

The Vermont Department for Children and Families

Outcomes for Vermonters
(January 2016)



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Department for Children and Families

Mission & Vision

The Department for Children and Families fosters the healthy development, safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Vermonters.

We envision Vermont as a place where people prosper; children and families are safe and have strong, loving connections; and individuals have the opportunity to fully develop their potential.

Departmental Structure

DCF is structured around the Commissioner's Office, three divisions that support work across the department (Business Office, Information Services, and Operations), and six programmatic divisions that administer the department's major programs:

1. Child Development Division;
2. Economic Services Division;
3. Family Services Division;
4. Office of Child Support;
5. Office of Disability Determination Services; and
6. Office of Economic Opportunity.

Departmental Priorities

While each division within the department has its own priorities and areas of focus, we are unified in our passion for:

- Reducing poverty and homelessness;
- Eliminating hunger;
- Improving the safety and well-being of children, youth and families;
- Keeping children safe from abuse;
- Providing timely and accurate financial supports for individuals and families; and
- Supporting Vermont's most vulnerable citizens, including older Vermonters, people with disabilities, and families with children.

Departmental Highlights:

In 2015, the Department achieved many important goals and made noteworthy program improvements in all six divisions. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- ➔ There was a sharp increase in the number of licensed child care programs participating in the STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) — Vermont’s quality recognition system — from 444 in FY 2014 to 668 in FY 2015.
 - 64% of programs achieved 3, 4 or 5 stars (*an indicator of high quality*) in FY 2015.
- ➔ There was also a substantial increase in the number of registered providers (*family child care homes*) participating in STARS — from 346 in FY 2014 to 544 in FY 2015.
 - 19% of providers achieved 3, 4 or 5 stars (*an indicator of high quality*) in FY 2015.
- ➔ 3SquaresVT, Vermont’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, now has one of the lowest payment error rates in the country: 1.25% for the first nine months of FFY 2015. This is a dramatic decrease from a payment error rate of 9.66% in FFY 2013.
- ➔ Vermonters called the state’s Child Protection Line a record 19,434 times to report suspected child abuse or neglect. As a result, 5,902 child safety interventions were initiated: 3,311 assessments and 2,591 investigations.
- ➔ Opiate addiction continues to be a factor affecting children’s safety in Vermont. One of the consequences is a substantial increase in the number of children entering DCF custody, from 982 in FFY 2013 to 1,370 in FFY 2015. The increase has been most dramatic for children aged 0 to 5 — from 284 in FFY 2013 to 539 in FFY 2015.
- ➔ The Family Services Division provided more than 50,000 mandated reporters with information and guidance related to changes to mandated reporting procedures, child abuse definitions, and information sharing that resulted from Act 60 of 2015 (formerly S.9).
- ➔ The Office of Child Support ranks in the top ten nationally for federal performance measures such as children with parentage established, cases with court-ordered child support, amount of current support paid, and repayments toward past due support.
- ➔ The Office of Disability Determination Services processed claims for disability benefits 20 days faster than the national average while maintaining very high decision quality — ranking Vermont in the top five states in the nation.
- ➔ The Office of Economic Opportunity supported operations at 28 non-profit emergency homeless shelters across the state. In FY2015, 4,303 persons (3,446 adults and 857 children) were sheltered for a total of 153,361 shelter bednights. The average length of stay was about 36.8 days.
- ➔ The department launched its new website (dcf.vermont.gov) with a fresh new look, client-oriented navigation, and mobile-friendly interface!

Child Development Division (CDD)

CDD improves the well-being of Vermont children by developing and administering a continuum of high-quality, comprehensive child development and family support services that promote health and well-being, school readiness, and foundations for lifelong success.

Populations Served

The division focuses its efforts on four populations:

1. Pregnant and postpartum women;
2. Children from birth to age six and their families;
3. Children ages five to 12 participating in afterschool programs;
and
4. Early childhood and afterschool programs and professionals.

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Programs Visited by Licensing

The Licensing Unit licenses and monitors registered family child care homes and licensed programs to make sure they provide safe and healthy environments for children and contribute to their development.

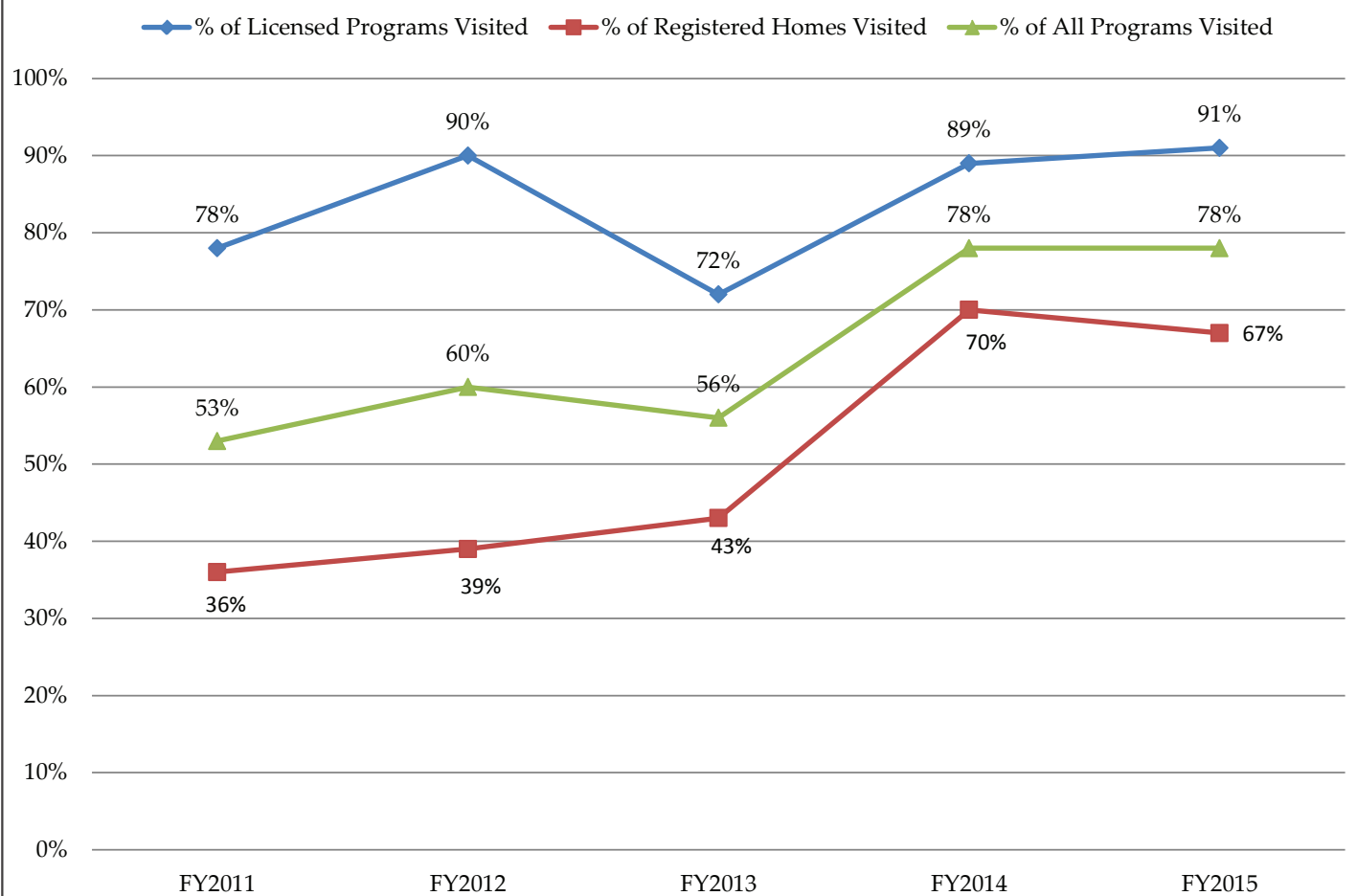


The percentage of all programs visited in FY 2015 remained steady at 78%:

- ➔ 91% of licensed programs were visited, up from 89% in 2014; and
- ➔ 67% of registered homes were visited, a slight decrease from 70% in 2014.

CDD will continue working towards the goal of visiting 100% of all licensed programs and 90% of all registered providers at least once a year.

Child Care Programs Visited by Licensing

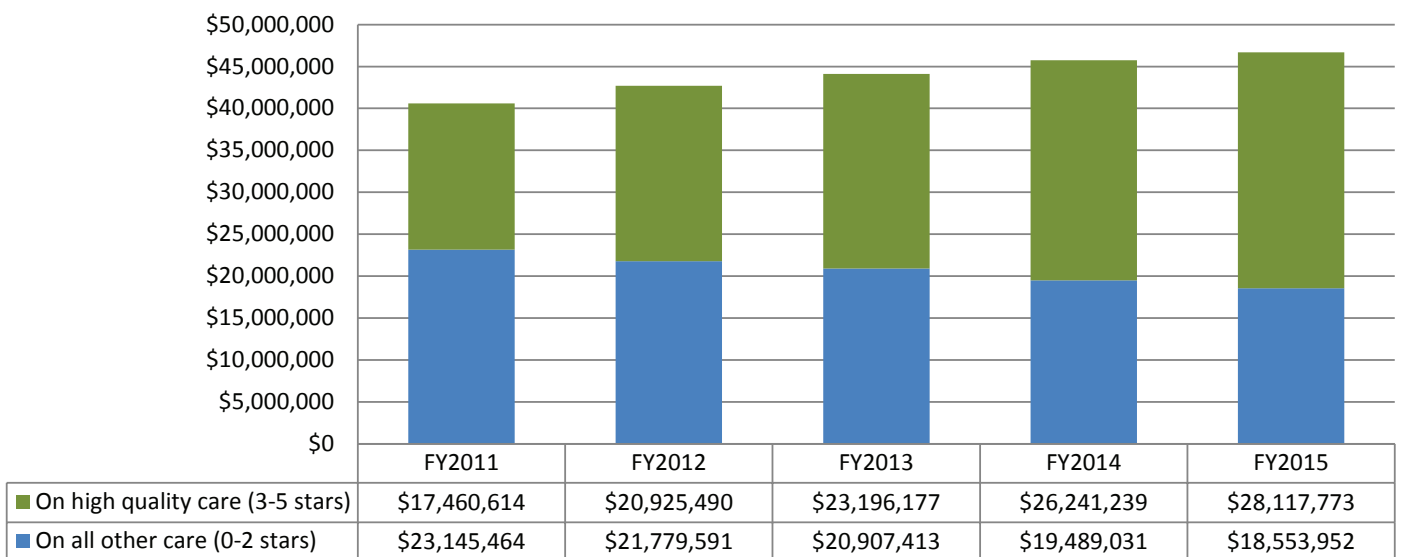


Outcome: Children are ready for school

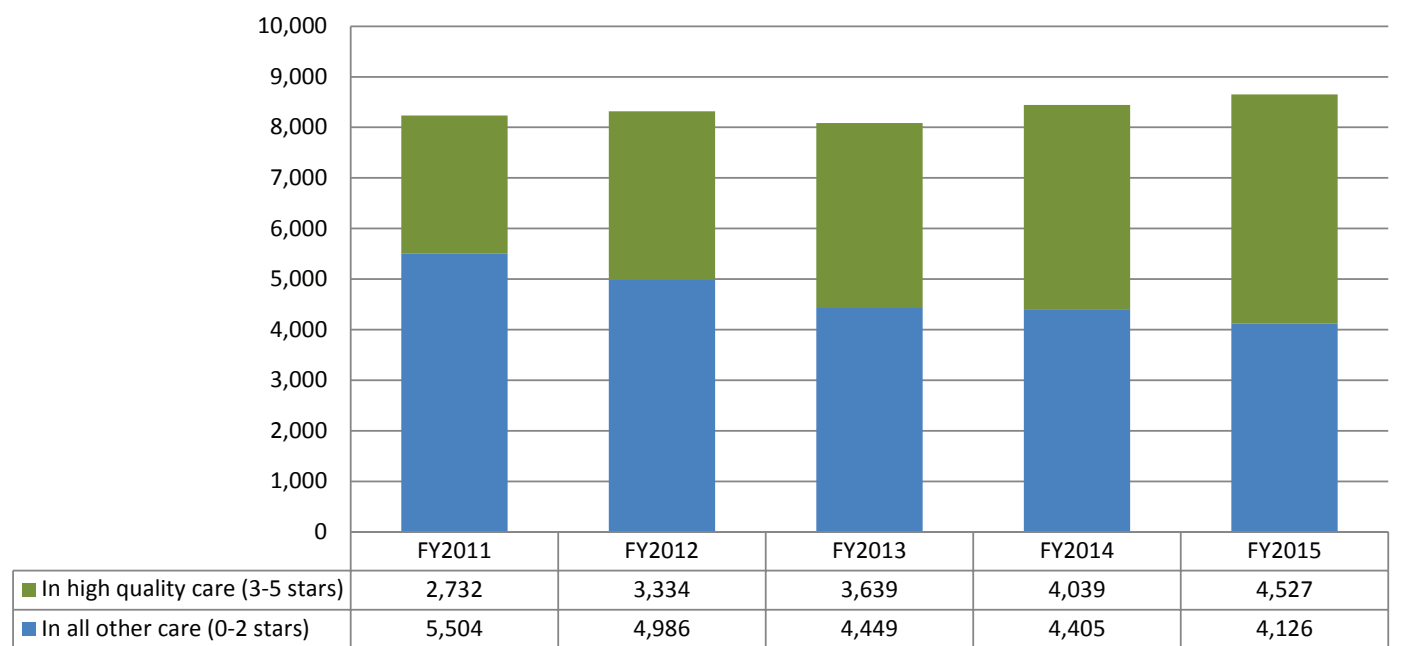
Performance Measure: Financial Assistance Provided To Children In High Quality Care
 In FY2015, \$46.7 million in Child Care Financial Assistance helped a total of 14,301 children (average of 8,653 each month) access early care & education and afterschool programs.

- ➔ 60.2% of the total budget was spent on high quality care (*three or more stars*); and
- ➔ 52.3% of the children getting financial assistance were in high quality care.

Child Care Financial Assistance, dollars spent



Child Care Financial Assistance, Average Number of Children



Outcome: Children are ready for school

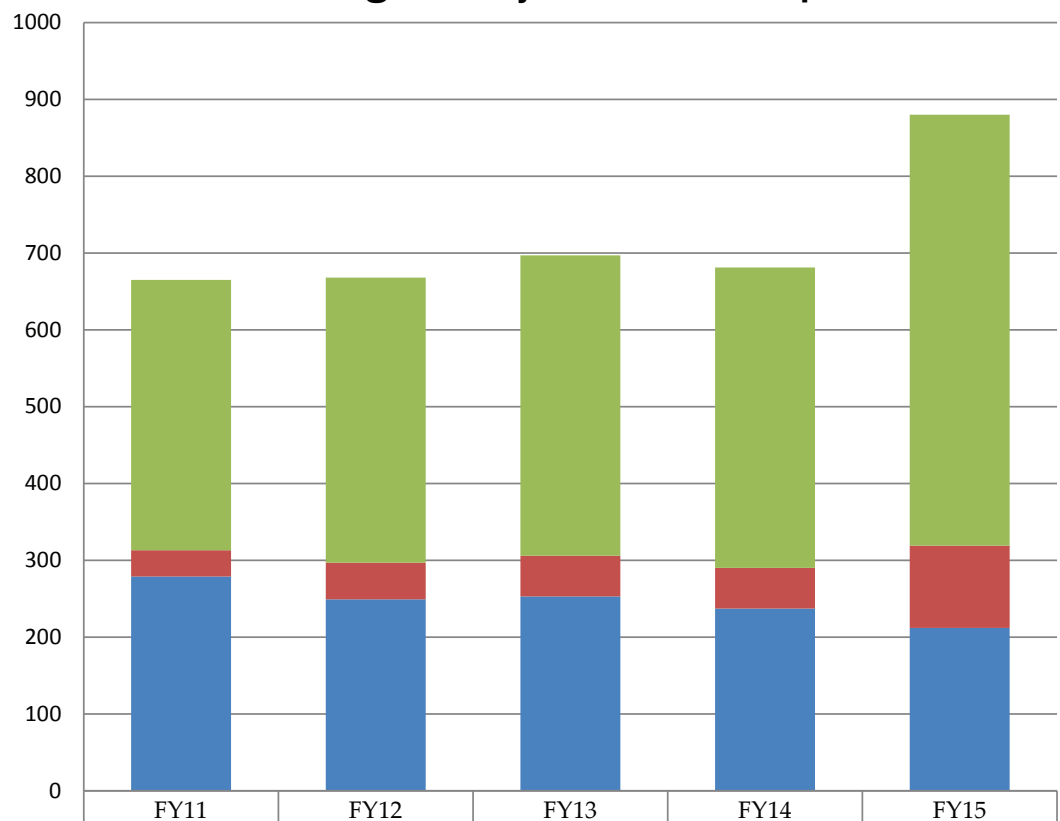
Performance Measure: Licensed Child Care Programs Participating in STARS

CDD supports the continuous improvement of early childhood and afterschool programs through the SStep Ahead Recognition System (STARS). Programs that participate in STARS — Vermont’s quality recognition system — are going above and beyond state regulations to provide professional services that meet the needs of children and families. Research shows that high quality early care and education has a demonstrable, positive impact on children’s development, well-being, and school readiness.

There was a sharp increase in the total number of licensed programs participating in STARS in FY 2015:

- ➔ Programs that achieved 1 or 2 out of 5 possible stars increased from 53 to 107; and
- ➔ Programs that achieved 3, 4, or 5 out of 5 possible stars (*an indicator of high quality*) increased from 391 to 561 (64%).

