



Reach Up – Vermont's TANF Program

February, 2021

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Mission:

Reach Up joins families on their journey to overcome obstacles, explore opportunities, improve their finances and reach their goals.

Vision:

*Families will be empowered,
connected and thriving.*

Reach Up Programs

∞ Reach Up

Vermont's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
Work Requirement

∞ Reach First

Short-term (less than 4 months)
Not likely to need Reach Up after 4 months – most go back to employment

∞ Reach Ahead

Transitional Benefits – transitions family off Reach Up program when participant becomes employed
Support services – childcare subsidy, help maintaining job, \$ for work supplies, car repairs, etc.

∞ Post-Secondary Education Program

Financial assistance
Participant pursues 2 or 4 year degree

∞ Child-Only Reach Up

Only the children receive assistance
No participation requirements for adults – adults are either non-parent caregivers or receiving SSI

Reach Up Partnerships



- Case Management
- Transportation
- Workforce Development
- Housing
- Post Secondary Education
- Early Childhood Education
- Financial Empowerment – 2 Community Action agencies

Reach Up Response to COVID-19

Rules Waived

- **Eligibility** - reviews extended, self-declaration of certain verification requirements were allowed, temporary absence eligibility extended, 60-month application requirements waived, and all pregnancies considered high-risk.
- **Case management services** - more than one conciliation per year is allowed, conciliation allowed for those with 60 countable months, out-of-school youth requirements waived, in-person meeting requirements waived, all participants deferred from the work requirement

Funding

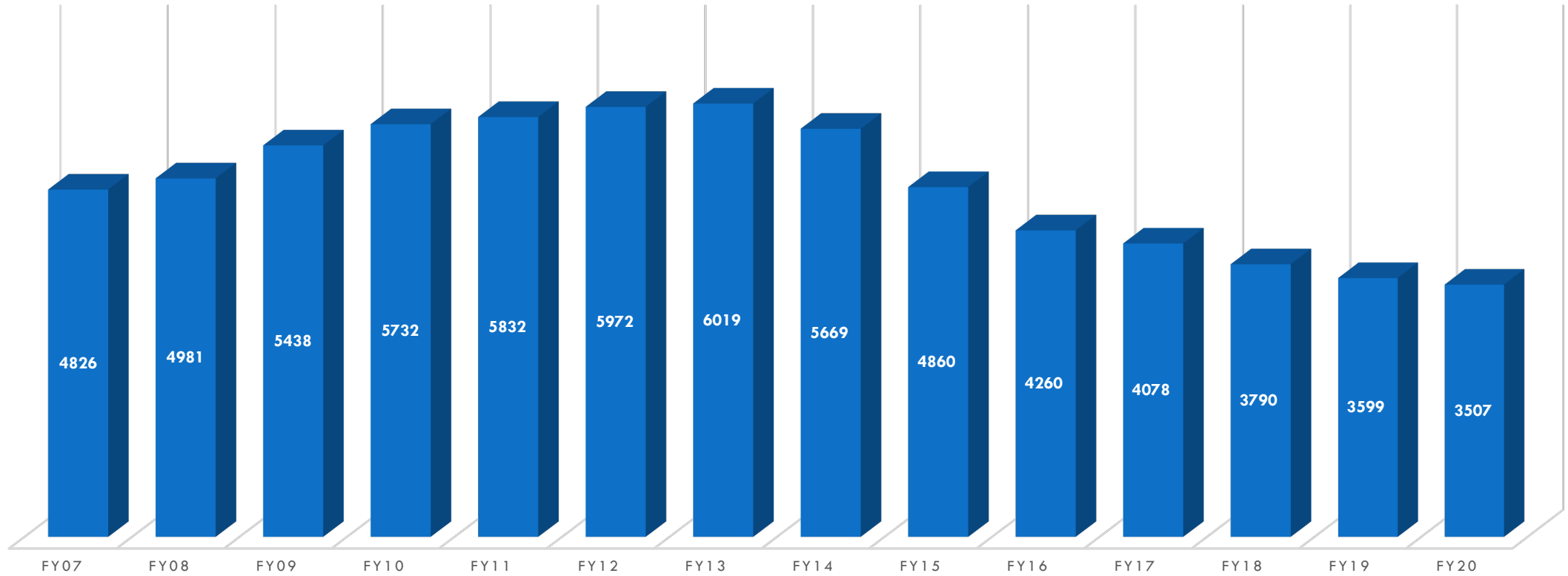
- November - \$1.3 million in CRF one-time \$432 checks to families receiving Reach Up to cover increased costs and/or decreased income due to COVID-19.
- Early December - 1,620 Reach Up households Also Received the \$286 3SVT CRF Payment
- Late December -\$1.3 million CRF funds allocated for \$391 checks to cover increased cost of food.

