

Legal Services for Vermont's Small Businesses

Presentation to Vermont General
Assembly, House Committee on
Commerce and Economic
Development

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Vermont Small Business
Law Center

VERMONT LAW & GRADUATE SCHOOL





Who are we, what do we do?

- Access to legal services for small business:
- Individual educational consults
- Paid attorney referrals for qualifying businesses (10 hours paid, we find the attorney)
- Public educational events



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Vermont Bar Association Small Business Legal Assistance Program

- Low bono panel of firms eager to work with small business and organization clients
- Reduced rate for up to ten hours of legal work (no cost to the business/organization)
- Coordinated via VBA's legal access coordinator
- Critical for successful delivery of legal services to Vermont's small businesses



Seventeen Community Partners in 2024

Vermont Small Business Development Center
Vermont Bar Association, and law firms
U.S. Small Business Administration

Community and Business Development Partners:	Incubator and Accelerator Programs Across the State:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○Capstone Agencies○Vermont Professionals of Color Network○Center for Women & Enterprise○Vermont Arts Council○Center on Rural Innovation○Micro Business Development Program○Regional Development Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○The Cultivator (Randolph)○Black River Innovation Campus Actuator (Springfield)○Space on Main (Bradford)○DeltaClime VT○Generator Makerspace (Burlington)○Hub Co-Works (Rutland)



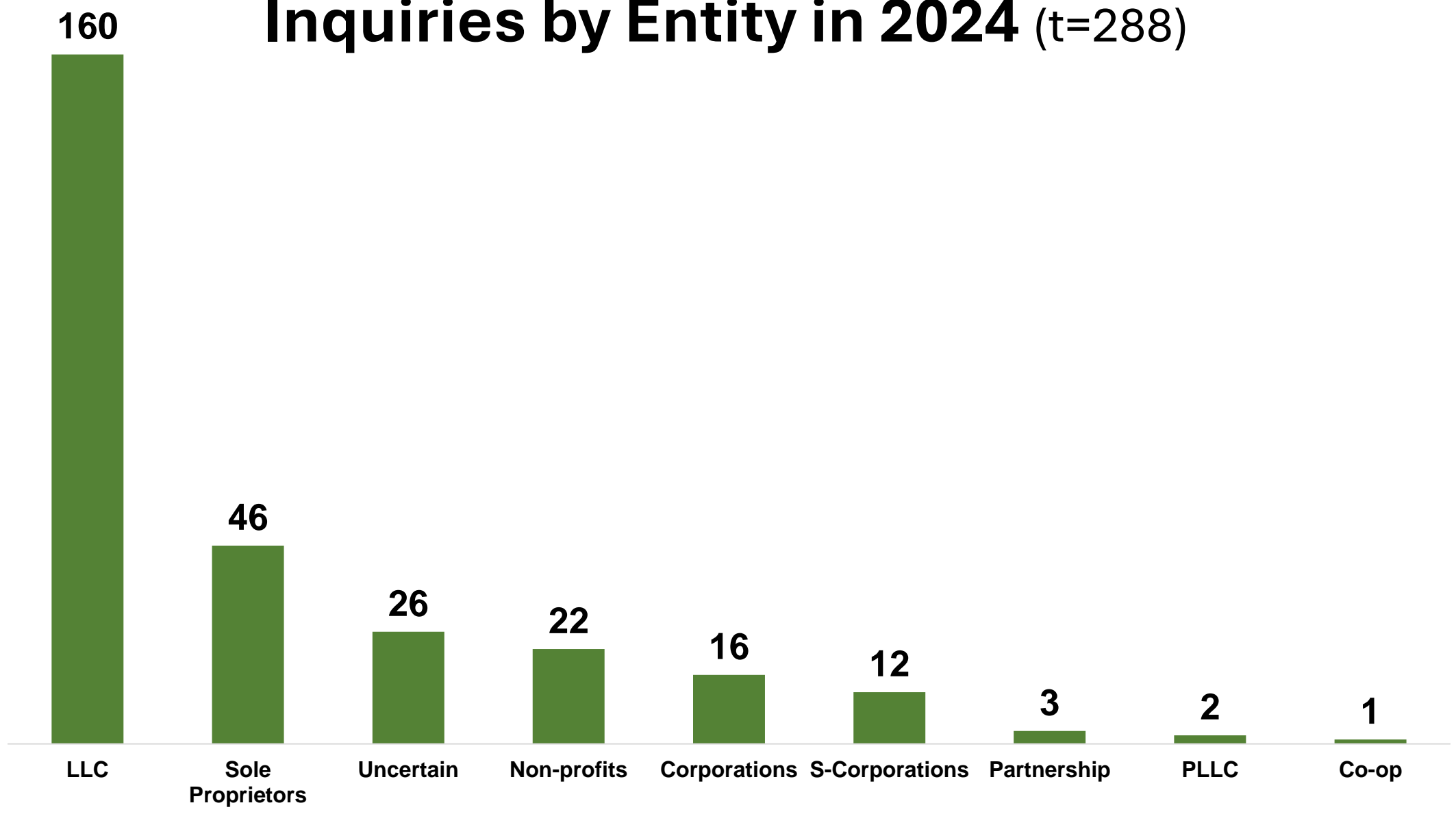
Numbers Served (2024)