Licensed Child Care Programs by STARS Participation



■ Programs at 3, 4, 5 star level	352	371	391	391	561
■ Programs at 1 or 2 star level	34	48	53	53	107
■ Programs not participating in STARS	279	249	253	237	212

Outcome: Children are ready for school

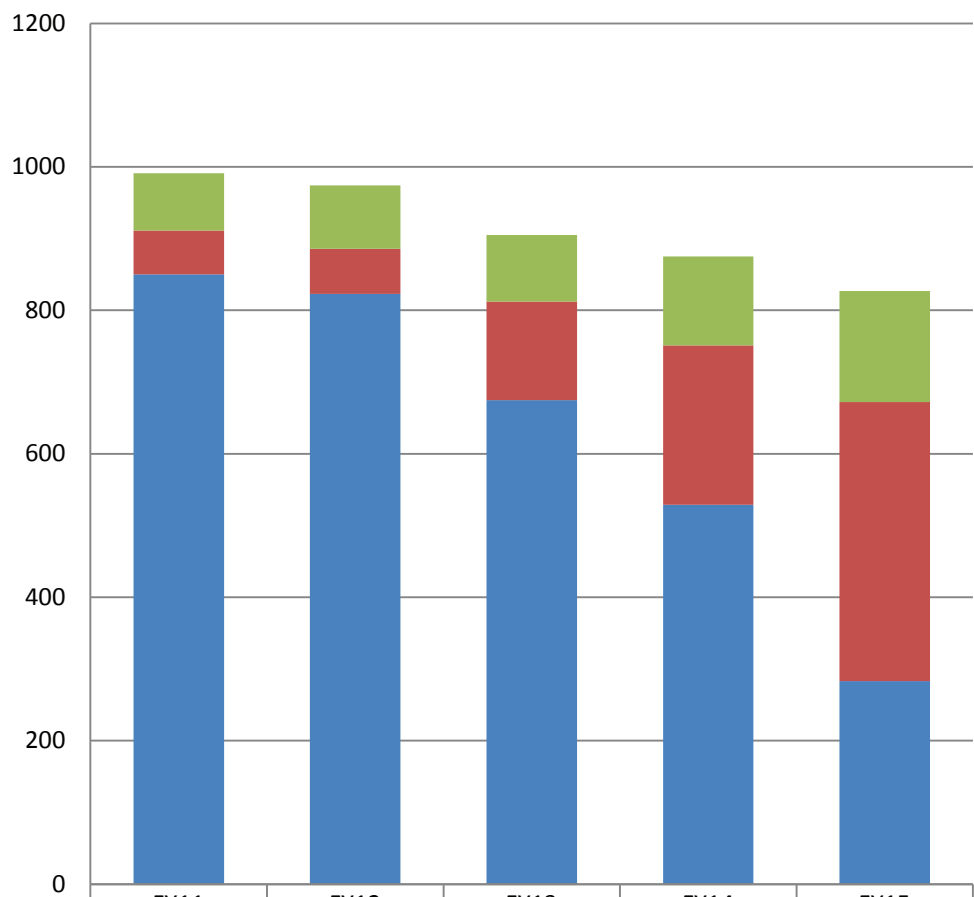
Performance Measure: Registered Child Care Providers Participating in STARS

The total number of registered providers (*family child care homes*) participating in STARS increased substantially in FY 2015:

- ➔ Providers with 1 or 2 out of 5 possible stars increased from 222 to 389; and
- ➔ Providers that achieved 3, 4, or 5 out of 5 possible stars (*an indicator of high quality*) increased from 124 to 155 (19%).

Registered providers generally enter STARS at a one- or two-star level, and they progress over time to higher levels. Their participation at any level is a step in the right direction towards high quality care for all children in Vermont.

Registered Providers by STARS Participation



Providers at 3, 4, 5 star level	80	88	93	124	155
Providers at 1 or 2 star level	61	63	137	222	389
Providers not participating in STARS	850	823	675	529	283

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Strengthening Families Child Care Grants

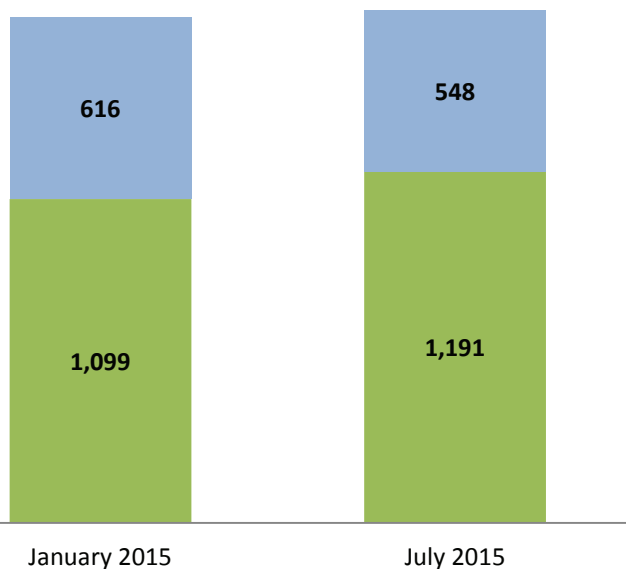
CDD provides grants to help high-quality child care programs (4 or 5 stars) incorporate principles from the nationally-recognized, evidence-based *Strengthening Families Framework* into their program policies and practices.

Thirty one (31) grantees representing 40 center-based programs across the state received grants in 2015. Key outcomes from the current grant year demonstrate how participating programs have increased access to high quality early learning and development programs for vulnerable children and families across Vermont.

- ➔ While grantees are only required to enroll 25% of children in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, 68% of the children enrolled in these programs qualify for child care subsidies.
- ➔ Grantees ensured the vast majority (86%) of enrolled children have access to medical homes (*primary care providers*).

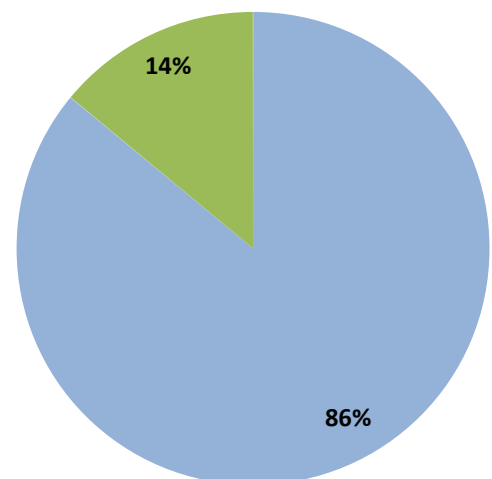
Children Enrolled in Program

- # of non-CCFAP children enrolled
- # of CCFAP children enrolled



Children with Access to Medical Homes (July 2015)

- Children with Medical Home
- Children without Medical Home



Economic Services Division (ESD)

ESD administers economic benefits that help Vermonters in need. Programs such as 3SquaresVT, Emergency/General Assistance, Fuel Assistance, and Reach Up provide a safety net for individuals and families who may be experiencing unemployment, underemployment, single parenthood, aging, disability, the death of a family member, or other life-changing events.

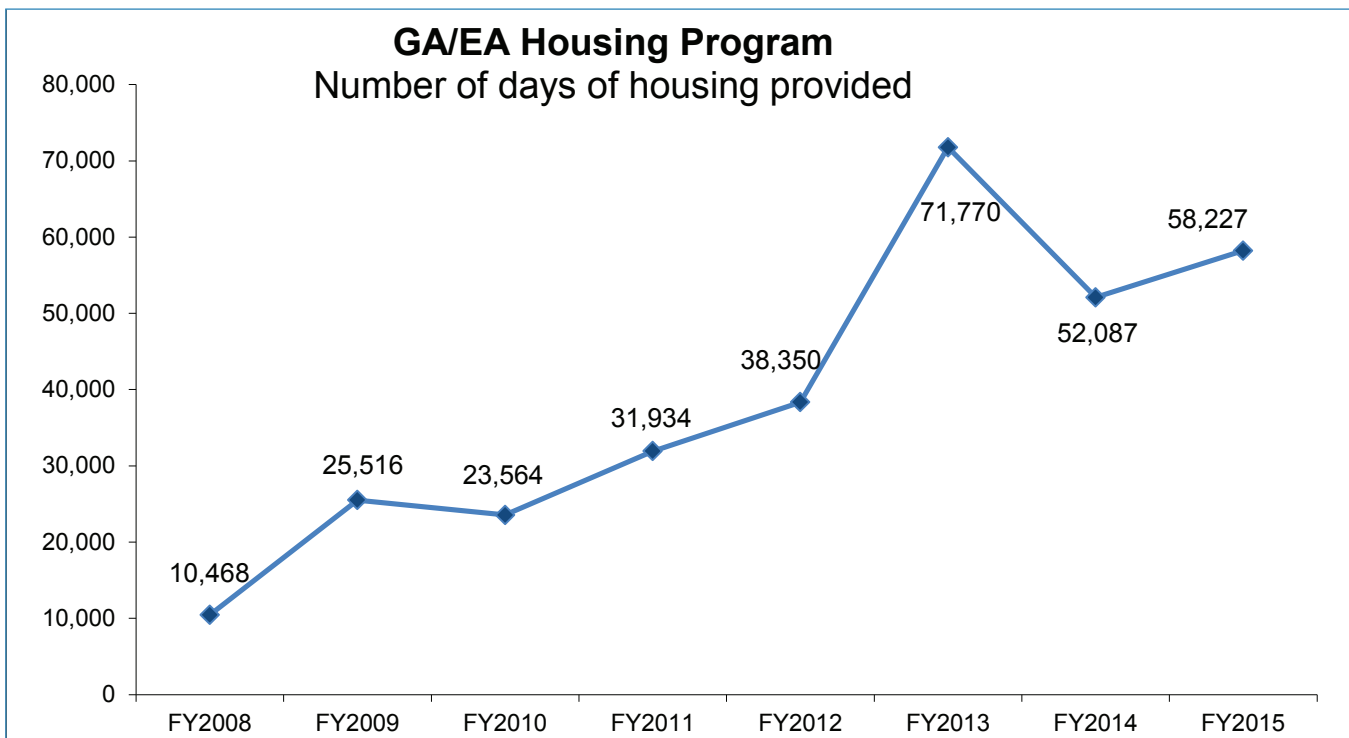
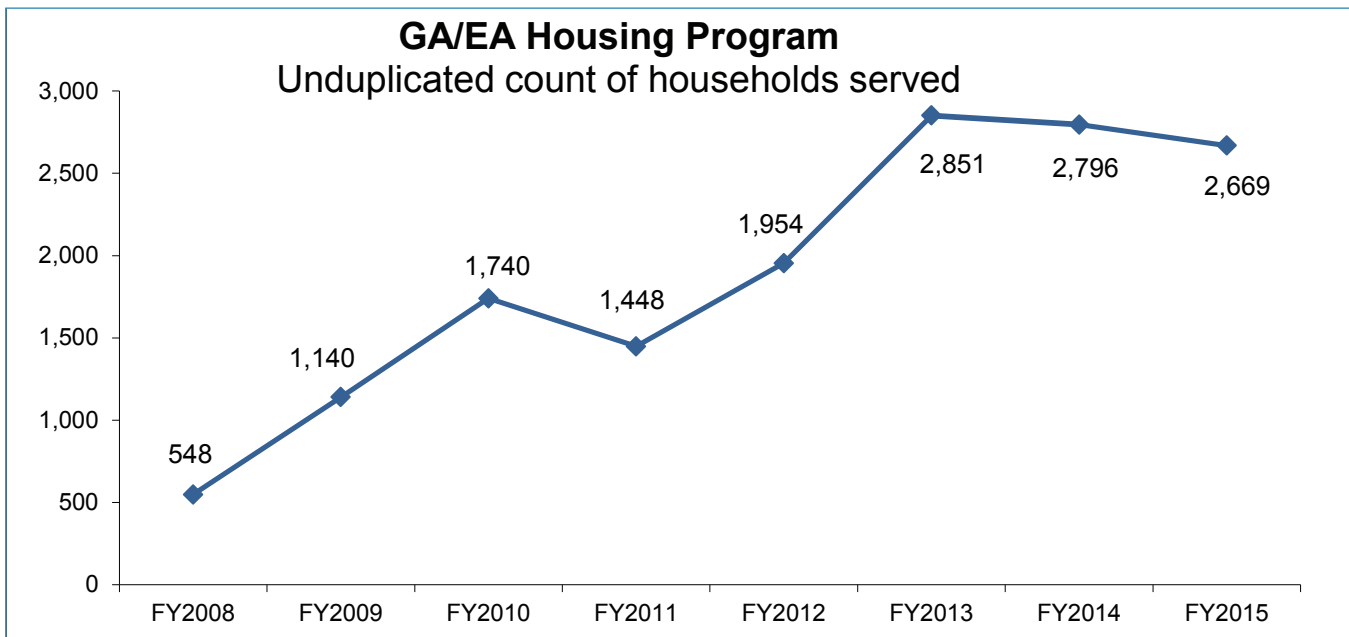
Populations Served

1. Children & youth;
2. Families with children;
3. Seniors;
4. People with physical disabilities; and
5. Low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

Outcome: Vermonters are healthy

Performance Measure: GA/EA Housing Assistance: Households

- The number of unique households getting GA/EA Housing Assistance decreased, from 2,796 in FY 2014 to 2,669 in 2015.
- However, the total number of days of housing provided increased substantially, from a total of 52,087 days in FY 2014 to 58,227 in 2015. This suggests that fewer households are needing services but for longer periods. A sharp decrease from FFY 2013 is likely due to policy changes that restricted eligibility.



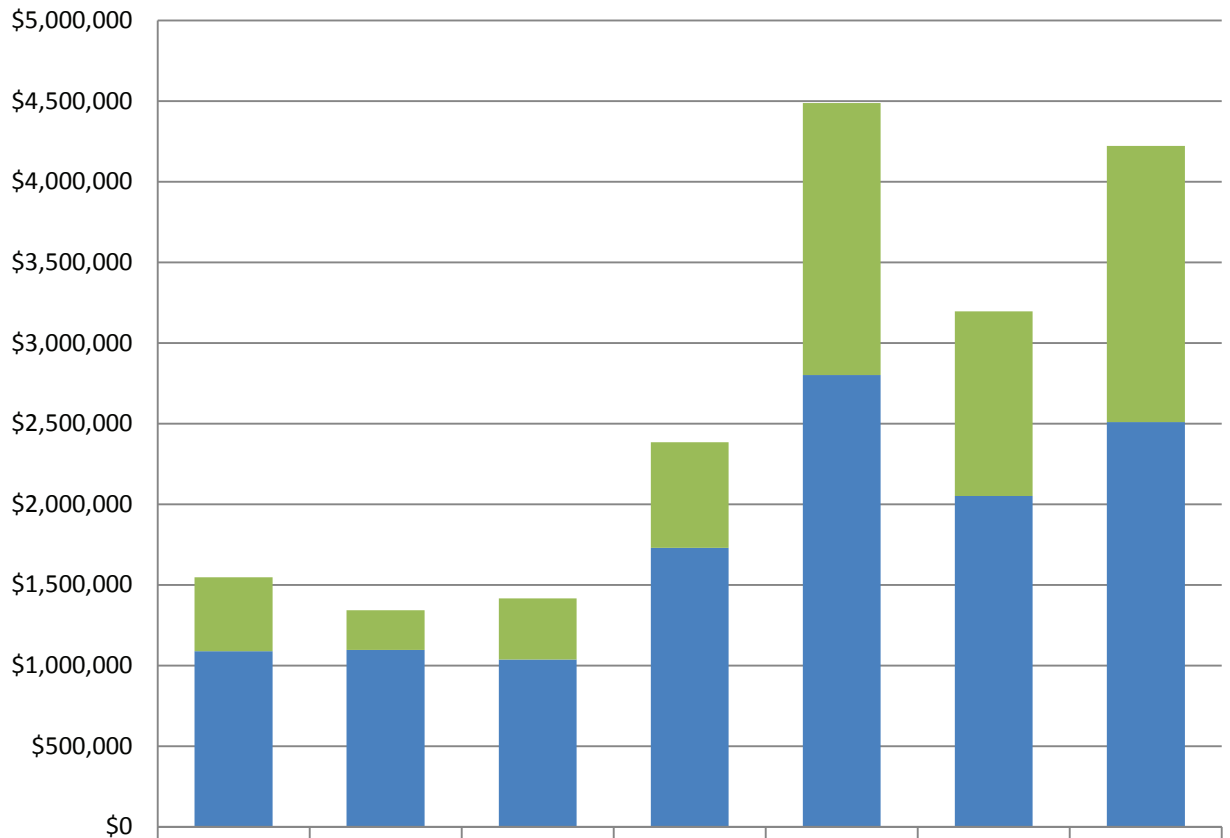
Outcome: Vermonters are healthy

Performance Measure: GA/EA Housing Assistance: Expenditures

GA/EA housing expenditures increased from \$3.1 million in FY 2014 to \$4.2 million in FY 2015.

- ➔ The average assistance provided per household increased, from \$617 in FY 2010 to \$1,451 in FY 2015.
- ➔ The average number of days assistance was provided increased, from 14 in FY 2010 to 22 in FY 2015.
- ➔ The average cost per night for a motel stay increased, from \$46 in FY 2010 to \$66.50 in FY 2015.

GA Temporary Housing Expenditures 2009 - 2015



Outcome: Vermonters are healthy

Performance Measure: Vermont Rental Subsidy Program (VRSP)

VRSP began in December of 2011. It provides state-funded rental assistance to homeless families and individuals who don't earn enough income to afford rent in their communities. Subsidies provide support for up to one year while households work to increase their incomes or secure other long-term affordable housing. Participants pay 30% of their incomes towards rent; the State of Vermont pays the difference to the landlords.

Since the program started, 242 households have moved off VRSP because they secured long-term vouchers, increased their earnings, or found alternative housing options.

The average cost to the State is \$626 per household, per month.

