

The Vermont Department for Children and Families

Outcomes for Vermonters
January 2015



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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 2014, the Department achieved many important goals and made noteworthy program improvements in all six divisions. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- ➔ Vermont was awarded \$7.3 million of what is expected to be a \$33 million, four-year federal grant to create full-time, comprehensive, high quality preschool experiences for four year olds in families with incomes under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Vermont is one of 18 states nationally to receive the *Preschool Expansion Grant*.
- ➔ Vermont was awarded a \$36.9 million federal *Early Learning Challenge* grant to help ensure all Vermont children, especially those with high needs (e.g., children in poverty, children in protective services), are ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten.
- ➔ The percentage of child care programs visited by licensing staff increased appreciably: from 72% of licensed programs visited in FY 2013 to 89% in FY 2014 and 43% of registered homes visited in FY 2013 to 70% in FY 2014.
- ➔ The budget for the Vermont Rental Subsidy Program (VRSP) doubled in FY 2014, allowing the program to help more homeless families and individuals who couldn't afford rent in their communities. As of November 2014, 112 households (76%) have moved off VRSP because they secured long-term vouchers, increased their earnings, or found alternative housing options.
- ➔ Vermont's Payment Error Rate for the 3SquaresVT program decreased dramatically in the first eight months of FFY 2014, dropping to 2.98% and ranking Vermont top in the nation for most-improved payment error rate.
- ➔ The department is undertaking comprehensive efforts to strengthen child safety in light of two recent child fatalities and subsequent attention to the child protection system. In FY 2014, Vermonters called the state's toll-free Child Protection Line a record 18,852 times to report their concerns about children's safety and well-being. Substance abuse was reported as a family factor in almost one third of the reports made.
- ➔ A new service, called *EZpay4kids*, allows parents and employers to make child support payments online using credit cards, debit cards, and electronic checks. These new, convenient payment options are helping people make their payments faster and on time.
- ➔ Claims for disability benefits were processed more than 20 days faster than the national average while maintaining very high decision quality—ranking Vermont in the top five states in the nation.
- ➔ The Family Supportive Housing demonstration project was rolled out in the Brattleboro, Burlington, and Rutland districts. In the project's first year, 48 families (88 children and 60 adults) received a variety of services based on their needs and 36 of these families (75%) have been placed into permanent housing.

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: Safety & well-being of children

Indicator: Programs Visited by Licensing Staff

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.

Compared to the previous year, the percentage of programs visited rose appreciably in FY 2014:

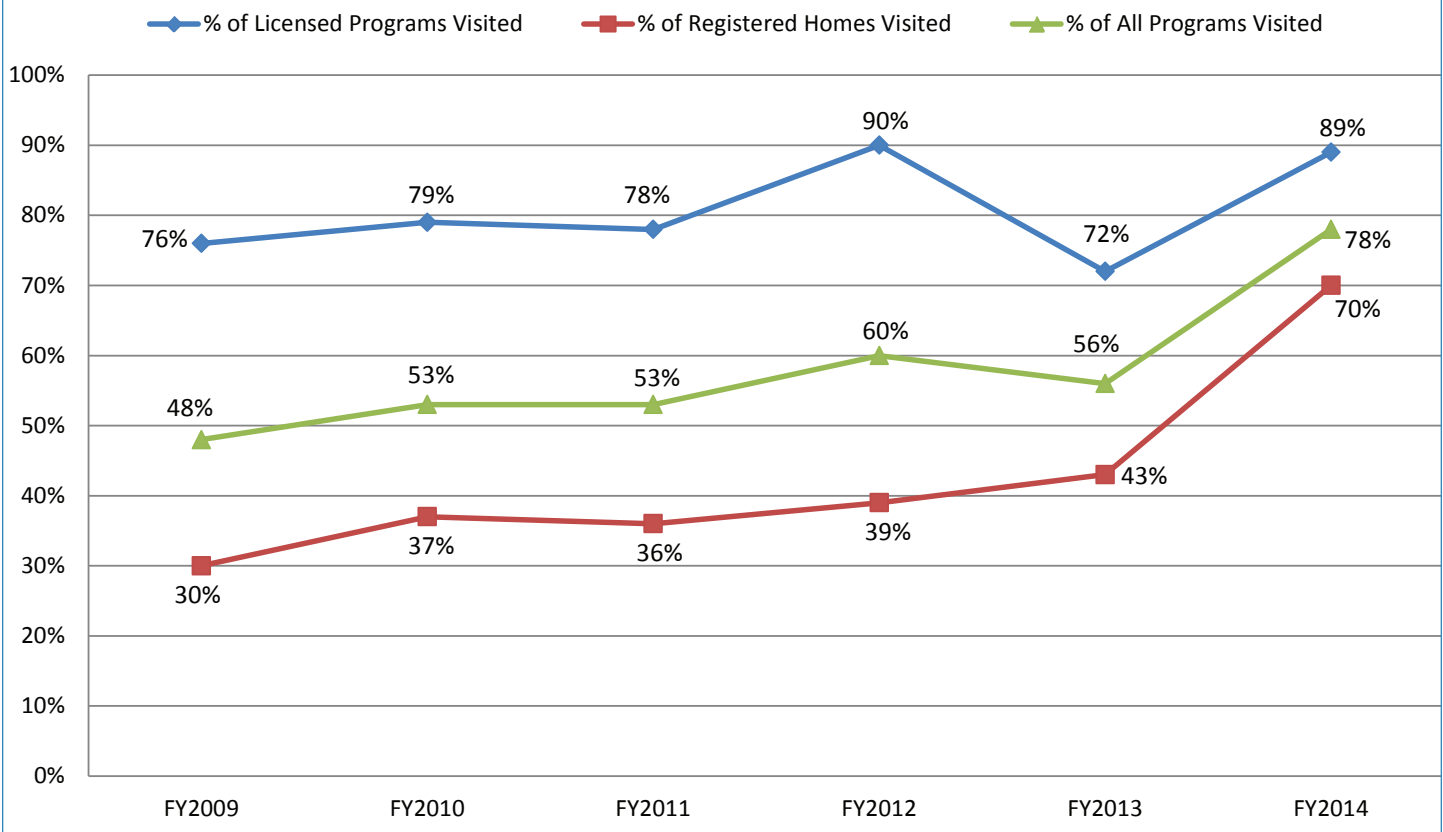
- ➔ 89% of licensed programs were visited, up from 72% in 2013; and
- ➔ 70% of registered homes were visited, up from 43% in 2013.

This increase was due in large part to the staffing of two new positions and one vacant position in early 2013. These three new employees were fully trained and able to carry an independent caseload by the start of the fiscal year.

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 Unit



Outcome: Children are ready for school

Indicator: Licensed Child Care Programs Participating in STARS

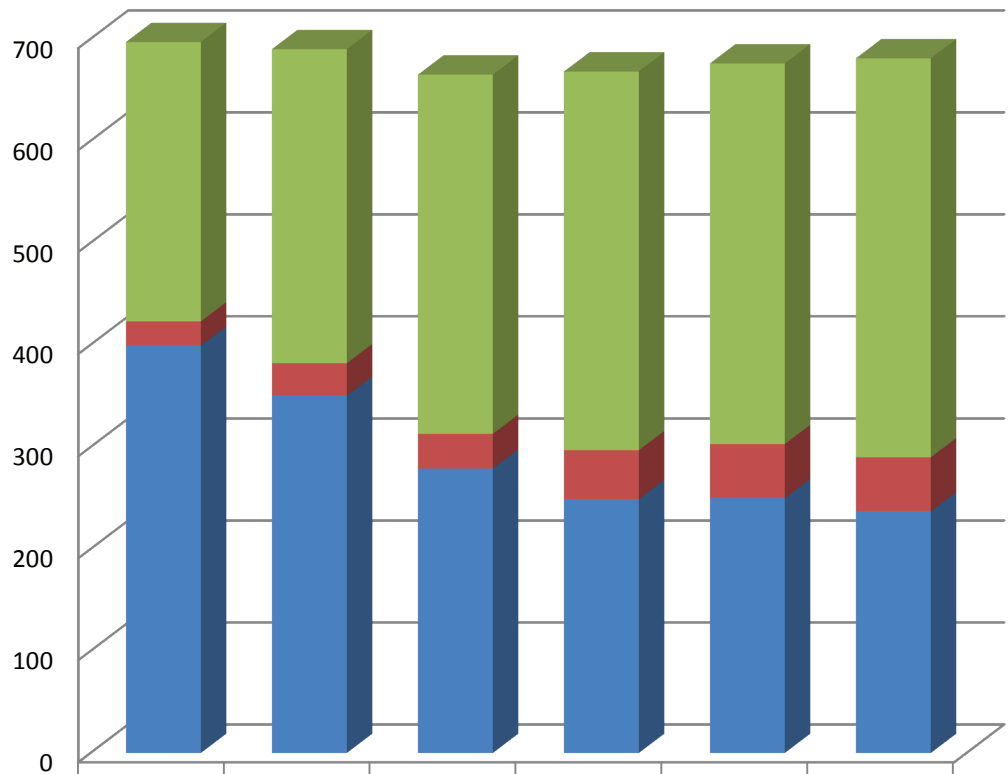
CDD supports the continuous improvement of early childhood and afterschool programs through the STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS). Programs that participate in STARS — Vermont’s quality recognition system — are going above and beyond state regulations to provide professional services that meet the needs of children and families. The more stars a program has, the more it is involved in a wide range of practices that support children, families, and professionals.

Vermont continues to see a steady increase in both:

- ➔ The total number of licensed programs participating in STARS; and
- ➔ The number of licensed programs that are achieving a 3, 4 or 5 star rating out of 5 possible stars (an indicator of high quality).

Research shows that high quality early care and education has a demonstrable, positive impact on children’s development, well-being, and school readiness.

Licensed Child Care Programs by STARS Participation



Outcome: Children are ready for school

Indicator: Family Child Care Homes Participating in STARS

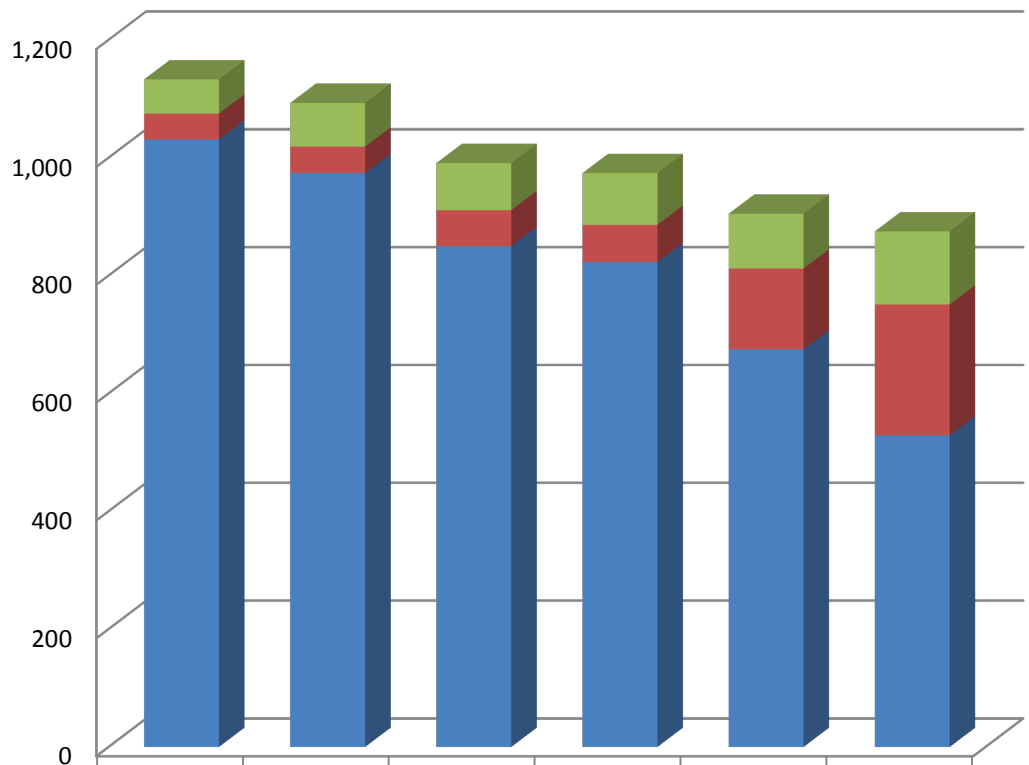
Since FY 2009, the percentage of family child care homes (*registered providers*) participating in STARS has increased steadily. We expect this upward trend to continue as peer mentors are available to help providers navigate their way through the STARS process (thanks to the *Vermont Birth to 3 Project*).

The percentage of registered providers participating in STARS increased appreciably in FY 2014. It went from:

- ➔ 25% of all registered providers in FY 2013; to
- ➔ 40% of all registered providers in FY 2014.

Family child care 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 Programs by STARS Participation



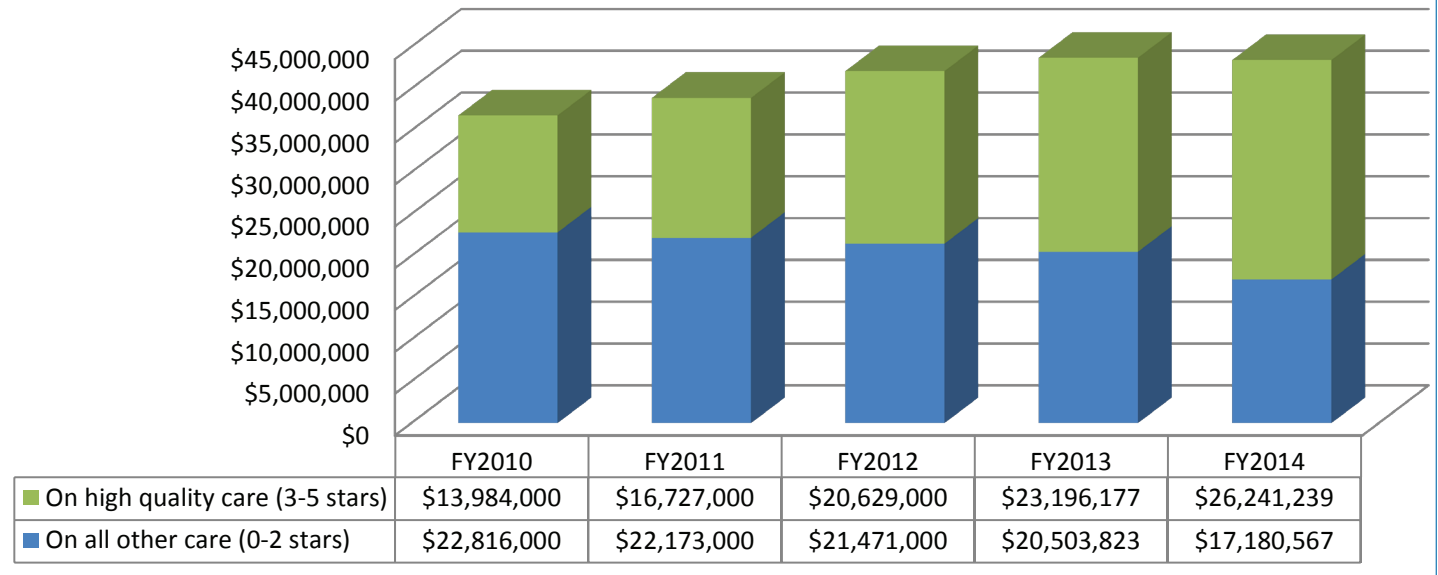
Outcome: Children are ready for school

Indicator: Financial Assistance Provided To Children In High Quality Care

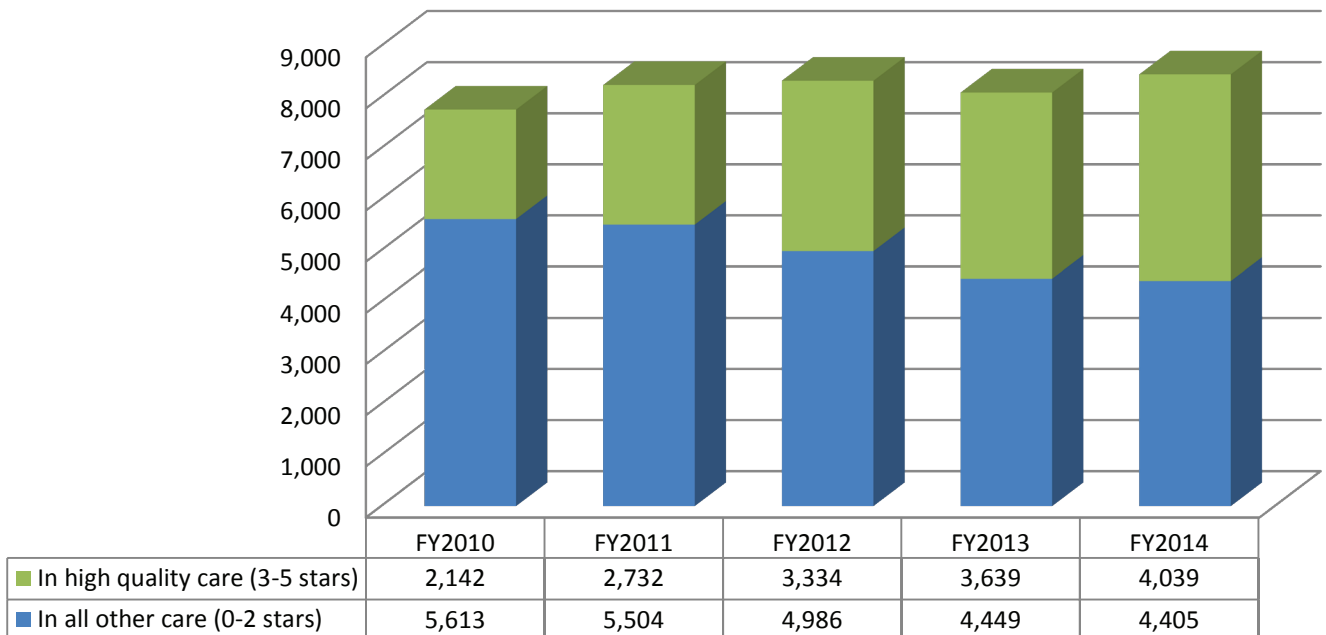
In FY2014, \$43.4 million in child care financial assistance was provided to 8,444 children – helping them access early care & education and afterschool programs.

