

# Homeless Assistance

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Economic Services Division  
& Office of Economic Opportunity



**DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
**Agency of Human Services**

# Agency of Human Services

Independent Living

Expanding Community Opportunities for All Ages

Affordable Housing

Targeting Financial Assistance to Support Stability

Transitional Housing

Opening Paths from Institution to Community

Emergency Shelter

Providing a Safe, Emergency response

Supportive Housing

Customizing Services for Tenants at Higher Risk

Homelessness Prevention

...and Rapid Re-housing for people who become Homeless

# Other AHS Housing Programs *(not homeless)*

- Department of Mental Health
  - Subsidy + Care
- Department of Corrections
  - Transitional and Re-entry Housing
- Department of Aging & Independent Living
  - SASH
- Department of Health – ADAP
  - Recovery Housing (e.g., Phoenix)

# Housing Opportunity Grant Program

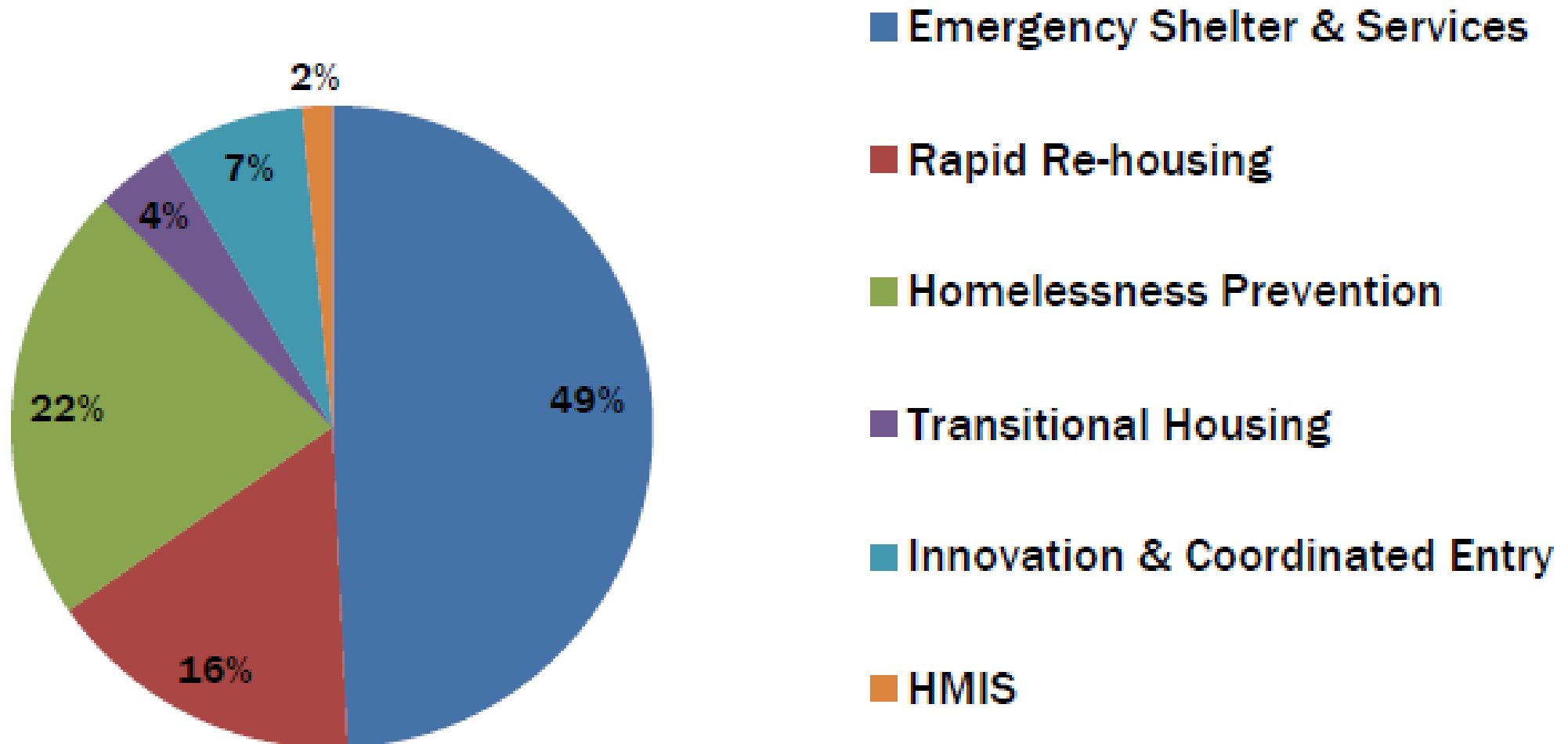
Funding for community organizations to support housing crisis interventions:

- Blends ~\$7 million in state and federal funding
  - Emergency Shelter: Year-round & warming; day shelters; domestic violence shelters; apartment stays for families
  - Transitional housing for youth & veterans
  - Homelessness prevention
  - Rapid re-housing programs
  - Coordinated Entry
- OEO partners with over 40 programs



