



Engaging with Rural Communities at Higher Risk for Radon Exposure

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Department of Health**

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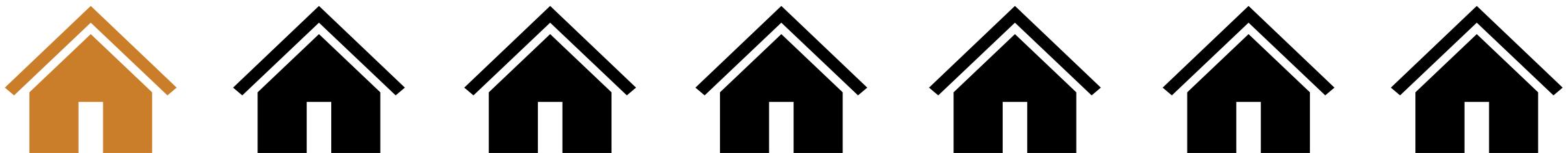
Broad online community-based outreach

Benefits and limitations

Radon is an issue in Vermont.

1 in 7 Vermont homes has unsafe levels of radon.

An estimated **65** Vermont residents die from radon-related lung cancer each year.



Front Porch Forum is the main outreach tool for increasing radon awareness.

Front Porch Forum (FPF) is an [online neighborhood forum](#) with networks in every city, town and neighborhood in VT.

The Health Department's paid subscription allows for a [monthly statewide blast](#) that reaches all members.

The Vermont Radon Program has been using FPF during [NRAM since 2016](#).



Not all outreach methods reach all people.

A 2021 analysis found that **FPF usage across Vermont is not consistent.**

Many Chittenden and Washington county forums had over 200% of households participating.

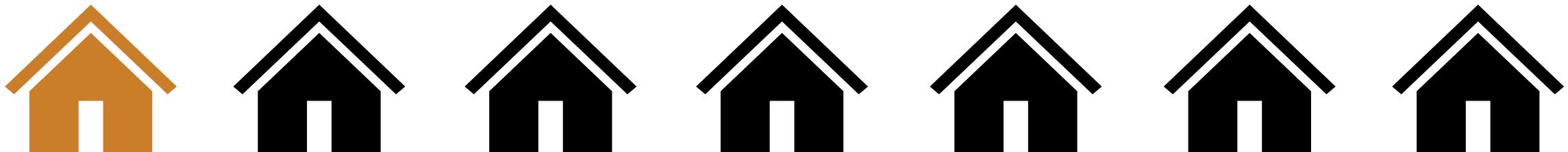
Northeast Kingdom counties had 50% of households participating.

Southern counties had between 25% and 35% of households participating.



Radon is a bigger issue in the Northeast Kingdom.