- 60.4% of the total budget was spent on high quality care (*three or more stars*); and
- 47.8% of the children getting financial assistance were in high quality care.

Child Care Financial Assistance, dollars spent



Child Care Financial Assistance, number of children



Outcome: Children and families are safe, stable & supported

Indicator: Children's Integrated Services

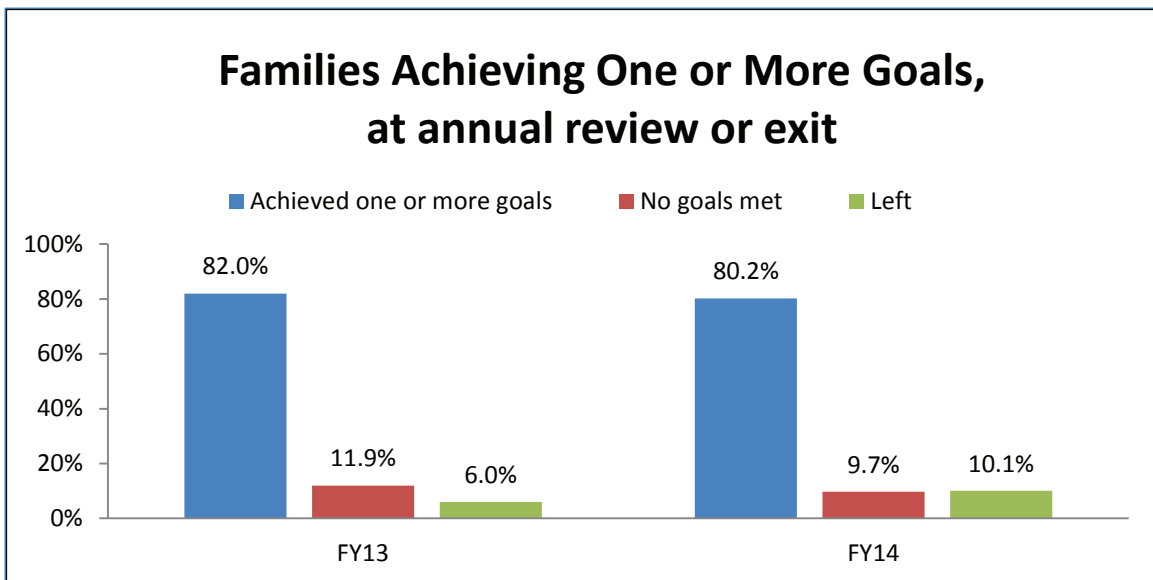
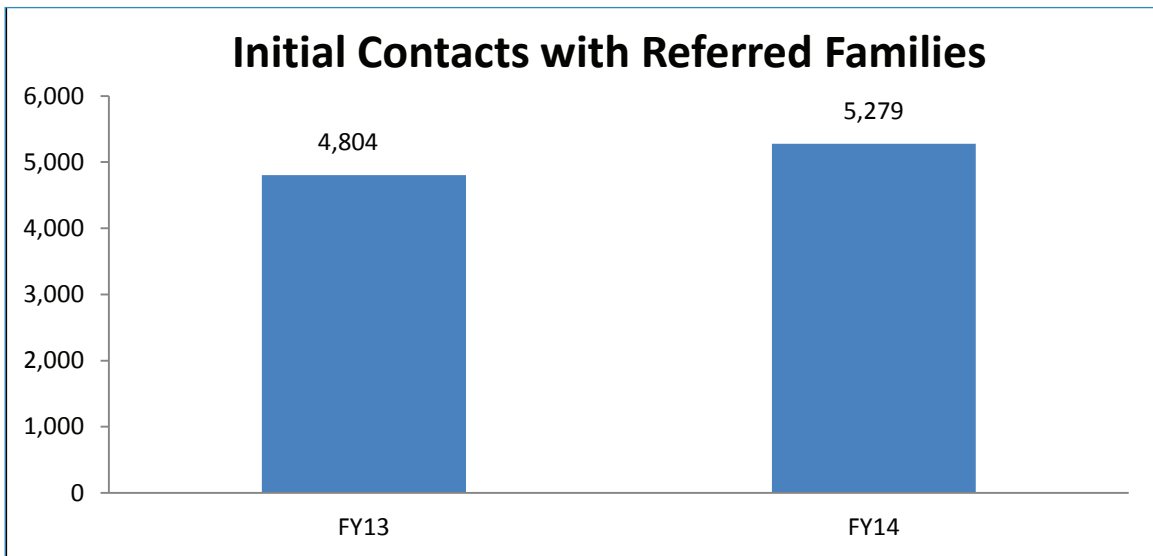
Vermont created a unique, innovative model for integrating early childhood health, mental health, early intervention and specialized child care services for pregnant and postpartum women and for children birth to age six. The model is designed to improve child and family outcomes by providing services that are client-centered, holistic, and coordinated; and flexible funding to address any gaps in services.

➔ Initial contacts with referred families.

The number of contacts with families increased by about 10%. This could indicate that CIS outreach efforts are paying off.

➔ Families achieving one or more goals at annual review or exit, whichever is earliest.

The vast majority of children or families (80%+ or roughly 4 in 5) achieved one or more goals.



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 can meet their basic needs

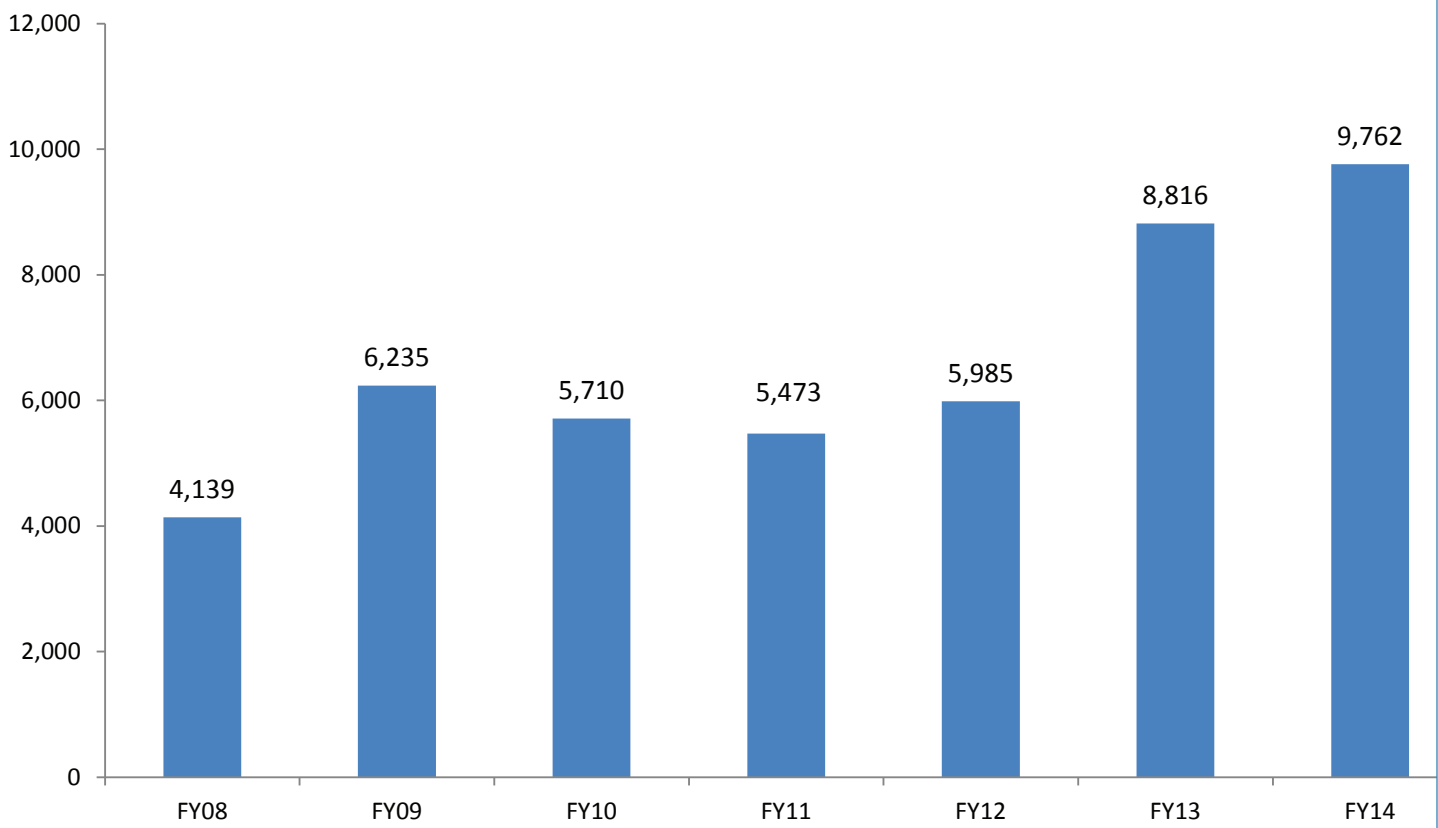
Indicator: General/Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)

GA and EA help eligible individuals and families meet their emergency basic needs. This may include help paying for:

- ➔ Groceries;
- ➔ Room & board;
- ➔ Rent/security deposit;
- ➔ Fuel, utilities, utility deposit, connect & reconnect fees, special trip charges;
- ➔ Transportation,
- ➔ Medical, dental, prescription, medical supplies/equipment; and
- ➔ Burial costs.

GA is funded from the State's general fund and EA is funded from the federal TANF (*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*) block grant. Traditionally, a large portion of these funds are used to meet temporary housing needs.

GA/EA Unduplicated Cases Served



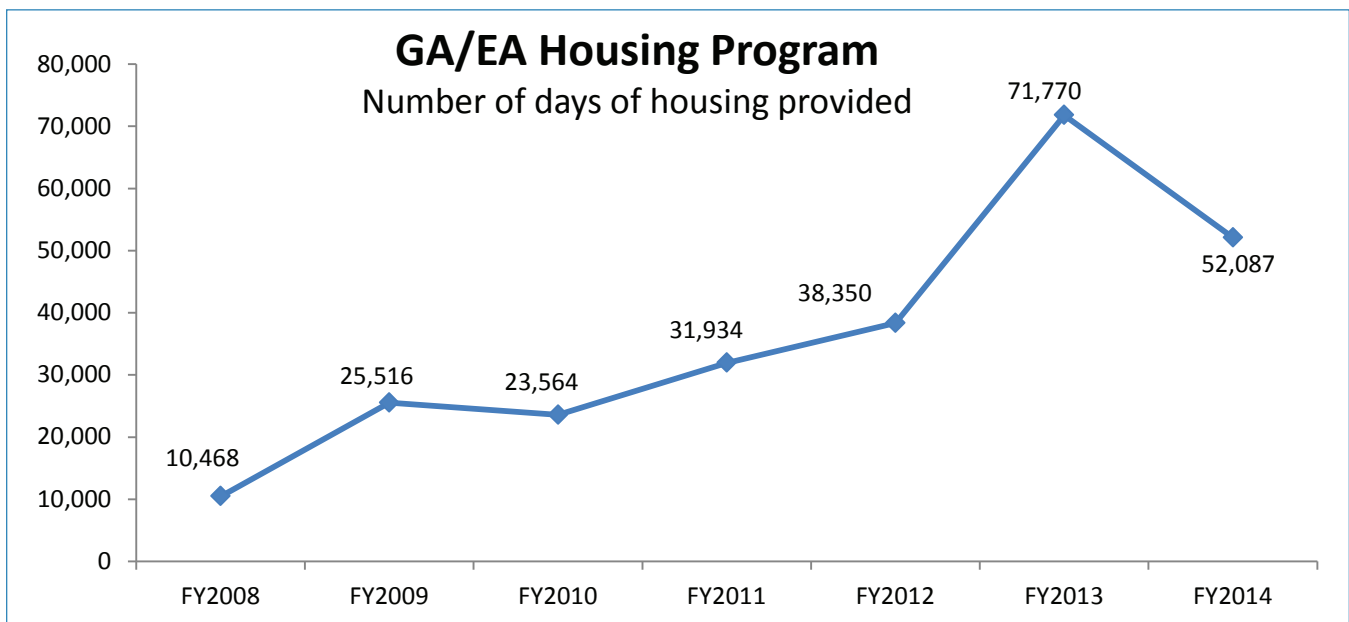
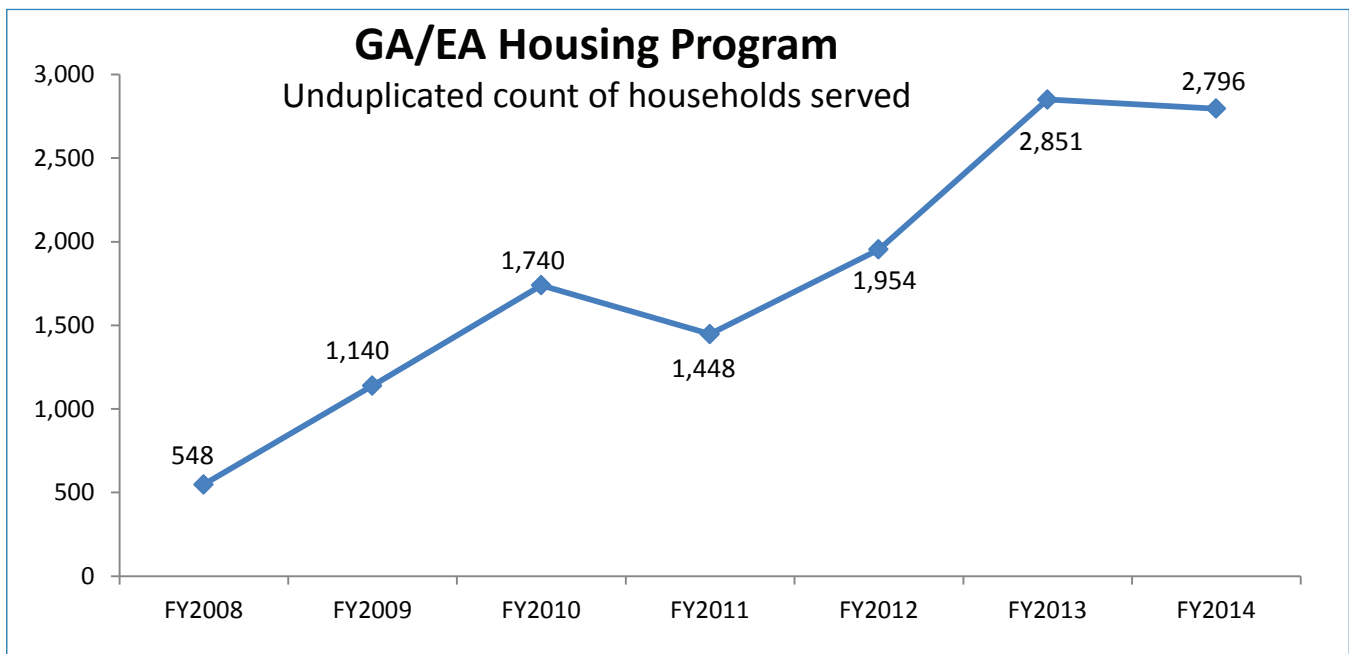
Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: GA/EA Housing Assistance - Households

The number of unique households receiving GA/EA Housing Assistance decreased slightly in FY 2014, from 2,851 households served in FY 2013 to 2,796 in 2014. This is likely due to policy changes that restricted eligibility.