**Last year 3,872 people  
were sheltered:  
2,770 adults &  
1,102 children (under 18 years)**

# Housing Opportunity Grant Program SFY 2019 Grants



# Emergency Shelter



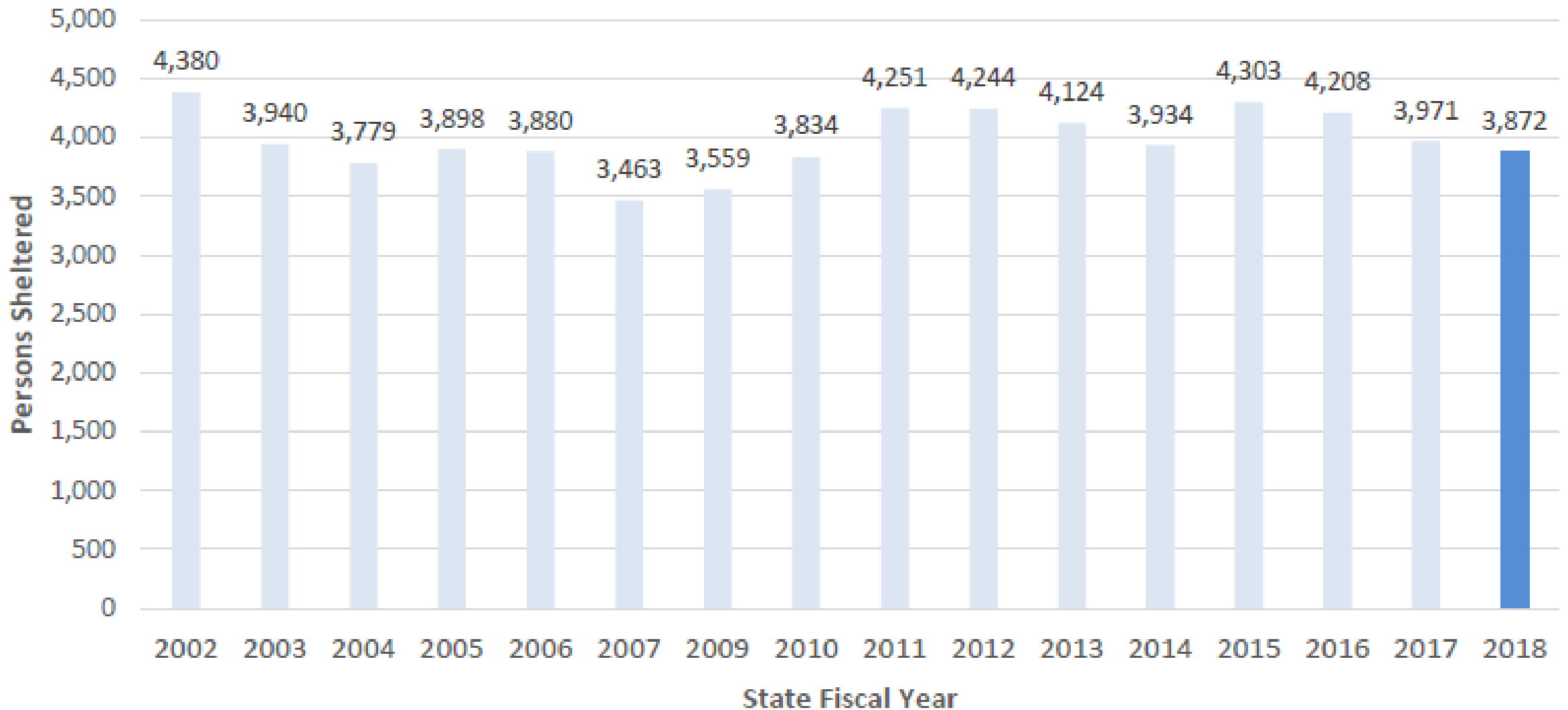
By design, intended to be temporary, and to help guests move into permanent housing as quickly as possible

Variety of forms: congregate facility, motels, seasonal “warming” shelter, scattered site apartments (\*best for families\*)

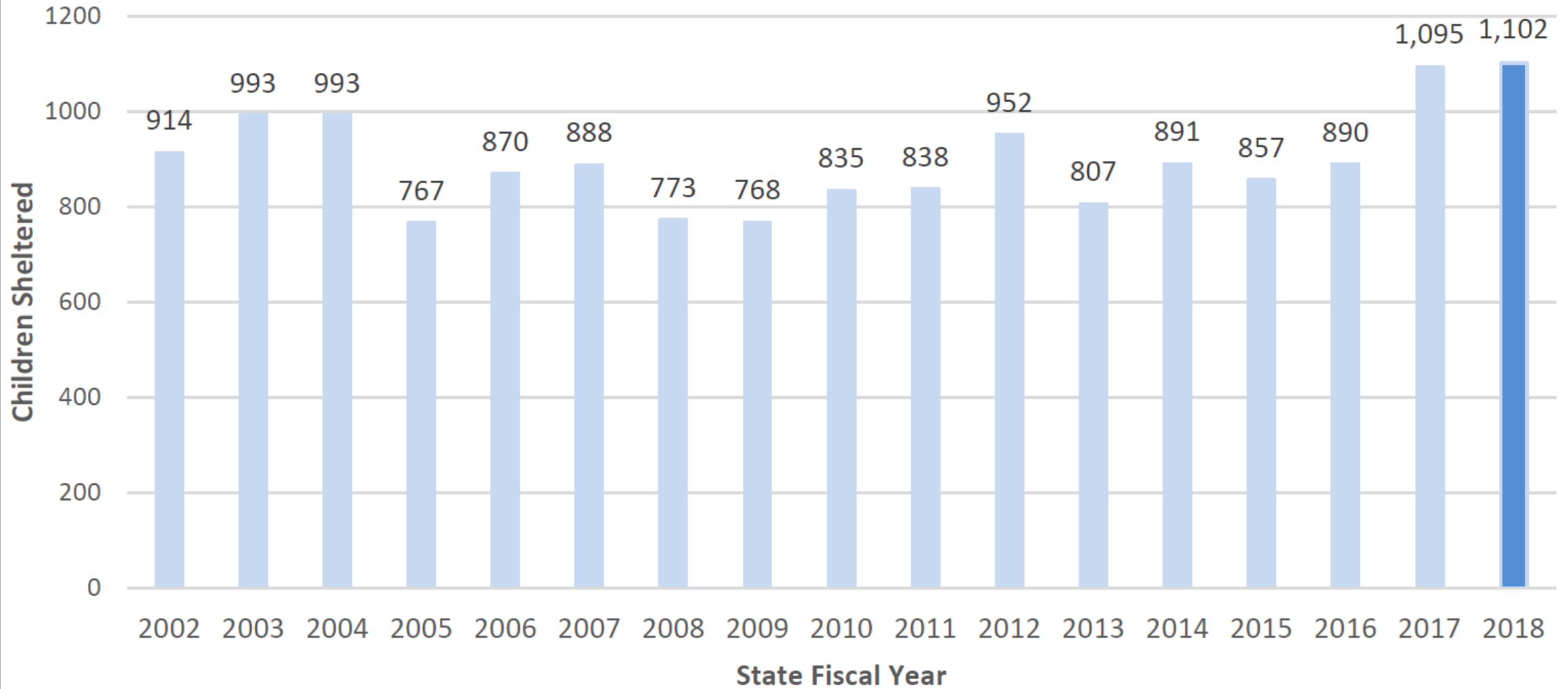
Unaccompanied Youth: Basic Center, Transitional Living Program