- 288 – intakes from businesses requesting legal education*
- 149 – educational consultations with small businesses
- 168 – businesses placed or in process of being placed with attorney
- 80+ – educational presentations to groups of business owners, and flood clinics
- 39 – businesses signed up for an educational consult through April 15, 2025

* Gaps between inquiry and uptake, or desire to go right to working with a lawyer



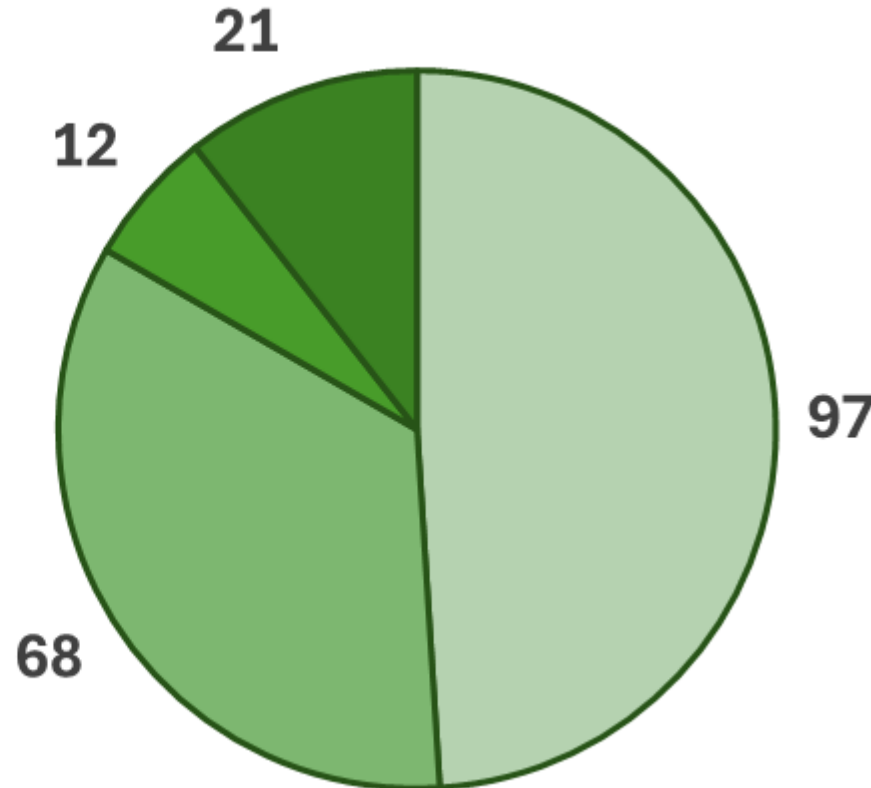
Inquiries by Entity in 2024 (t=288)





Businesses With Employees: How Many Employees?