The total number of days of housing provided decreased markedly in FY 2014, from a total of 71,770 days in FY 2013 to 52,087 in 2014.

The numbers below are unduplicated counts. *Some families and individuals received services more than once during the year.*



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: GA/EA Housing Assistance - Expenditures

GA/EA housing expenditures decreased to approximately \$3.1 million in FY 2014 from a high of almost \$4.5 million in FY 2013.

The average assistance provided per household:

➔ \$617 in 2010; \$990 in 2011; \$1,138 in 2012; \$1,574 in 2013; and \$1,141 in 2014.

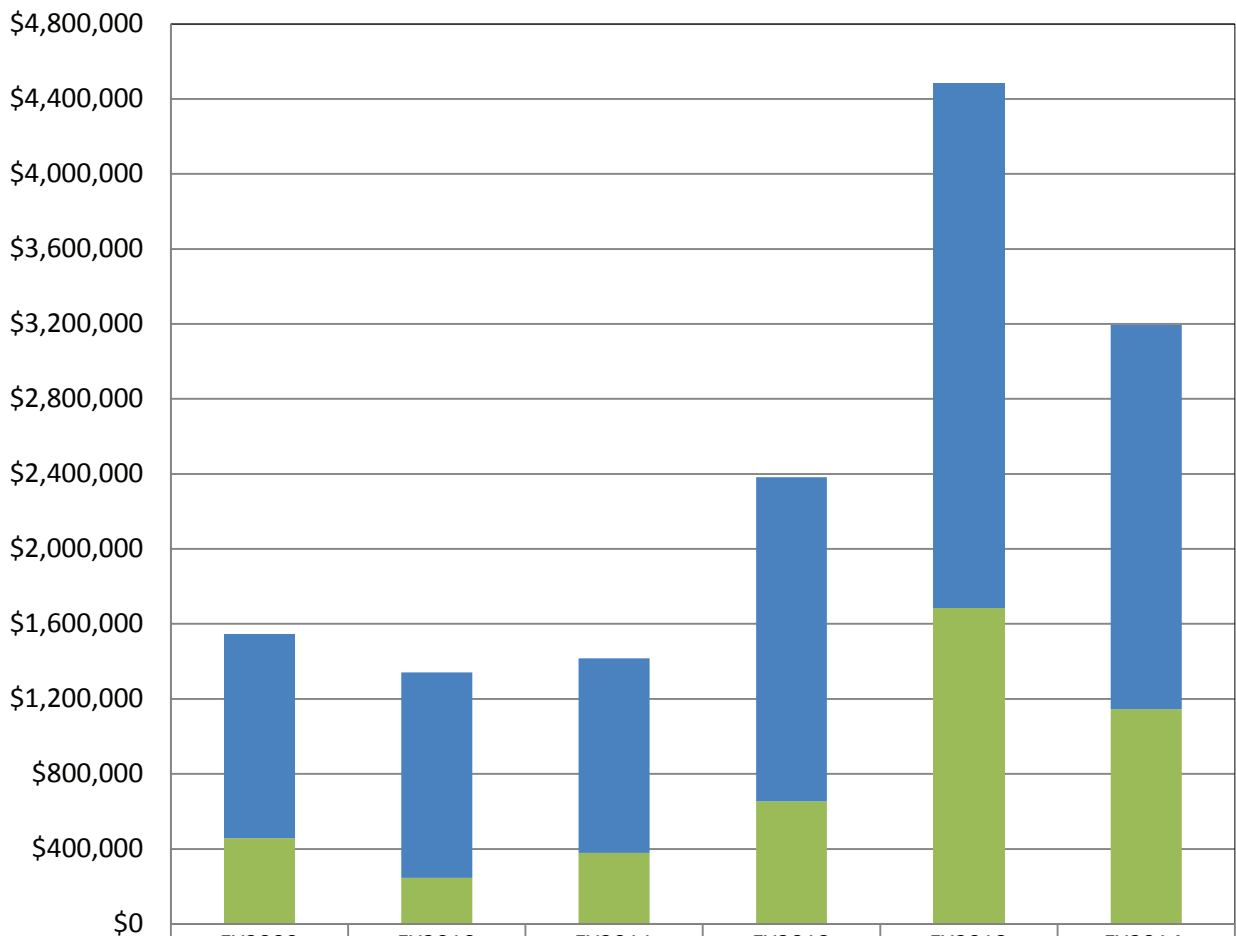
The average number of days assistance was provided:

➔ 14 in 2010; 22 in 2011; 20 in 2012; 25 in 2013; and 19 in 2014.

The average cost per night for a motel stay:

➔ \$46 in 2010; \$45 in 2011; \$58 in 2012; \$57 in 2013; and \$61 in 2014.

GA/EA Housing Expenditures



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: 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 income or secure other long-term affordable housing. Participants pay 30% of their income towards rent; the State of Vermont pays the difference to the landlords.

As of November 2014, 112 households (76%) 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 \$553 per household, per month.

VERMONT RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM – Year to Year Comparison

	Sept 2013	Sept 2014
Household Composition of VRSP Recipients		
Single-parent families with children	34	47
Two-parent families with children	24	18
Individuals	3	11
Couples without children	0	3
Total Households	61	79
- Households receiving Reach Up	51	41
- Households receiving SSI	3	14
- Households receiving both Reach Up and SSI	3	3
- Other households under 125% of federal poverty guidelines	4	21
Program Performance		
Households approved and leased up	61	79
Households tentatively granted and seeking housing	1	61
Total number of households on the waiting list	48	13
Program Cost Analysis		
Average monthly rent paid by tenant	\$295	\$268
Average monthly rent paid by DCF	\$662	\$553
Average cost per household for full year of VRSP subsidy	\$7,944	\$6,636
Average time housed by VRSP (in months)	10	12

Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: 3SquaresVT

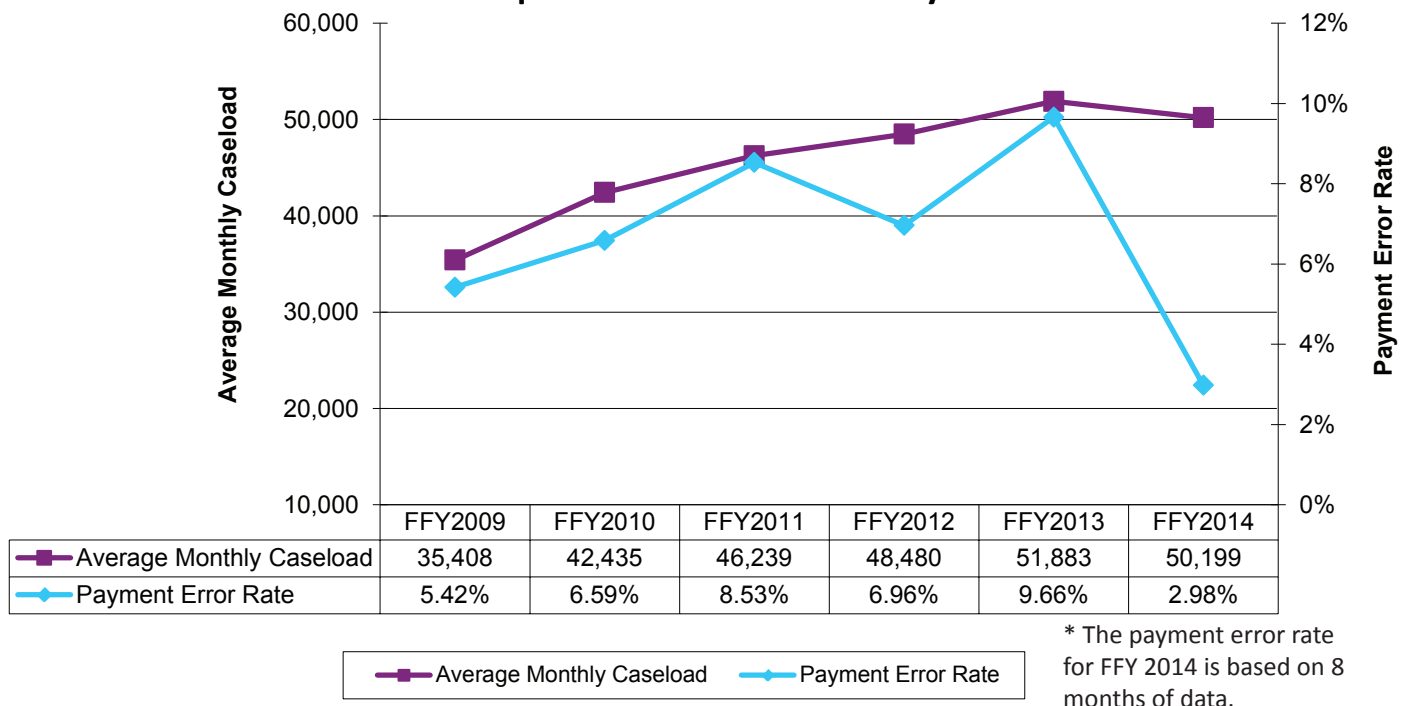
3SquaresVT is 100% federally funded. This program is critical because it helps reduce hunger and stimulates the state's economy (generating \$1.84 in financial benefits for every \$1 spent).

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 failed to meet this standard for three years in a row: from FFY 2011 to FFY 2013 when it stood at a high of 9.66%.

This rate dropped to 2.98% in the first eight months of FFY 2014, **ranking Vermont first in the nation for most-improved error rate**. Several initiatives contributed to this dramatic turnaround:

- Adding new eligibility workers;
- Addressing workflow and procedural issues through a business improvement process;
- Implementing new quality control procedures;
- Delivering intensive staff trainings to eligibility workers, supervisors, and managers;
- Restoring ESD's training unit; and
- Consulting with national experts around best practices.

3SquaresVT Caseload and Payment Error Rate

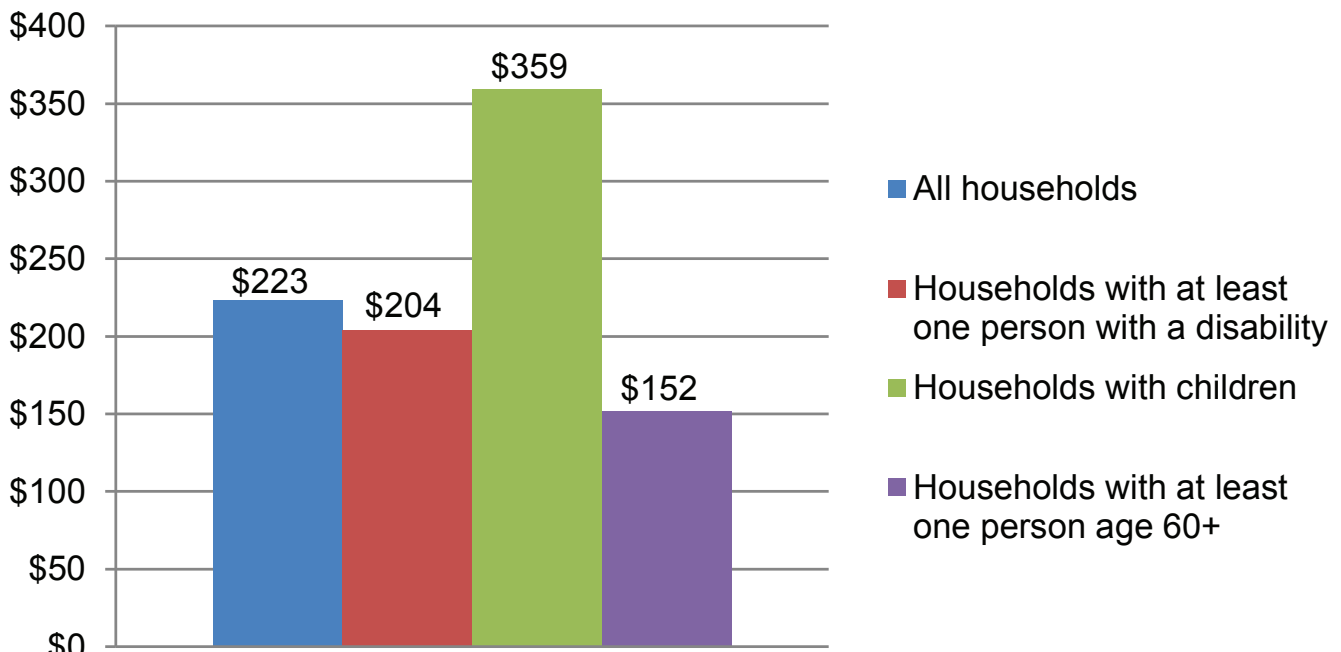


One-Month Snapshot of 3SquaresVT Participants

Data for the Month of September 2014

Total Recipients	87,525
- Recipients aged 0-17	31,052 (35.5%)
- Recipients with a disability	23,112 (26.4%)
- Recipients aged 60 or older	13,564 (15.5%)
Total Participating Households	45,711
- Households with children aged 0-17	16,331 (35.7%)
- Households with at least one person with a disability	21,695 (47.5%)
- Households with at least one person aged 60+	12,208 (26.7%)

Average 3SquaresVT Benefit, by household makeup



As of September 2014

Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

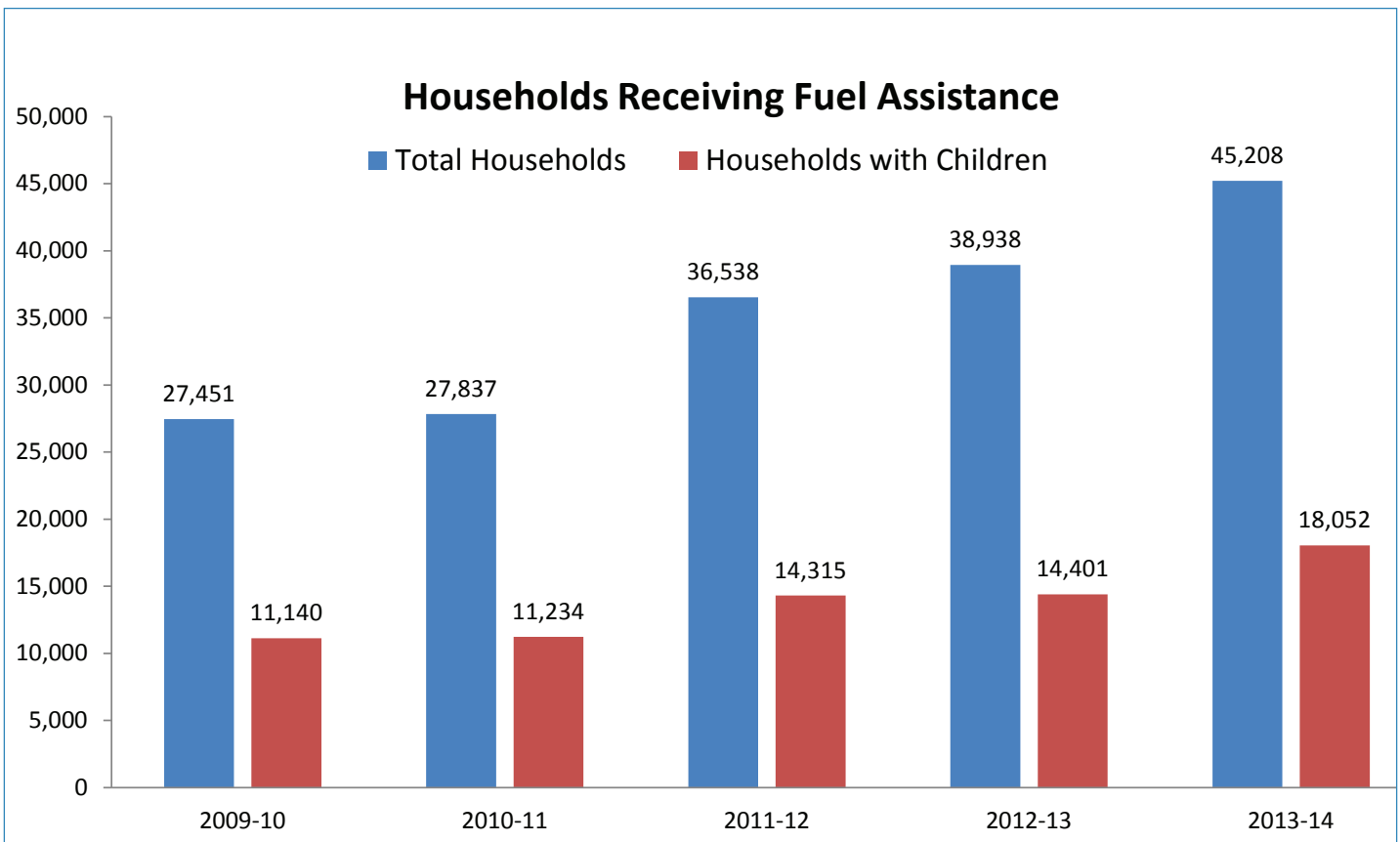
Indicator: Seasonal Fuel Assistance

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 **2013-14 heating season (November 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014)**:

- ➔ 45,208 Vermont households received fuel assistance.
- ➔ The average benefit paid to certified fuel dealers for all households was \$792.
- ➔ Of the total households getting fuel assistance, 76% of them (20,175 households) heated with oil, propane or kerosene, and their average benefit was \$900.