VERMONT RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM – Year to Year Comparison

	September 2014	September 2015
Household Composition of VRSP Recipients		
Single-parent families with children	47	68
Two-parent families with children	18	39
Individuals	11	6
Couples without children	3	5
Total Households	79	118
- Households receiving Reach Up	41	70
- Households receiving SSI	14	18
- Households receiving both Reach Up and SSI	3	7
- Other households under 125% of FPL	21	23
Program Performance		
Households approved and leased up	79	118
Households tentatively granted and seeking housing	61	30
Total number of households on waiting list	13	73
Program Cost Analysis		
Average monthly rent paid by tenant	\$268	\$308
Average amount of monthly rent paid by DCF	\$553	\$626
Average cost per household for full year of VRSP subsidy	\$6,636	\$7,512
Average time housed by VRSP (in months)	12	10

Outcome: Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government

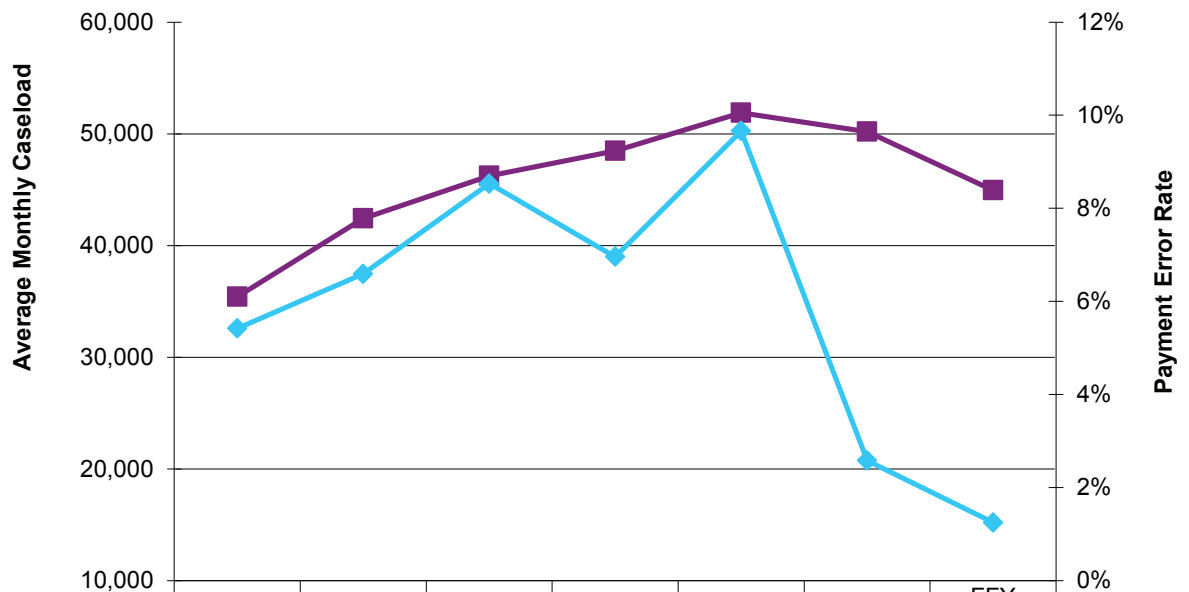
Performance Measure: 3SquaresVT Caseload and Payment Error Rate

3SquaresVT, which is 100% federally funded, helps reduce hunger in Vermont and stimulates the state's economy (generating \$1.84 in financial benefits for every \$1 spent).

The Food & Nutrition Service of the US Department of Agriculture, which oversees the program nationally, requires states to achieve a minimum accuracy rate of 94% when issuing benefits – or face penalties. This means that the percentage of total recipients who were either under or over paid, calculated as a *Payment Error Rate*, must be below 6% to be in compliance.

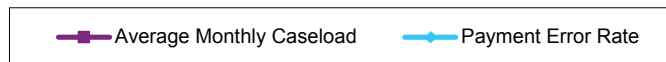
Vermont has not only exceeded this standard for the second year in a row, we currently have one of the lowest rates in the country: 1.25% for the first nine months of FFY 2015.

3SquaresVT Caseload and Payment Error Rate



	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015*
Average Monthly Caseload	35,408	42,435	46,239	48,480	51,883	50,199	44,950
Payment Error Rate	5.42%	6.59%	8.53%	6.96%	9.66%	2.58%	1.25%

Federal Fiscal Year



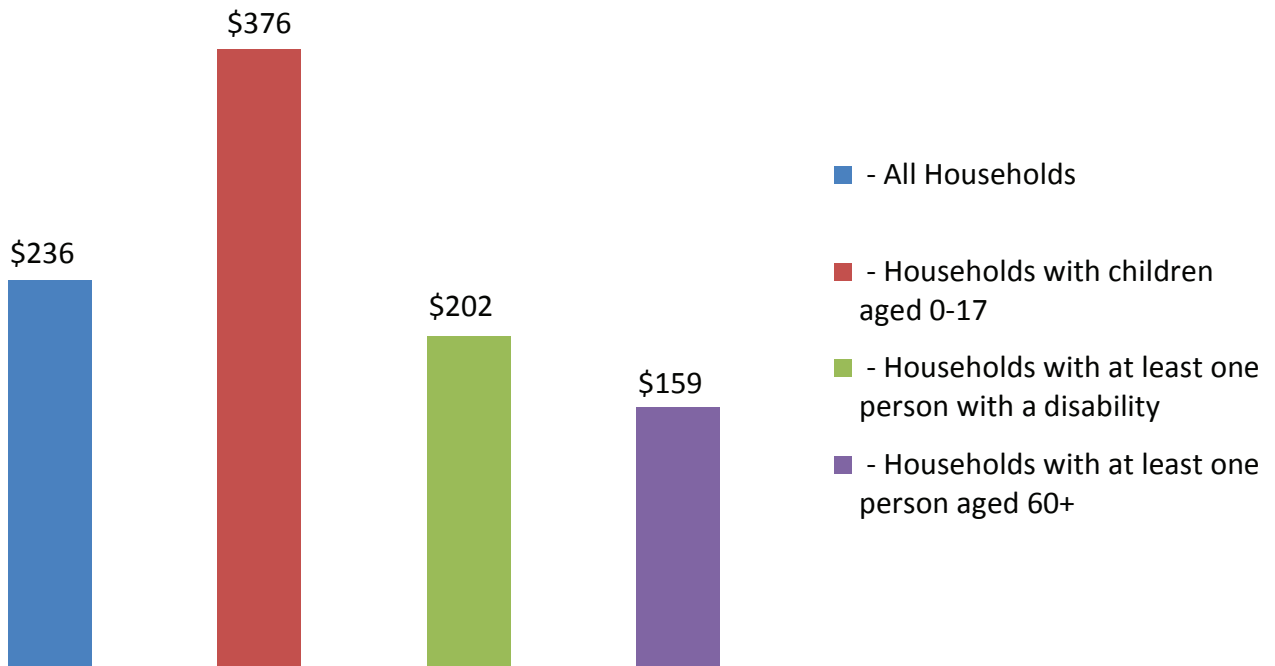
* data thru 04/2015

One-Month Snapshot of 3SquaresVT Participants

Data for the Month of September 2015

Total Recipients	82,184
- Recipients aged 0-17	28,482 (34.6%)
- Recipients with a disability	20,670 (25.1%)
- Recipients aged 60 or older	13,719 (16.7%)
Total Participating Households	43,869
- Households with children aged 0-17	15,075 (34.4%)
- Households with at least one person with a disability	19,376 (44.2%)
- Households with at least one person aged 60+	12,422 (28.3%)

Average 3SquaresVT Benefit as of September 2015



Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

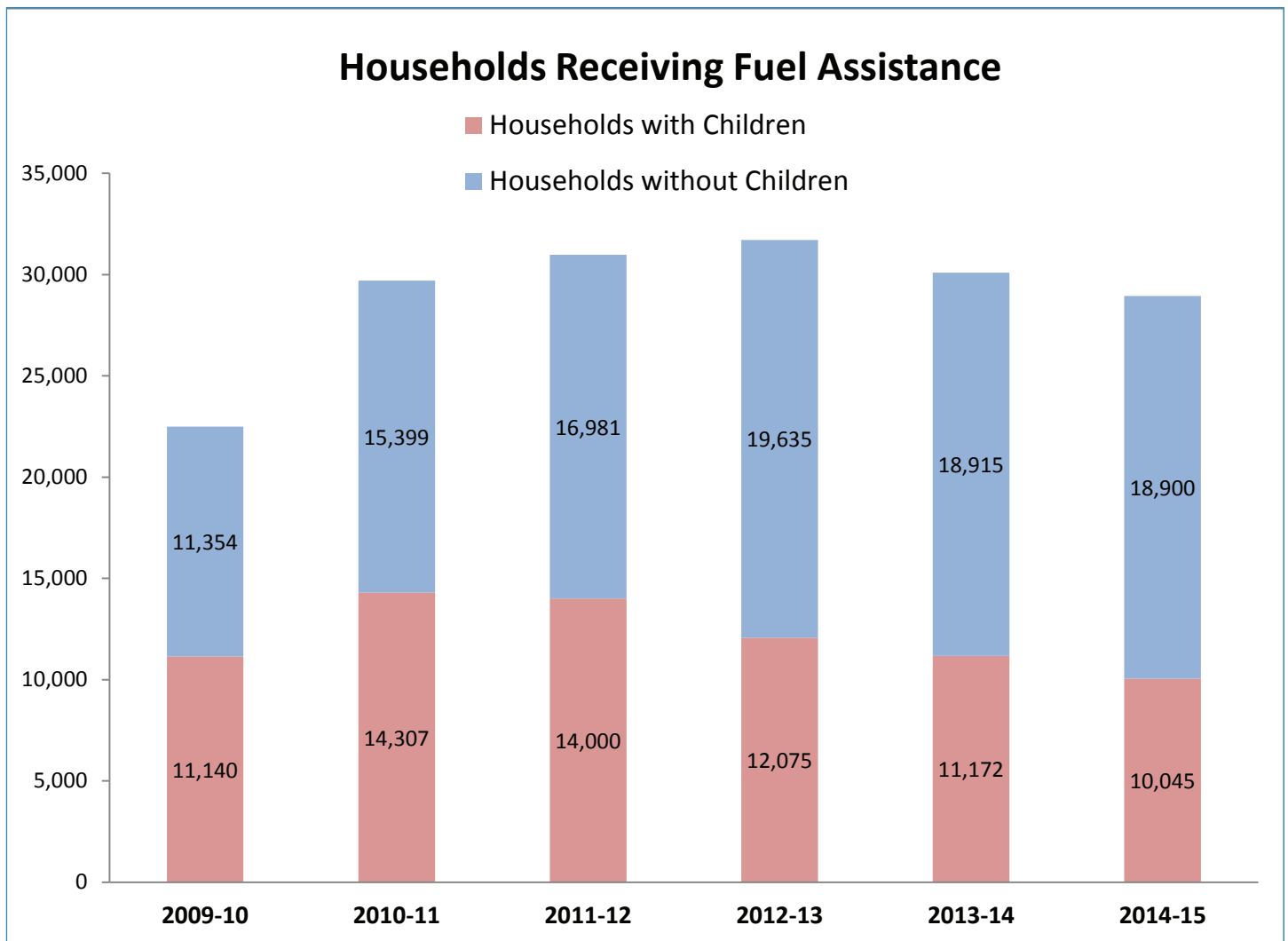
Performance Measure: Seasonal Fuel Assistance

Seasonal Fuel Assistance (also known as Home Heating Assistance) helps lower-income Vermonters to heat their homes by paying part of their home heating bills. It can help whether they:

- ➔ Own their home or rent;
- ➔ Pay for heat directly or as part of rent;
- ➔ Rent a room in someone's home; or
- ➔ Live in public, subsidized, or Section 8 housing AND rent includes the cost of heat.

During the 2014-15 heating season (*November 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015*):

- ➔ 28,945 households received a full fuel benefit;
- ➔ 10,045 of those households included children; and
- ➔ The average benefit paid to certified fuel dealers for all households was \$783.

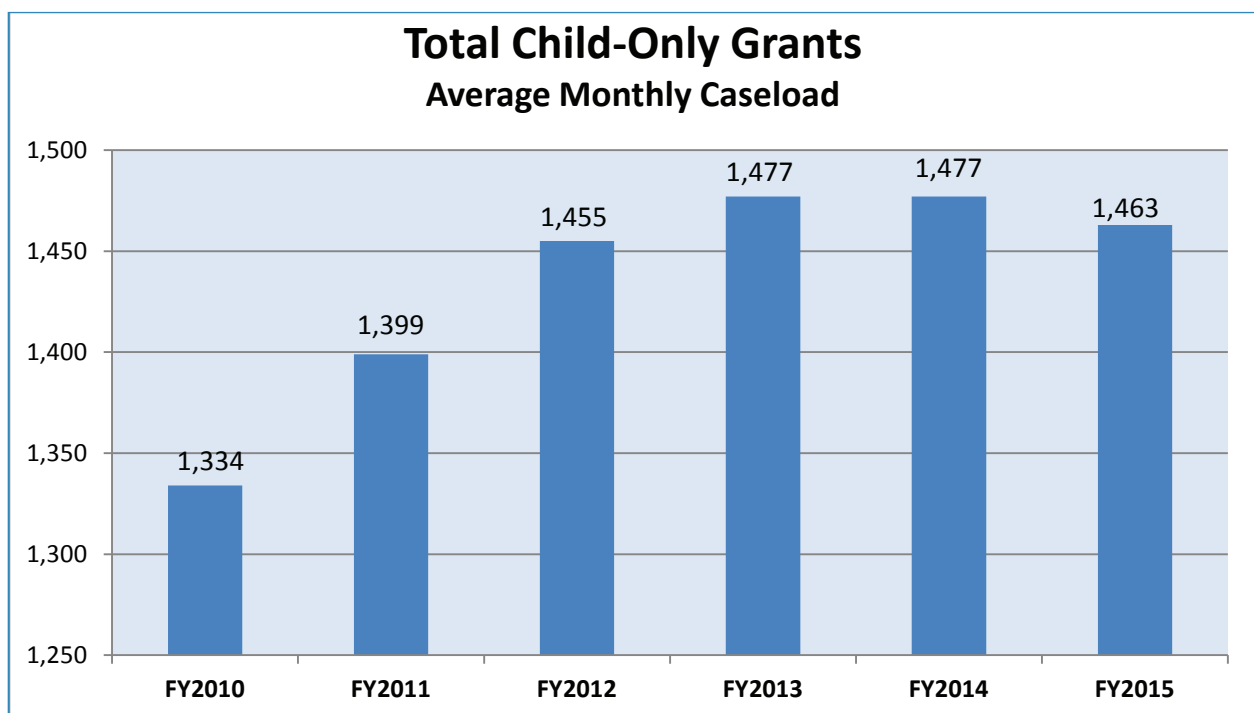
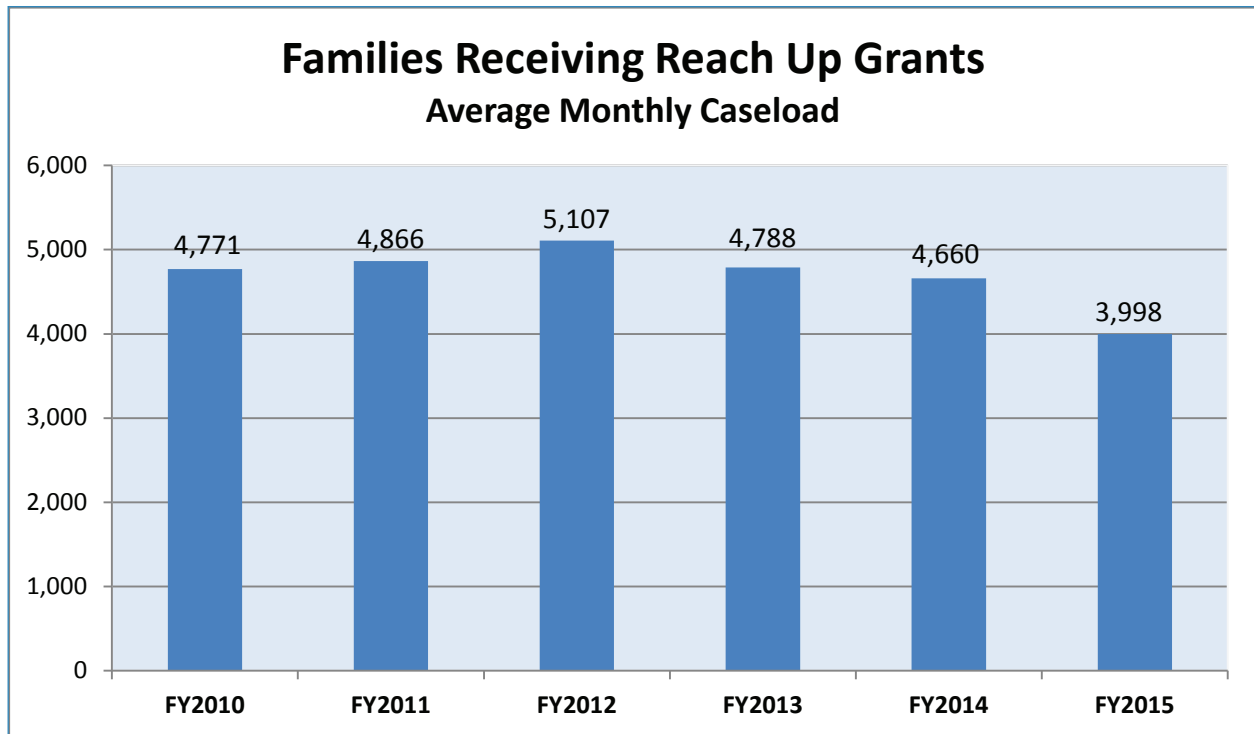


Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Reach Up Grants

In FY 2015, Reach Up:

- ➔ Helped 3,998 families each month (on average) to meet their basic needs and find employment;
- ➔ Provided 1,463 child-only grants each month (on average) to parents receiving SSI and adult relatives caring for minor children.



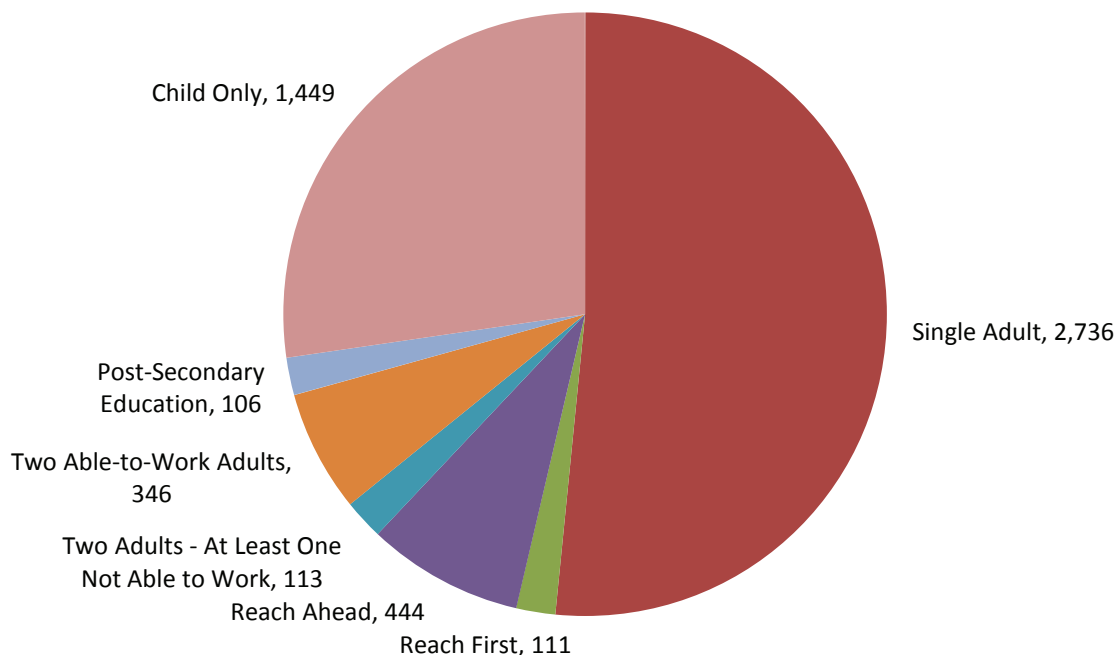
Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Reach Up: Types of Families on the Caseload

The chart below describes the types of families on the Reach Up caseload in FFY 2014. In addition to regular Reach Up cases, we also had the following types of cases:

- ➔ *Child-Only Reach Up* provides cash assistance to help adult relatives care for minor children who have little or no income of their own.
- ➔ *Reach First* helps families who meet the eligibility requirements for Reach Up but who will likely be self-sufficient in 4 months or less.
- ➔ *Reach Ahead* helps families transition from Reach Up and the Postsecondary Education program to work. Because of new legislation that came into effect on July 1, 2015, participants may now get the following benefits for up to 24 months:
 - A child care subsidy;
 - Supports to help them keep a job (e.g., help paying for car repairs); and
 - A cash benefit to purchase food.