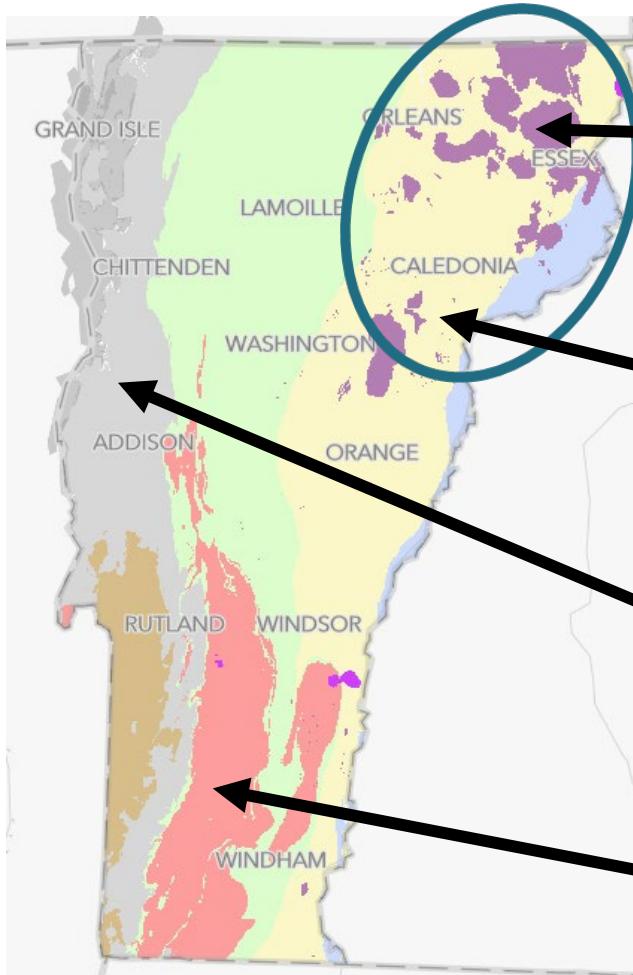
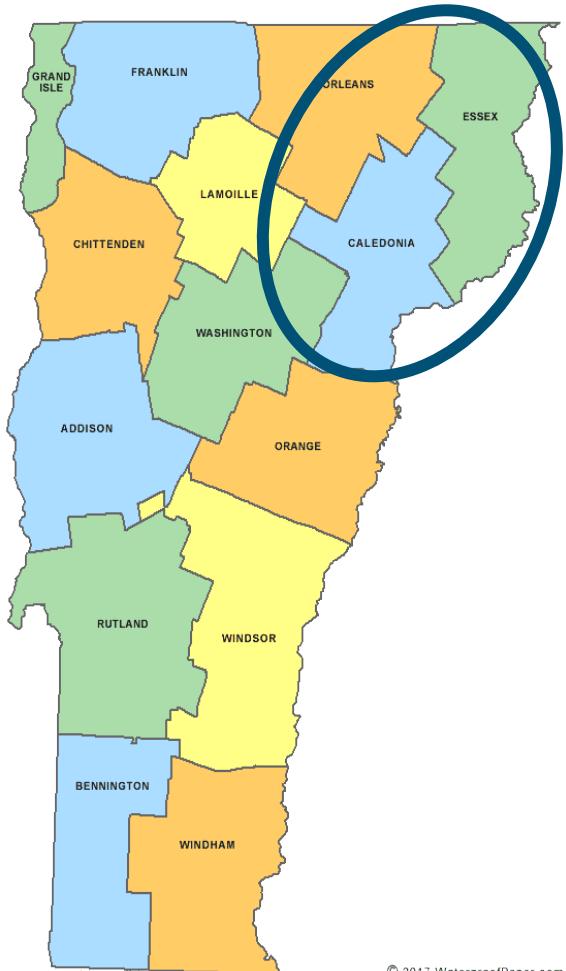
1 in 7 Vermont homes has unsafe levels of radon.



1 in 5 Northeast Kingdom homes has unsafe levels of radon.



Geological factors in the Northeast Kingdom translate to higher risk.