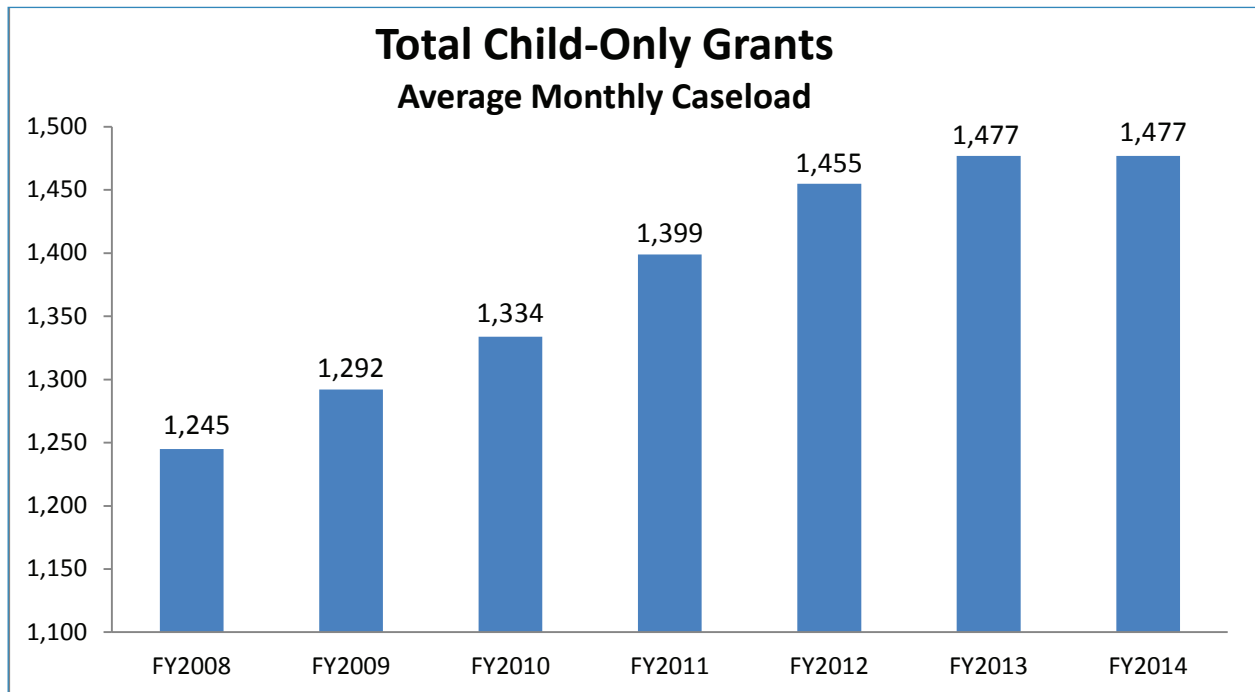
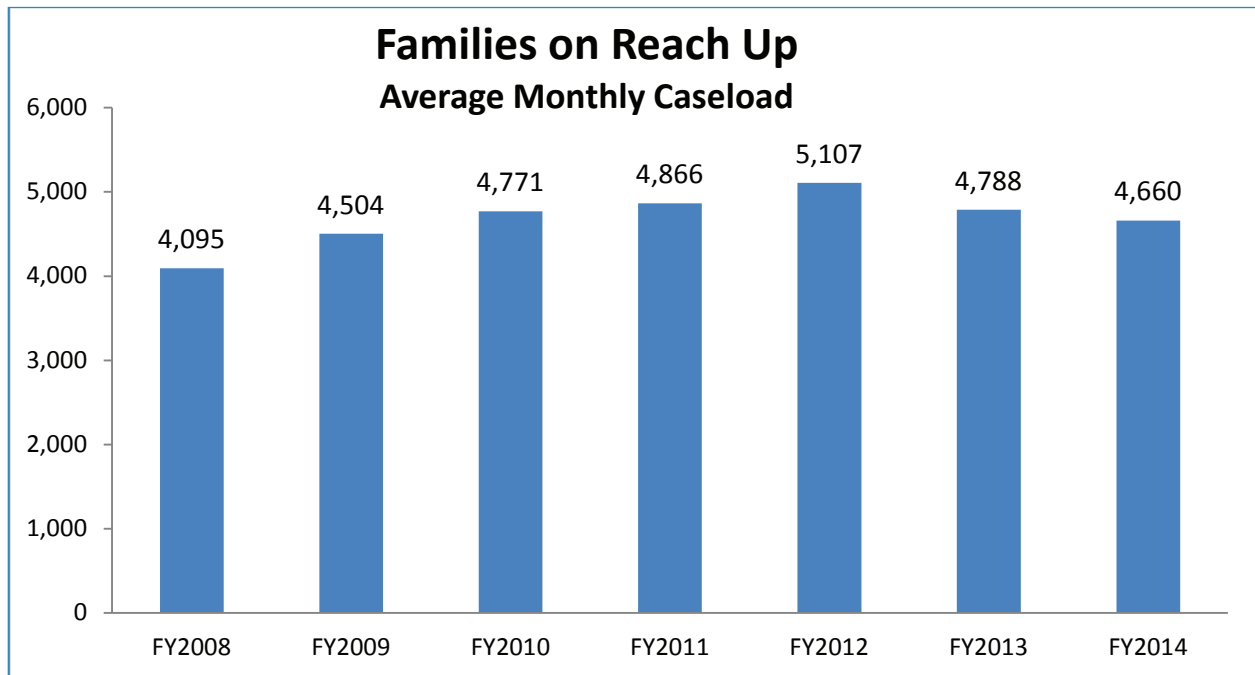


Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: Reach Up - Grants

In FY 2014, Reach Up:

- ➔ Helped 4,660 families meet their basic needs and secure employment;
- ➔ Provided 1,477 child-only grants to parents who are receiving SSI and relatives who are caring for children after being granted legal custody by a family court. The child-only grants given to relatives providing kinship care are one way DCF supports child safety while maintaining family ties.



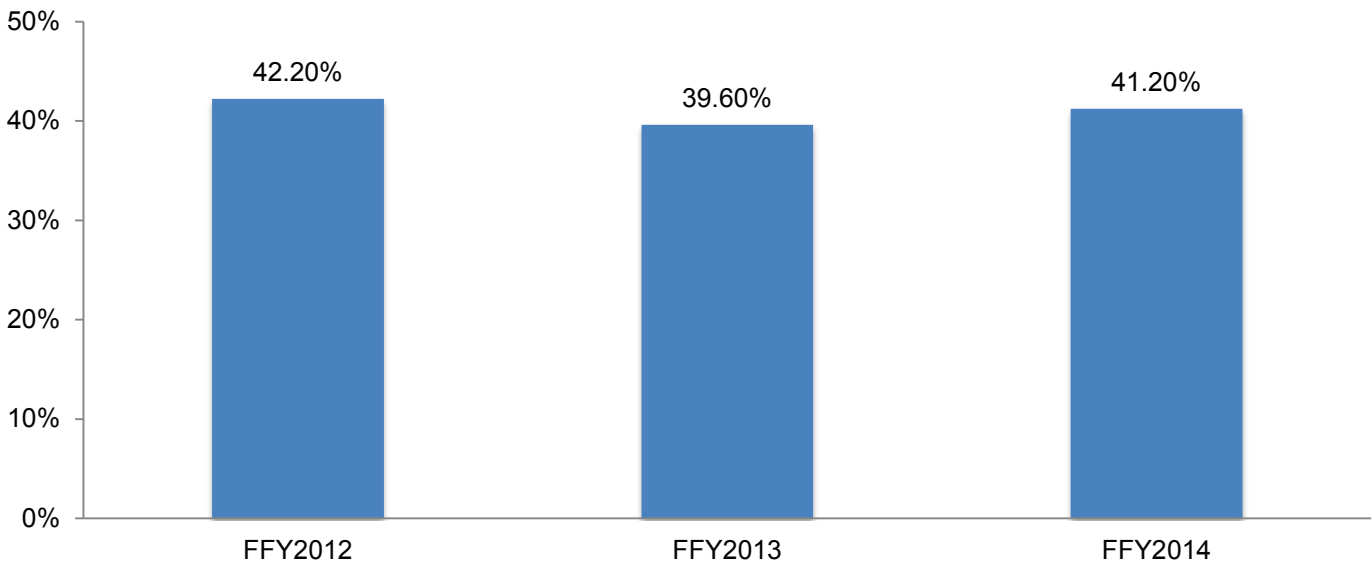
Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: Reach Up - Employment-Related Activities

The goal of Reach Up is to move families into the workforce so they become financially independent. About 1,500 families transition from Reach Up to employment each year.

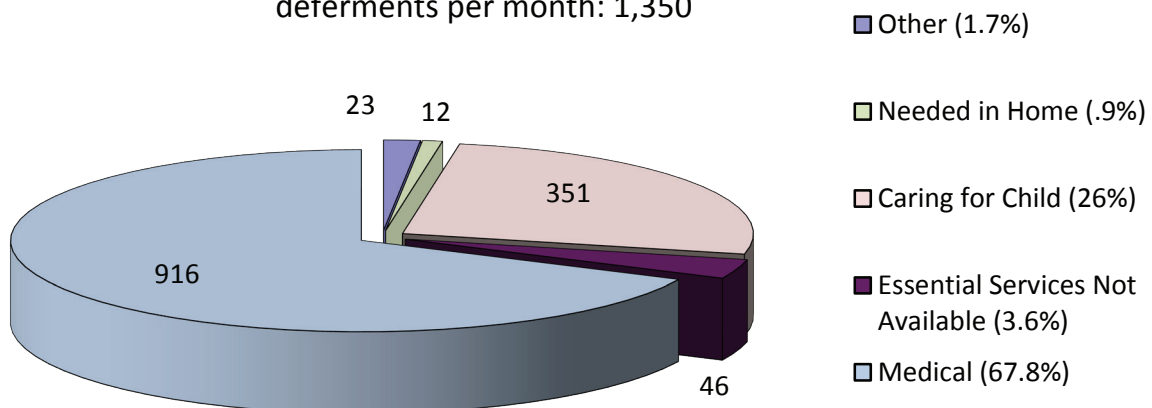
Work participation rates measure how well states engage families receiving assistance in certain work activities. The department may defer or modify a participant's work requirement for specific reasons (e.g., to care for a child or for medical reasons). A *deferral delays the onset of the work requirement, while a modification changes the number of hours the participant must engage in approved work activities.*

% of Reach Up Participants Engaged in Work Activities



Reach Up Families with Deferments

Average number of families with deferments per month: 1,350



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: Children and youth are safe from abuse

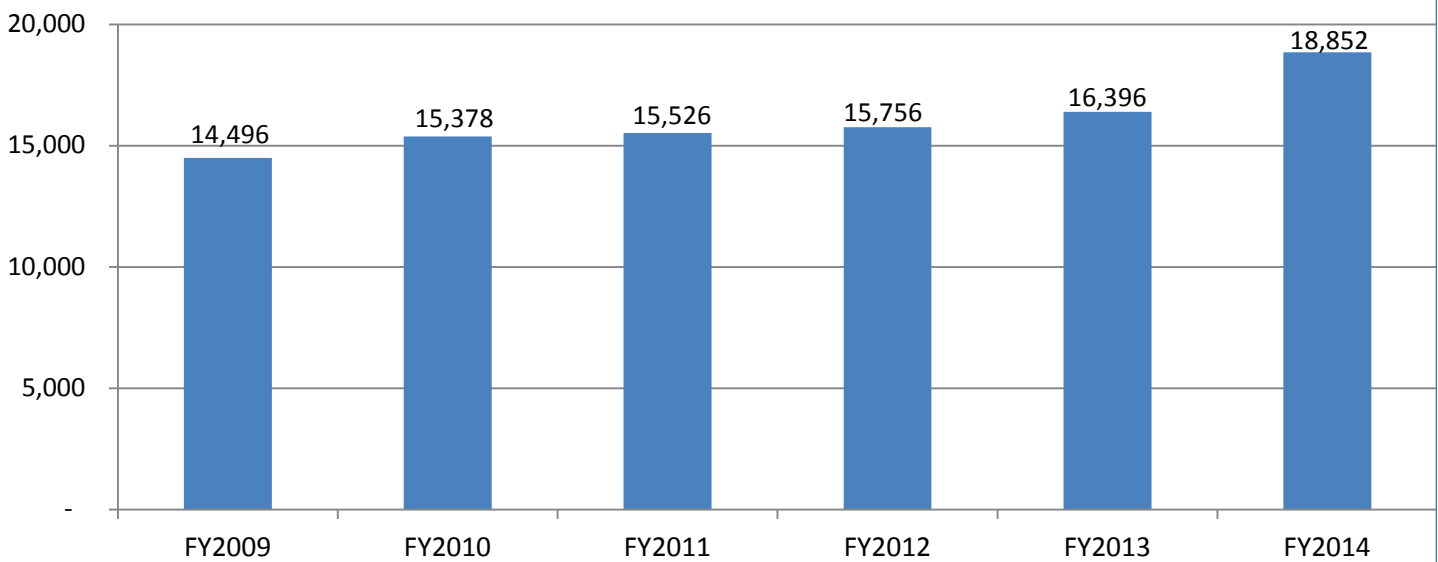
Indicator: Child Safety Intakes & Interventions

In FY 2014, FSD received 18,852 reports (*intakes*) about suspected child abuse or neglect. As a result of those calls, FSD initiated 5,291 child safety interventions:

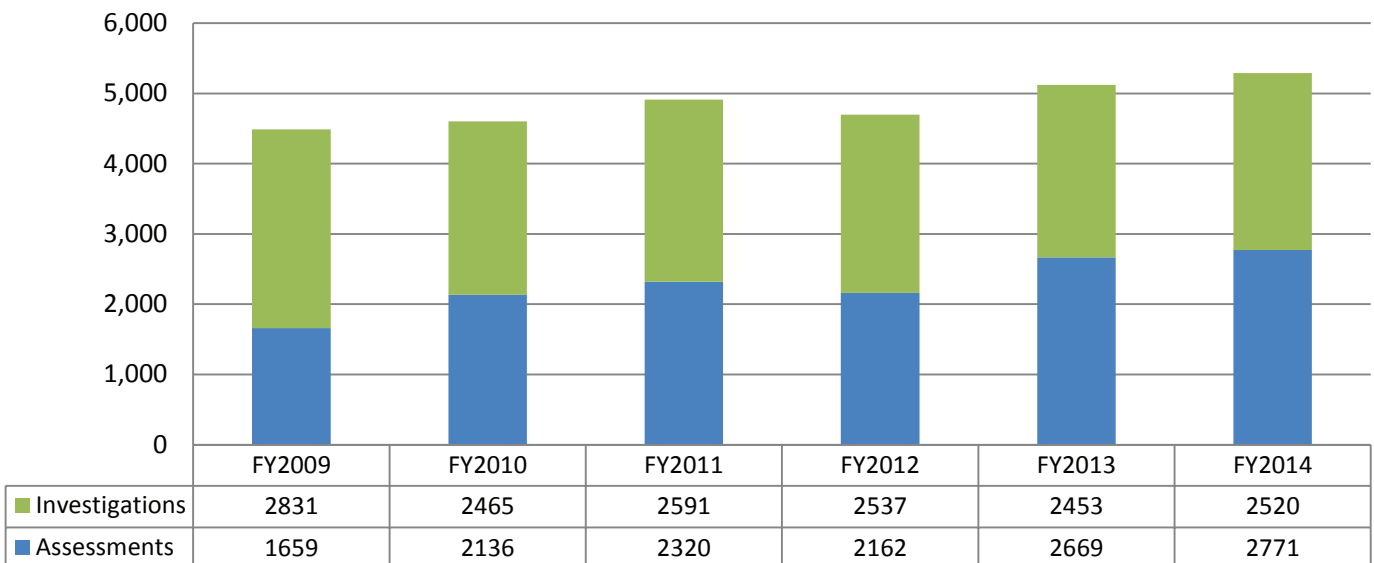
- 2,771 assessments¹; and
- 2,520 investigations.

¹ Assessments determine the level of risk and safety for children and evaluate families' strengths and their need for ongoing services.

Total Child Abuse/Neglect Intakes



Child Safety Interventions by Type



Outcome: Children and youth are safe from abuse

Indicator: 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.

