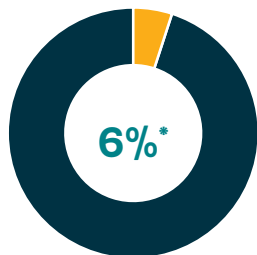
Who We Help — By Service Category Needs



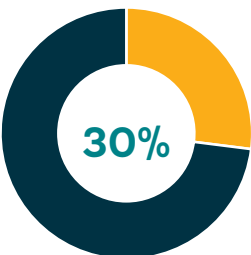
Mental Health Needs



Substance Use Treatment



Developmental Disabilities

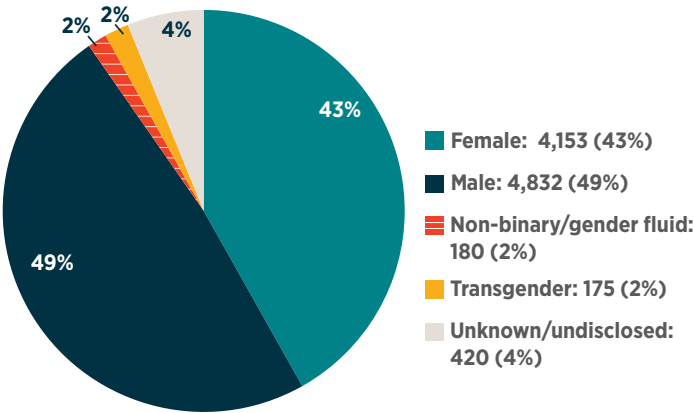


Have Multiple Needs

* Although only 6% of the people we serve receive support from Developmental Services (DS), they receive 276,078 of the total 715,418 services provided, or roughly 39% of all services.

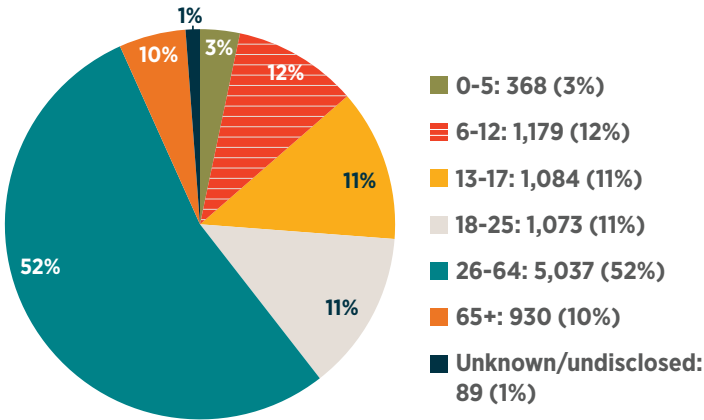


Who We Help — By Gender

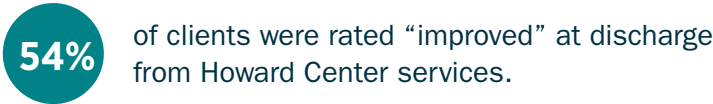
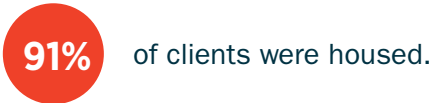


Percentage of new clients who were screened for:	FY23	FY24
• Depression	70%	77%
• Substance use problems	87%	91%
• Domestic violence	99%	99%
• Trauma history	94%	90%

Who We Help — By Age



Indicators of Health and Wellness



How Well We Meet Client Needs

82%

of clients were offered a face-to-face appointment within five days of initial contact.

57%

of clients were seen for treatment within 14 days following their assessment.

Client satisfaction is our top priority. Here's what our clients have to say:

88%

The services I received were right for me.

82%

My quality of life improved.

87%

The services I received made a difference.

96%

Staff treated me with respect.

90%

I received the help that I needed.