Domestic/Sexual Violence Shelters, with some motel overflow, some “transitional”

# Persons in Vermont's Publicly Funded Homeless Shelters

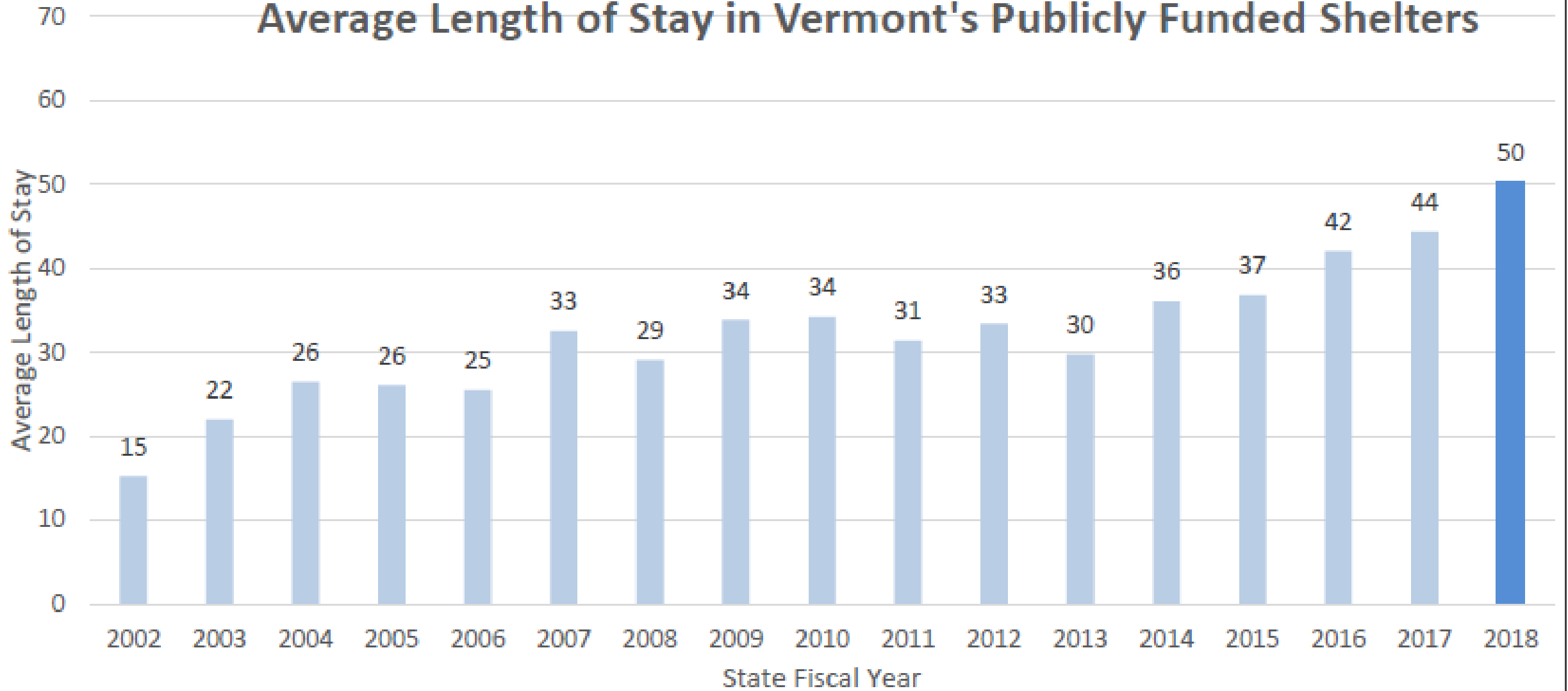


# Children in Vermont's Publicly Funded Homeless Shelters





## Average Length of Stay in Vermont's Publicly Funded Shelters



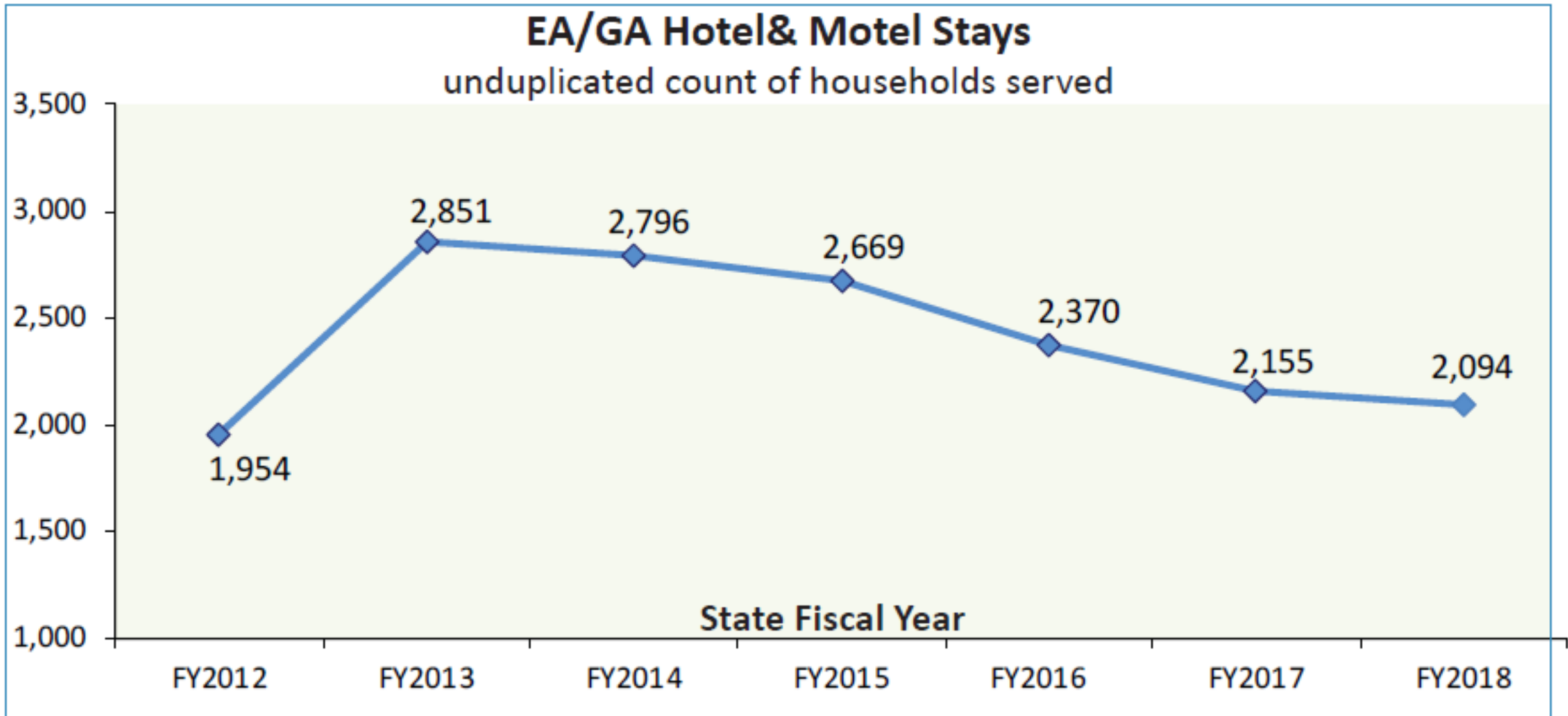