Types of Families in the Reach Up Caseload, Average Monthly Caseload FFY2014

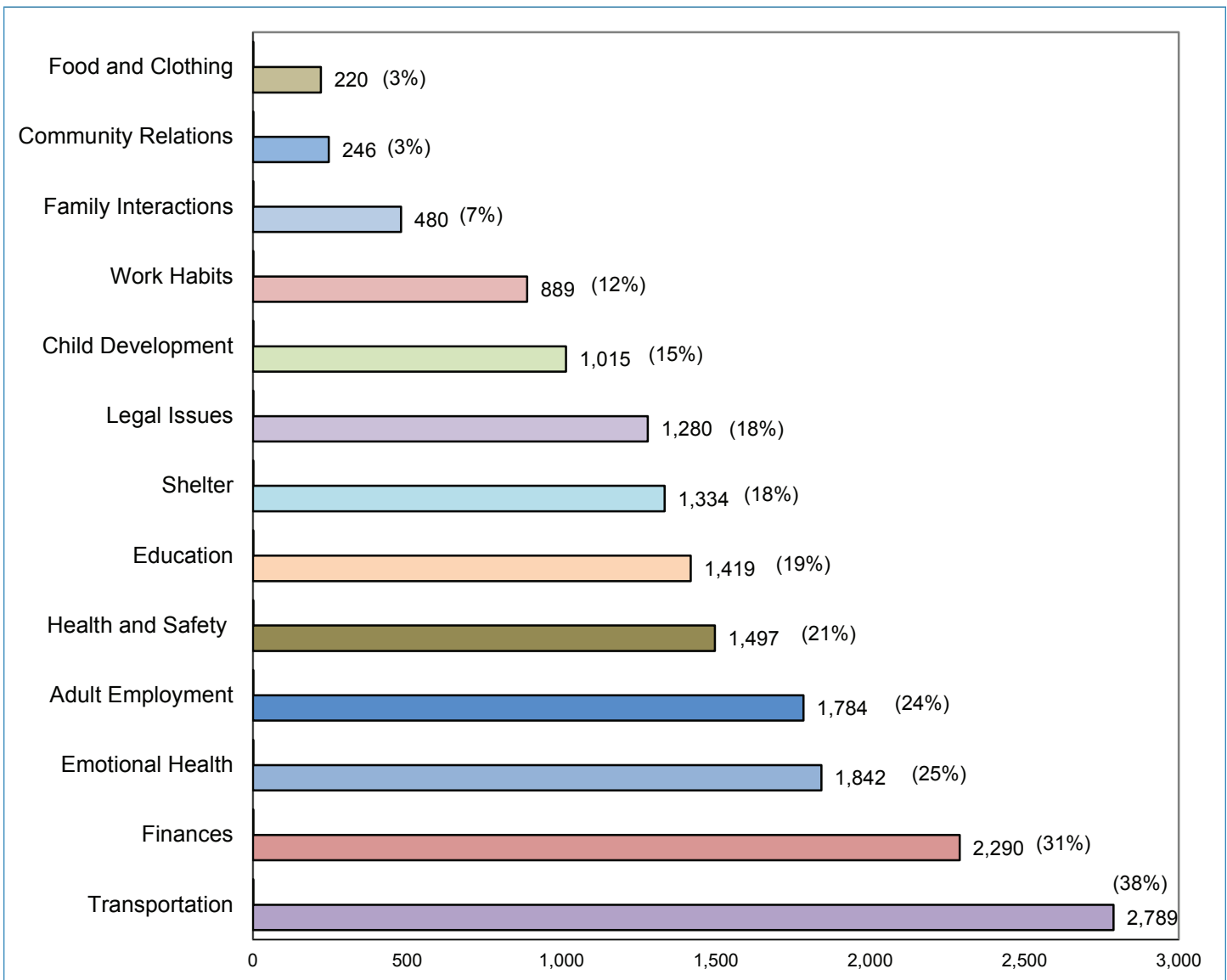


Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Reach Up Participants With Barriers

The chart below shows the types of barriers that families receiving Reach Up grants face as they try to become financially independent.

Reach Up Participants With Barriers, FFY 2015



Family Services Division (FSD)

FSD works in partnership with families, communities, and others to make sure children and youth are safe from abuse and their basic needs for things like food, clothing, shelter and health care are met; youth are free from delinquent behavior; and families are supported to achieve these goals.

Populations Served

1. High-risk children, youth, and families;
2. Children and youth in the care and custody of the state; and
3. Youth on juvenile probation.

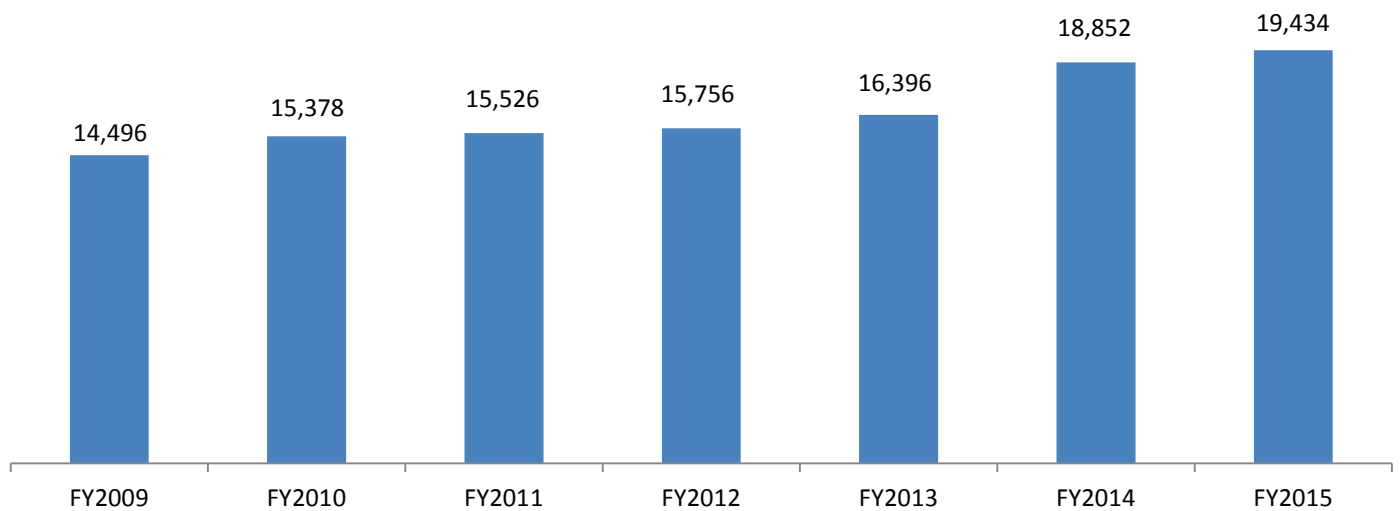
Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Child Safety Intakes & Interventions

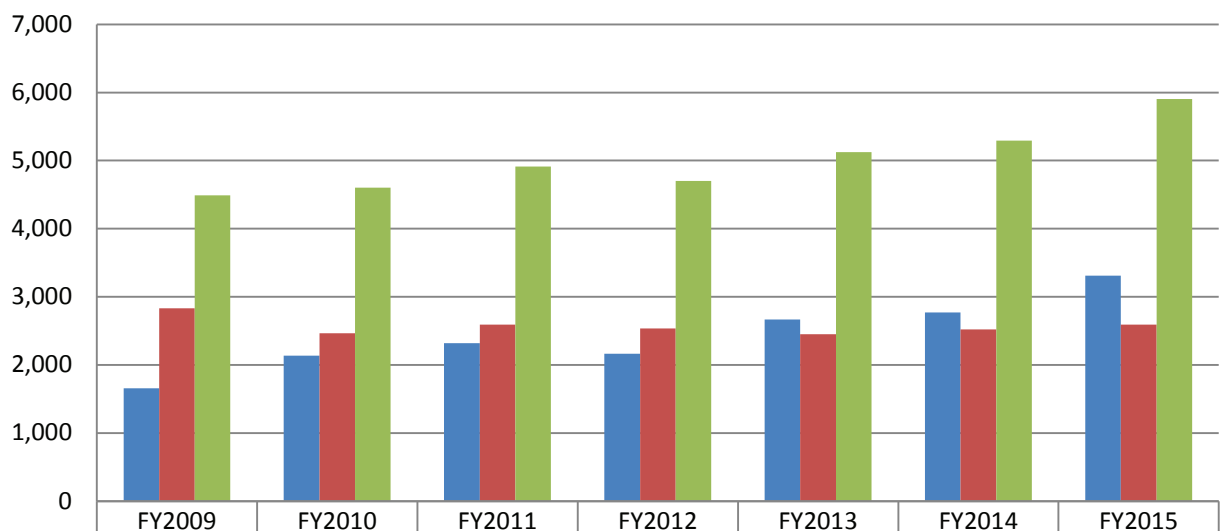
In FY 2015, FSD received a record 19,434 reports (*intakes*) about suspected child abuse or neglect. As a result of those calls, FSD initiated 5,902 child safety interventions:

- ➔ 3,311 assessments; and
- ➔ 2,591 investigations.

Total Child Abuse/Neglect Intakes



Child Safety Interventions by Type



	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Assessments	1,659	2,136	2,320	2,162	2,669	2,771	3,311
Investigations	2,831	2,465	2,591	2,537	2,453	2,520	2,591
Total Interventions	4,490	4,601	4,911	4,699	5,122	5,291	5,902

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Family Factors Identified by Reporters at Intake

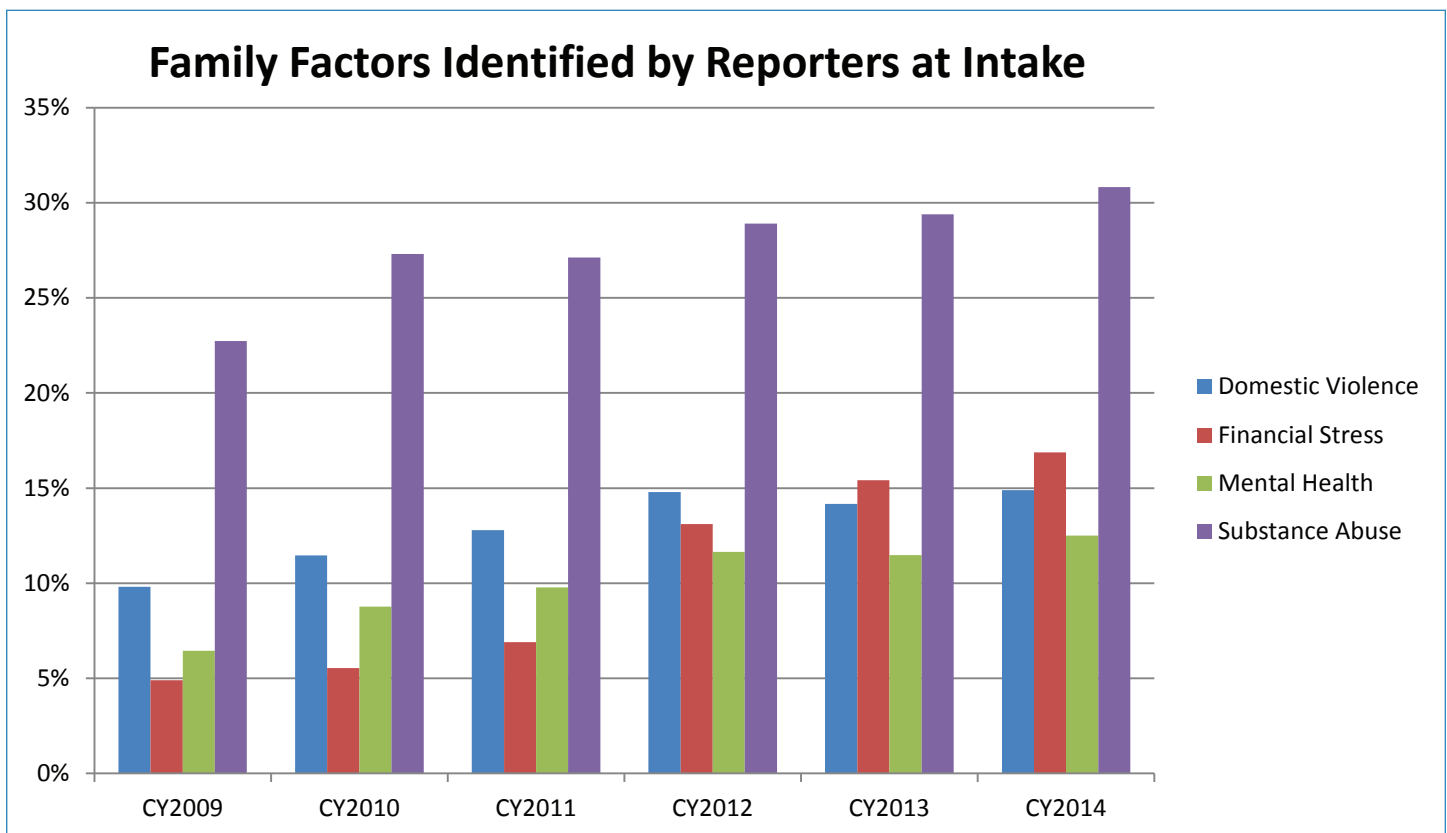
While children from any family can experience child abuse and neglect, we know that there is a strong correlation between child maltreatment and factors such as substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, and financial insecurity. The presence of these factors can create a toxic level of stress that impairs a family's ability to function and inhibits the development and well-being of children.

Research has found that the presence of:

- Any one of these factors increases the risk of child abuse and neglect; and
- Multiple risk factors has an exponential impact on a child's likelihood of experiencing abuse and neglect.

The table below identifies family factors that were identified by reporters when they called the Child Protection Line. While some factors may not have been validated during ensuing interventions, the list helps us better understand the difficult challenges families face and helps supervisors and social workers to plan effective intervention strategies.

Of particular note is that fact that there has been a steady increase in the reporting of substance abuse as a family factor in child abuse/neglect reports. This reinforces the need for supportive services and specialized interventions for this pervasive problem.



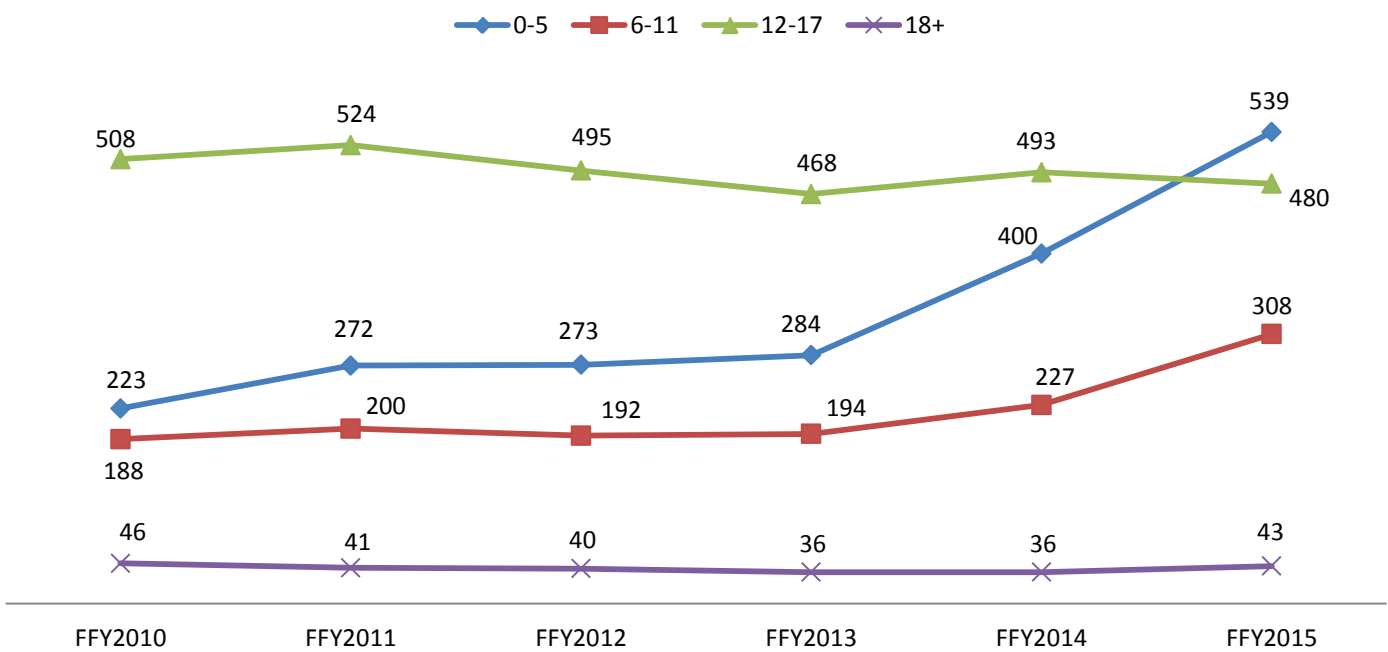
Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Children & Youth in DCF Custody

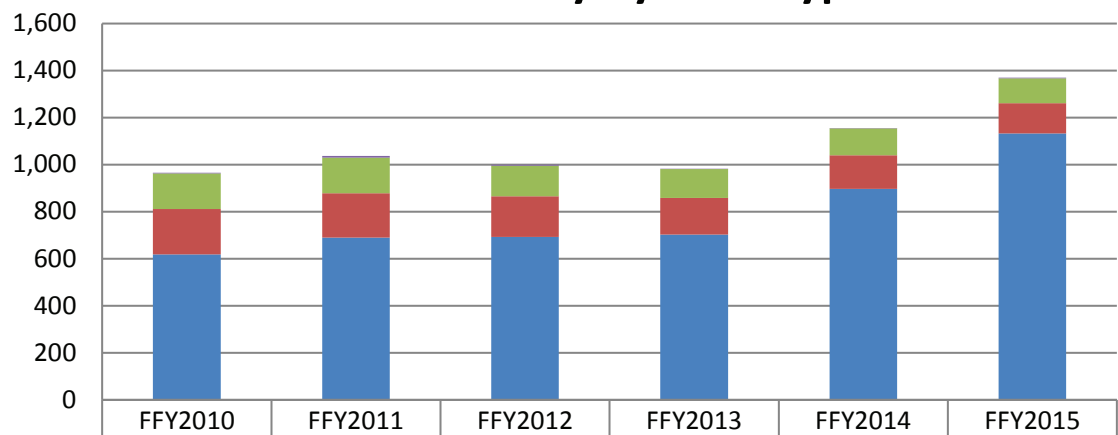
A judge may order a child be taken into DCF custody if the child has been abused or neglected, is beyond or without parental control, or has been adjudicated delinquent.