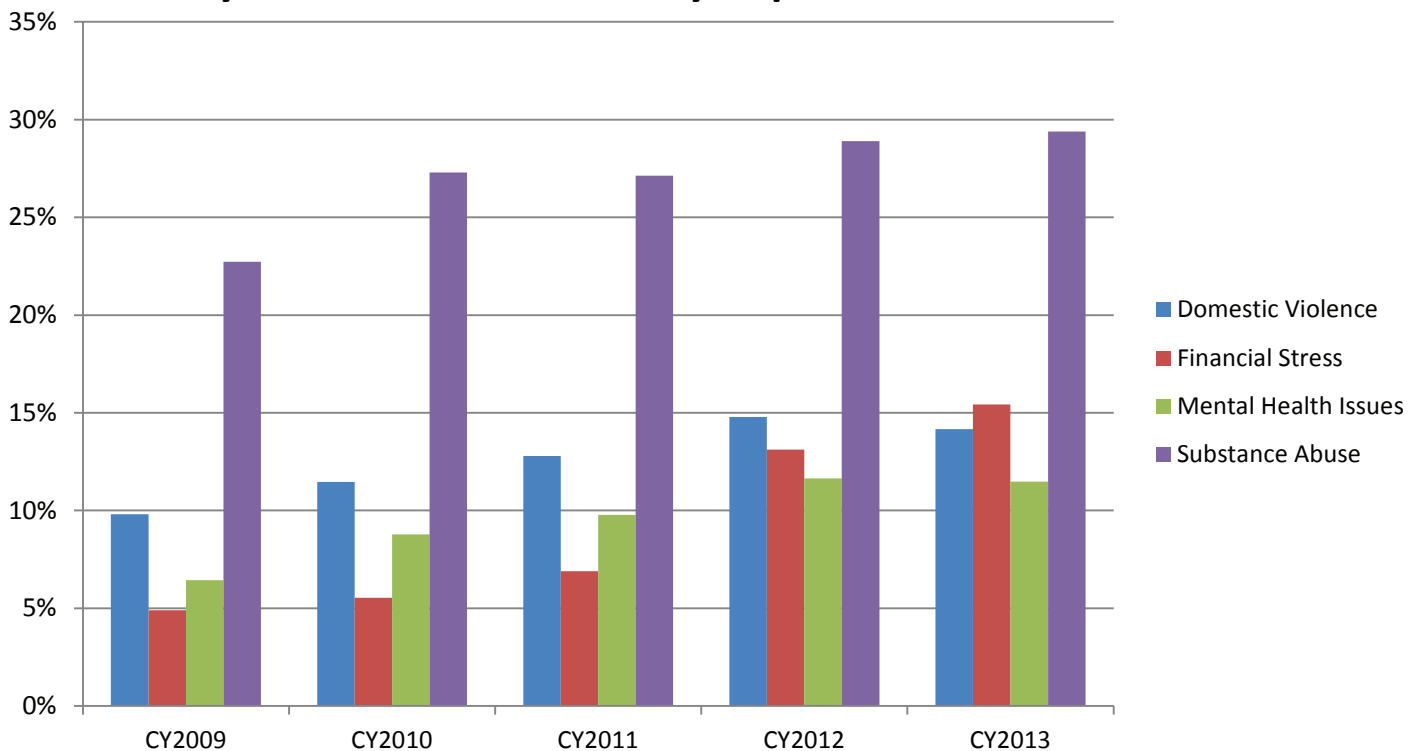
Research has found that the presence of:

- 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 substance abuse was reported as a family factor in almost a third of all the reports made. This reinforces the need for supportive services and specialized interventions for this pervasive problem.

Family Factors as Identified by Reporter at Intake



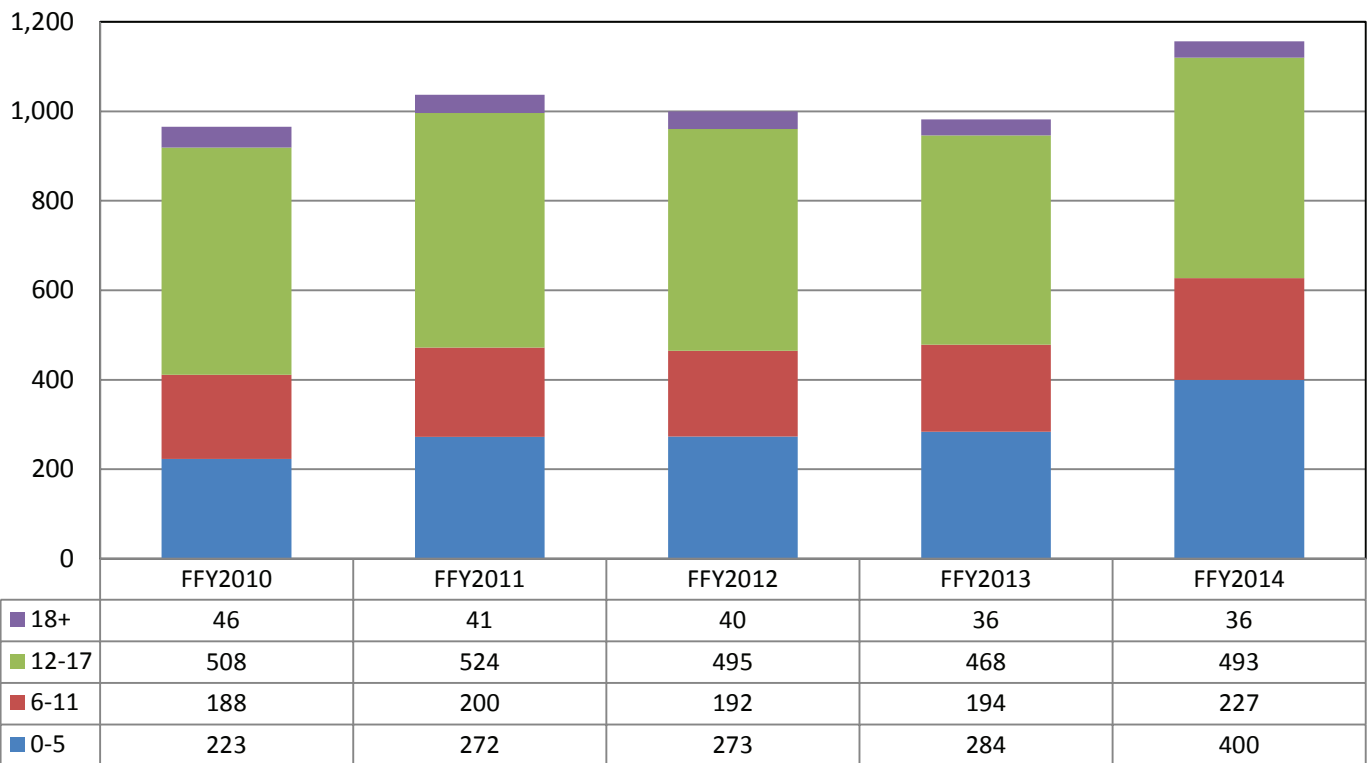
Outcome: Children, youth, and communities are safe

Indicator: Children & Youth in DCF Custody

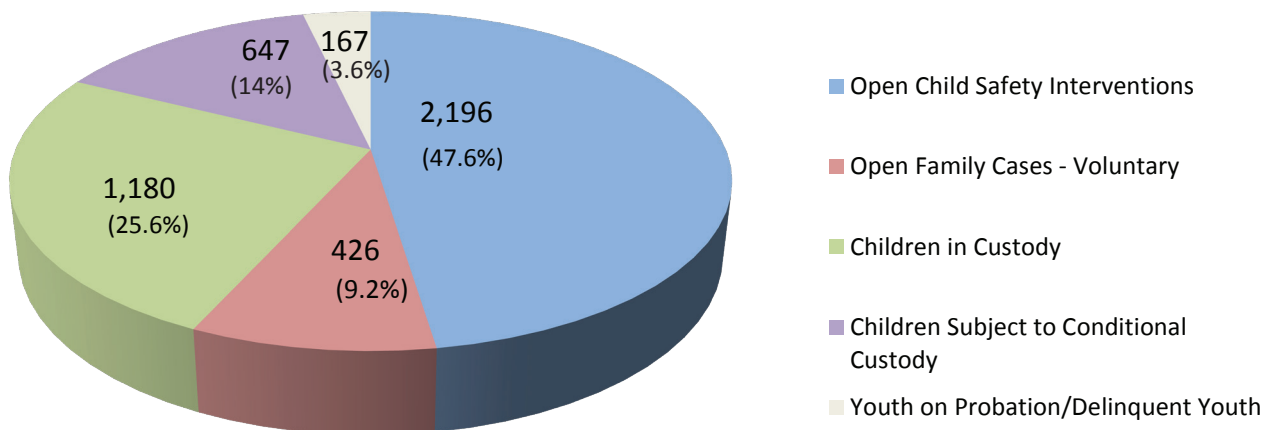
A judge may order a child be taken into DCF custody if the child has been abused or neglected; is beyond or without parental control; or has been adjudicated delinquent.

The number of very young children (*ages 0 to 5*) taken into DCF custody increased substantially in FFY 2014.

Children in custody by age range, point in time September 2014



FSD Caseload, point in time December 2014



Outcome: Children and youth are safe

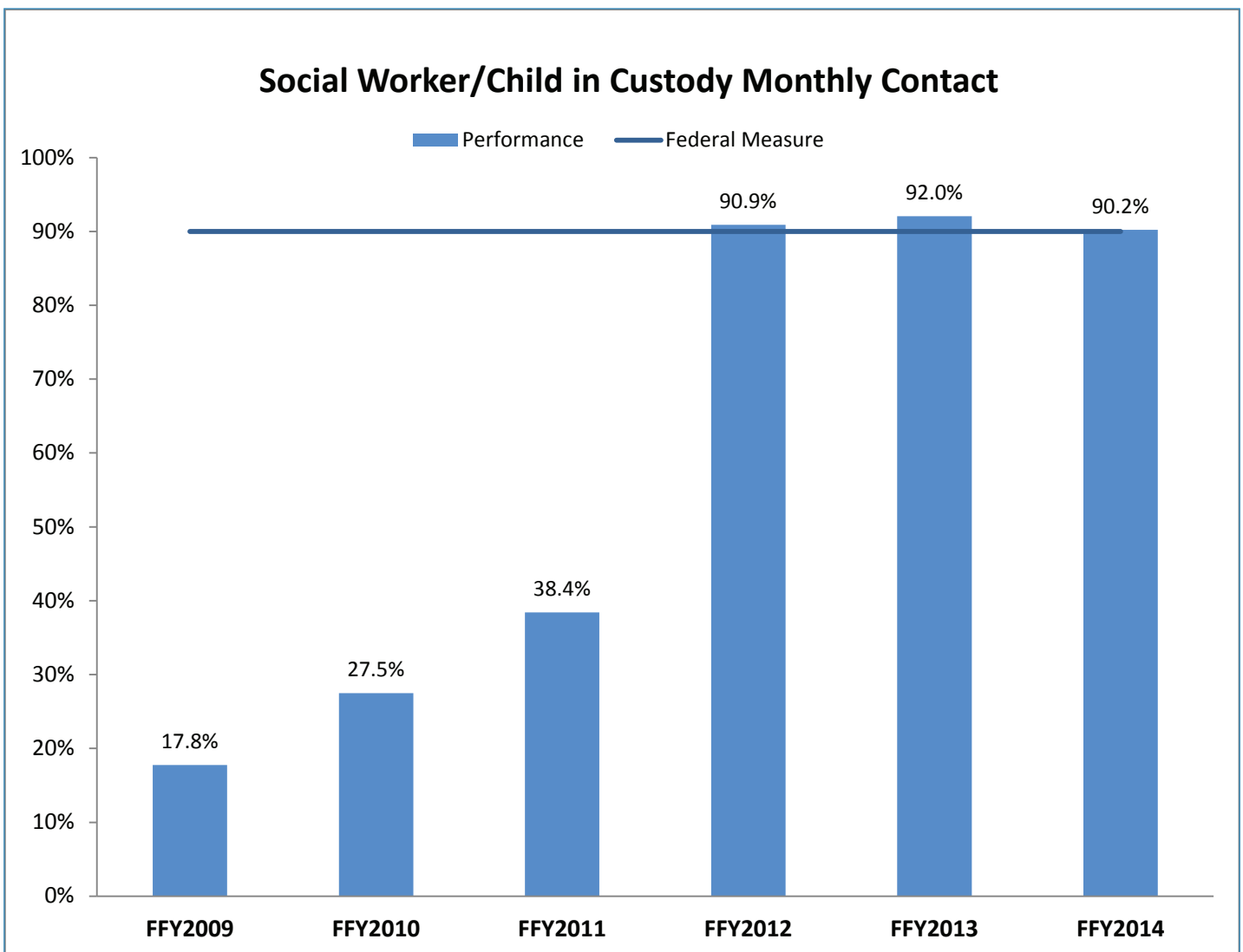
Indicator: Social Worker Contact with Children in DCF Custody

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. States that do not meet this standard face financial sanctions.

Due to the concerted effort of staff and, most importantly, the addition of full-time social worker positions in FFY 2011 & 2012, monthly contact has increased substantially over the past few years. 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.

The federal standard will be higher (95%) starting in FFY 2015.



Outcome: Children and youth are safe, stable & supported

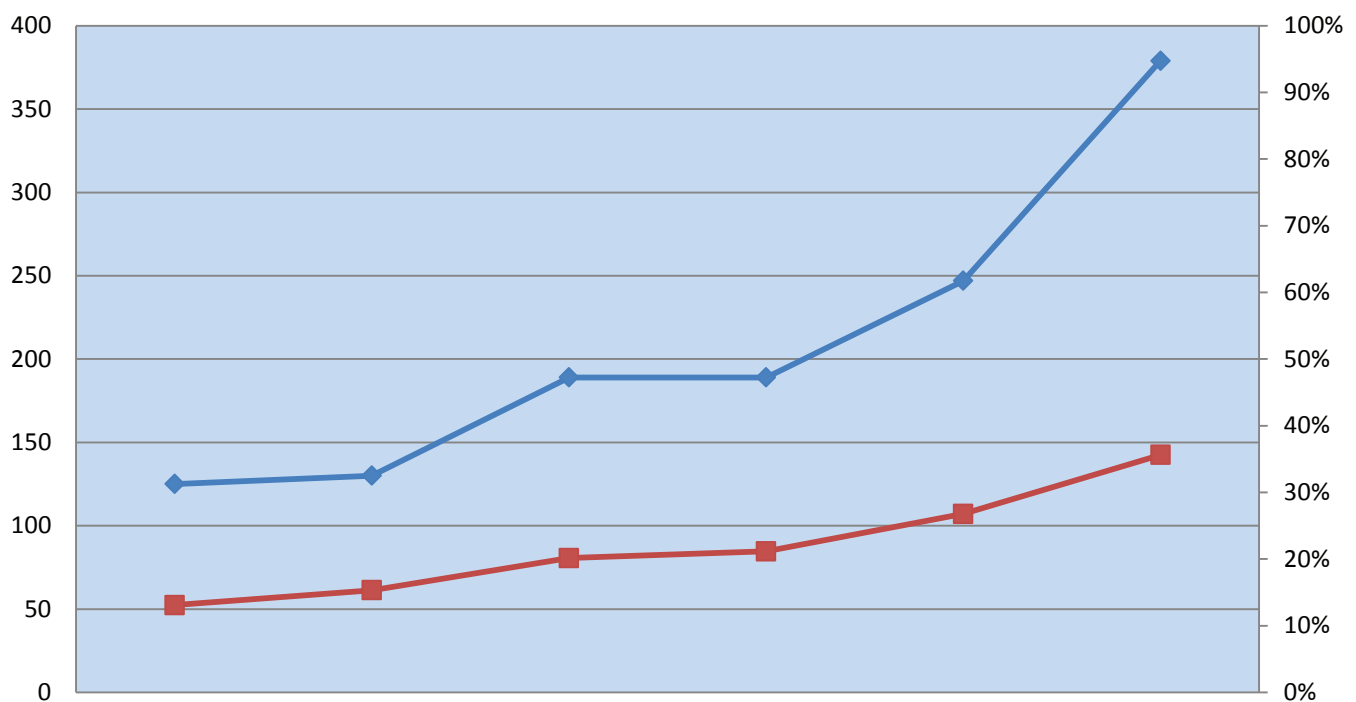
Indicator: Children Placed in Licensed Kinship Foster Homes

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
Number	125	130	189	189	247	379
Percent	13.09%	15.33%	20.15%	21.16%	26.76%	35.62%