Devonian Granites

26% of 219 homes tested had elevated levels of radon

Connecticut Valley Zone

20.7% of 5703 homes tested had elevated levels of radon

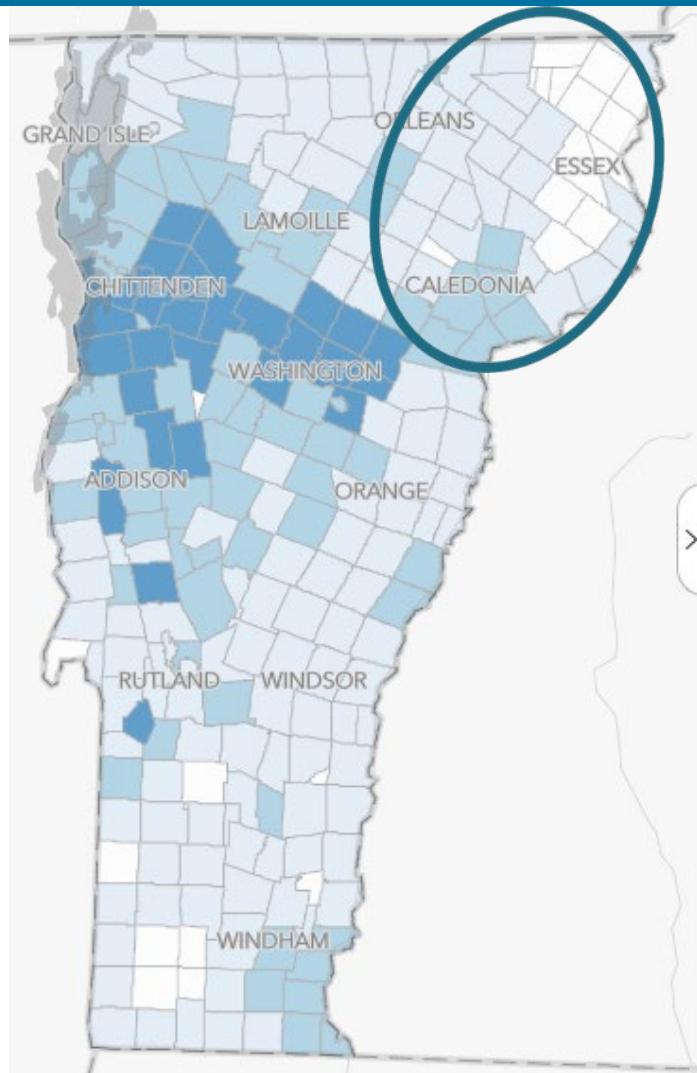
Champlain Valley Zone

11.5% of 9059 homes tested had elevated levels of radon

Mesoproterozoic Zone

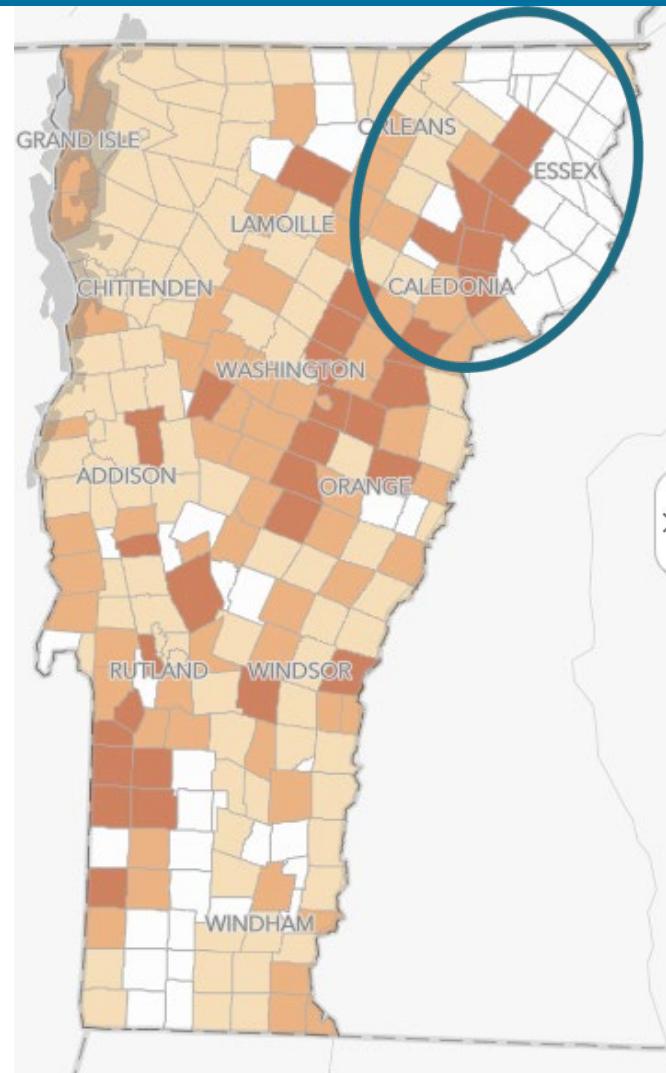
12.2% of 811 homes tested had elevated levels of radon

The Northeast Kingdom also has low testing rates and limited data.



Rates of Testing by Town 1994 to 2022
Percent of residences tested for radon

- >12% - 21%
- >7% - 12%
- >0% - 7%
- <7 residences tested



Elevated Results By Town 1994 to 2022
Percent of Tested Residences w/ Elevated Radon

- >25% - 46%
- >15% - 25%
- >0% - 15%
- <20 homes tested

Outreach by trusted community partners

Project implementation and successes

Trusted community partners provided outreach to Northeast Kingdom residents.

Partnered with the Offices of Local Health in Newport and St. Johnsbury and almost 40 community partners.