# General/Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)

Provides emergency housing in a hotel/motel when no alternative shelter is available.

Eligibility/access through Economic Services District (ESD) Office or 2-1-1 (After hours)

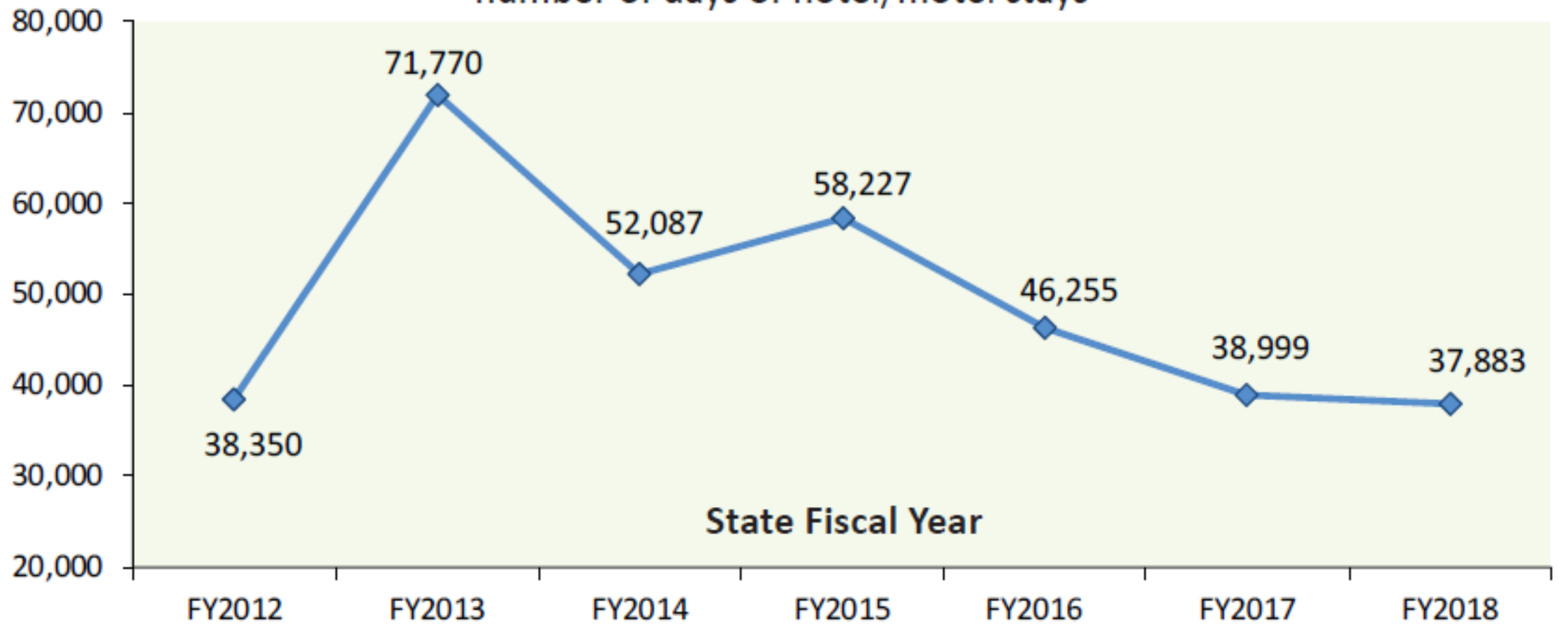
- Catastrophic
- Vulnerable
- Adverse Weather Conditions