The number of very young children (*ages 0 to 5*) taken into DCF custody increased substantially again in FFY 2015.

Children in Custody, by Age Range



Children in Custody by Case Type



Voluntary	2	7	4	1	2	3
Beyond Parental Control	152	152	131	123	114	106
Delinquency	193	188	173	156	143	128
Abuse & Neglect	618	690	692	702	897	1,133

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

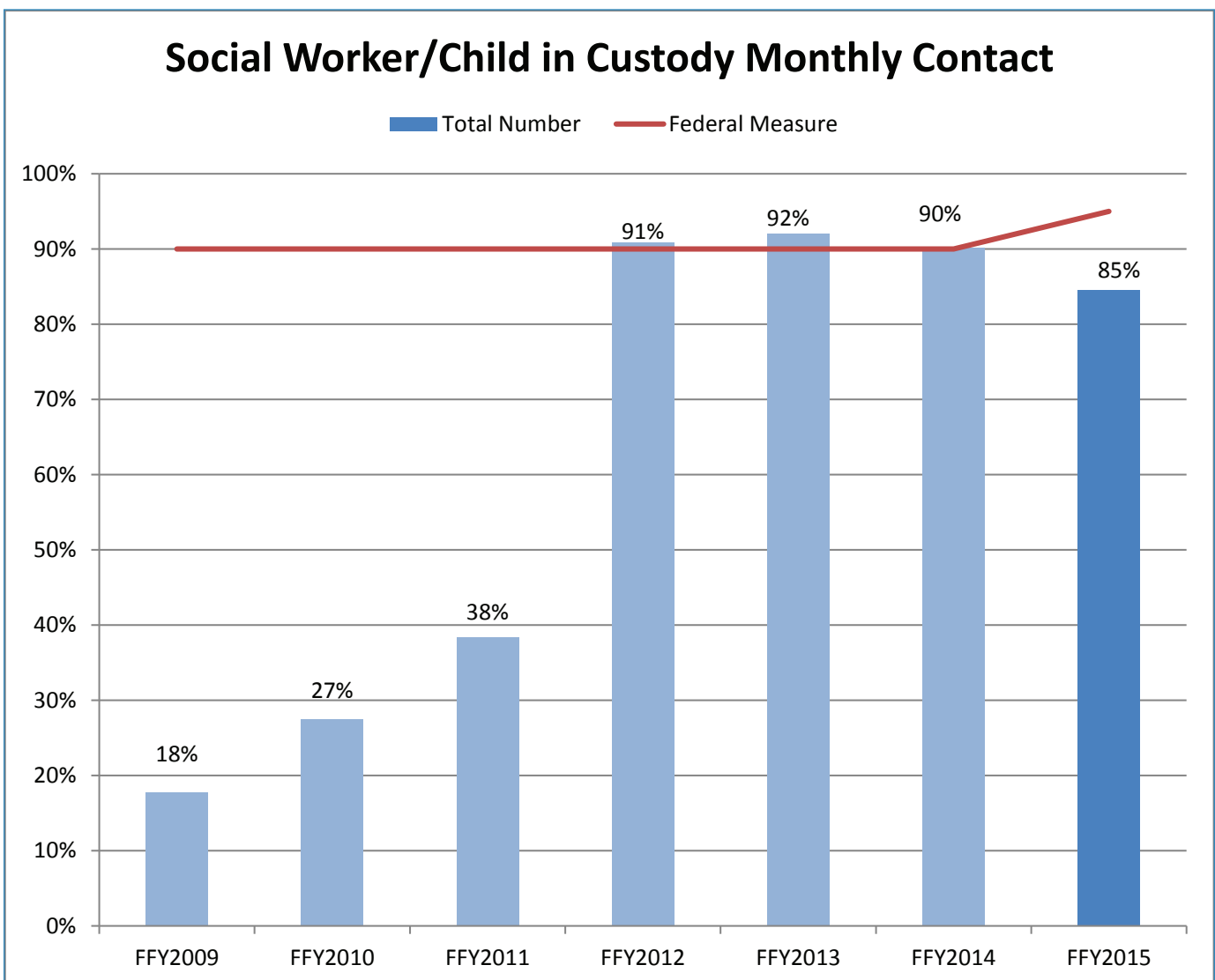
Performance Measure: Social Worker Contact with Children in DCF Custody

Research shows that regular social worker contact with children and families leads to more positive outcomes for children in state custody.

The federal standard for face-to-face contact between social workers and children and youth in custody is that 90% of children are seen each and every month of the year.

Due to the concerted effort of staff and, most importantly, the addition of full-time social worker positions in FFY 2011 & 2012, monthly contact increased substantially. In FFY 2014, FSD achieved a rate of monthly face-to-face contact of just over 90% — meeting the goal of 90% for the third year in a row.

Starting in FFY 2015, the federal standard increased to 95%. During this same period, monthly social worker-child contact fell below the federal standard due to increasing workloads and rising numbers of children coming into DCF custody.



Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

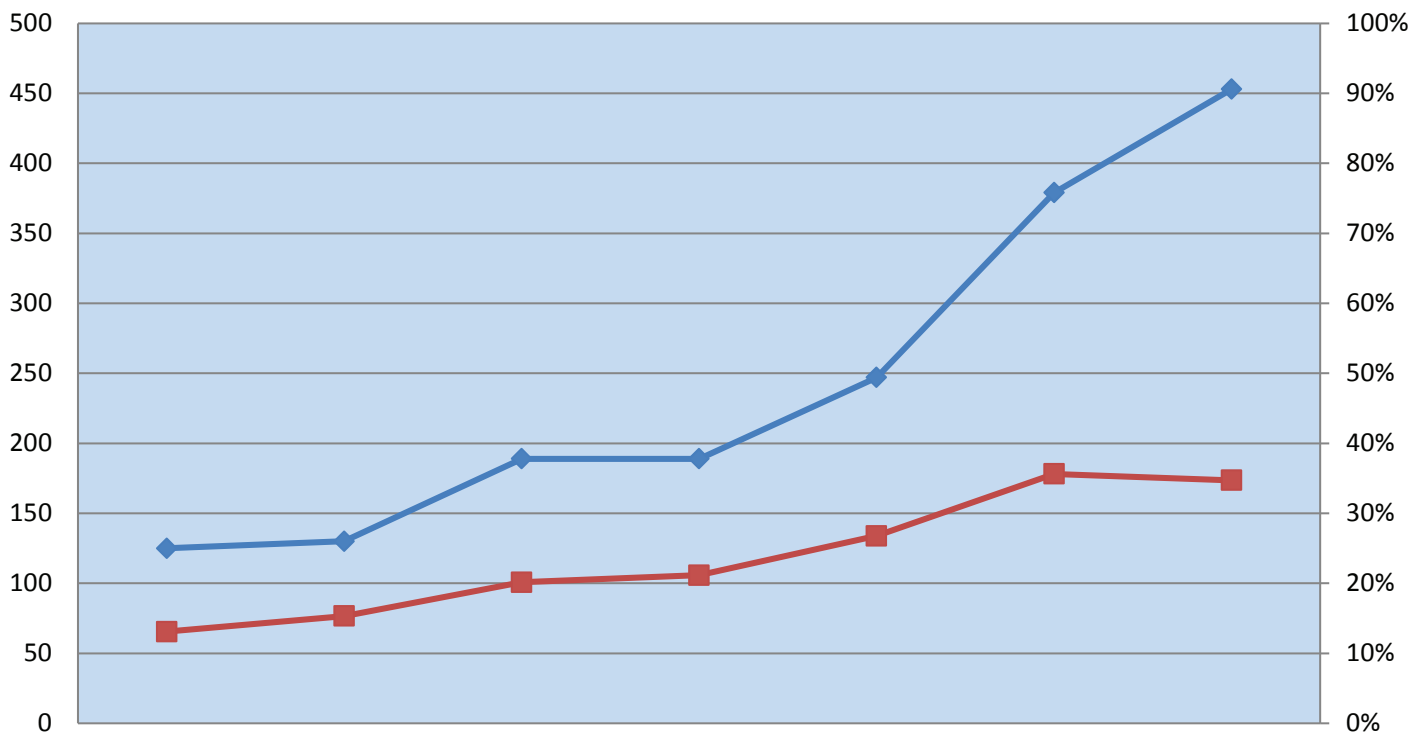
Performance Measure: Children Placed in Licensed Kinship Foster Homes

Children in DCF custody are placed with relatives or other known connections (known as *kinship foster homes*) whenever possible. To become licensed, kin must go through the same licensing process as other foster parents, which includes passing background checks and attending specialized training.

Research shows that compared to being placed in non-related foster homes, children placed in kinship foster homes typically experience:

- Better behavioral development;
- Better mental health functioning;
- Better placement stability;
- Closer ties with their birth parents and siblings; and
- Similar reunification rates.

Children in DCF Custody Living with Relatives or Other Known Connections (*Kinship Foster Care*)



	9/30/2009	9/30/2010	9/30/2011	9/30/2012	9/30/2013	9/30/2014	9/30/2015
◆ Number	125	130	189	189	247	379	453
■ Percent	13%	15%	20%	21%	27%	36%	35%

Outcome: Youth successfully transition to adulthood

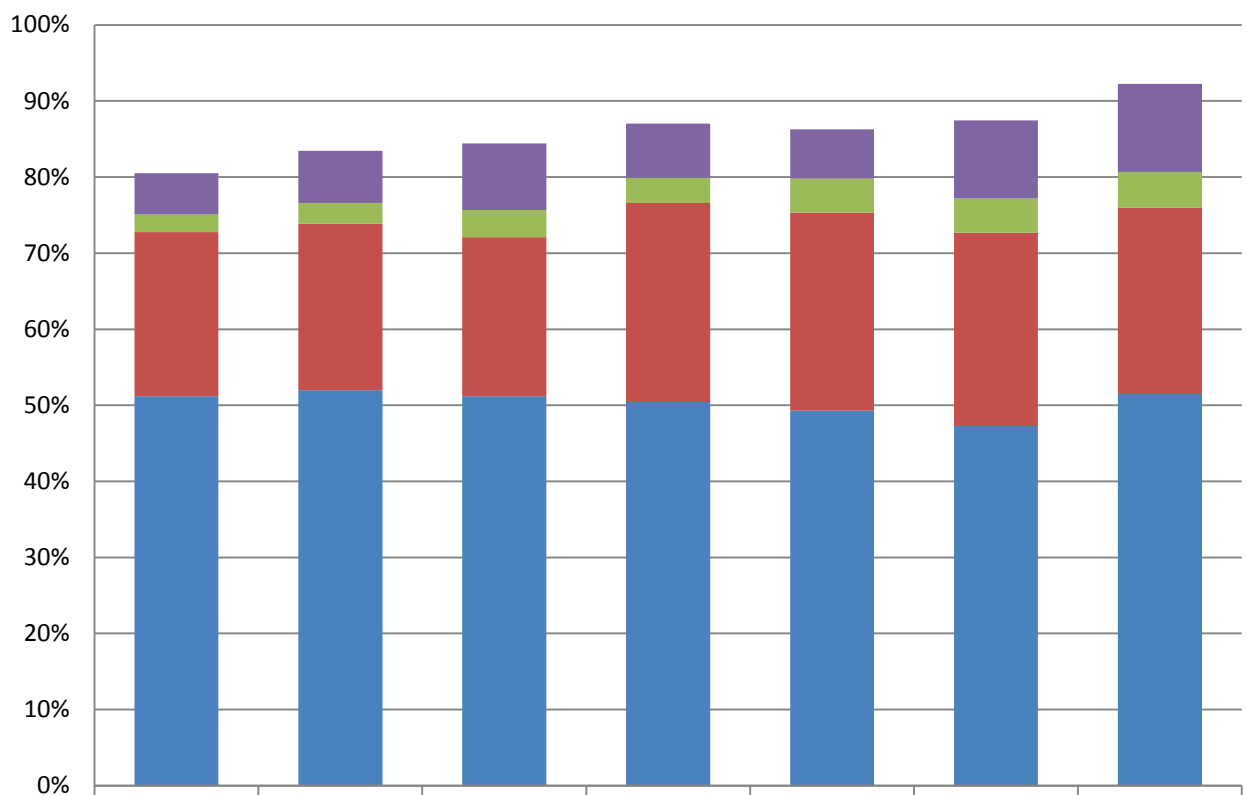
Performance Measure: Children Who Exited DCF Custody To Permanent Placements

The ultimate goal of state care is to provide children and youth with safe, permanent homes — ideally with their parents. From children’s first day in state care, their social workers typically work towards two goals at the same time (*concurrent planning*):

1. To return children home to their parents; and
2. To help children secure other permanent placements — preferably with extended family members or known connections — if they cannot safely return home.

This helps FSD achieve timely outcomes that respect children’s need for stability. Living in uncertainty and moving between different living situations can be extremely disruptive to children’s development and educational success.

Children in DCF Custody Who Exited to Permanent Placements



Relative Custody	5%	7%	9%	7%	6%	10%	12%
Guardianship	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Adoption	22%	22%	21%	26%	26%	25%	25%
Reunification	51%	52%	51%	50%	49%	47%	51%

Outcome: Youth successfully transition to adulthood

Performance Measure: Transitional Services Provided to Youth in DCF Custody

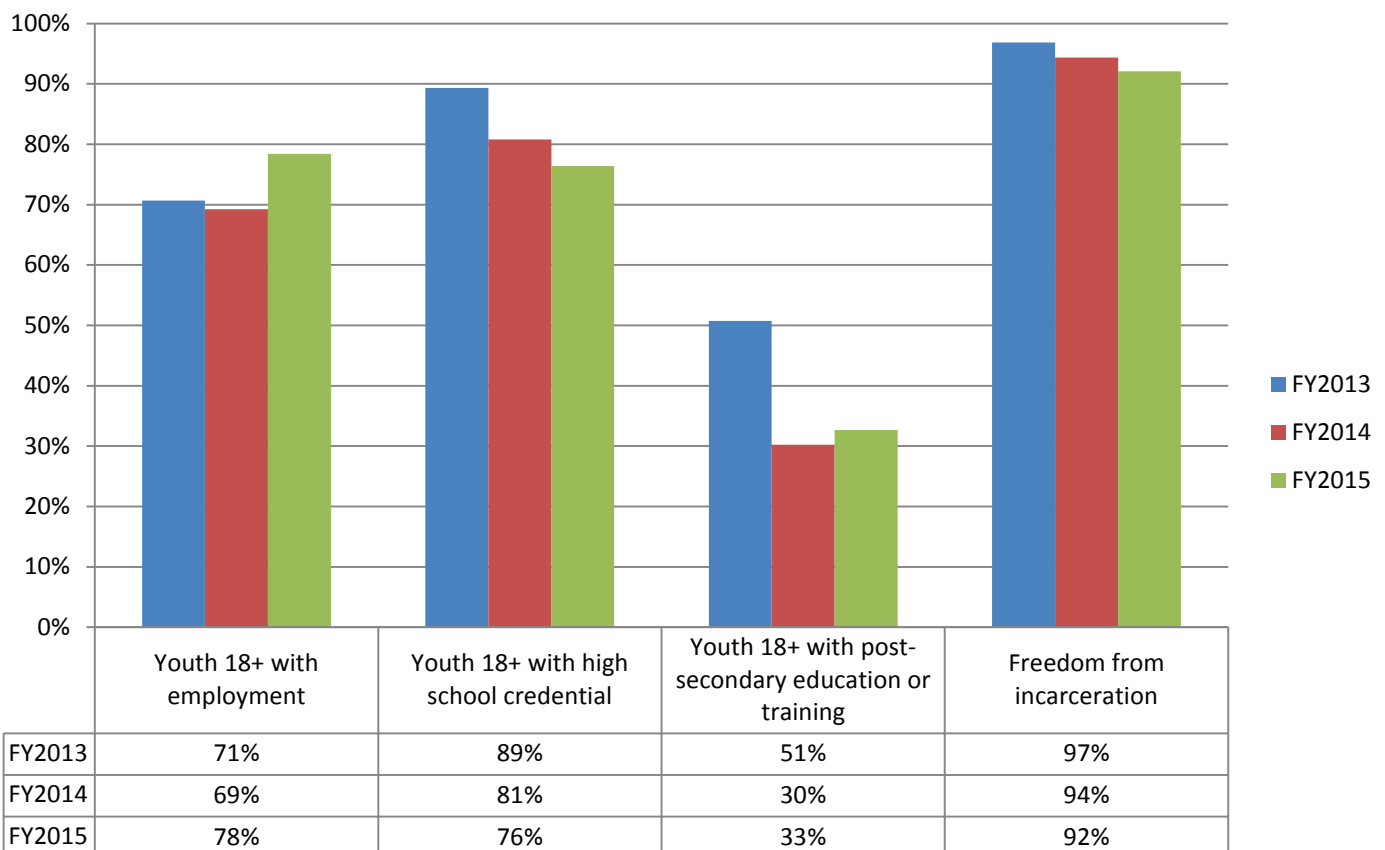
The Youth in Transition Act (Act 74), passed in 2007, focuses on helped youth leaving foster care successfully transition into adulthood. The Act has created opportunities for youth to stay in supportive living situations while they complete high school; pursue training and higher education; and establish safe, independent living situations.