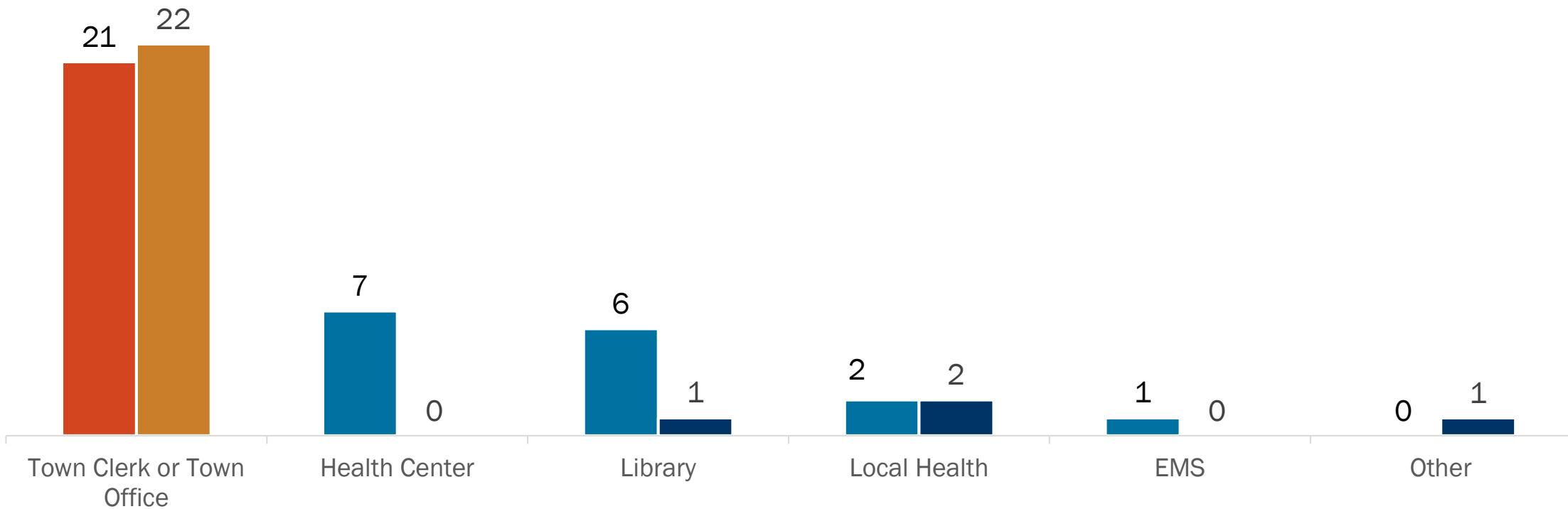
Partners were given **three options**:

- **Educate** – Information about radon and how to request a test kit
- **Sign-up** – Coupons that could be returned for a free radon test kit
- **Distribute** – Test kits that could be directly distributed by partners



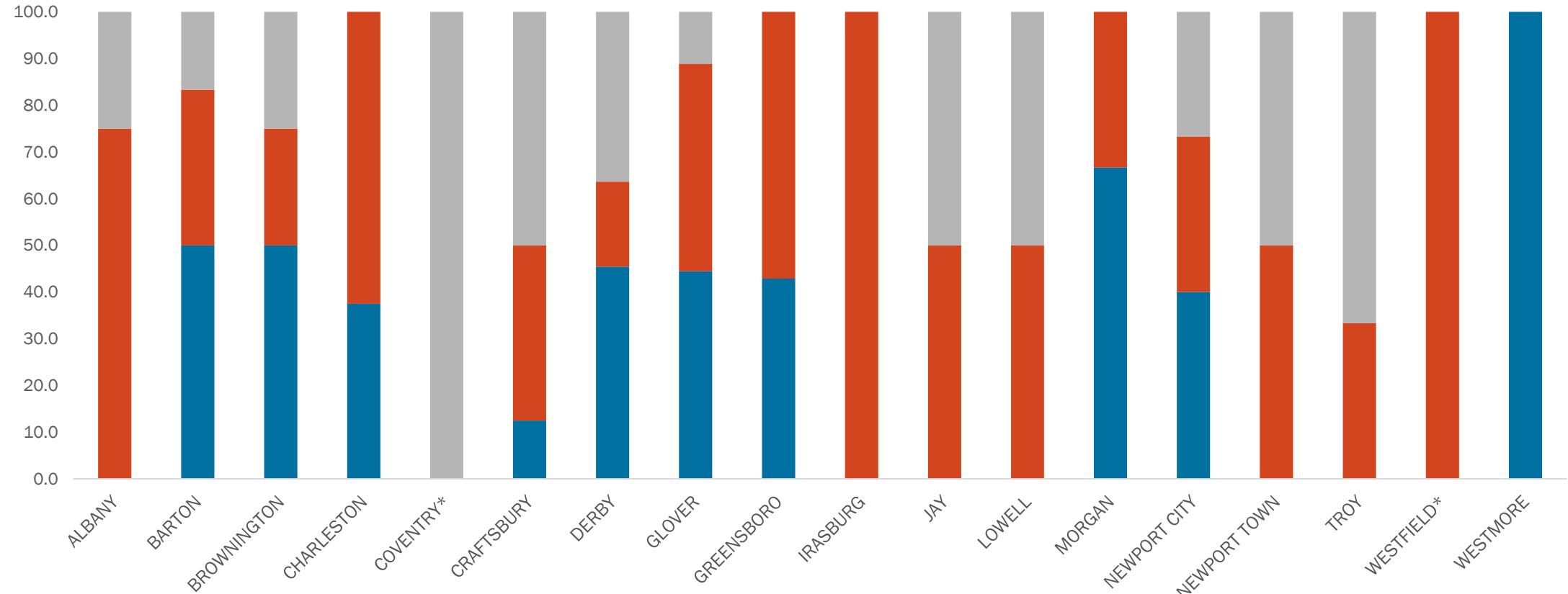
Town clerks and town offices participated more than other community partner types.