"Effigy Elegy" by Adam Forguites and Shirley Reid



Breaking Barriers conference attendees

Community Education

MARNA AND STEVE WISE TULIN COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERIES

Howard Center presented two sessions in the Spring 2024 Marna and Steve Wise Tulin Community Education Series: “Mental Health *is* Community Health” and “Substance Use and Our Community.” Each session focused on relevant community issues and included expert presenters, followed by a Q & A. All sessions were free and open to the public and recorded by the Media Factory. Videos can be viewed on the Howard Center YouTube channel, youtube.com/@HowardCenter.



PERSPECTIVES 2025

Confronting Stigma, Cultivating Compassion

SPRING CONFERENCE: MAY 13, 2025

Mark your calendars for Howard Center's Spring 2025 Conference, "Perspectives 2025: Confronting Stigma, Cultivating Compassion." Now in its seventh year, the conference is a day-long, hybrid event featuring international speakers and bringing diverse perspectives, learning, and inspiration to our Vermont community. This year we are pleased to be featuring bestselling authors Ashley C. Ford, Anne Lamott, and Damon Tweedy, MD.

REGISTER AT [HOWARDCENTER.ORG](https://howardcenter.org)!

802-488-6000 | howardcenter.org



**Dr. Jeffrey Swanson at the
Breaking Barriers conference**

“It is an honor to host an event that not only celebrates our vibrant community but also raises crucial funds for such important causes.”

***—Mehran Assadi,
Chairman, President, and CEO,
National Life Group***

Howard Center in the Community

THANK YOU!

Each year, Howard Center receives support and recognition from organizations and individuals who acknowledge the importance of our work in maintaining a healthy, thriving community. These are just a few of the community partners we work with each year. We appreciate and thank them all.

NATIONAL LIFE GROUP SUPPORTS YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

National Life Group presented Howard Center with a check for \$55,000, raised from the 10th Annual National Life Group Do Good Fest®. The contribution supports Howard Center's youth mental health programs and services, including three therapeutic schools for children and youth who have social, emotional, or behavioral challenges.



0101

National Life Group
Foundation

DATE: June 15, 2014

PAY TO THE ORDER OF: BRANCHES OF HOPE & HOWARD CENTER

AMOUNT: \$112,000.00

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND AND 0/100

ENTIRE AMOUNT

Mehran Assadi

1:000045678000 0000:1 11 0000

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT BENEFITS BAIRD SCHOOL

Delainey LeBlanc, of Essex, recruited 27 volunteers and launched a GoFundMe, raising over \$1,000 to replace the old raised garden beds at Howard Center's Baird School. A member of South Burlington BSA Troop 6110, Delainey selected Howard Center as the beneficiary of her project to honor a friend who died by suicide. She and her crew replaced 15 beds with new cedar beds and added fresh soil. *Thank you, Delainey!*



SB ROTARY CLUB SUPPORTS CLIENT FUNDS PROGRAM

The South Burlington Rotary Club donated \$10,000 to Howard Center, raised through the 12th Annual Curling Challenge fundraiser. The donation supports Howard Center's Client Funds program which helps people with basic needs and offers opportunities for enrichment activities.

"It's a joy to see our community come together in such a meaningful way and to support an organization helping so many people every day of the year."

—Nina Borden, President, South Burlington Rotary Club



KIDSAFE COLLABORATIVE RECOGNIZES HOWARD CENTER STAFF

Margaret Russell, a Howard Center School Services Clinician at the Integrated Arts Academy in Burlington, was honored with the KidSafe Gregory Packan Outstanding Advocacy Award.

“Margaret’s achievements reflect a deep dedication not only to our mission but to each child she serves. Her award illuminates the impact that such commitment can have on the health and well-being of our community.”

—Anne Paradiso, Director of School Programs, Howard Center

HIREABILITY VERMONT RECOGNIZES HOWARD CENTER’S JOBS PROGRAM

HireAbility Vermont celebrated the 30th anniversary of Vermont’s ten Jump on Board for Success (JOBS) Programs. The Howard Center JOBS team was recognized for their partnership with HireAbility, and Gina D’Ambrosio was awarded a Service Achievement Award for her commitment to the JOBS Program and her standing as the longest-serving program director in the state.





