

1. Currently we are running our businesses out of our home and need high speed internet (teaching on Zoom). I understand that the internet is not accessible throughout the whole state of Vermont. Are there ways to still hard wire or access the internet to our house in the areas that are spotty? Are there services like Comcast that can special wire a house? Or are we limited to certain areas within the state where we should look for a house to run a business from?

-It is true that there are areas of the state where broadband access is inconsistent. Broadband expansion is top priority of the state. In addition to \$116 million in construction grants, Gov. Phil Scott wants to use a lot of federal money — \$95 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds and \$100 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act — to support broadband buildout. The Vermont Community Broadband Board is working to have every Vermonter connected in five years. There are available services like satellite internet where hardwire does not reach and yes I believe Comcast would extend wires to houses where possible for a certain price.

2. How much of the housing crisis is caused by AirBnb and second home owners? Is tourism becoming a main draw to the state at the cost of maintaining a quality of life for those who live in the state?

Housing is a need across the state. I can't point to specific data concerning AirBnB and second homeowners though there have been anecdotal reports in the press that suggest affordable housing is hard to find in areas more heavily visited by tourists like towns with ski/snowboard resorts.

3. With the aging population and housing crisis, is this affecting goods and services? Who is replacing the population that is retiring and are they filling the essential jobs if the house prices are too high?

Vermont is a small state and demographics have been an issue for decades. I have not experienced an effect on goods or services. While Vermont lacks the statewide data needed to quantify the volume of in-migration, in some towns the COVID booms seems to be real, with an influx of new residents moving to the state during the pandemic.

4. Is there flourishing programming for families and youth like swim lessons, sports, music, summer camps, arts/entertainment, etc? Who is funding and supplying such programs?

There are all sorts of family programming available across the state that is both funded publicly and by non-profits. For example take a look at Burlington Parks' or Burlington City Arts' programs

- <https://enjoyburlington.com/type/recreation-programs-activities/>
- <https://www.burlingtoncityarts.org/adult-youth-and-family-classes>
- <https://campfindervt.com/>

5. In Jackson Hole, where we lived for 20 years, the housing crisis was such that there are very few service workers who could afford to live in town, so it was challenging to get any kind of service work done (car repair, home appliance) and the hospitals, grocery stores, restaurants, etc were always understaffed, even preCOVID. What programs are in place that will prevent this from happening in Vermont?

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development oversees the Department of Housing and Community Development, they would be able to best answer this question. Their main phone number is: 802-828-3080.

6. I see there is grant funding for people to relocate to Vermont if they are moving for a local job or attached to a job they can serve remotely. Does the same apply for people who are bringing a business or starting a new business in the state?

From my understanding, the worker relocation grant program is for employees who receive a Form W-2 from their employer. However, the state does work to assist businesses looking to relocate to the state:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/resources/business/relocate-expand>

7. Vermont has taken a very cautious approach to COVID19 with closures and protocols with masking and vaccination requirements. How does the state plan to move forward with public events and gatherings, particularly in arts and entertainment, to revive the economies of these sections of the community?

As of June 14, 2021, all business, event and gathering capacity restrictions have been lifted. Some towns and localities have continued to implement masking policies but that has been decided on a town-by-town basis since November.

8. With the industry of wellness and art- is there financial support at the state level for starting such businesses?

I'm not aware of financial support available specifically for the wellness industry, the Agency of Commerce and Development would be able to speak in more detail to opportunities for businesses. Their main phone number is: 802-828-1093.

9. What are the roads like? Most likely I would be commuting into a town 2-3x / week, driving up to 45 min each way. Are there areas of the state where this would be more challenging?

Road conditions vary depending where you are and when you are there. Mud season is a real thing in Vermont. Vermont is made up of a mix of roads including dirt roads that can be challenging.

10. What is available for rentals to move into the state to then be available to shop for a long term home? How have companies like AirBnB affected these types of rentals?

The availability of rentals will vary depending on where you are in the state. How short-term rental companies have affected the long-term rental market is an on-going debate in the state and will vary from town to town. My hunch, anecdotally, is that towns near ski resorts could be more impacted by short-term rentals than others.