Youth in Transition services are delivered through the Washington County Youth Service Bureau (WCYSB), which subcontracts with 10 provider agencies in all 12 DCF districts.

Supports and services provided include:

- ➔ Case management;
- ➔ Extended services & supports;
- ➔ Help applying to college, finding a job, securing housing, and getting health insurance;
- ➔ Individual life skills assessment and instruction; and
- ➔ Referral to community services.

Youth Development Program Outcomes



Office of Child Support (OCS)

OCS improves children's economic security by:

1. Establishing, enforcing, and modifying child support orders for children who do not live with both parents;
2. Establishing and enforcing medical insurance provisions in court orders;
3. Collecting, recording, and distributing child support payments through the OCS Registry; and
4. Establishing parentage when children are born outside of marriage.

Populations Served

- Custodial parents, non-custodial parents, and guardians of children entitled to child and medical support.

A large percentage of Vermont's child support program caseload is comprised of divorced and never married lower-income working families. About 40% of children are born to non-married partners and about 50% of marriages end in divorce. This means more than half of Vermont children will live in single-parent households at some point — and be much more likely to live in poverty.

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

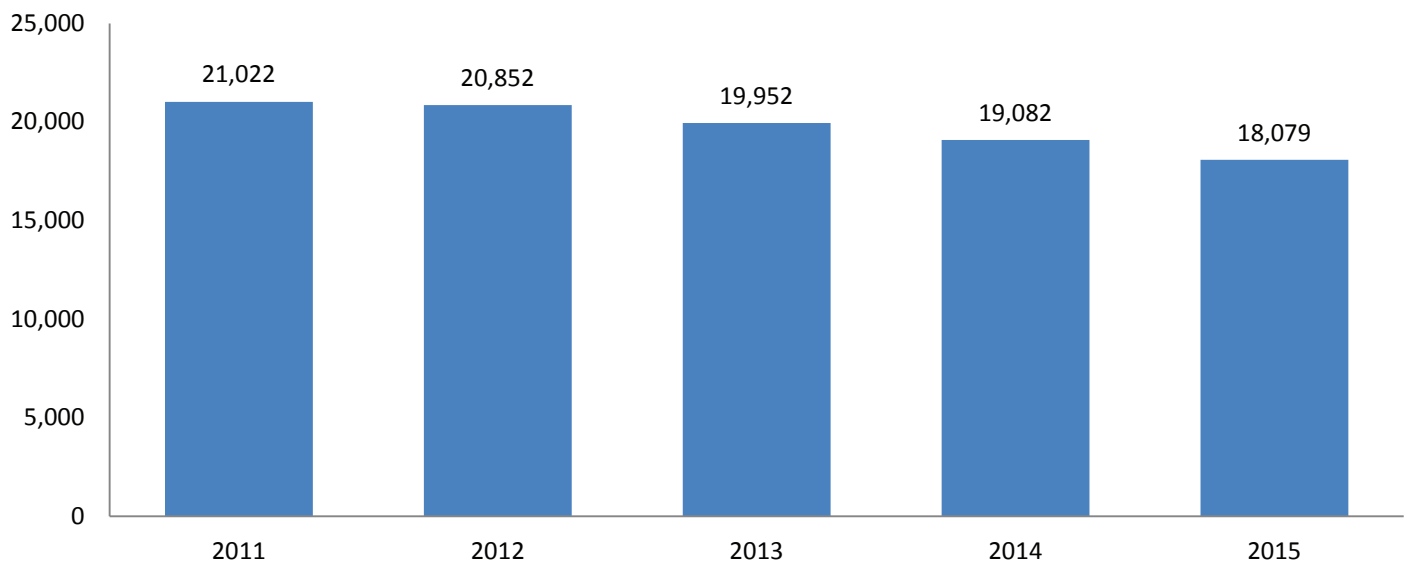
Performance Measure: Child Support Cases & Collections

The Office of Child Support:

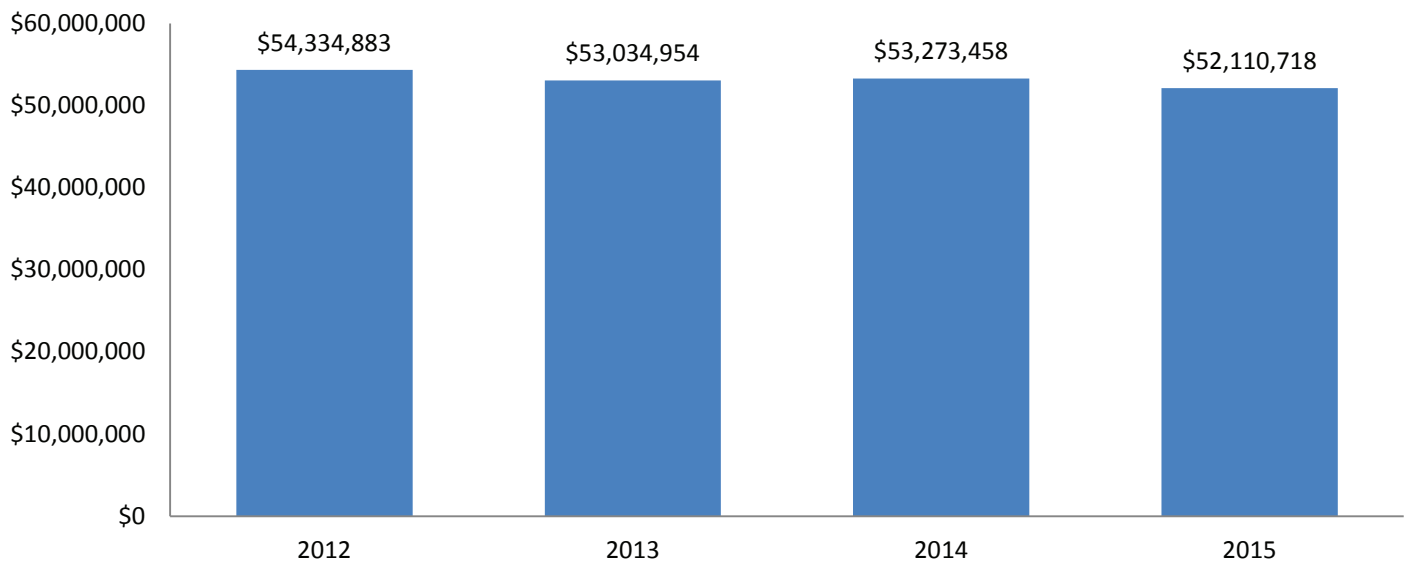
- Had 18,079 child support cases in CY 2015; and
- Collected \$52,110,718 in child support payments in FFY 2015.

Child support is a key economic support for children. Parents who support their children financially are more likely to also support them in other ways.

Child Support Cases, by Calendar Year



Child Support Collection, by Federal Fiscal Year



Outcome: Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government

Performance Measure: Key Federal Performance Indicators

The following indicators are for FFY 2014. They enable OCS to track outcomes over time and in comparison to child support programs across the country.

Indicator: % of Cases with Child Support Orders Established

The Child Support Order is a court document that spells out who must pay support, who receives support for the children covered by the order, the amount to be paid and how often payments are made.

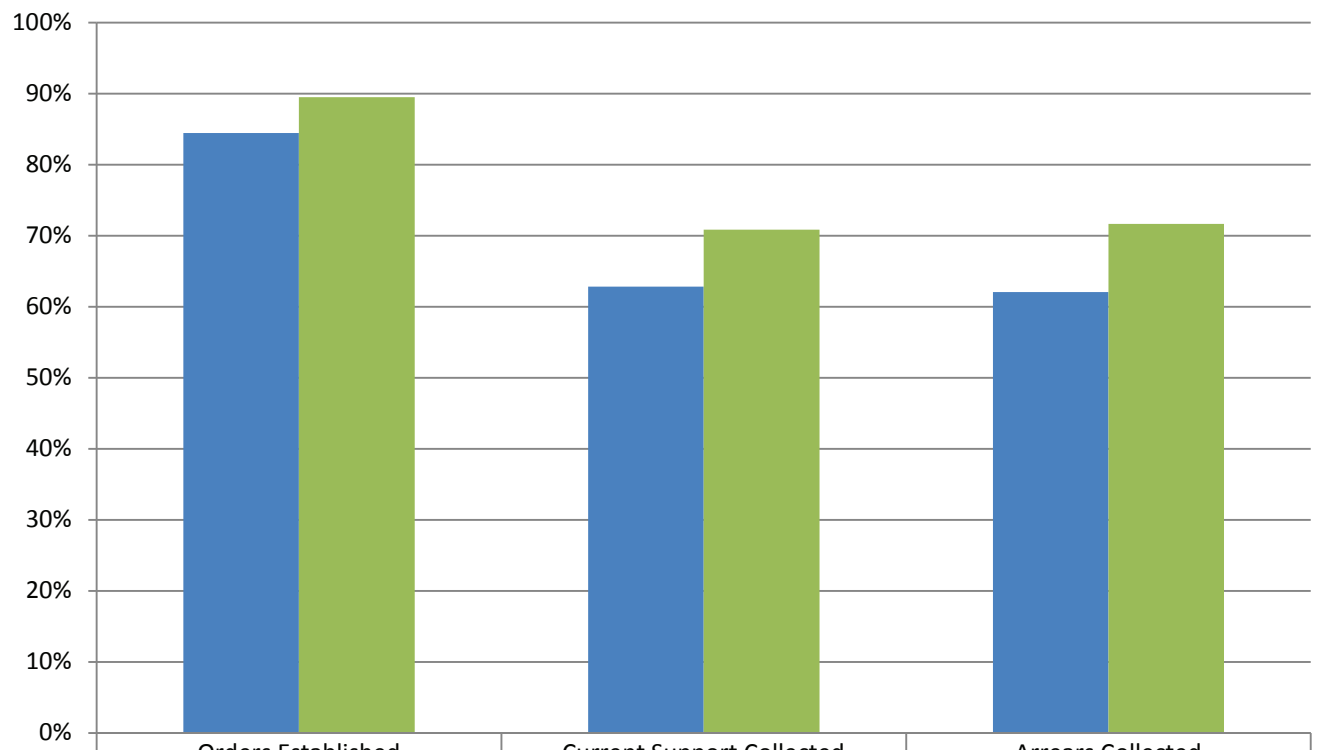
Indicator: % of Ordered Child Support Collected

A key indicator of financial security for children entitled to child support is the percent of child support actually paid for children who are minors compared to the aggregate amount that should be paid in a year pursuant to court orders.

Indicator: % of Cases with Collections on Past Due Support

When current support is not paid on time, the unpaid amounts, plus surcharges and penalties, become arrearages still owed to the children. These unpaid balances may still be recovered for the custodial parent after the children turn 18.

Key Federal Performance Measures, FFY 2014



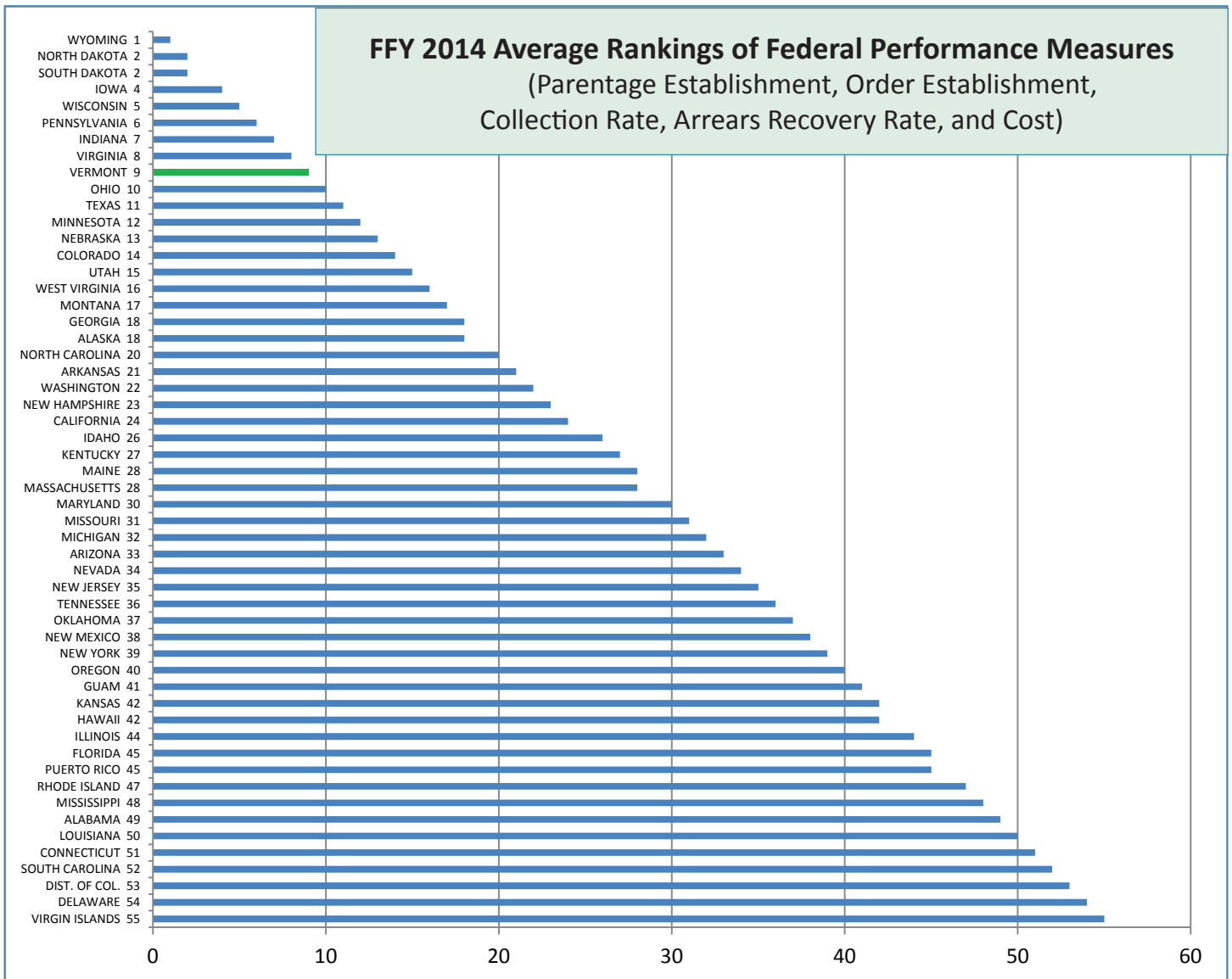
Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Average Rankings of Federal Performance Measures

Overall, child support benefits to children can be measured in terms of the percent of:

- Children with parentage established;
- Cases with court-ordered child support obligations;
- The amount of current support paid vs. ordered; and
- Cases with any repayment toward past due support.

Nationally, Vermont ranks in the top 10 in each of these categories and ninth overall.



Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS)

DDS provides applicants with accurate medical eligibility decisions as quickly as possible, as governed by Social Security federal statutes, regulations, and policy, with full and fair consideration of each applicant's situation and respect and concern for the individual's well-being and legal rights. DDS is 100% federally funded.

Populations Served

People who have applied for disability benefits under:

1. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); and
2. Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Program Integrity

DDS also regularly reviews the cases of people on disability to determine whether they continue to meet the medical requirements.

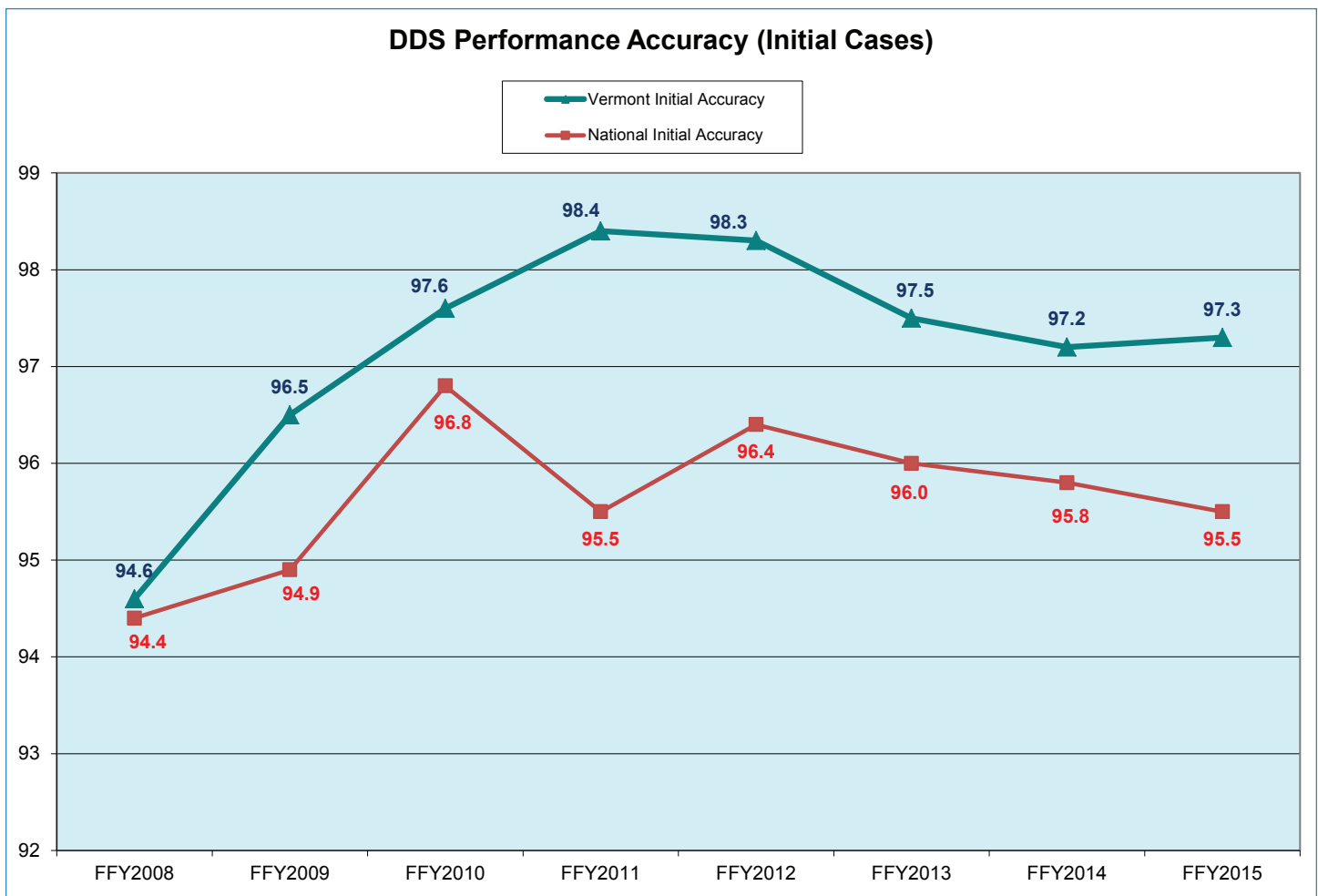
Outcome: Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government

Performance Measure: Accuracy Rate on Initial Cases

Disability benefits are vital to thousands of Vermonters with severe disabilities and serious illnesses. These benefits are a lifeline for many recipients who would live in poverty without them. DDS makes the medical decision on the 5,000 to 5,800 initial disability applications filed by Vermont residents every year.