In 2023, more than half of the community partners were town clerks or town offices. In 2025, almost all were.



Community partner outreach in Orleans County led to 37.4% of radon test requests in 2023.

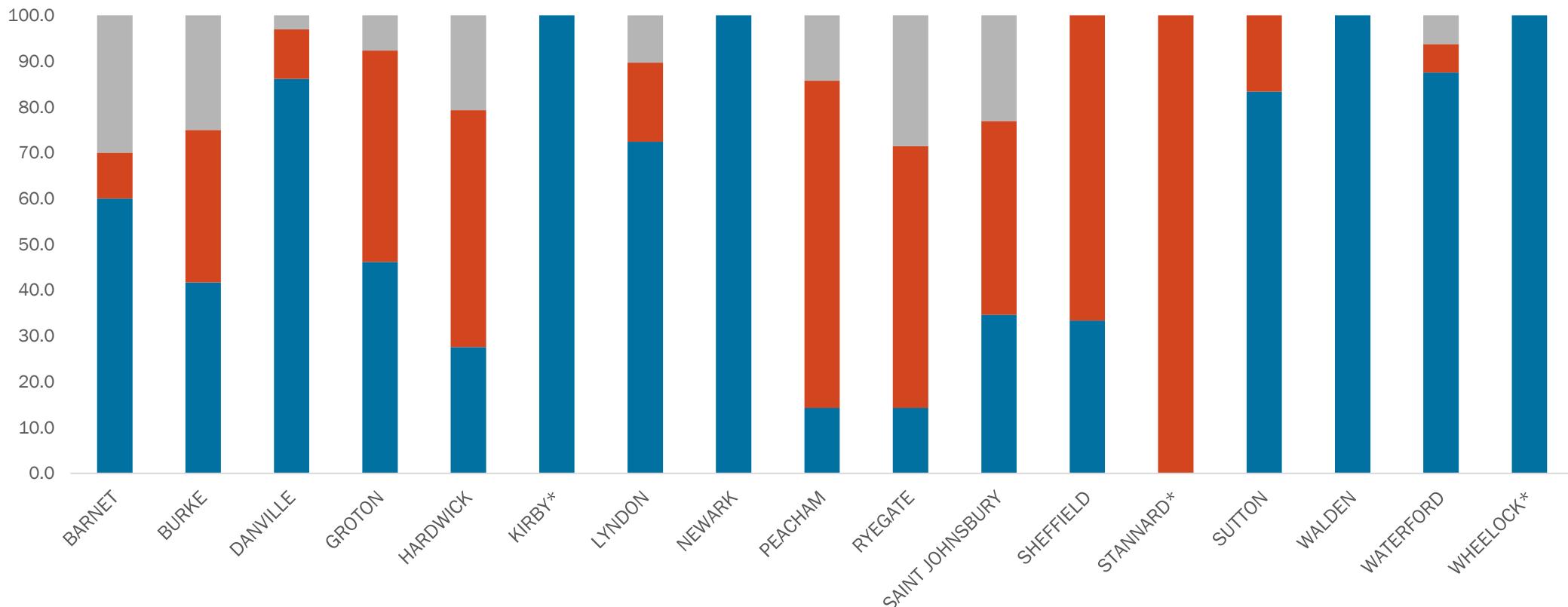
Percent of kits requested in 2023 from the **Northeast Kingdom outreach project** compared to **FPF NRAM outreach** and other outreach types



*Towns where percentage represents a single test kit request

Community partner outreach in Caledonia County led to 61.3% of radon test requests in 2023.