# General/Emergency Assistance



## EA/GA Hotel & Motel Stays

number of days of hotel/motel stays



# General/Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)

## Year-to-Date Statewide GA Emergency Housing Data Comparison over Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Unduplicated Households	# of Nights
FY19 (July – November)	1100	19,794
FY18 (July - November)	1020	14,630
FY17 (July – November)	890	13,420

- the number of July – November unduplicated households is up about 8% from FY18 and up 24% from FY17
- the number of July – November nights is up 35% from FY18 and up 47% from FY17

# General/Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)

Adverse Weather Conditions Analysis for SFY14-SFY18					
	SFY14	SFY15	SFY16	SFY17	SFY18
# of AWC Nights	154	133	93	108	135
Granted Applications	6835	12,279	3721	5565	7009
# of Adults	7338	13,152	3961	6241	7990
# of Children	1558	3370	1334	1409	2160
Cost	\$983,443	\$1,833,587	\$344,441	\$671,567	\$818,896

# GA Community Investments

## **Decrease motel reliance by increasing community capacity**

- 13 projects in 9 AHS Districts

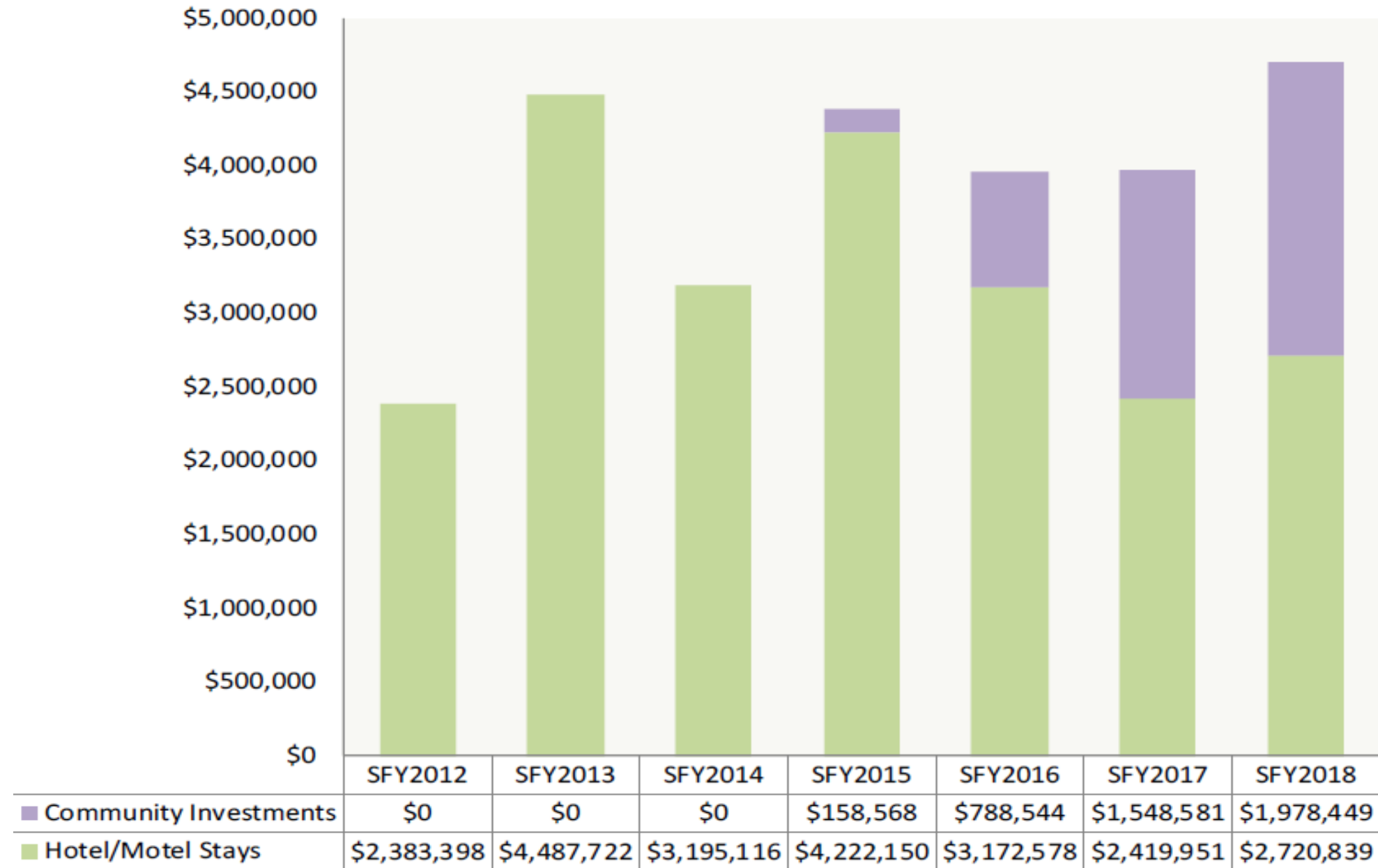
## **Improve service delivery**

- Services help connect people to housing help and address housing barriers

## **Range of projects, including:**

- Seasonal warming shelters
- Expansion of shelter overflow and services at domestic violence shelters

## GA Housing Expenditures & Investments





# Vermont Rental Subsidy

Launched in 2011, the Vermont Rental Subsidy (VRS) Program is a Rapid Rehousing initiative administered by ESD. VRS provides rental assistance to Vermont households whose monthly income would otherwise be insufficient to afford the cost of renting in their communities.

# Vermont Rental Subsidy

## Highlights:

- Eligible participants must meet the AHS definition of homelessness
- Participants are paired with a Housing Support Worker
- Participants contribute 30% of gross income towards rent
- Subsidy for up to 12 months, providing a transition to longer term stability
- Bridge to long-term subsidy or increased income

# Vermont Rental Subsidy

Snapshot of current participants:

- 45 active
- 24 tentatively granted participants\*
- 18 waitlisted
- 88% of active participants are Reach Up participants

\*FY19 has seen increased challenges around participants identifying affordable, appropriate housing and leasing up in a timely manner