Outcome: Children and youth are safe, stable & supported

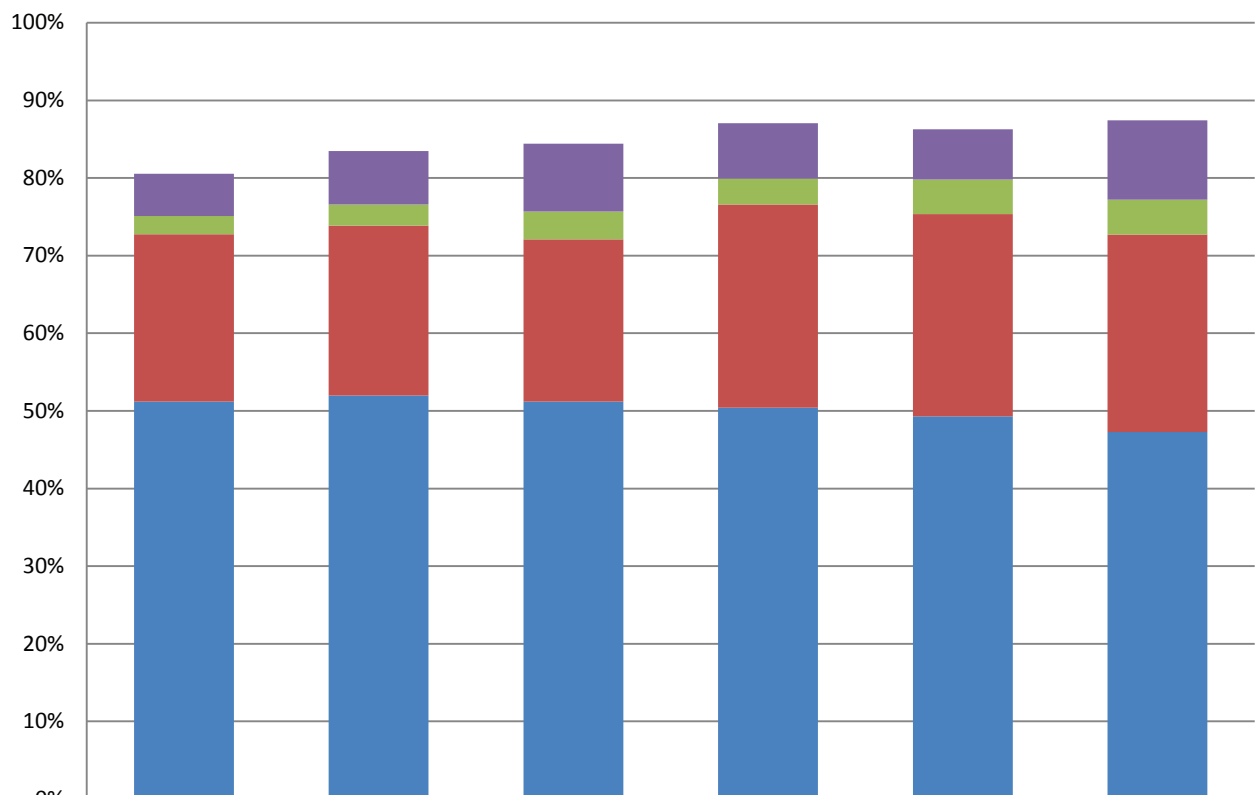
Indicator: Children Who Exited DCF Custody To Permanent Placements

The ultimate goal of state care is to provide children and youth with safe, permanent homes — ideally with their parents. That’s why, 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



Outcome: Children and youth are safe, stable & supported

Indicator: Transitional Services Provided to Youth in DCF Custody

Act 74, the Youth in Transition Act, focuses on the needs of youth who are exiting foster care and the resources needed to address their needs.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2014, transitional services were provided to 440 Vermont youth. Here's the breakdown of youth served by age group:

- ➔ 133 were under 18;
- ➔ 101 were 18; and
- ➔ 206 were over 18.

Youth Served by the Youth Development Program	FFY 2014	
Total number of youth served	440	
- Youth 18+ with employment	144	69%
- Youth 18+ with high school credential	148	81%
- Youth 18+ with post-secondary education or training	55	30%
- Youth 15 - 22 employed or enrolled in education or training	384	87%
- Youth insured by Medicaid	427	97%
- Youth with children	63	14%
- Youth who experienced homelessness at some point during the year	39	9%
- Youth who were incarcerated at some point during the year	25	6%
Youth who received financial support for:		
- Housing	67	15%
- Extended foster care services	36	8%
- Incidental living grants	204	46%
- Education funds	69	16%
- Employment funds	31	7%
- Basic needs funds	58	13%
- Enrichment, normalcy, relationship funds	40	9%
- Transportation costs	50	11%
- Driver's education & licensing	59	13%

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.

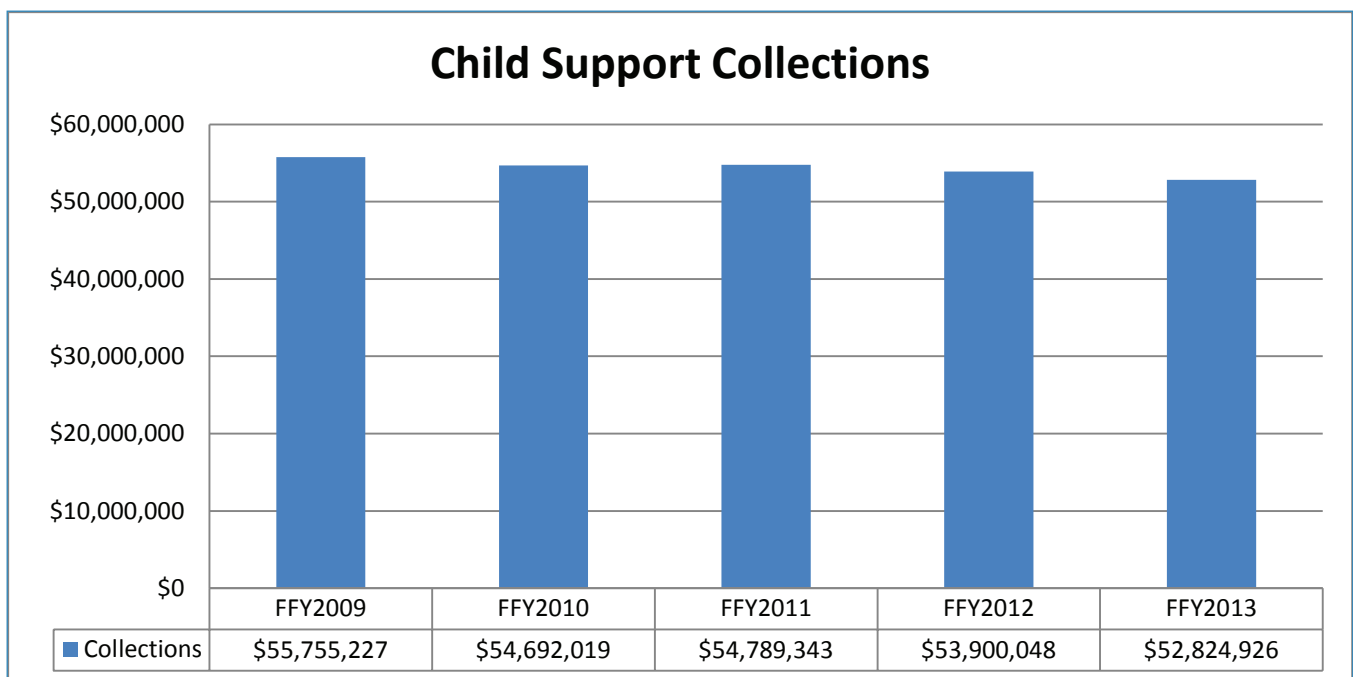
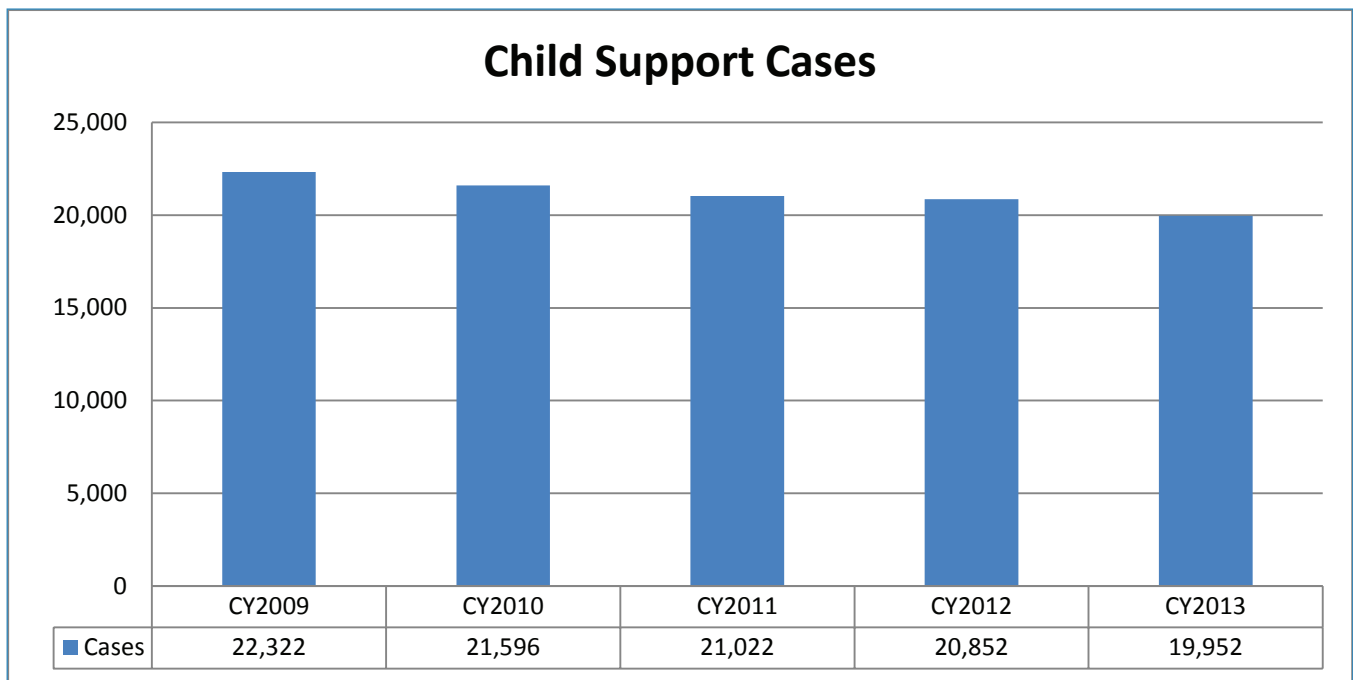
Outcome: Children and families are stable & supported

Indicator: Child Support Cases & Collections

The Office of Child Support:

- Had 19,952 child support cases in calendar year 2013; and
- Collected \$52,824,926 in total child support payments in Federal Fiscal Year 2013.

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.



Outcome: Children and families are stable & supported

Indicators: Key Federal Performance Indicators

The following indicators are for FFY 2013. 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.

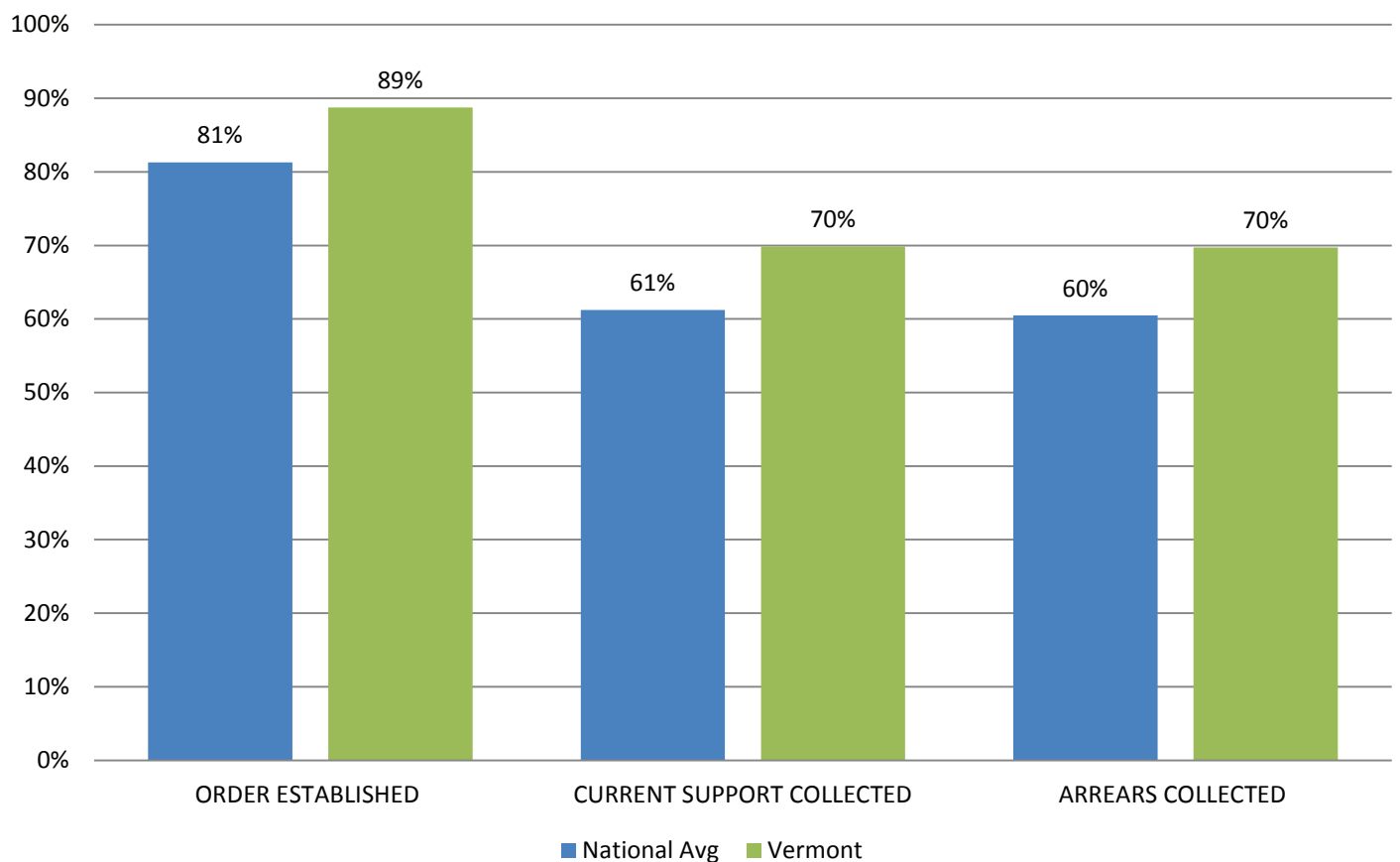
➤ Indicator: % of Ordered Child Support Collected

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 2013 -



Outcome: Children and families are stable & supported

Indicator: Average Rankings of Federal Performance Measures

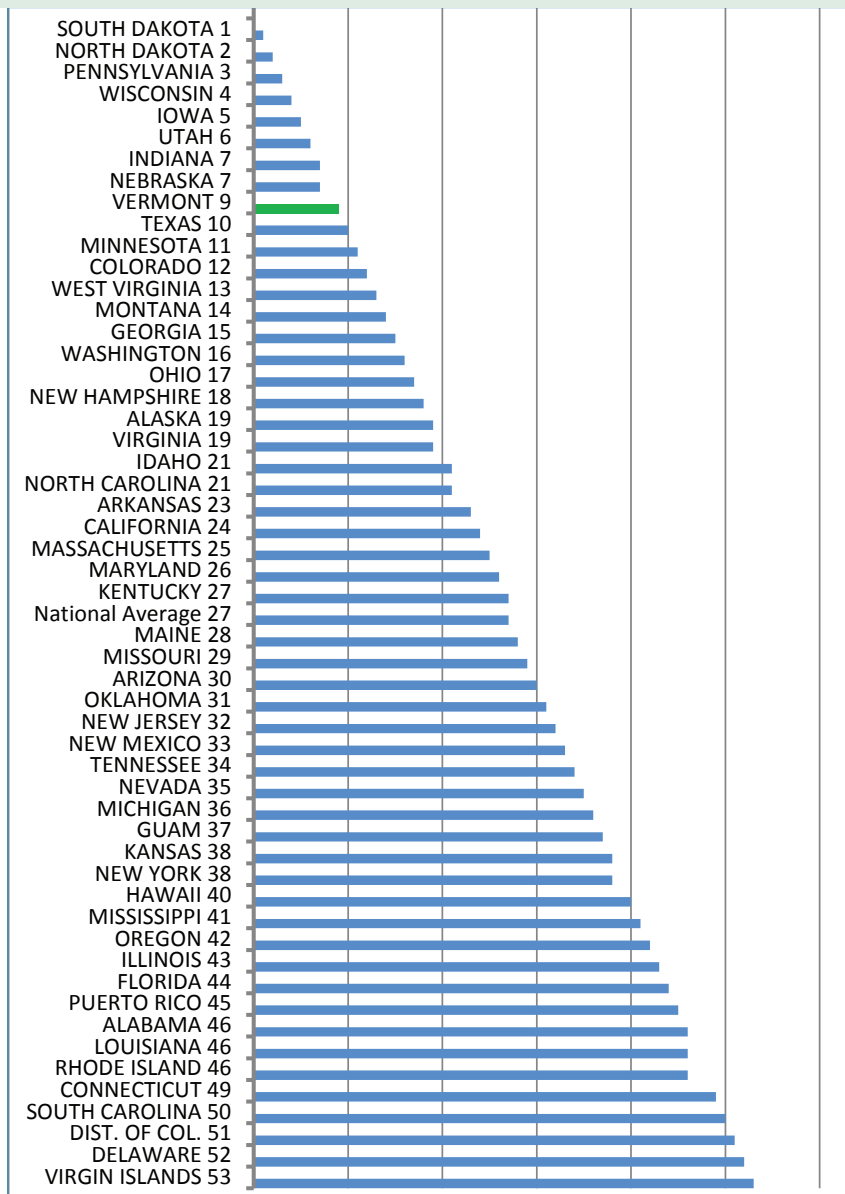
Overall, child support benefits to children can be measured in terms of the percent of:

- 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.