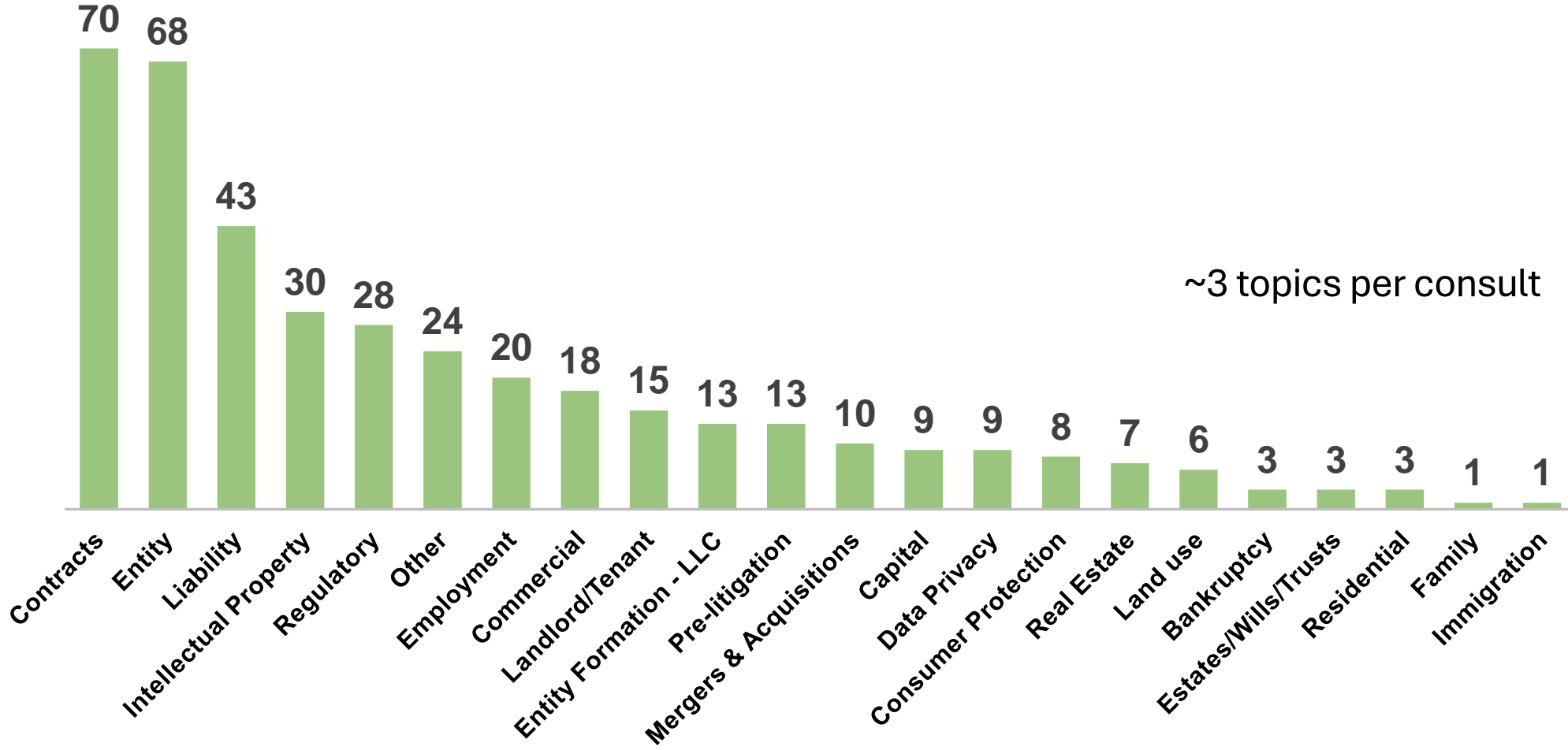
How Many Businesses have How Many Employees?



51% of the Small Businesses report having at least one employee.