2020 Highlights

- Reach Up Case Managers Take On Housing Case Management
- Trauma Informed Care Toolkit
- Goal-Oriented Coaching Approach
- Financial Empowerment Program
- Mental Health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership® Launch

Historic Average Monthly Caseloads

HISTORIC AVERAGE MONTHLY CASELOADS (REACH FIRST, REACH UP AND PSE HOUSEHOLDS)



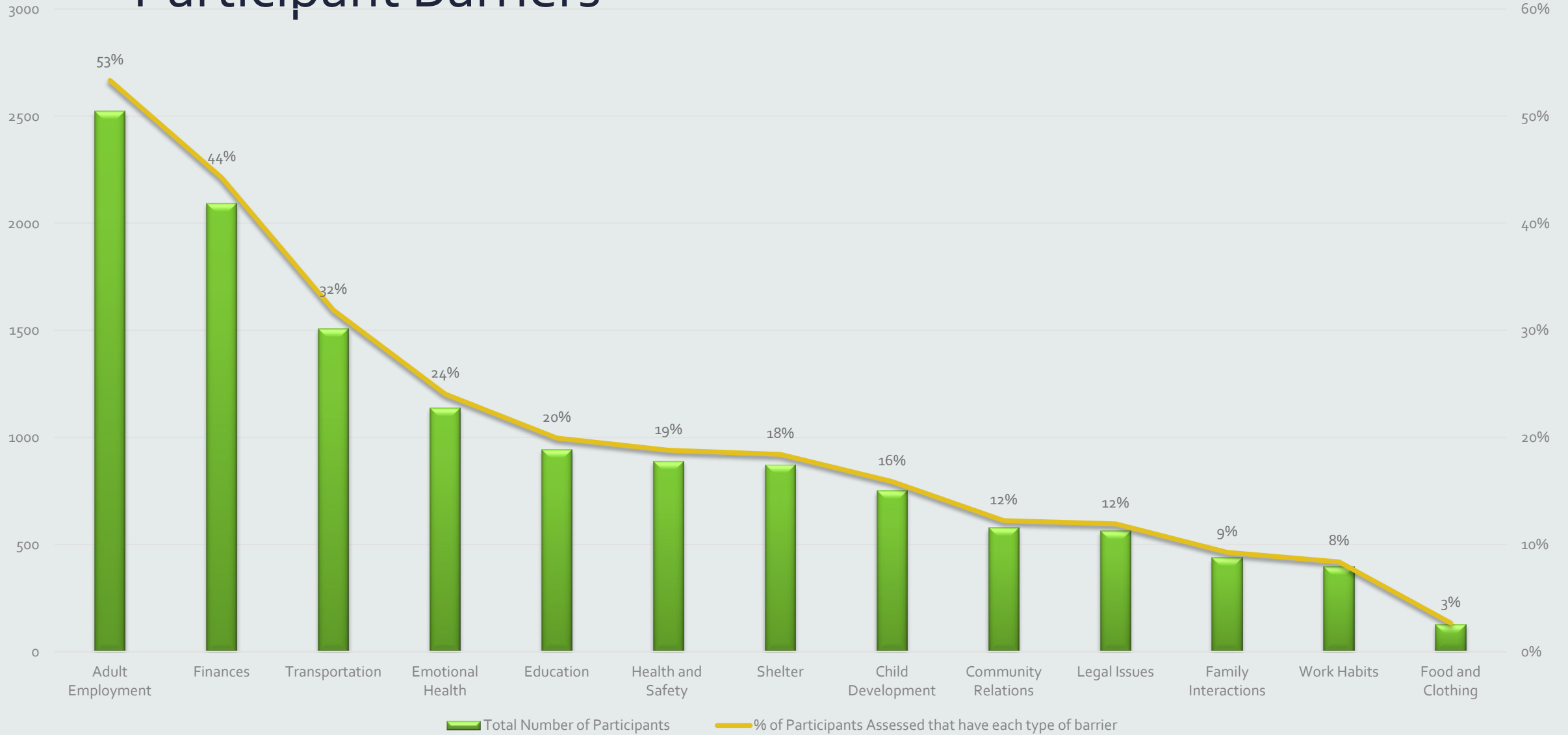
Reach Up Grant for Family of Three

	2008	2020
Basic Needs Standard (Family of 3)	891 (2004 Basic Needs Standard)	1011 (2008 Basic Needs Standard)
Housing Allowance (Standard from 2001 – Outside Chittenden Cty)	400	400
Special Needs Housing Allowance (if housing costs exceed standard)	90	90
Ratable Reduction	X 49.6%	X 49.6%
Reach Up Grant Amount	\$685	\$744
HUD Fair Market Rent outside Chittenden County (family's actual housing costs, for rent alone)	\$1013	\$1628 2 bedroom