# Homelessness Prevention

Prevent homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them stabilize and preserve existing housing, or identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

“But for this assistance” ...  
targeted  
prevention and  
diversion

Limited public  
funding but  
range of help:  
back rent,  
moving help,  
security deposit,  
rental assistance

Financial  
Coaching and  
Renter 101  
classes

Faith groups  
and Case  
Conferencing is  
helpful

AHS  
Homelessness  
Prevention  
Activities



DMH – CRT  
Housing Support  
Fund & Housing  
Subsidy + Care



DCF – Family  
Services  
Youth Developm't  
Program for youth  
exiting foster care  
DOC –



DAIL – Support &  
Services at Home  
(SASH)



Transitional  
Housing &  
Supportive Service  
Program



VDH –ADAP  
Community-based recovery housing  
to prevent homelessness for people  
exiting treatment

# Housing Opportunity Grant Program Homelessness Prevention - 2018

Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services are provided to households at-risk or experiencing homelessness:

**2018:** 71% at-risk (prevention) and 29% homeless (rapid re-housing)

**2017:** 55% at-risk (prevention) and 45% homeless (rapid re-housing)

Households in HOP-funded Homelessness Prevention Programs:

**2018:** 1,555 Households

**2017:** 1,364 Households

**2016:** 1,081 Households

# Housing Opportunity Grant Program Homelessness Prevention - 2018

1,555 HH participated in Homelessness Prevention Activities at 9 community-based agencies

- Eligibility = At-Risk of Homelessness

722 HH received financial/rental assistance

- Eligibility = At-Risk of Homelessness and extremely to very low income (<30% AMI or 30-50% AMI)

Type of HOP Assistance	Total Expended
Security Deposits	\$ 152,062
Rental Assistance (includes arrears)	\$ 367,933
Utilities	\$ 9,374
Moving Costs	\$ 3,267
<b>TOTAL (\$\$)</b>	<b>\$ 532,636</b>

# Family Supportive Housing

Supportive housing for families with complex needs who have experienced homelessness

7 community providers (7 districts)  
~155 families currently

- Winston Prouty Center in Brattleboro
- COTS & Howard Center in Burlington
- Homeless Prevention Center in Rutland
- Upper Valley Haven in Hartford
- NEKCA in St. Johnsbury
- Family Center of Washington County in Barre
- Sunrise Family Resource Center in Bennington