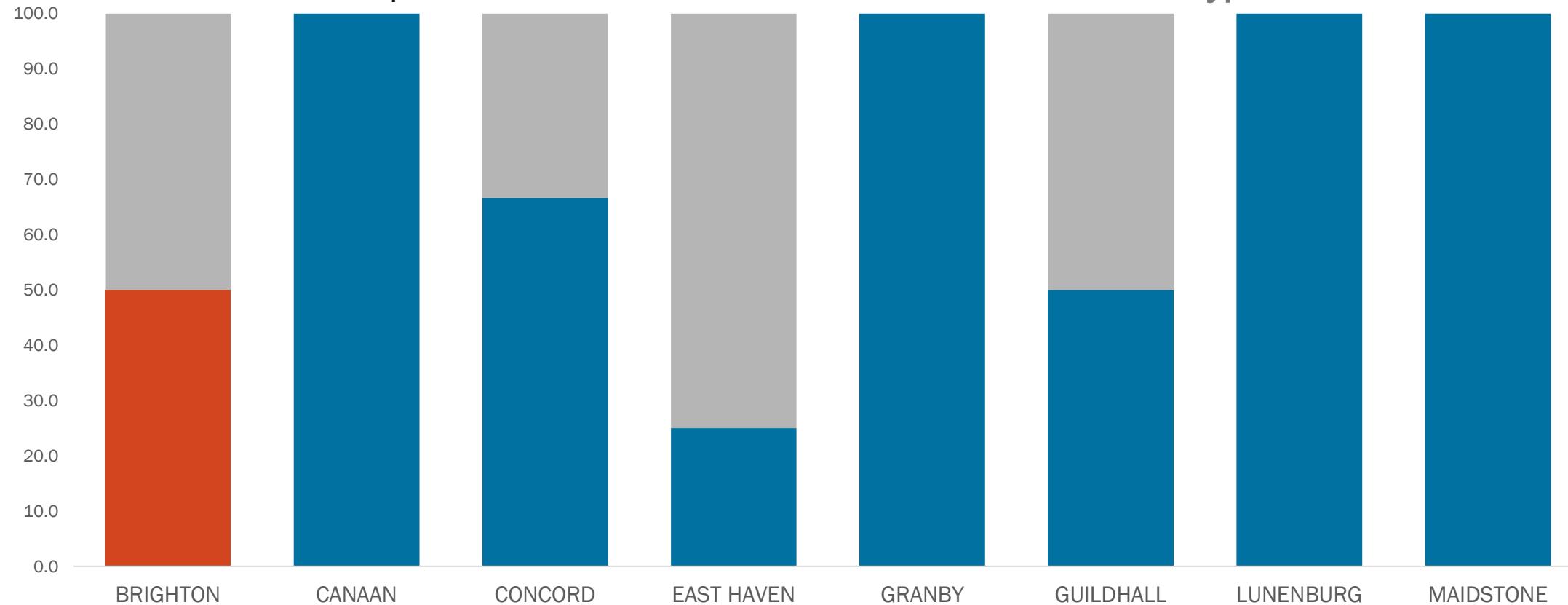
Percent of kits requested in 2023 from the Northeast Kingdom outreach project compared to **FPF NRAM outreach** and other outreach type



*Towns where percentage represents a single test kit request

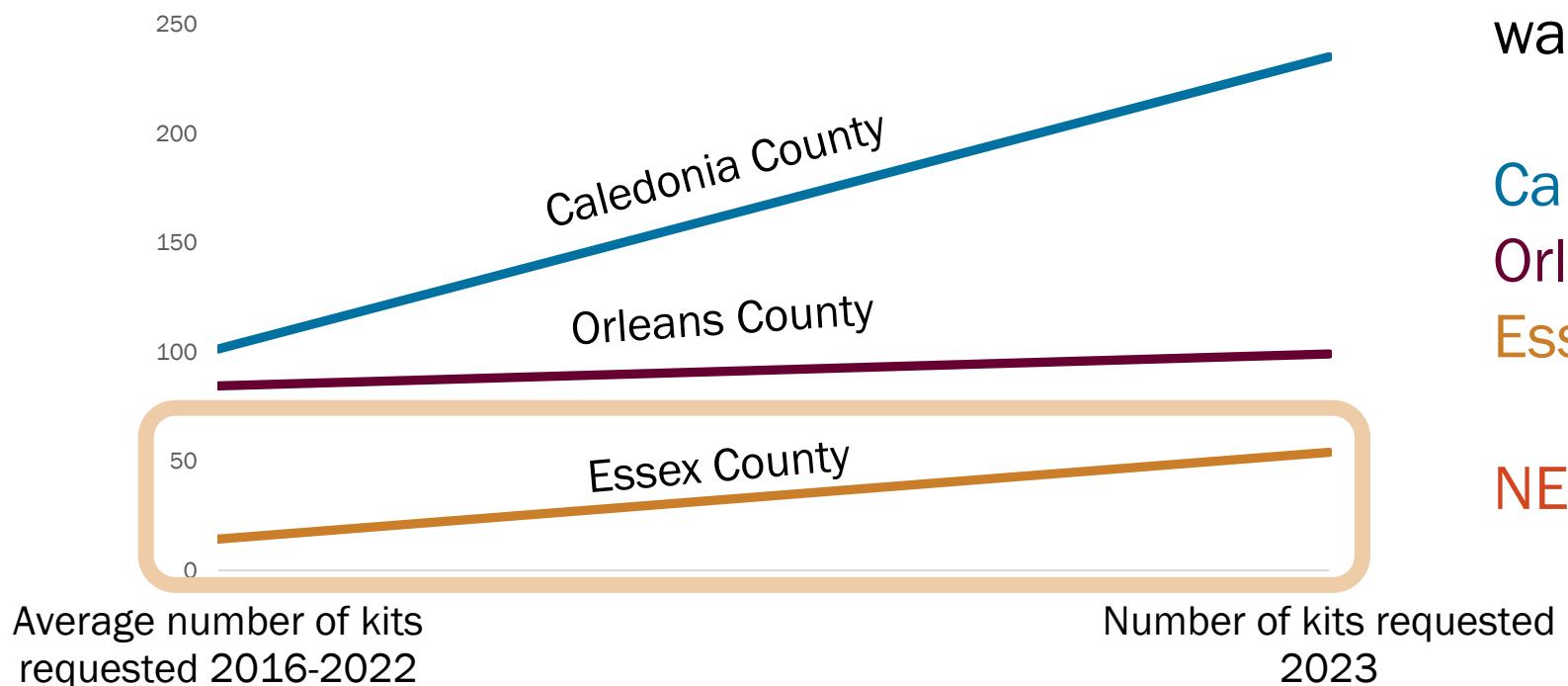
Community partner outreach Essex County led to 79.6% of radon test requests in 2023.