FFY '13 Average Rankings of Federal Performance Measures

(Parentage Establishment, Order Establishment, Collection Rate, Arrears Recovery Rate, and Cost)



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.

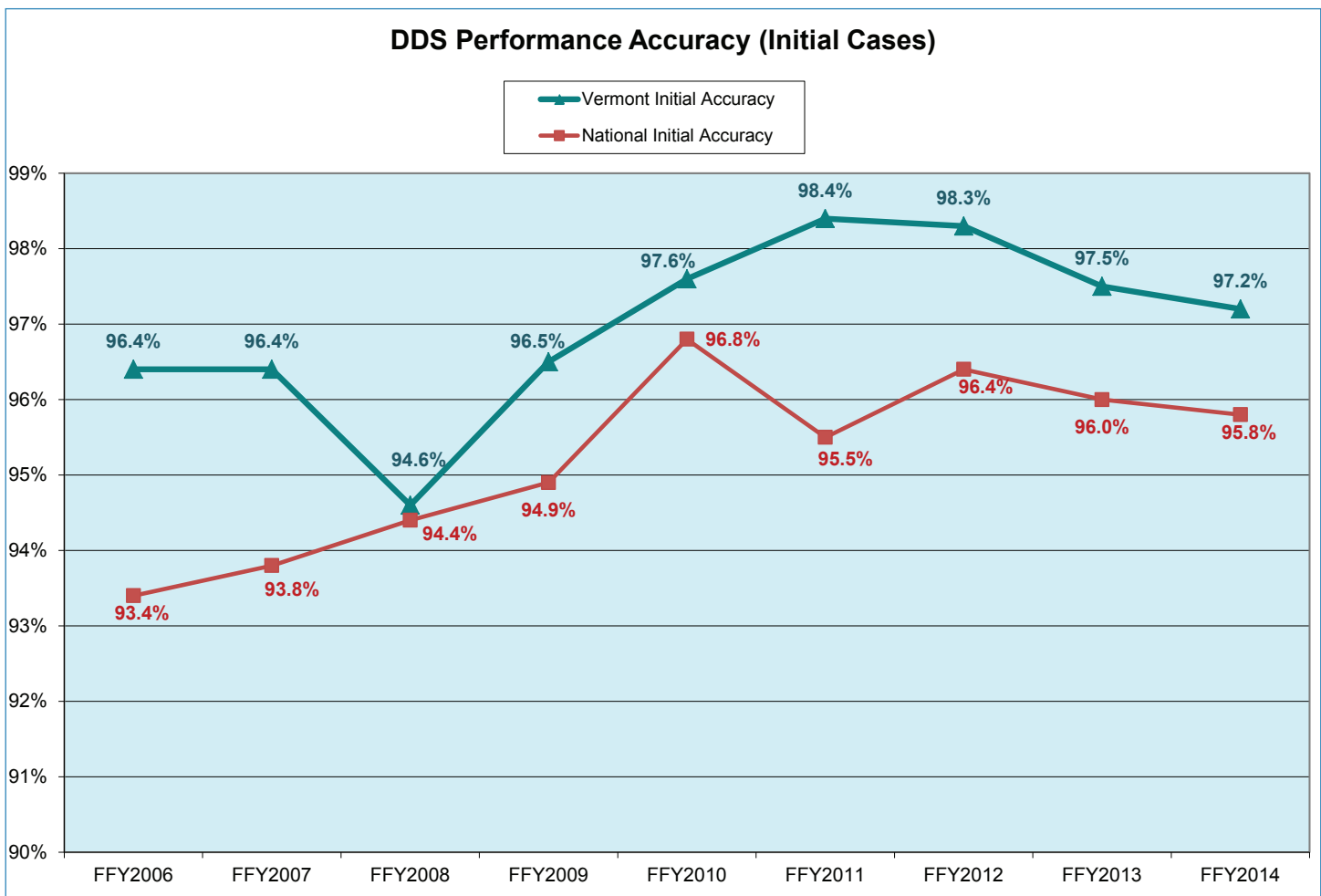
Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: 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 initial medical decision on the 5,000 to 5,800 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.

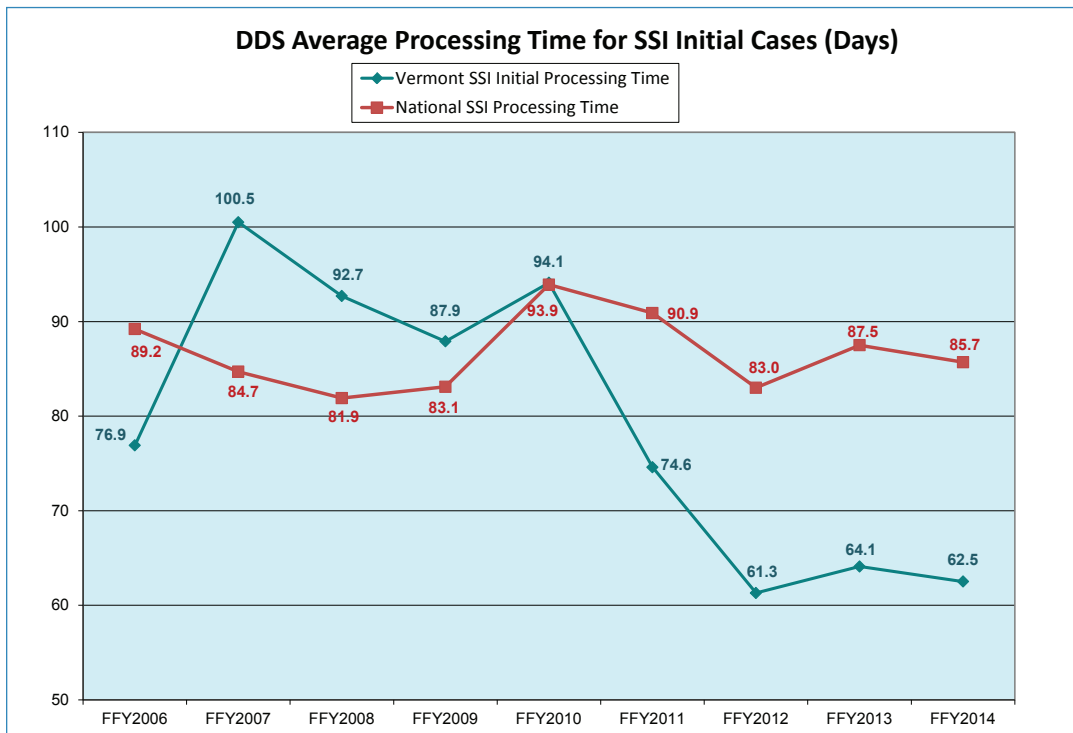
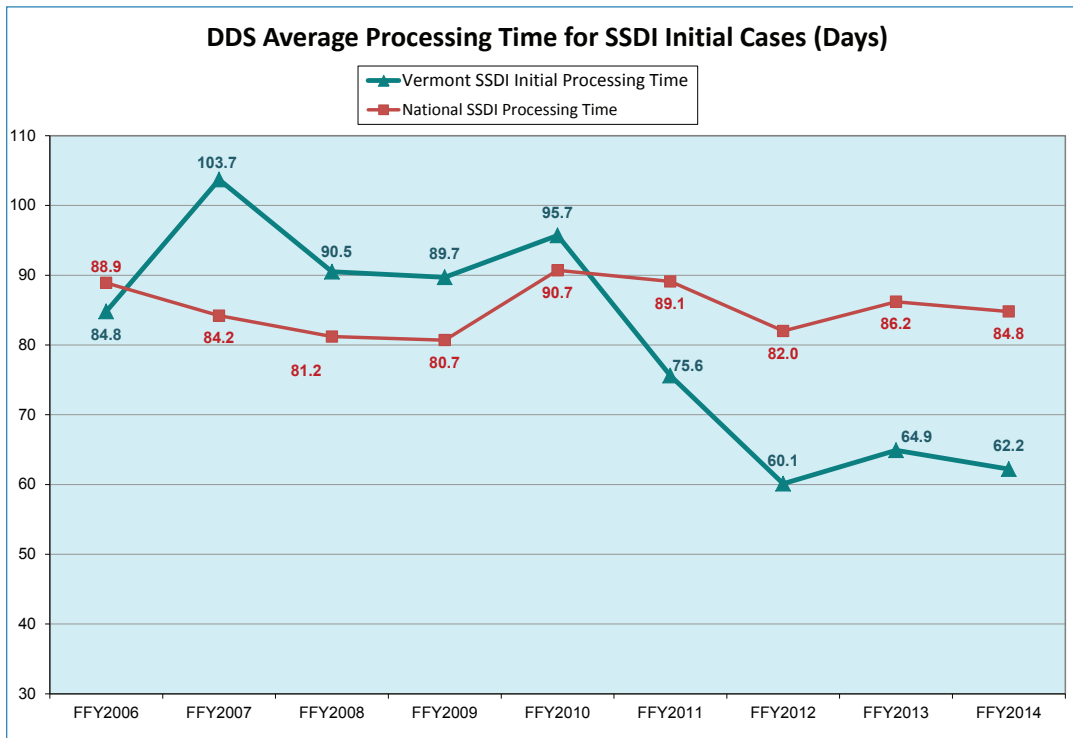
In FFY 2014, Vermont's initial case accuracy rate was the fourth highest in the country, with a rate of 97.2% or 1.4 percentage points above the national average. Maintaining high accuracy requires regular training, professional development, and mentoring of adjudicators and medical consultants. It also requires a robust quality assurance program that monitors key decision points in the case process.



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: 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 2014, DDS's case processing speed ranked in the top four in the country for SSDI and the top three for SSI, helping disabled Vermonters get the benefits to which they are entitled – faster.



DDS Processing Time Trends

Having sufficient, fully-trained staff to handle the workload is critical to improving and maintaining good processing times. In 2009-2010, SSA authorized hiring of additional DDS staff. Once this staff was fully trained in 2011, the DDS realized significant improvements in processing time. Despite losing some experienced staff in 2013 and 2014, DDS maintained good timeliness as it began training the replacement staff SSA authorized in 2014. A return to sequestration of federal funding in 2016 may negatively affect DDS replacement hiring and service levels in future years. To maintain timeliness, the DDS will continue to assess processes & outcomes and implement continuous improvements.

Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

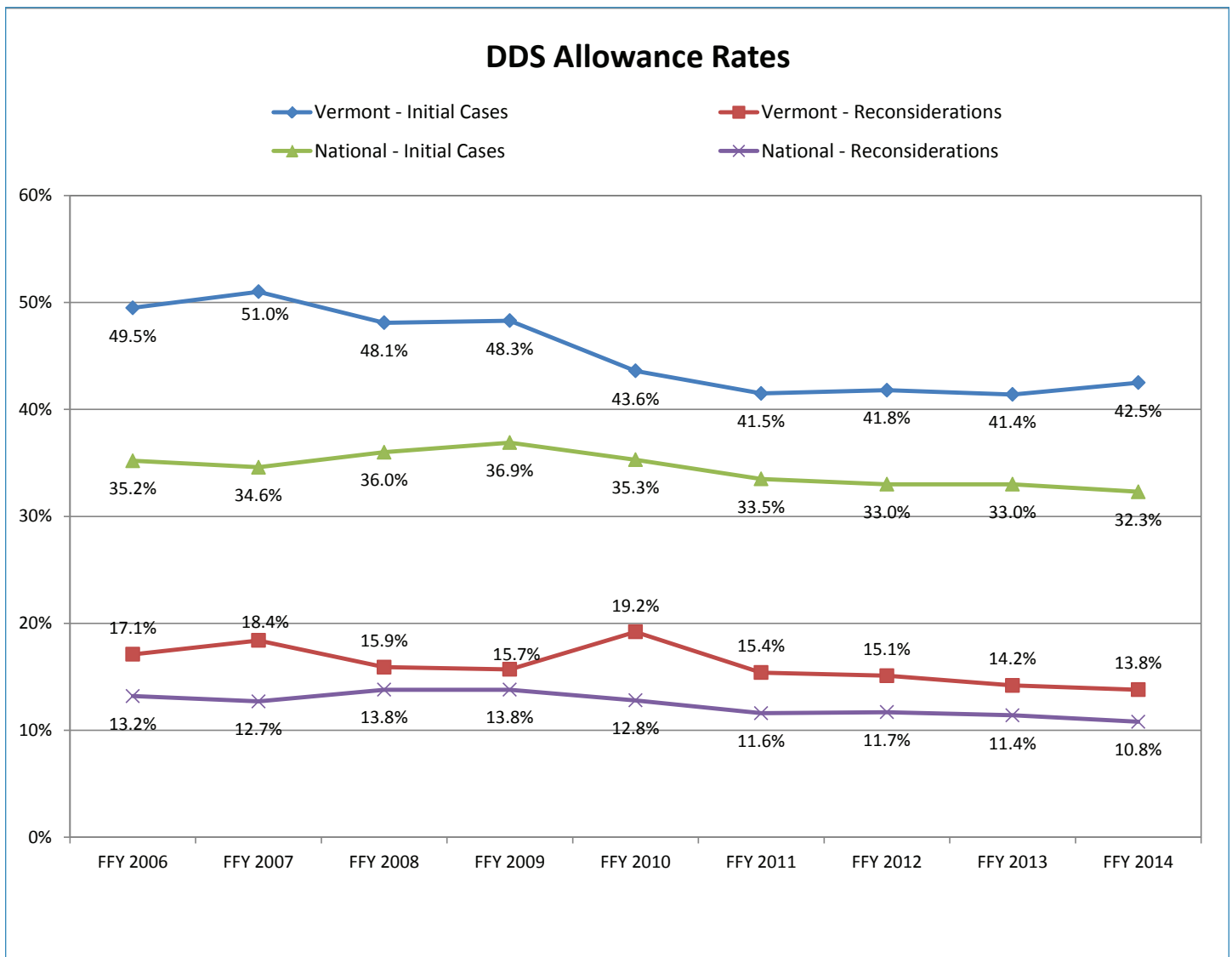
Indicator: Allowance Rates

In FFY 2014, Vermont's initial claim allowance rate (*the percentage of determinations with a finding of disabled*) was 42.5% — 10.2 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 13.8% — also above the national average of 10.8%.



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

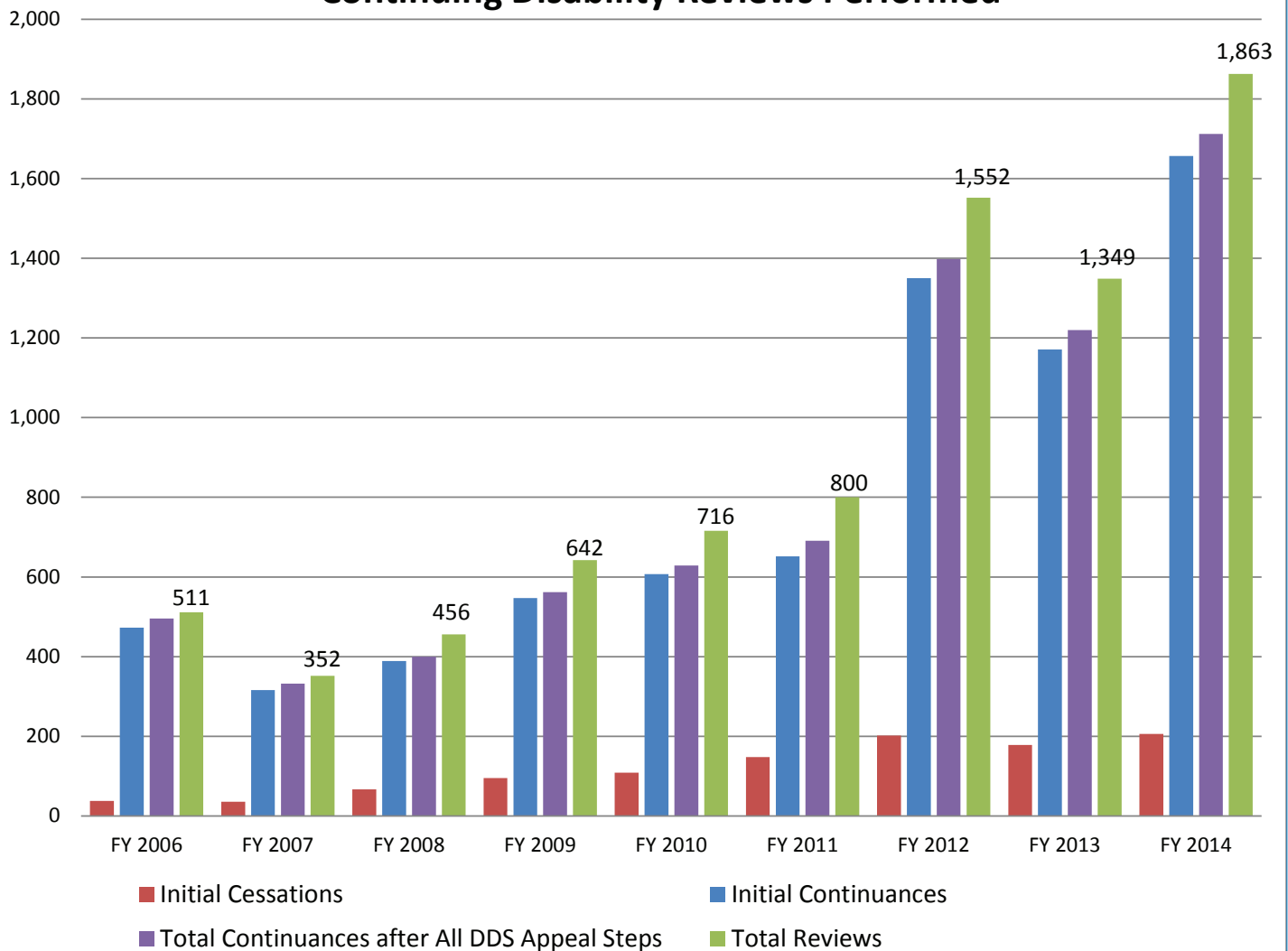
Indicator: Continuing Disability Reviews to Ensure Benefits Continue/Stop Appropriately

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.