One of the most important measures of performance is initial case accuracy. DDS must meet federal regulatory requirements, and mistakes may subject applicants who are eligible to undue hardship. Erroneous determinations may also jeopardize program integrity and the proper use of public funds.

In FFY 2015, Vermont's initial case accuracy rate was the fourth highest in the country, with a rate of 97.3% or 1.8 percentage points above the national average. Maintaining high accuracy requires regular training, professional development, and mentoring of adjudicators and medical consultants. It also requires a robust quality assurance program that monitors key decision points in the case process.

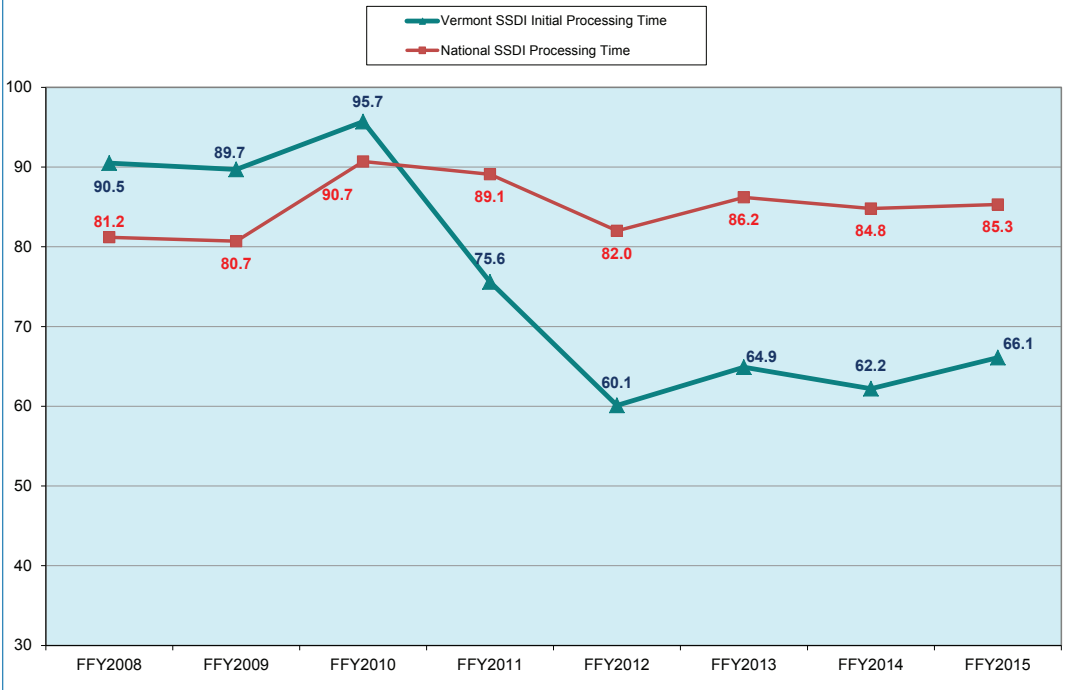


Outcome: Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government

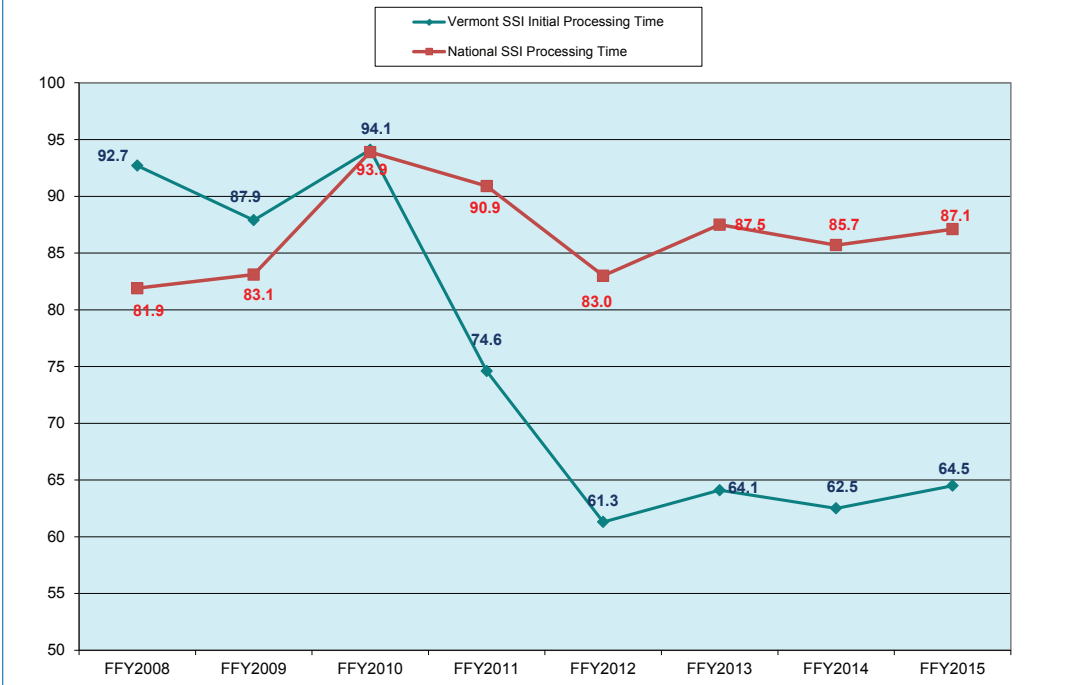
Performance Measure: Average Processing Time for Initial Cases

Another important performance measure is the time it takes DDS to make an initial case decision. A long wait time can be a significant hardship for people with disabilities. In FFY 2015, DDS's case processing speed ranked in the top four DDSs in the country for both SSDI and SSI, helping disabled Vermonters get the benefits to which they are entitled – faster.

DDS Average Processing Time for SSDI Initial Cases (Days)



DDS SSI Average Initial Case Processing Time (Days)



DDS Processing Time Trends

Maintaining a sufficient, fully trained staff to handle the workload is critical to achieving good processing times, as is clear national disability policy and effective IT support from the Social Security Administration. Longer processing times in 2008-2010 were the result of major system and policy changes and limited federal funding for replacement hiring. After successfully implementing systems and policy changes, and receiving funding to hire and train sufficient new staff, the DDS achieved significant improvements in processing time. To sustain timeliness, the DDS continually assesses staffing needs, processes, and workload trends, focusing on ways to improve DDS services and outcomes for Vermonters.

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

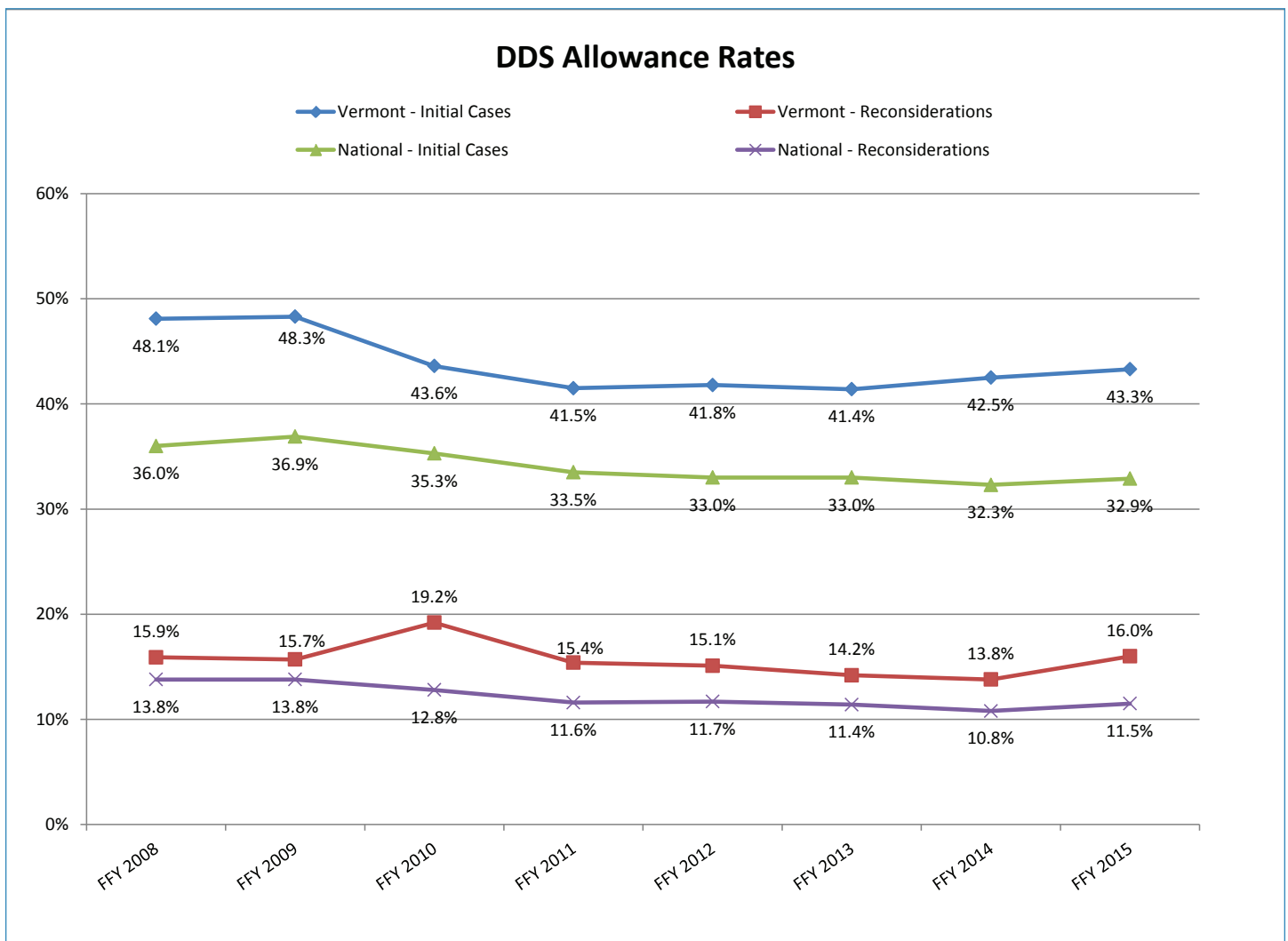
Performance Measure: Allowance Rates

In FFY 2015, Vermont's initial claim allowance rate (percentage of determinations with a finding of disabled) was 43.3% — 10.4 percentage points higher than the national average.

When coupled with high accuracy rates, high allowance rates are indicative of the high quality services provided to Vermonters with disabilities:

- Giving full, fair consideration to each applicant; and
- Getting benefits to those who are eligible without a lengthy appeals process whenever possible.

The allowance rate for reconsiderations of unfavorable initial decisions was 16% — also above the national average of 11.5%.



Outcome: Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government

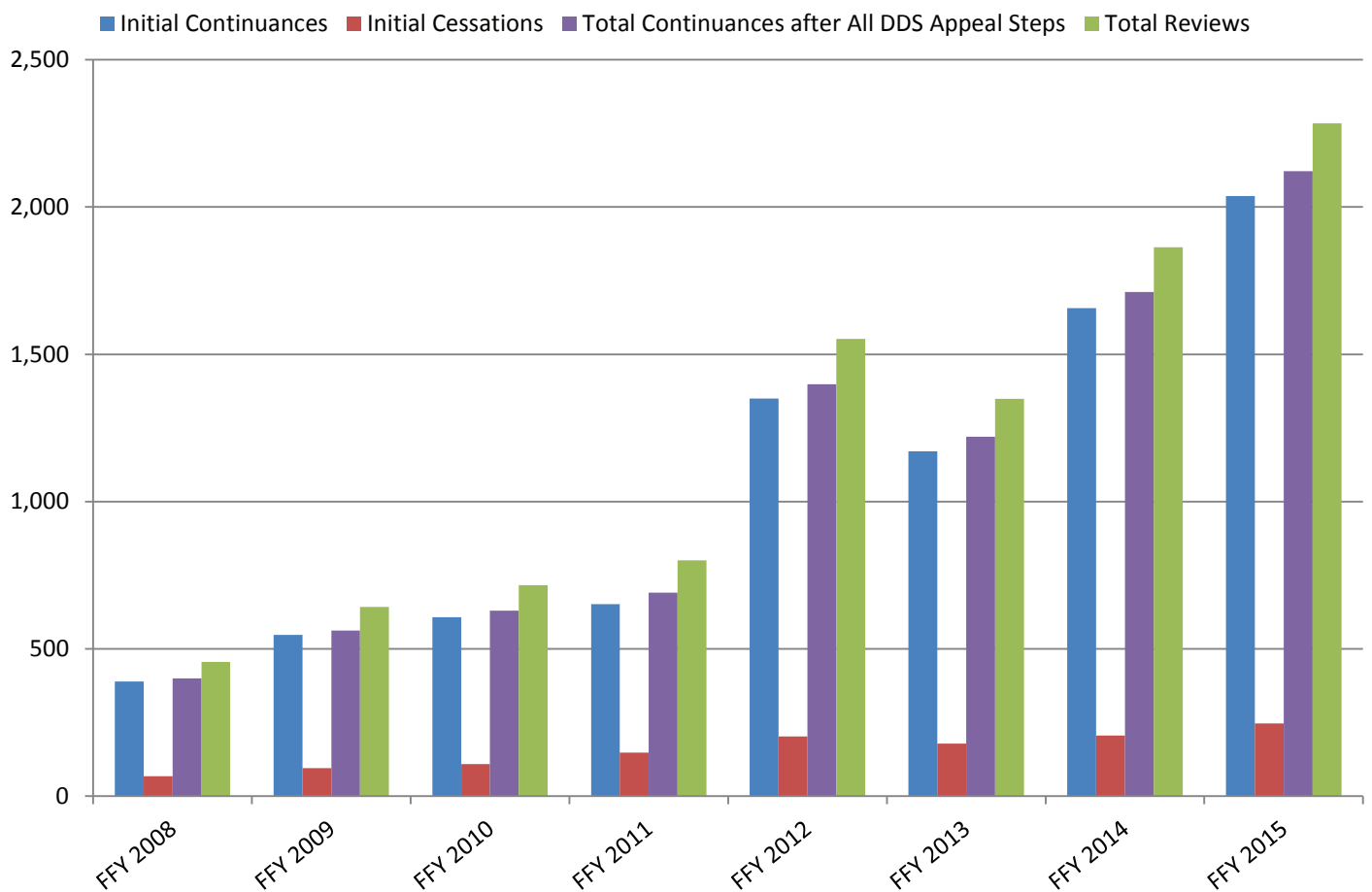
Performance Measure: Continuing Disability Reviews

Each year Social Security assigns Vermont a number of Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) to process, depending on budget and workload expectations. This number has been increasing in recent years.

The main reason that benefits stop is that a person's medical condition has significantly improved to the point that he/she can resume substantial work activity. Most people with serious, long-term illnesses and impairments that initially qualified them for disability benefits will continue to be eligible.

Although only a small percentage of people stop receiving benefits due to CDR reviews, they are critical for program integrity. The program savings are significant – for every administrative dollar spent on CDR reviews nationally, Social Security estimates a program savings of nine dollars.

Number of Continuing Disability Reviews Performed



Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

OEO works in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations, and others to increase the self-sufficiency of Vermonters, strengthen Vermont communities, and eliminate the causes and symptoms of poverty.

OEO administers federal and state funds that support the work of organizations that provide direct services to low-income Vermonters. These services include asset building and financial capability, emergency food shelves, emergency homeless shelters, rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention, supportive housing, job readiness training, micro business development, weatherization assistance, and more.

Populations Served

Most OEO programs target Vermonters with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines, though some programs range up to 200% of poverty.

Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Family Supportive Housing (FSH)

FSH is a demonstration project, developed by the Agency of Human Services and Department for Children and Families, aimed at reducing the incidence and duration of child homelessness in Vermont. Funds have been provided to partners in five communities: Burlington, Brattleboro, Rutland, St. Johnsbury, and White River Junction.

Each site helps families who are homeless move into affordable housing and provides them with up to 24 months of home-based case management and service coordination aimed at helping them keep their housing.



Here are some highlights:

- ➔ Enrolled families experienced homelessness for a significant amount of time prior to being housed: almost 6 months (181 days) on average. In rare cases, a family was homeless for a full-year before being housed through the program.
- ➔ 91 families received services through FSH. This included:
 - 176 children and 121 adults;
 - 54 families (59.3%) who were getting Reach Up benefits; and
 - 24 families (26.4%) who had open cases with the Family Services Division; 8 of these cases (33 %) were favorably resolved within 12 months.
- ➔ 75 of the 91 families (82.4%) were in permanent housing as of June 30, 2015.
- ➔ 65% of the adults in recovery maintained their sobriety after 12 months.

Claire's Story

Claire, a mother of three, was at risk of losing her children because she struggled with addiction. She did not take the FSH seriously at first. She turned the corner after a year in the program when she was happy to be living in an apartment with all her children, working, and looking at completing her degree.

“My kids and I are happy. I am coming into myself as an individual in all aspects and being more comfortable with myself. They don't just do housing. They support life goals, work situations, and are a huge support system in life in general.”