Frequency of Topics Discussed in Educational Consults in 2024 (n=402)



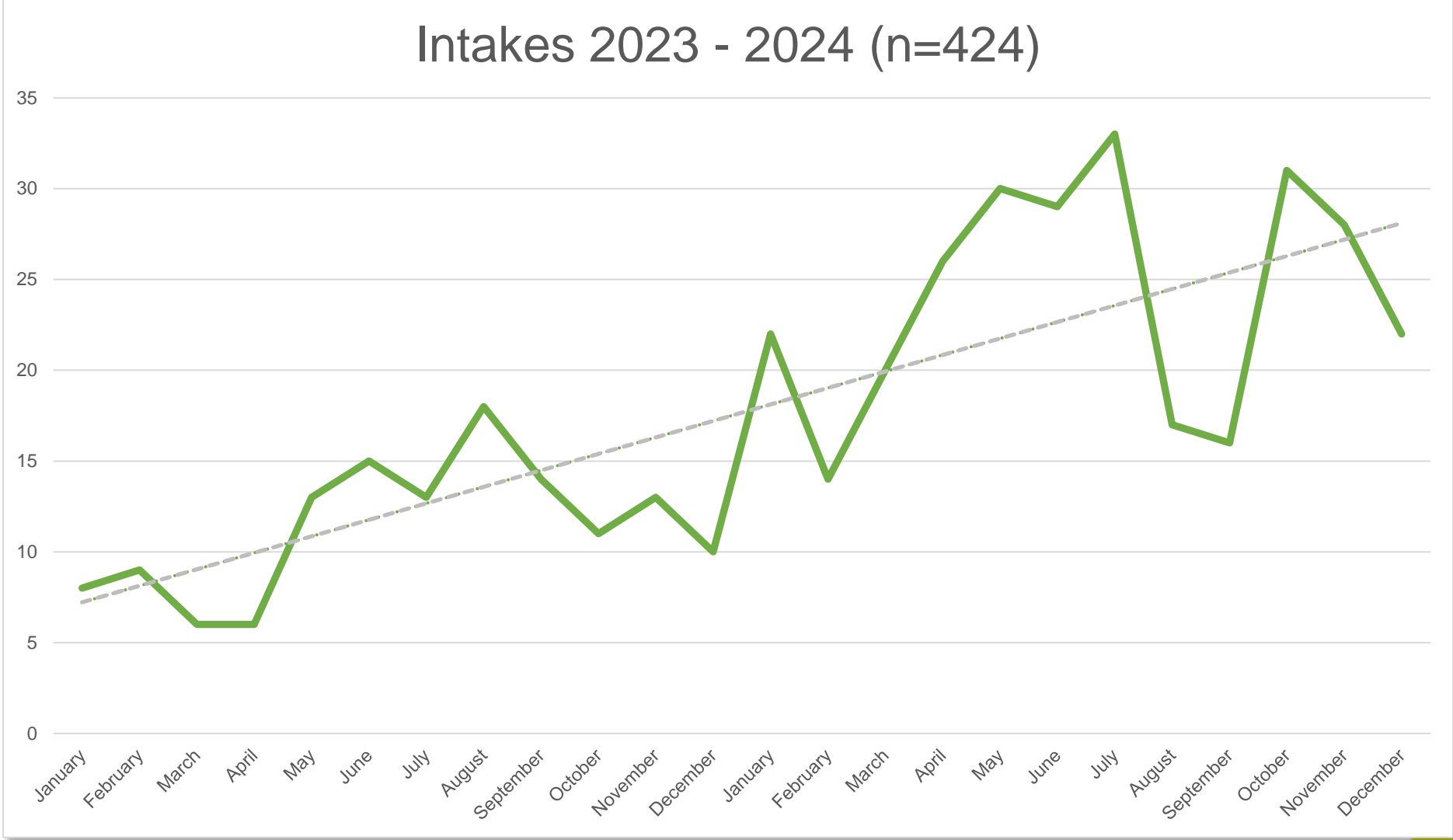


Areas of Need for Regulatory Education (2024 Observations)

- Home vs. commercial kitchen
- Commercial leases
- Employees vs independent contractor
- Death with dignity / medical assistance in dying
- Benefit cliff and self-employment
- Beneficial Ownership Information reporting
- Data privacy
- Zoning and Act 250