HOWARD CENTER RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR DIVERSITY EFFORTS

Howard Center was one of several community organizations to receive recognition from the Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center at the 2024 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. remembrance event.

“Our increasingly diverse community acknowledges and celebrates Howard Center’s work to advocate for a more inclusive community where all individuals who are struggling with mental health or substance use issues receive the help they need.”

—Patrick Brown, Greater Burlington Multicultural Resource Center

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUPPORTS TORCH RUN

Staff from Howard Center’s Community Outreach Program joined the South Burlington and Essex Police Departments—just two of the nine towns the program serves—in the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run®. The annual event raises funds and awareness, while honoring the Special Olympics athletes who live, work, and compete in their local communities. Participants include members of the law enforcement community, the military, first responders, and community members.



Howard Center FY24 Annual Impact and Outcomes Report

NEW INITIATIVES

Howard Center continually adapts and changes to meet emerging needs in our community. This year, we launched two new initiatives to expand care and services.

SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES MOBILE UNIT

Howard Center introduced a new mobile unit to better reach Vermonters misusing substances in rural communities. While numerous programs already provide services, many individuals face barriers to treatment, including medical and physical health problems, behavioral issues, or transportation limitations. These barriers often mean that some don't even attempt to get treatment. The mobile unit meets people in their own communities and is just one more approach to help people through their recovery process.

“People enter recovery at all different sorts of stages, and our first task is to say, ‘What can we do to help you today?’”

—Substance Use Services Mobile Unit staff member

802-488-6000 | howardcenter.org



Substance Use Services Mobile Unit staff



“We see people come in sometimes having the worst day of their life. Knowing that we are here to help . . . puts Mental Health Urgent Care in a unique position to achieve meaningful connection and change in a guest’s life in a very short amount of time.”

—MHUC staff

MENTAL HEALTH URGENT CARE

Howard Center’s new Mental Health Urgent Care (MHUC) opened in October 2024 to provide a therapeutic alternative to emergency department visits for adults who are experiencing a self-defined mental health crisis concern or distress; have complex diagnoses, including an intellectual disability; substance use disorder; traumatic brain injury; are experiencing a suicide crisis; have co-occurring medical conditions; or need immediate peer support.

The initiative is a partnership with the University of Vermont Medical Center, Community Health Centers, Pathways Vermont, and the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

As of December 31, 2024, approximately 145 individuals have visited MHUC. Many have visited more than once, and the most common concern for seeking services are feelings of helplessness and being overwhelmed, suicidal ideation, depression, and anxiety.





Mental Health Urgent Care open house event

"I appreciate the Adult Crisis Stabilization Program being a bridge from hospital to support treatment, so that I was less vulnerable in between."

—Adult Crisis Stabilization Program Client



The Adult Crisis Stabilization program

HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAMS

Each year our annual report highlights a few of the many crucial programs and services we provide to our community. While we wish we could include all of our programs, we are limited to providing just a sampling in this report.

ADULT CRISIS STABILIZATION (FORMERLY ASSIST)

The Adult Crisis Stabilization program, formerly ASSIST, provides 24-hour staffing for Chittenden County adults experiencing a psychiatric crisis. People usually stay for 5-7 days, which include therapeutic group sessions, medication administration, assistance with changes in medication, and psychiatric and nursing support.

People served include those who would otherwise need hospitalization or who are transitioning from an in-patient hospital stay. Staff work with clients to develop individualized treatment plans, access Howard Center services, and connect with other community organizations and services.

169 people received services in FY24.

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DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES PEER SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Through this peer-to-peer network, paid peer staff specialists with an intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder provide individual and group support based on their own lived experience. They encourage others who are receiving services to become more self-reliant by helping to establish meaningful connections with their peers, and they offer guidance in areas such as independent living, communication, employment, and person-centered planning.



Peer specialists support one another



Youth enjoying a moment reading together

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Program provides support to children ages birth to six, their parents, and caregivers who are experiencing social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The program offers home-based parenting education and support, supportive counseling for children, consultation, advocacy, and care management.