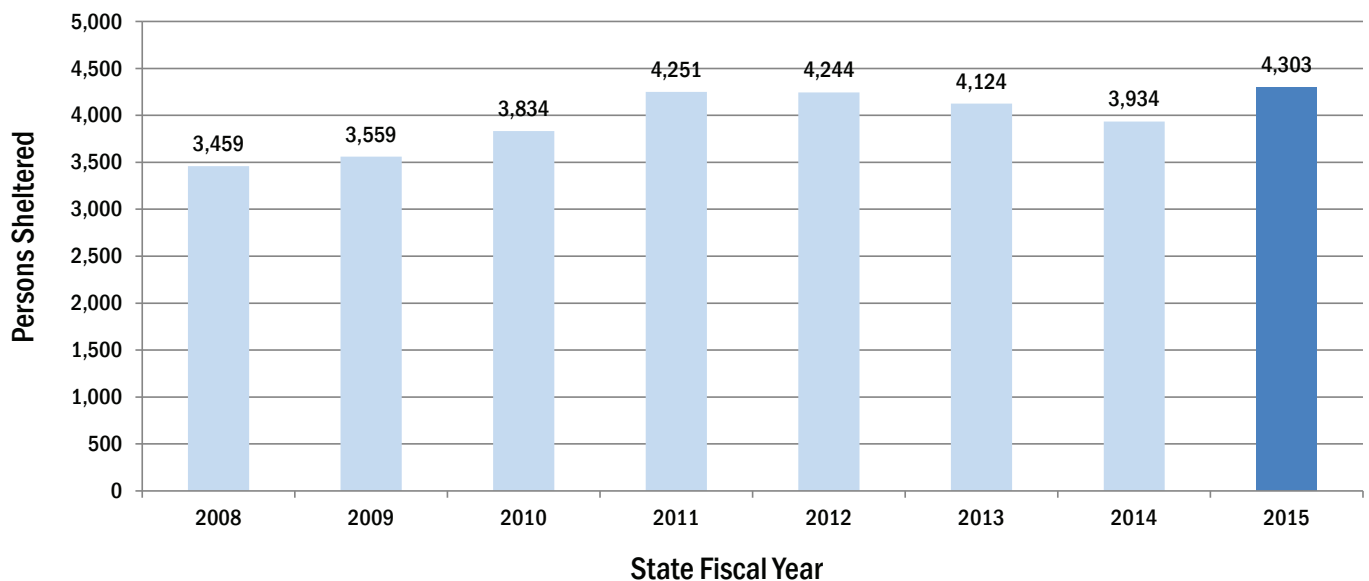
Outcome: Vermonters are healthy

Performance Measure: ESG Emergency Homeless Shelters

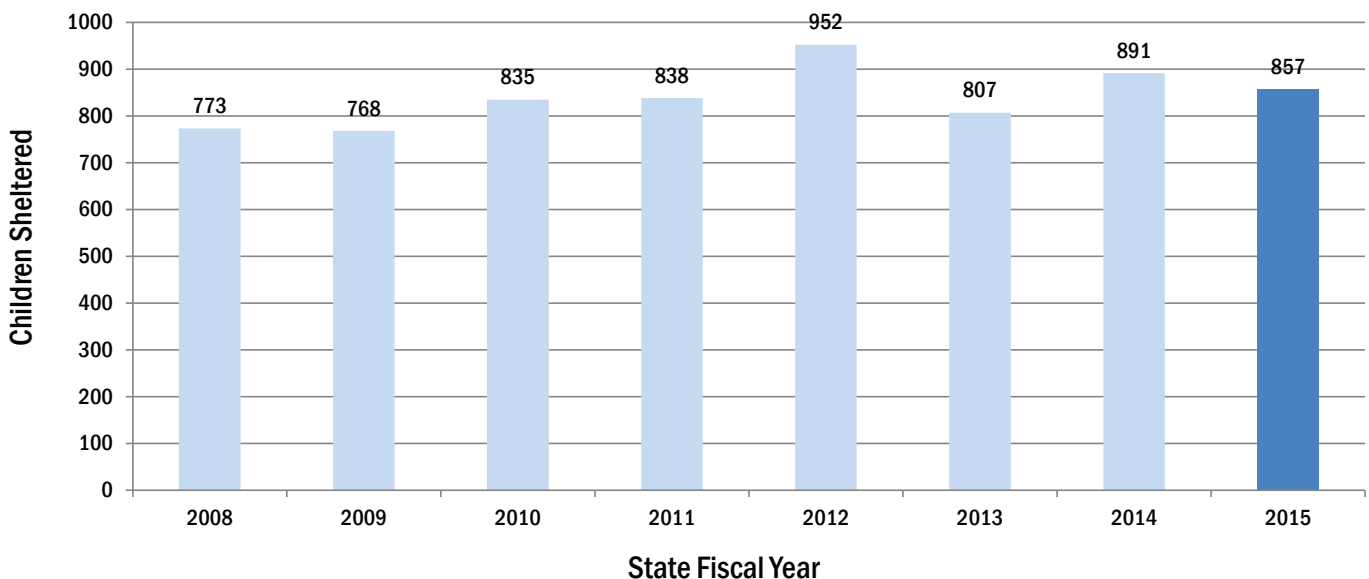
Through its Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), OEO supports operations at 28 non-profit emergency homeless shelters across the state.

➔ In FY 2015, 4,303 persons were sheltered, including 3,446 adults and 857 children.

Persons in Vermont's ESG Homeless Shelters (2008-2015)



Children in Vermont's ESG Homeless Shelters (2008-2015)



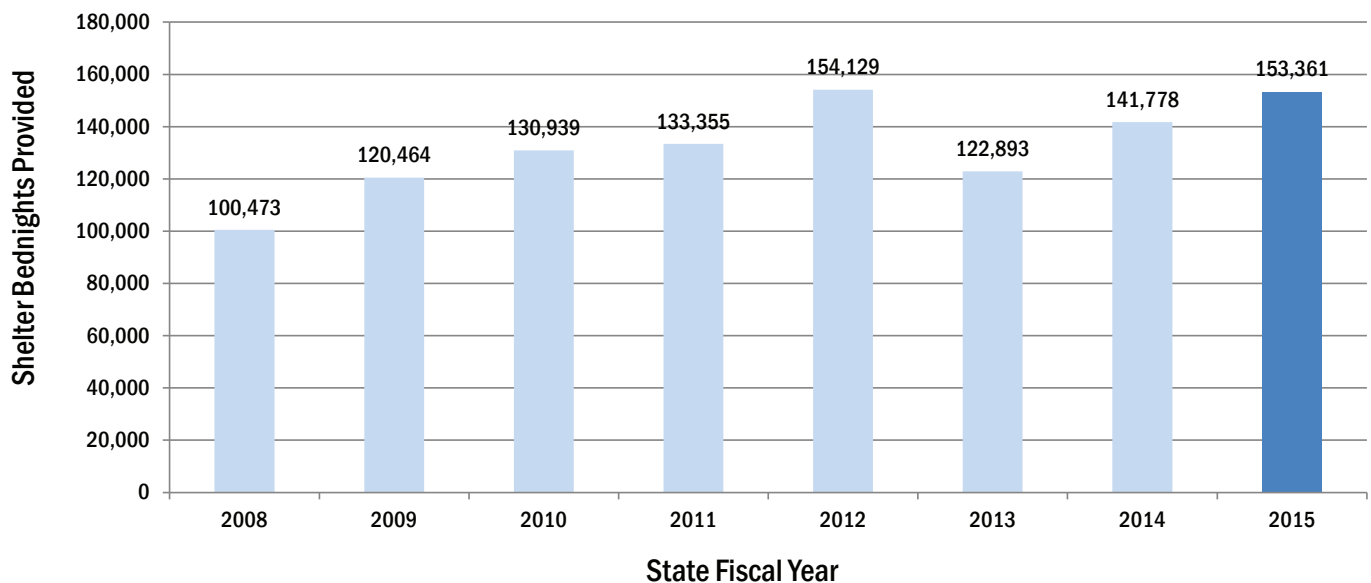
Outcome: Vermonters are healthy

Performance Measure: ESG Emergency Homeless Shelters

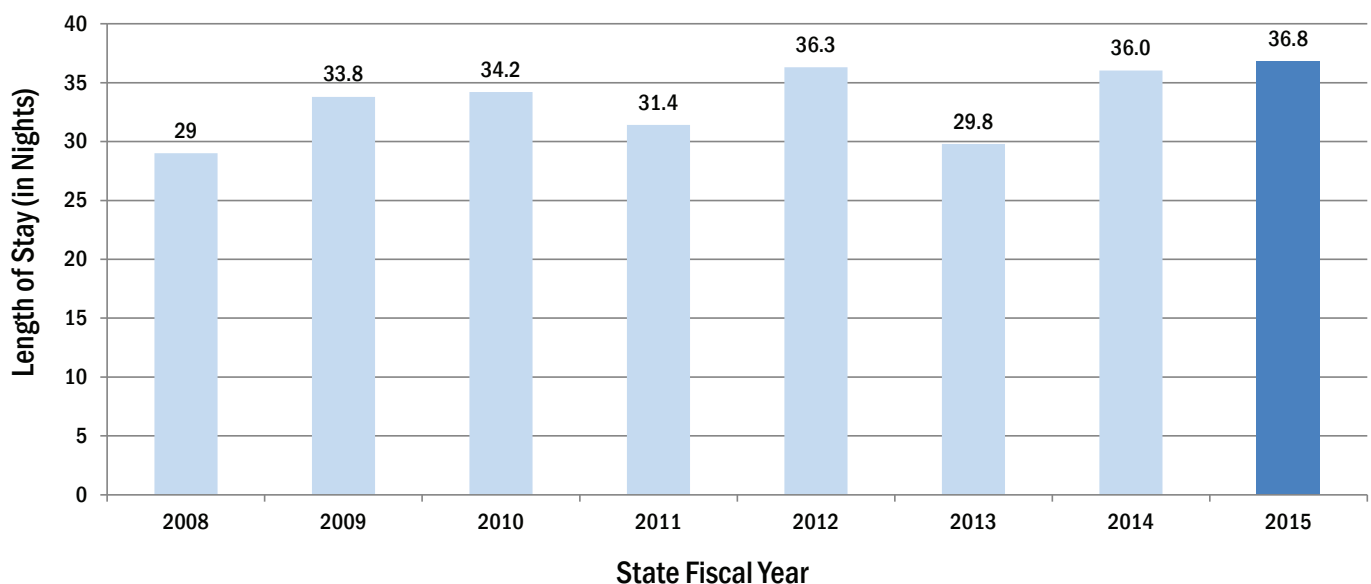
Through its Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), OEO supports operations at 28 non-profit emergency homeless shelters across the state.

- In FY 2015, 4,303 persons were sheltered for a total of 153,361 shelter bednights. The average length of stay was about 36.8 days.

Shelter Bednights: Vermont's ESG Homeless Shelters (2008-2015)



Average Length of Vermont's ESG Shelter Stay (2008-2015)



Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Low-Income Homes Weatherized

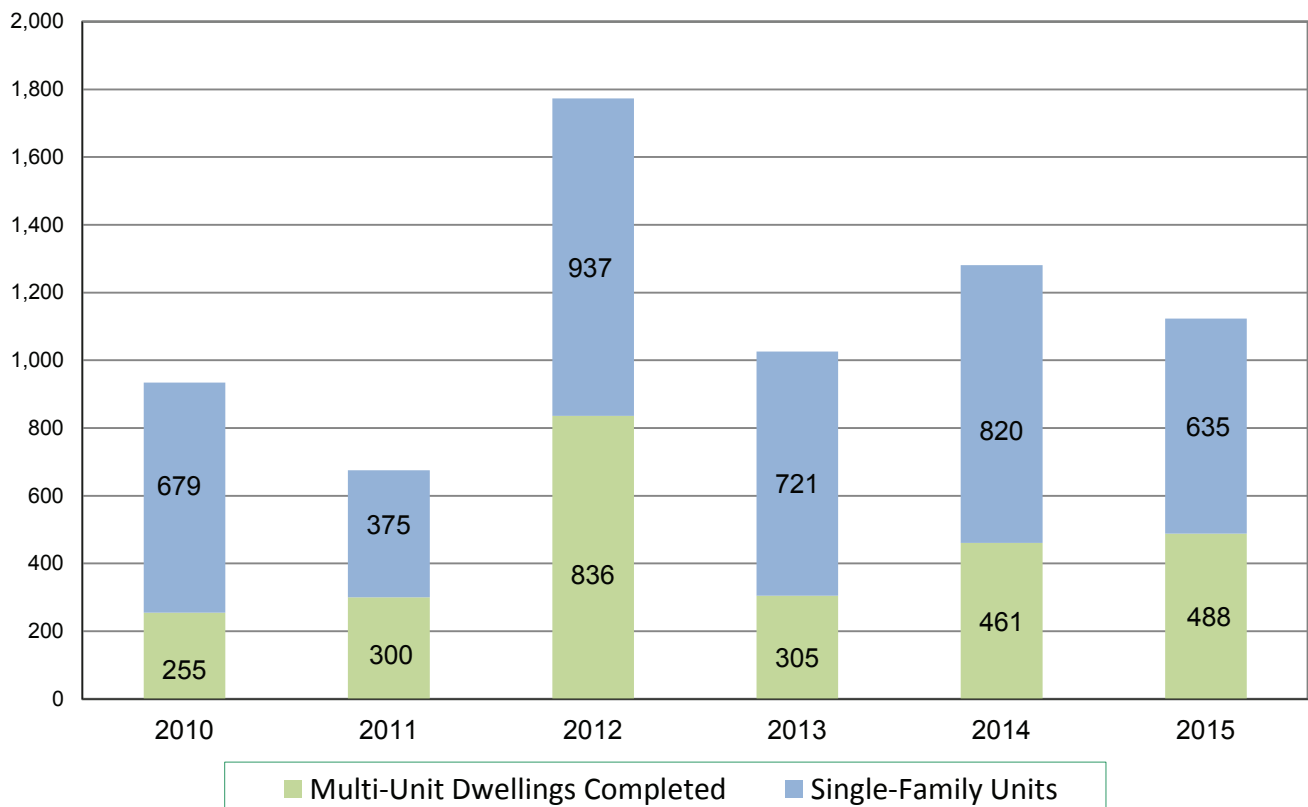
The Weatherization Assistance Program helps lower-income residents save fuel and money by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. This leaves them with more money to pay for food, housing, health care, child care and other necessities. Priority is given to older Vermonters, people with disabilities, families with children, households getting Fuel Assistance, and people living in the highest energy-intensity homes.

Recently, the Weatherization Program launched a one-touch referral initiative that links all weatherization clients to other applicable health, housing, and energy programs. This service is provided at each client's home.

In FY 2015:

- 1,123 homes were weatherized;
- The average investment per home was \$8,500; and
- The average savings were about 20% of heating costs.

Low-Income Weatherization Program



Program Year: Beginning in 2013, the Weatherization Program Year runs from July 1 to June 30. For years prior, the program year was April 1 to March 31.

Outcome: Vermont has a prosperous economy

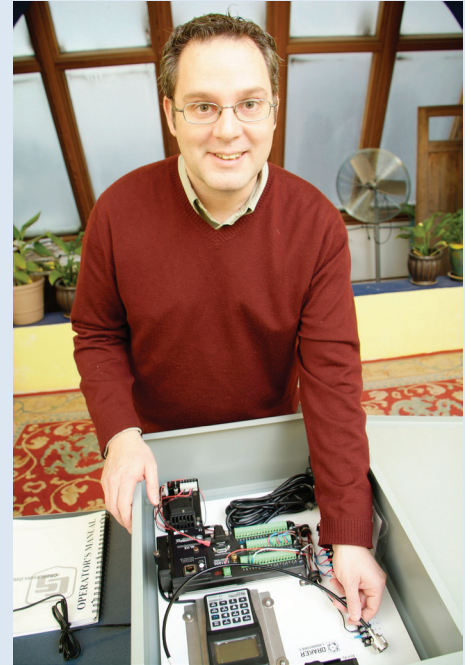
Performance Measure: Micro Business Development Program (MBDP)

MBDP, operated by each of Vermont's Community Action Agencies, provides training and assistance to help low-income Vermonters start and grow businesses.

Assistance includes one-to-one business counseling, business training, networking opportunities, business plan development, and financial management training.

In FY 2015:

- ➔ 771 low-income Vermonters participated:
 - 48 unemployed participants found jobs;
 - 33 employed participants increased their incomes;
 - 68 participants started new businesses; and
 - 79 participants expanded their businesses.
- ➔ 80.5 FTE jobs were created for the participants and others.
- ➔ \$680,641 in capital was leveraged.



Business ownership is a proven pathway out of poverty, helping to increase income, create wealth, and move people off public assistance.

SINCE 2010:

5,466 LOW-INCOME VERMONTERS

PARTICIPATED IN MBDP

427 NEW BUSINESSES WERE STARTED

268 BUSINESSES WERE EXPANDED

523.7 JOBS (FTE) WERE CREATED AT AN
AVERAGE COST TO THE STATE OF \$3,645 PER JOB

\$5,621,842

IN CAPITAL WAS LEVERAGED



Outcome: Families are safe, nurturing, stable and supported

Performance Measure: Individual Development Account (IDA) Program

OEO provides funds to the five Community Action Agencies in Vermont for the Vermont Individual Development Account Program. IDA is a matched savings and financial education program for low-income Vermonters. Participants can save up to \$1,000 of earned income, which is matched by federal and state funds, to help them invest in their first homes, a business, or post-secondary education.

In FY 2015:

- ➔ 145 people increased their savings;
- ➔ 45 participants withdrew a total of \$107,922 to invest in small businesses;
- ➔ 16 participants withdrew a total of \$88,289 to buy their first homes; and
- ➔ 15 participants withdrew a total of \$31,560 to pursue education/job training.

Lack of income means you don't get by. Lack of assets means you don't get ahead.

SINCE 2001:

865 LOW-INCOME VERMONTERS

SAVED AN AVERAGE OF

\$966 EACH OVER 2 YEARS.

SAVINGS WERE MATCHED 2:1 TO HELP THEM

INVEST \$2,332,009

IN THEIR OWN FUTURES.



173

first homes



500

businesses



192

college

Department for Children and Families

*Fostering the healthy development,
safety, well-being, and
self-sufficiency of Vermonters.*

<http://dcf.vermont.gov>