Approximately 27% of Reach Up families live in public or subsidized housing

Participant Barriers

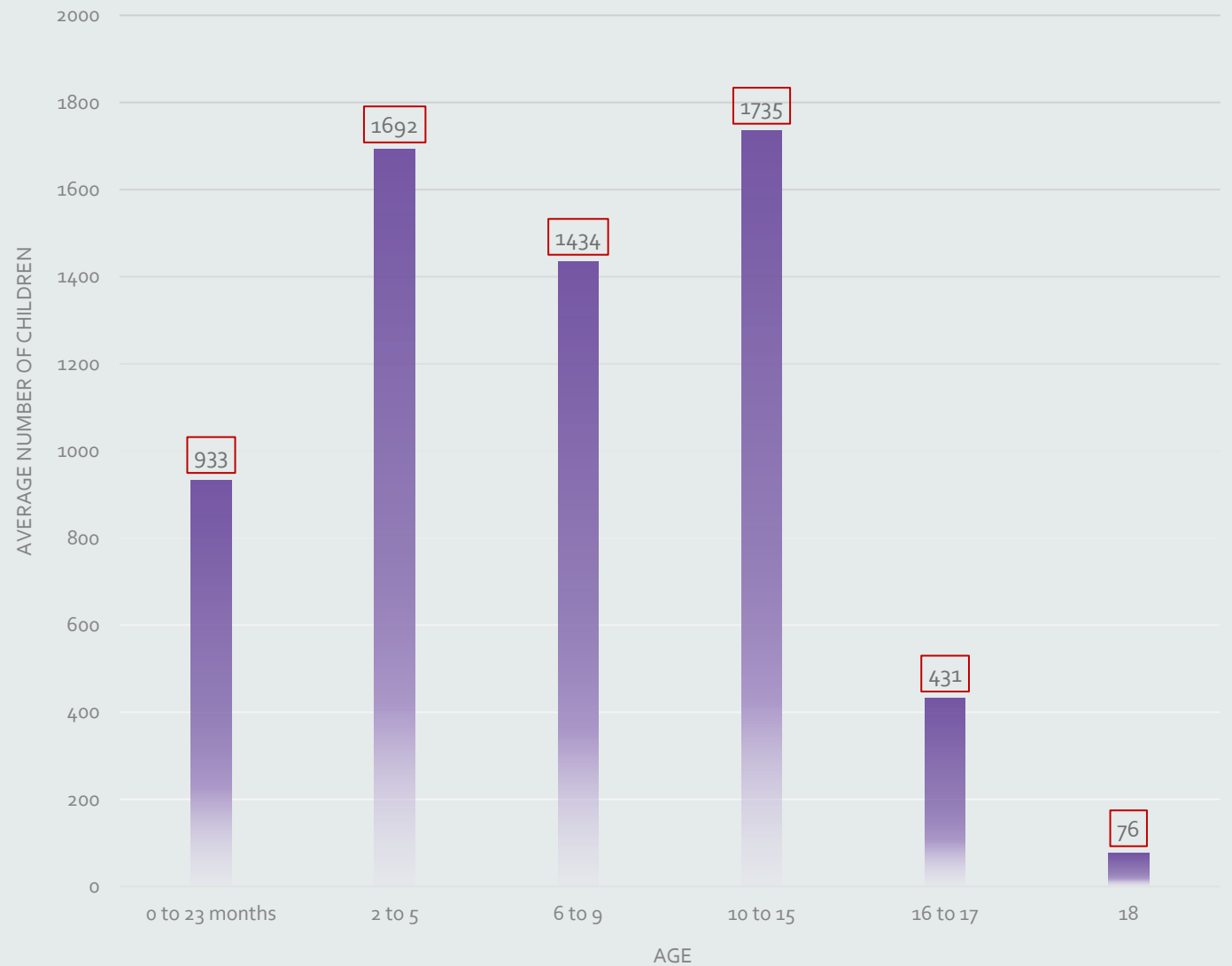
Reach Up Participants with Barriers



Children in Reach Up

- 6302 – average monthly number of children receiving RU in FFY '20
- Child well-being strongly correlated with economic mobility
- Increased income in households with young children correlated to better outcomes in many areas (Harvard Center on the Developing Child)

AGES OF CHILDREN IN REACH UP FAMILIES





Key Hallmarks of Science-Informed Approaches

Create and Support Responsive Relationships

Strengthen Core Life Skills

Reduce Sources of Stress



A Structured Science-Informed Approach to Goal Achievement:

Goal, Plan, Do, Review and Revise

- Goal:** Set a goal – something you want to accomplish
- Plan:** Develop a plan for how to get from here to there
- Do:** Do the plan – put it into action
- Review:** Review and assess progress
- Revise:** Take the next action steps, make a new plan, or set a new goal



Goal-Oriented Approach

Research has found that people are more likely to stick with a task and make progress toward their long-term goals when they:

- Pursue what interests them
- Create routines that involve the deliberate practice of specific skills
- Find meaning and purpose in what they're doing
- Have hope that the activity will improve their circumstances

Source: Angela Duckworth, "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance." New York, NY: Scribner, May 2016.

From "Goal Practice Activities™"

by Michelle Derr, Jonathan McCay, and Rebecca Dunn

Mathematica Policy Research November 2018

Support Services

Help families achieve their goals in working towards employment



Help families overcome barriers to employment



Cut costs for participating in program



Create slack by freeing up money to pay for other essential costs





Outcomes

Employment

- % of entire caseload receiving RA (employed) stayed consistent at 12% for last couple of years
- Most in retail, services, health care fields
- Percentage of participants making at least \$12 per hour increased from 25% in 2017 to **44%** in 2018

Thank You!