# Family Supportive Housing

## Blend of general fund and Medicaid

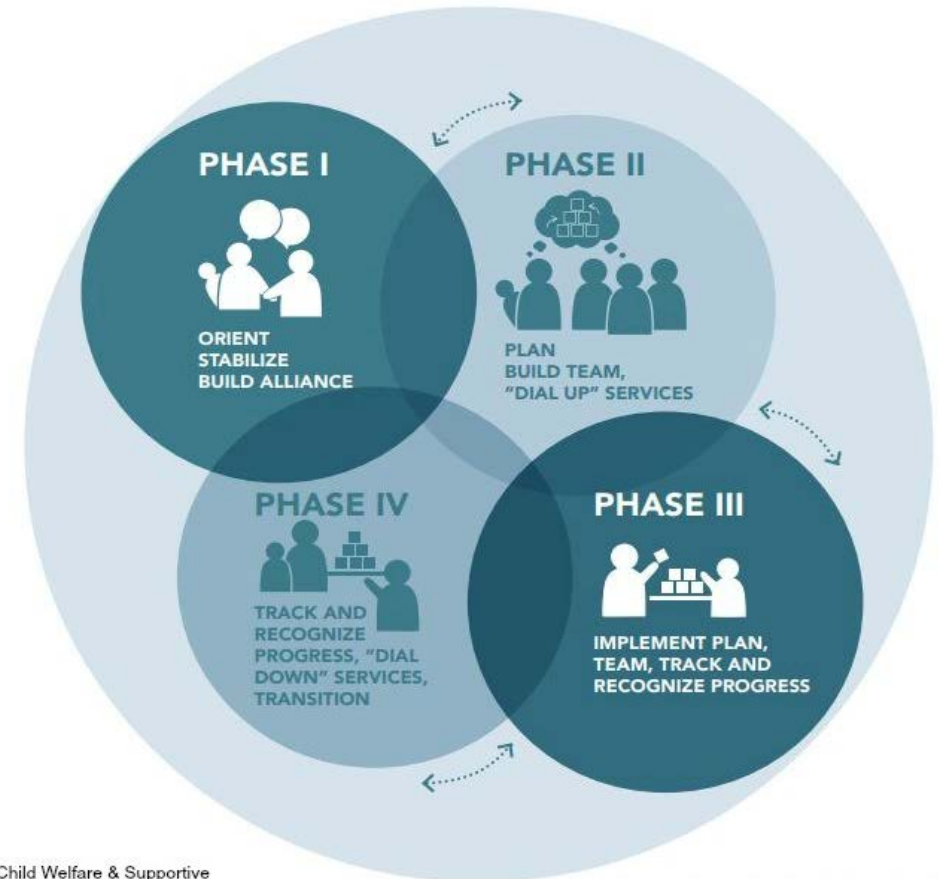
- Leveraged Medicaid funding in 2016 to expand to two additional sites

## Program goals

- Reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness through supports for families as they transition to and sustain permanent housing
- Focus on the root causes of a family's homelessness
- Promote resiliency for parents and their children

# Program Components

- Permanent housing (MOU with housing providers)
- Intensive home-based case management and service coordination – caseloads of 12 to 15 families
- Financial empowerment support (banking, spending, debt/credit, savings)
- Strengthening Families Framework
- Holistic, two-generation approach using non-judgmental, positive, and trauma-informed communication and engagement

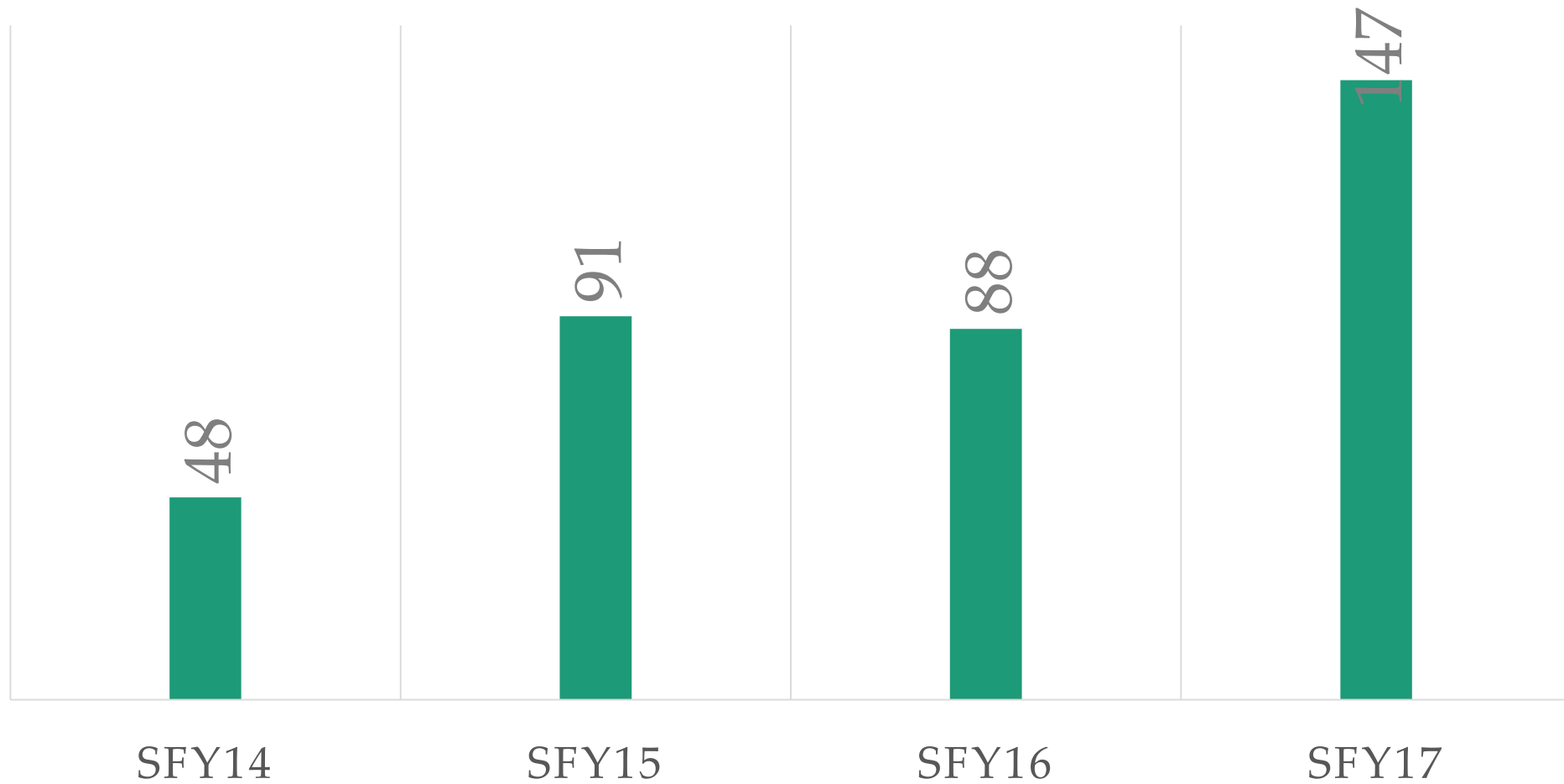


# FSH Prioritization

- Families with multiple episodes of homelessness
- Families that are open for services (or have active case) with the Family Services Division of DCF.
- Families with at least one child under 6