Percent of kits requested in 2023 from the **Northeast Kingdom outreach project** compared to **FPF NRAM outreach** and other outreach types



Overall, community-led approaches led to increased radon testing in the Northeast Kingdom.

Caledonia County and Essex County had a better response to the outreach program than Orleans County



Percent change in the number of test kits requested was greatest in Essex County

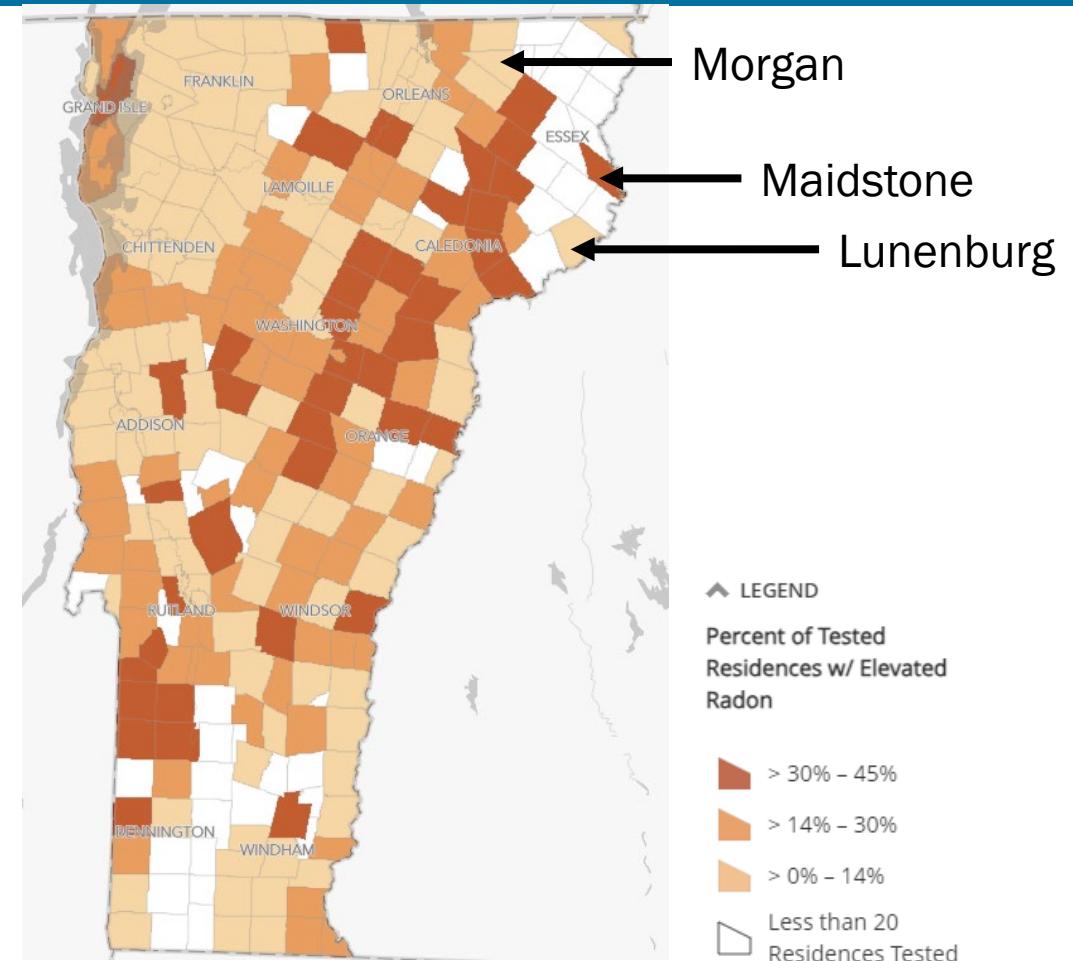
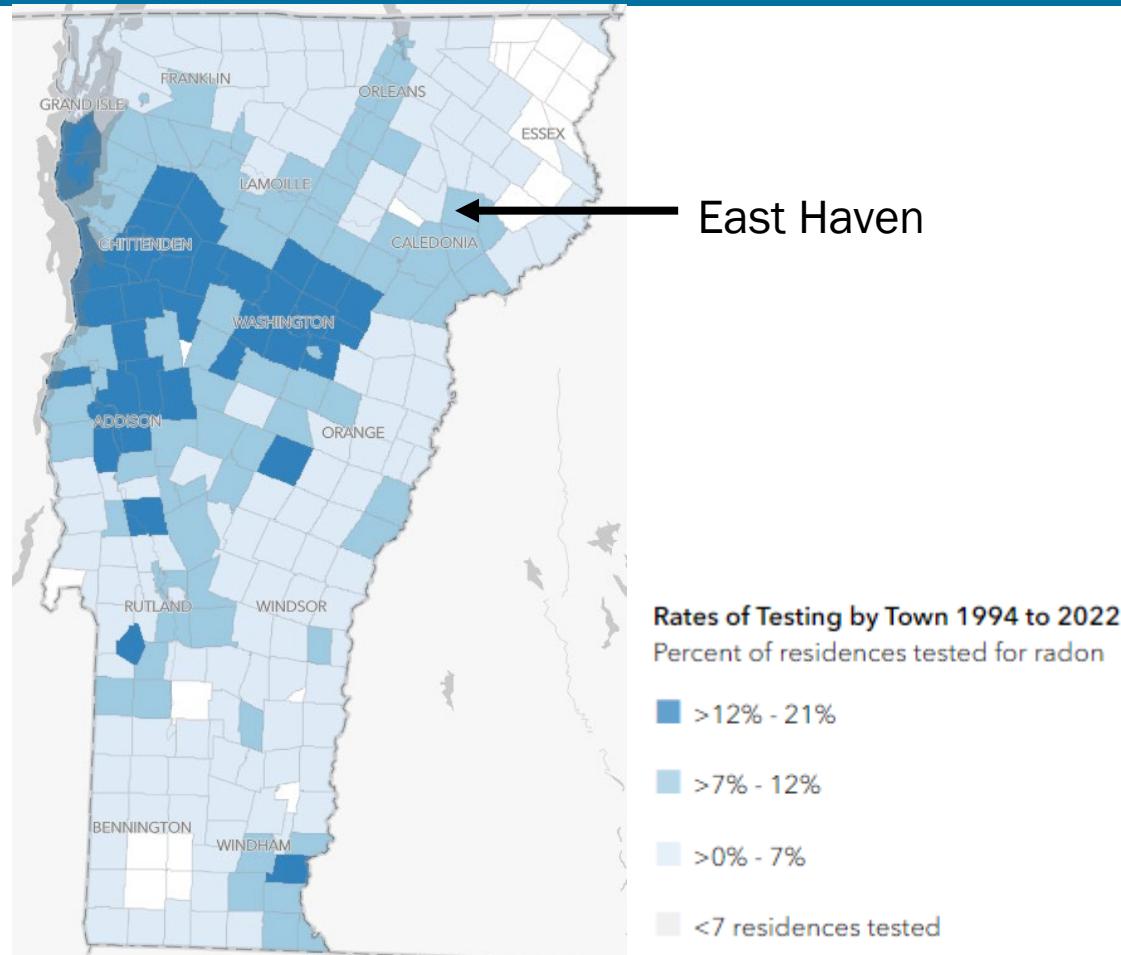
Caledonia: +132%

Orleans: +17.3%

Essex: +277.6%

NEK overall: +94%

Town level data for four more towns is now available on the radon risk maps.



Community-led approaches are an important way of engaging with rural communities.

- 1** Radon is a problem across Vermont, but increasing radon awareness in rural communities can pose challenges.
- 2** Community-led approaches are an important way to ensure radon awareness messaging reaches all residents.
- 3** More analysis is needed to see if this community-led outreach leads to mitigation and radon risk reduction.

Thank you!

Let's stay in touch.

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