LISTEN Programs

Fiscal Year 2021

LISTEN's Service Area
LOCATIONS
Programs Office & Food Pantry
60 Hanover St
Lebanon, NH
(603) 448-4553

Bourne Center Thrift Store & Dining Hall
42 Maple St
White River Junction
(802) 698-8764

Miracle Mile Thrift Store & Donation Center
387 Miracle Mile
Lebanon, NH
(603) 448-2510

Canaan Thrift Store
236 US Rte 4
Canaan, NH
(603) 632-5331

In FY 2021, we served over 2,000 households across the Upper Valley!

To schedule an appointment or inquire about services, call (603) 448-4553 or email reception@listencs.org.
A Brief History

In September 1972, volunteers stocked, organized, and staffed the very first LISTEN Thrift Store and “resource center.” The organization’s name stood for “Lebanon in Service to Each Neighbor.” The proceeds went to fund programs like a community garden and food pantry, and promoting low-income housing.

Over the next 50 years, LISTEN added programs such as heating assistance, summer camp scholarships, holiday baskets, and community dinners. We also began serving many more towns beyond the immediate Lebanon area. To reflect this growth, the Board voted to change the name to LISTEN Community Services.

**OUR MISSION**

To provide services and support to meet the critical needs of Upper Valley individuals and families.

**Why does basic needs assistance matter?**

The Upper Valley is a wonderful place, but a lot of people still struggle to afford to live here, even when they are working. Financial stress and instability is linked to long-term health problems like heart disease, as well as worse mental health. Helping people pay for food, housing, and other essential needs is shown to improve overall health and well-being.

**Who does LISTEN serve?**

We serve a large area covering parts of Grafton and Sullivan County in NH, and Windsor and Orange County in VT (see back of booklet for service area). Many of the people we work with are working families with children. Almost all of our programs are open to anyone, regardless of income.

**Where does our funding come from?**

About 25% of the revenue from our three thrift stores goes to support LISTEN’s programs. The remainder comes from the generous support of donors throughout the Upper Valley. This means that we can keep our funding flexible to serve as many families as possible, regardless of their income.

Below: Marcia Boutin, founder of LISTEN
THRIFT STORE & FURNITURE VOUCHERS

 THRIFT STORE VOUCHERS

Households are eligible once every 3 months

Vouchers are usable at any of our thrift stores

Provide adult and children’s clothing, kitchenware, and linens

FURNITURE VOUCHERS

Clients can choose furniture that suits them from the Miracle Mile warehouse.

Available items include: kitchen tables, chairs, couches, dressers, console tables, lamps, etc.

Our thrift stores generate revenue to help our community with housing, heating, food, and much more — but we also give away a lot of clothing, household goods, and furniture to our clients directly. There are many reasons why people come to us for vouchers, including:

- Summer or winter clothing
- Children outgrowing their clothes
- Furnishing a new apartment
- Replacing damaged goods after a house fire or other natural disaster
- Clothing and supplies for people experiencing homelessness

This service is often an important “gateway” for our clients — we may meet with some people about their clothing needs initially, but then it allows us to provide other services such as groceries from our pantry and housing assistance.

In FY 2021, we gave away $78,260 in free clothing!

HOW TO REQUEST A VOUCHER

To request a voucher, please call the LISTEN main office at 603-448-4553.

HEATING HELPERS

The cost of heating a home depends on a number of factors – the age of the building, the energy efficiency of the heating system, the cost of fuel, etc. As many as 1 in 5 families in Vermont struggle to afford the cost of heating. This causes significant financial stress on families and can contribute to housing insecurity. For some, especially the elderly and those with young children, the lack of heat can even be life threatening.

Last year, LISTEN helped 303 families keep their homes heated!

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

- LISTEN provides up to $400 in fuel or electric assistance, for purposes such as fuel deliveries, preventing disconnections, and repairs to home heating systems
- Households are eligible for $400 in a 12-month period
- We also make referrals to weatherization, energy efficiency upgrades, etc.

HOUSING HELPERS

The rising cost of housing and the lack of affordable housing has put stress on many Upper Valley families, as well as increased the amount of homelessness. Our service coordinators meet with families to help them navigate a housing crisis. We primarily focus on helping people get into and stay in affordable housing, but we also collaborate with other groups such as the Upper Valley Haven and town welfare to support families experiencing homelessness. In addition, we also help our clients apply for affordable housing, connect to free legal assistance, advocate with landlords, and much more.

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

- Our funds can be used to prevent evictions and foreclosures, to pay for a security deposit/first month’s rent, or for short-term emergency shelter.
- We provide individualized support and advocacy.
FOOD PANTRY

Our food pantry is a choice model, which means that we want our guests to be able to have as many options as possible to choose their own food. Choice allows for better nutrition and also reduces food waste. We also are committed to providing fresh and healthy foods. We also know that for many people facing financial difficulties for the first time, the food pantry can be the first place that they come to look for help. We know that asking for help isn’t easy, so our staff and volunteers are dedicated to making sure that our pantry is as welcoming as possible.

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

- Open M-F, 10am-4pm for walk-ins at 60 Hanover St
- Open to any household, regardless of town of residence
- All households are eligible to come once a week
- Fresh produce and non-perishable goods also welcome

Visits to our food pantry have tripled in recent years!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>4879</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last year we received over 200,000 lb. of food.

In FY 2021, we served 1941 individuals through our food pantry, distributing 19,725 boxes of food!
COMMUNITY DINNERS

Since 1982, LISTEN has been working to provide free, hearty, nutritious meals to the Upper Valley community. The program found its permanent home in 2013, with the opening of the Bourne Center dining hall at 42 Maple St in White River Junction, VT. Since then, it has been serving 80-100 meals each night to dinner guests, thanks to the help of so many of our generous volunteer cook teams. We are open to any and all, so please come by and enjoy a meal on us!

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

- Open Monday through Saturday, 4:30-5:30pm
- Located at 42 Maple St in White River Junction, VT
- Open to any and all!

48,616 meals served in FY 21

Above: The LISTEN team prepared 700 meals for Christmas Day 2021, which were delivered by 35 volunteer drivers to families all across the Upper Valley.

We couldn’t do it without our volunteers — we have over 60 volunteer cook teams help us prepare and serve our meals.

Left: A volunteer cook team getting ready to serve a community dinner (picture taken pre-COVID)
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SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camps are wonderful, enriching opportunities for children, as well as important sources of respite for parents. At LISTEN, we provide need-based summer camp scholarships for children ages 6-14 for one week of camp. We work with families to find the right camps for their kids that match their interests, whether that is sports, art, theater, nature ... we partner with over 50 camps each year!

LISTEN awarded 110 scholarships in the summer of 2020

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

❖ Scholarships available for children between 6-14 who live in our service area and whose families fall below our income guideline (Summer Camps are the only program with an income eligibility requirement)
❖ Schools refer students to the program in mid-February.
❖ Parents and legal guardians can schedule appointments in April.

HOLIDAY BASKETS

Holiday baskets are an important tradition at LISTEN. Through the generosity of our donors, LISTEN provides warm clothing and grocery gift cards to kids and seniors across the Upper Valley.

Last holiday season, LISTEN distributed warm winter clothing and food to 486 kids and seniors

PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

❖ Holiday baskets are open to children under 18 and seniors 65+ who live in our service area.
❖ Every household also receives a $50 grocery gift card for a warm holiday meal.
❖ Toys for Tots referrals also available through our LISTEN Programs office.
❖ Applications for Holiday Baskets typically open up in October.
LISTEN’s Service Area

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