Program staff also contribute their expertise to other Chittenden County programs that serve children and families, including Children's Integrated Services, Head Start classrooms, and Vermont Bright Futures Information System.

161 children and families received services in FY24.

"The clinician was a great advocate for our family. She listened well and heard our concerns and was right there at the table with us advocating for those resources."

—A parent

FILM GROUP

This innovative program is designed for anyone who enjoys film, video, music, photography, acting, drama, theater, gadgets, drawing, painting, imagery, and being creative. Through group participation, members learn and apply interpersonal skills that are needed to be part of a group, such as patience and focus, while developing a sense of community. The group maintains their connections by doing activities together, such as going bowling and, of course, watching movies.

With one film completed, a 17-minute feature called “A Dog’s Tale,” the group has begun working on their second, “Liminal,” a one-hour film. Each project takes about one year to complete, and everyone has a role in the process—including acting, directing, composing music, providing art direction, and even making masks for props.

“I just love being in a group setting with everyone and talking about movies and being in a group that makes movies. It’s just my favorite topic to talk about.”

—a film group participant



A film group participant



Howard Center staff and friends at the Pride Parade and Festival

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Howard Center's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department implements key initiatives both within and beyond the Howard Center community that are responsive to the needs of our constantly changing community. We are committed to ongoing growth and development, addressing community harm and promoting healing, and building a culture of dignity and belonging for all. We are equally committed to fostering representation and offering ongoing support for all our people, including but not limited to people of color, refugees and immigrants, trans and non-binary individuals, and people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY PRIDE

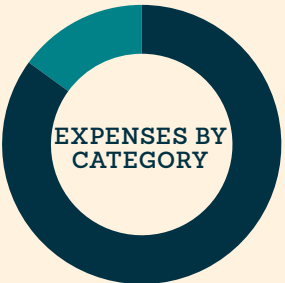
Each year, Howard Center staff and clients participate in the community-wide Pride celebration in Burlington.

FY24 Financial Summary

Howard Center is significant to the region as an employer and as a service provider. Our FY24 budget of over \$133M included complex, multiple funding streams. Over 95% of our services are funded through the state. 88% of our budget is allocated for our workforce in direct support of the people we serve. While our scope and services are essential, many of our programs are not funded adequately. This disparity requires that we continue to depend on grants, private donations, and entrepreneurial initiatives to bridge the gap.



ANNUAL BUDGET: \$133,104,390



AGENCY CENTRALIZED ADMINISTRATIVE RATE = 8.88%

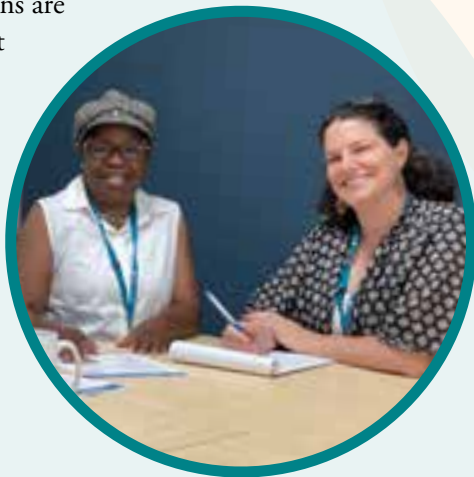
HOWARD CENTER MAIN NUMBER

Access and Intake Line: 802-488-6000

Available Monday-Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

- General information
- Brief screenings
- Intake assessments
- Support and connection to resources and services at Howard Center or in the community

Multicultural liaisons are available to support our refugee and immigrant communities.



HOWARD CENTER CRISIS HOTLINE

First Call for Chittenden County

Available 24/7/365

- Phone and in-person support
- Two-person mobile response
- Individual crisis assessment
- Short-term crisis management
- Referral to appropriate services
- Information about community resources
- Post-tragedy and disaster response
- Suicide prevention training



*For once I am at loss for words
in the best way imaginable. I
want to sincerely thank everyone
at First [Call] from my heart!"*

—First Call client