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 development, 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: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: 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. It helps families who are homeless to move into affordable housing and provides families with up to 24 months of case management and service coordination during their transition to permanent housing.

FSH was initially introduced in Brattleboro, Burlington, and Rutland districts. Hartford and St. Johnsbury districts were added in year two.

Here are some highlights:

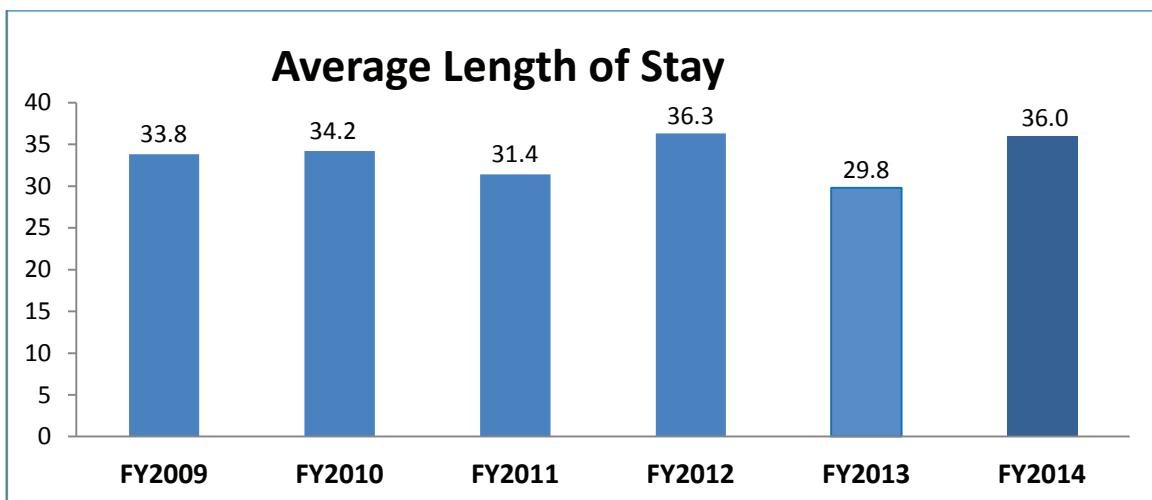
- ➔ 48 families (88 children and 60 adults) enrolled in year one and received a variety of services based on their needs.
 - 36 of the 48 families have been placed into permanent housing;
 - 12 of the 48 families have not yet moved into permanent housing but are receiving services.
- ➔ Families had been homeless for an average of 141 days prior to moving into permanent housing.
- ➔ 41 of the 48 families (85%) were participating in Reach Up.
- ➔ 17 of the 48 families (35%) had an open case with the Family Services Division.



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: ESG Emergency Homeless Shelters

Through its Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), OEO supports operations at 28 non-profit emergency homeless shelters across the state. In FY2014, 3,934 persons were sheltered for a total of 141,778 shelter bednights. This included 3,034 adults and 891 children. The average length of stay was about 36 days.



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: ESG Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing

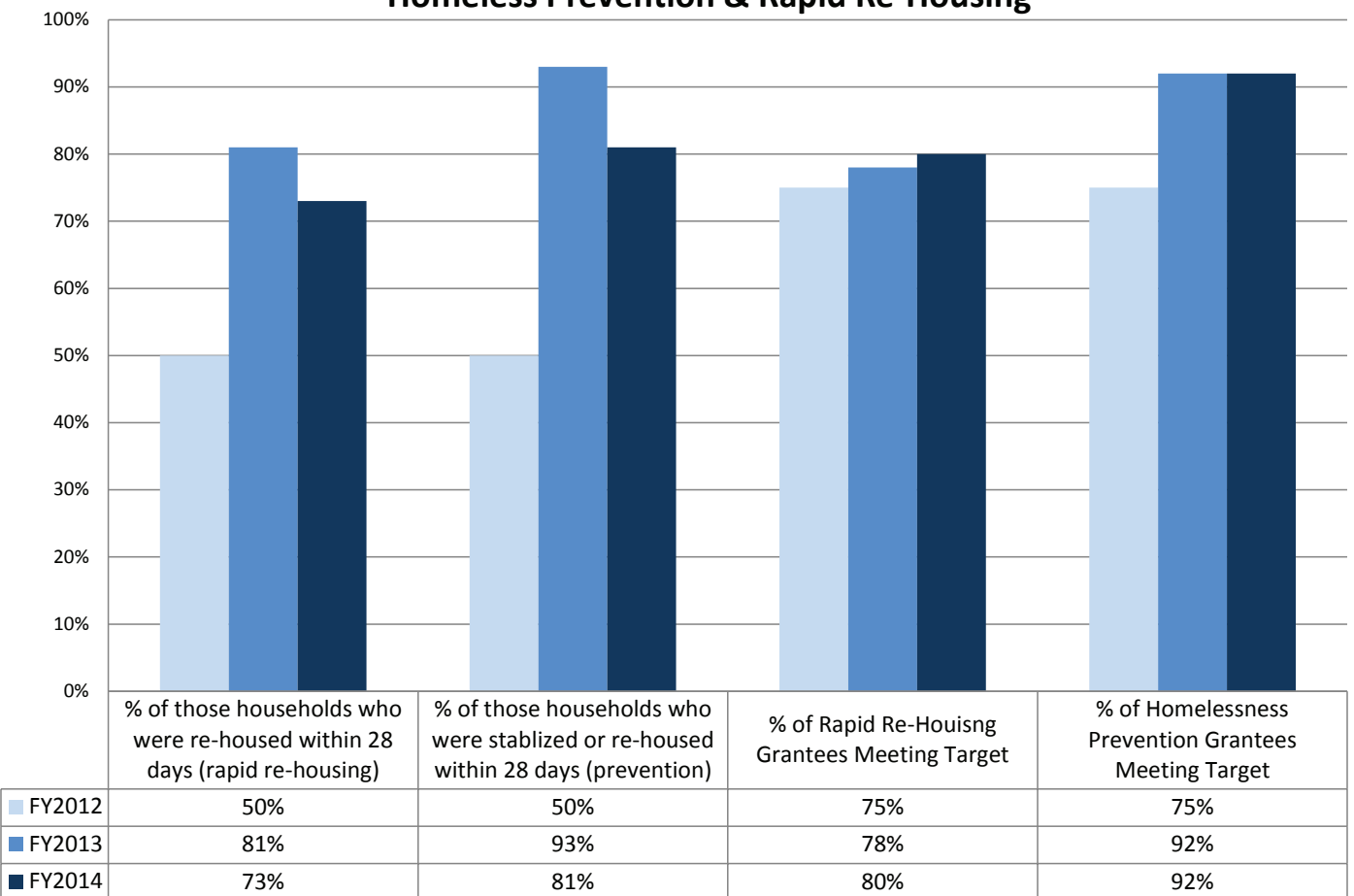
Other ESG-funded programs provide homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing assistance. Homelessness prevention targets helps to those at-risk of homelessness, while rapid re-housing serves those experiencing literal homelessness.

Services included:

- Housing search and placement;
- Housing case management;
- Landlord-tenant mediation; and
- Financial help to prevent eviction or help a family enter new housing (e.g., security deposits, utility payments, moving costs, and rental arrears).

In FY 2014, these activities provided housing stability for 1,703 persons in 771 households; 60% of these households were literally homeless.

Emergency Solutions Grant Performance: Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing



Outcome: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: Low-Income Homes Weatherized

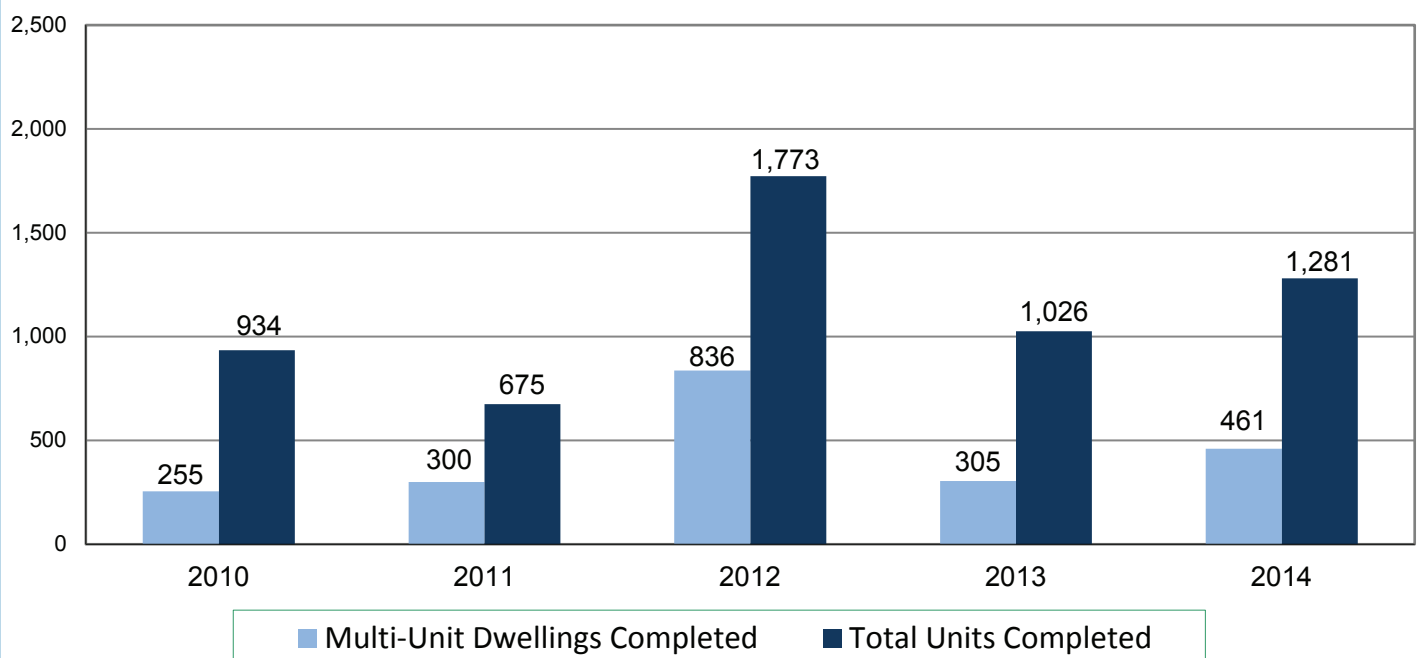
The Weatherization Assistance Program helps lower-income residents (particularly older Vermonters, people with disabilities, and families with children) to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. This saves them both fuel and electricity and leaves them with more money to spend on other necessities such as food and health care. A weatherized home saves a family, on average, about \$1,000 a year.

In FY 2014:

- ➔ 1,281 homes were weatherized;
- ➔ The average investment per home was \$8,500; and
- ➔ Priority was given to providing weatherization services to households getting fuel assistance and those with the highest fuel usage per square foot of living space.

Vermiculite insulation, a known asbestos-containing material, is found in 10% of our clients' homes. Until FY 2014, the presence of vermiculite meant an automatic deferral of services for needy clients. With the help of one-time funding, 15 homes containing vermiculite were weatherized, which resulted in average savings of \$1,500 per year for clients who struggle to heat their homes in the winter.

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: Vermonters can meet their basic needs

Indicator: Micro Business Development Program (MBDP)

The Micro Business Development Program (MBDP) is operated by each of Vermont's Community Action Agencies. It provides training and assistance to help low-income Vermonters to start and grow businesses. Business ownership is a proven pathway out of poverty, helping to increase income, create wealth, and move people off public assistance. Assistance includes one-to-one business counseling, business training, networking opportunities, business plan development, and financial management training.

In FY 2014:

- ➔ 780 low-income Vermonters participated in MBDP;
- ➔ 61 participants who were unemployed found a job;
- ➔ 58 participants who were employed increased their income;
- ➔ 57 participants started new businesses;
- ➔ 103 participants expanded their businesses;
- ➔ 80.7 (FTE) jobs were created — for the participants and others; and
- ➔ \$1.4 million in capital was accessed.

An evaluation conducted by UVM in 2008 found that more than 90% of businesses helped by MBDP are still in business after 3 years – a survival rate significantly higher than the Small Business Administration's national average.

Indicator: 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 home, a business, or a post-secondary education.

In FY 2014:

- ➔ 123 people increased their savings; and
- ➔ 36 Vermonters invested \$81,537 in their first home, post-secondary education, or a small business.

2014 STATE CSBG FACTSHEETS

From the VT FFY 2013 Community Services Block Grant Information System Survey

Vermont

CSBG NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

Vermont administers CSBG to
5 agencies in
100% of VT counties

61% of VT families served were in poverty, below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

33% of VT families served were in severe poverty, below 50% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

The CSBG Network provided services to
59,496 low-income individuals in
29,994 families in Vermont.

Vulnerable populations served included:



Nationally, 1,040 agencies receiving CSBG funding provided services to 15.7 million low-income individuals in 6.7 million families.

Of the 6.7 million families nationwide, 70% of those families were living in poverty, below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

CSBG NETWORK RESOURCES

For every \$1 of CSBG, the VT Network leveraged \$9.34 from state, local, and private sources, including the value of volunteer hours*



\$3,122,492 CSBG funds were allocated in support of the VT CSBG Network

The VT Network's non-CSBG funding totaled \$54,763,536

Including all federal sources and volunteer hours, the VT CSBG Network leveraged 17.65 per \$1 of CSBG

*Value of Volunteer Hours calculated using federal minimum wage, except in those states with a higher minimum wage.

2014 STATE CSBG FACTSHEETS



From the VT FFY 2013 Community Services Block Grant Information System Survey

CSBG PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES FOR VERMONT

Below is a subset of the VT Network’s 103,752 outcomes, including indicators of movement toward self-sufficiency and community revitalization.

Outcomes Include:

3,056	Employment or Work Supports Low-income participants in CSBG Network employment initiatives obtained supports which reduced or eliminated barriers to initial or continuous employment, acquired a job, obtained an increase in employment income, or achieved “living wage” employment and benefits.
3,778	Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization Low-income households achieved an increase in financial assets or financial skills as a result of CSBG Network assistance.
3,944	Child and Family Development Infants, children, youth, parents, and other adults participated in developmental or enrichment programs facilitated by the CSBG Network and achieved program goals.
9,460	Independent Living for Low-Income Vulnerable Populations Low-income vulnerable individuals received services from the CSBG Network and secured or maintained an independent living situation as a result.
5,442	Family Stability Low-income participants obtained supports which reduced or eliminated barriers to family stability through assistance from the CSBG Network.
75,988	Emergency Assistance Low-income individuals and families received emergency assistance from the CSBG Network.
1,113	Community Opportunities and Resources Community opportunities or resources were improved or expanded for low-income people as a result of CSBG Network projects or initiatives, or advocacy with other public and private agencies.
971	Community Empowerment Community members and low-income people mobilized to engage in activities that support and promote their own well-being and that of their community as a direct result of CSBG Network initiatives through maximum feasible participation.

Department for Children and Families

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

<http://dcf.vt.gov>