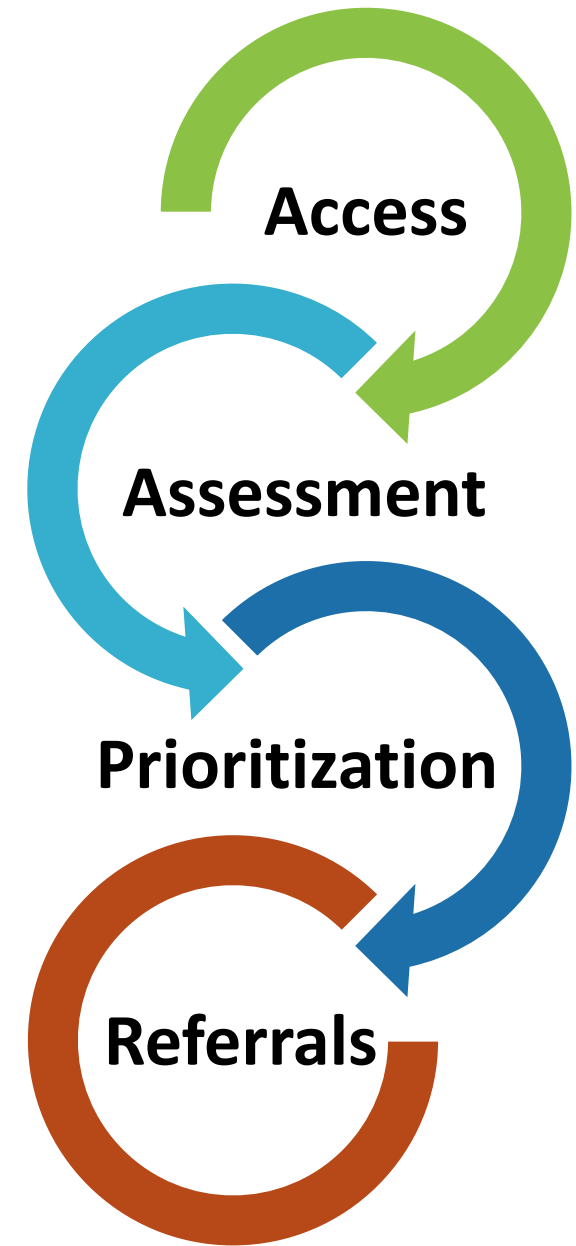
# FSH Families Enrolled



# What is Coordinated Entry?

## Overarching Goals

- Reorient system to focus on those being served
- Minimize time and frustration accessing help
- Maximize use of system resources
- Identify service gaps for planning



# Coordinated Entry Keys

## Uniform Tools

- VCEH Housing Crisis Referral Tool
- Housing Assessment Tool
- Client Release of Information
- Confidentiality Agreement for Partner Staff
- VCEH Local Partnership Agreement
- HMIS Data Sharing Agreement

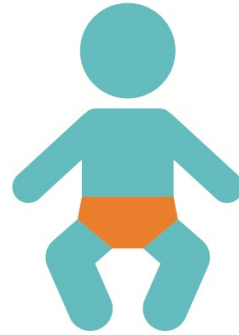
# Coordinated Entry Keys

## Screening and Referral Protocols

- Victims fleeing Domestic/Sexual Violence
- Veterans
- Unaccompanied minors and youth
- Chronic Homelessness

# US interagency policy statement on early childhood homelessness.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/ecehomelessnesspolicystatement.pdf>



A person in the U.S. is most likely to experience homelessness in the **first year of life**.<sup>1</sup>

A person is next most likely to experience homelessness at ages 1–5.<sup>1</sup>

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**Almost half of children** in shelter are under age 6.<sup>2</sup>

More than 150,000 very young children stay in shelters each year, and even more are sharing housing with others due to economic hardship.<sup>2</sup>



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Homelessness during pregnancy and in the early years is **harmful to children's development**.<sup>3</sup>

Pregnant women experiencing homelessness are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care<sup>4</sup> and their children are at increased risk for low birth weight.<sup>5</sup>





**ADOPT** the “Family Connection” framework developed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Support four key components of an effective homeless Continuum of Care.

1) Develop a coordinated entry system to assess needs and connect families to targeted prevention and temporary shelter as needed in each community.

2) Ensure interventions and assistance are tailored to the needs of families.

- Provide assistance to rapidly re-house homeless families.
- Increase access to affordable housing and help communities target resources.
- Direct service-intensive housing interventions to the highest need households.

3) Connect families to benefits, employment, and community-based services needed to sustain housing. Promote stability and positive education outcomes for children and youth by ensuring coordination between local homeless Continuum of Care, homeless education liaisons in schools, runaway and homeless youth programs, and organizations providing early education and intervention, such as Head Start.

4) Develop and build upon evidence-based practices for serving homeless families and families at risk for homelessness.

<https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/family-connection>

# Looking to the Future

- Fully implement coordinated entry and HMIS to streamline access and improve data
- Strengthen support services needed to find and keep housing
- Continue to expand community capacity through GA investments (decrease reliance on motels)
- Improve access to affordable housing