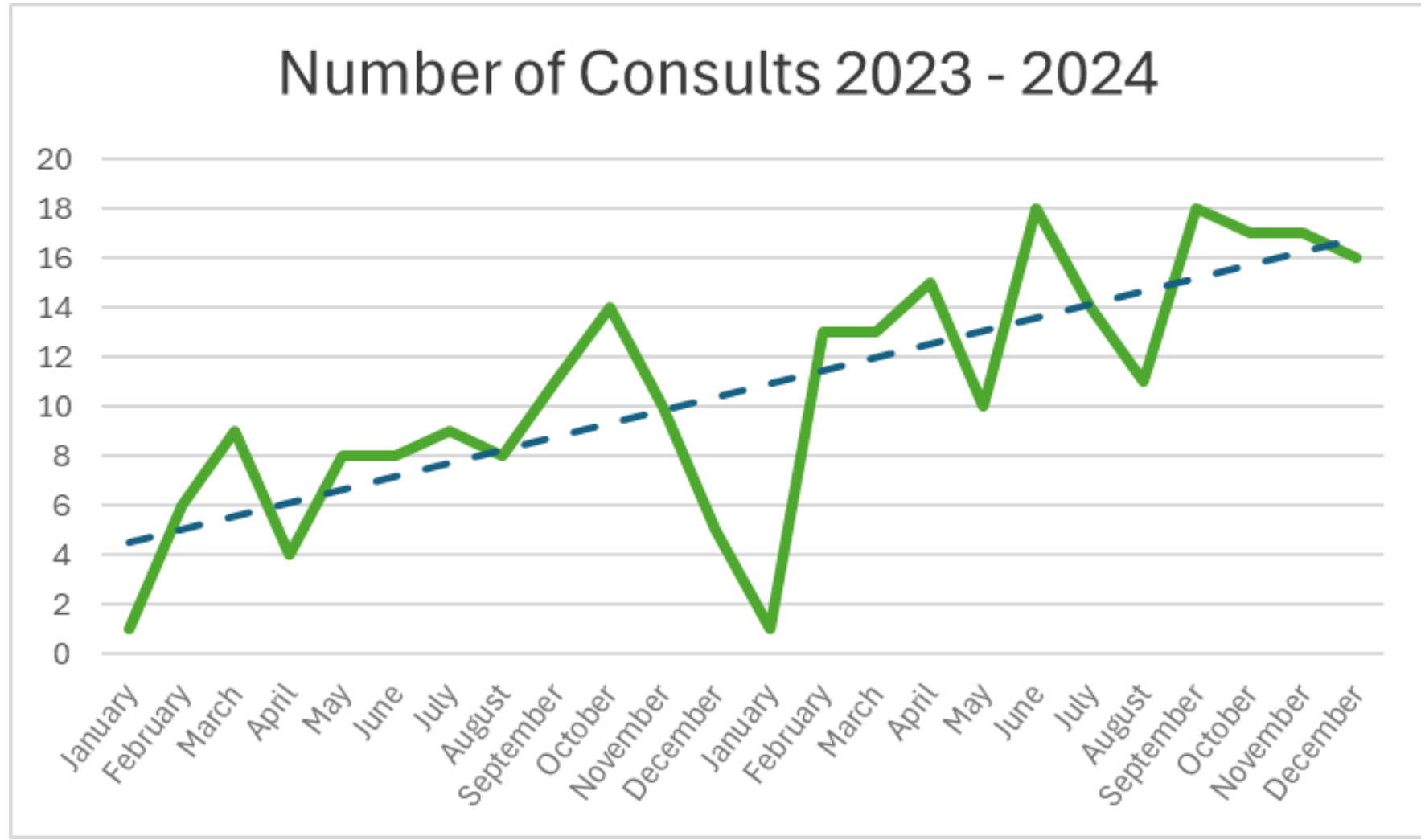


Intakes are Increasing: 2023-2024





Requests for Consults are Steadily Increasing





Current Operating Budget and Ask

- Currently 100% federally-funded:
 - Congressionally-Directed Spending grant (SBA-administered) through 6/30/2026
 - U.S. Treasury/State Small Business Credit Initiative (with VtSBDC) through 5/31/2026
- Small operating budget to maintain capacity - \$600k
 - 150-160 businesses educated and referred
 - 35 presentations per year
- **Ask – half (\$300k)**
 - **Opens up opportunities for matching funding**
 - **Facilitates educational programming on new legislation**
 - **Allows us to better scale to meet demand**

Thank you!

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U.S. Small Business
Administration