HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Washoe County
Human Services Agency Overview

Ryan Gustafson, Director

Our Mission

The mission of the Human Services Agency (HSA) of Washoe County is to promote the health, safety and well-being of children, adults and seniors who are vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation. We provide an array of protective and supportive services to families and individuals to enhance their quality of life by ensuring they are optimizing their self-reliance and self- sufficiency, as we strive to have a strengthened, safe, and thriving community.

The following Division's within HSA include:

- Children's Services Division
- Adult Services Division
- Senior Services Division
- Housing & Homeless Services Division

Children's Services

Tammi Williamson & Stacey Lance, Division Directors

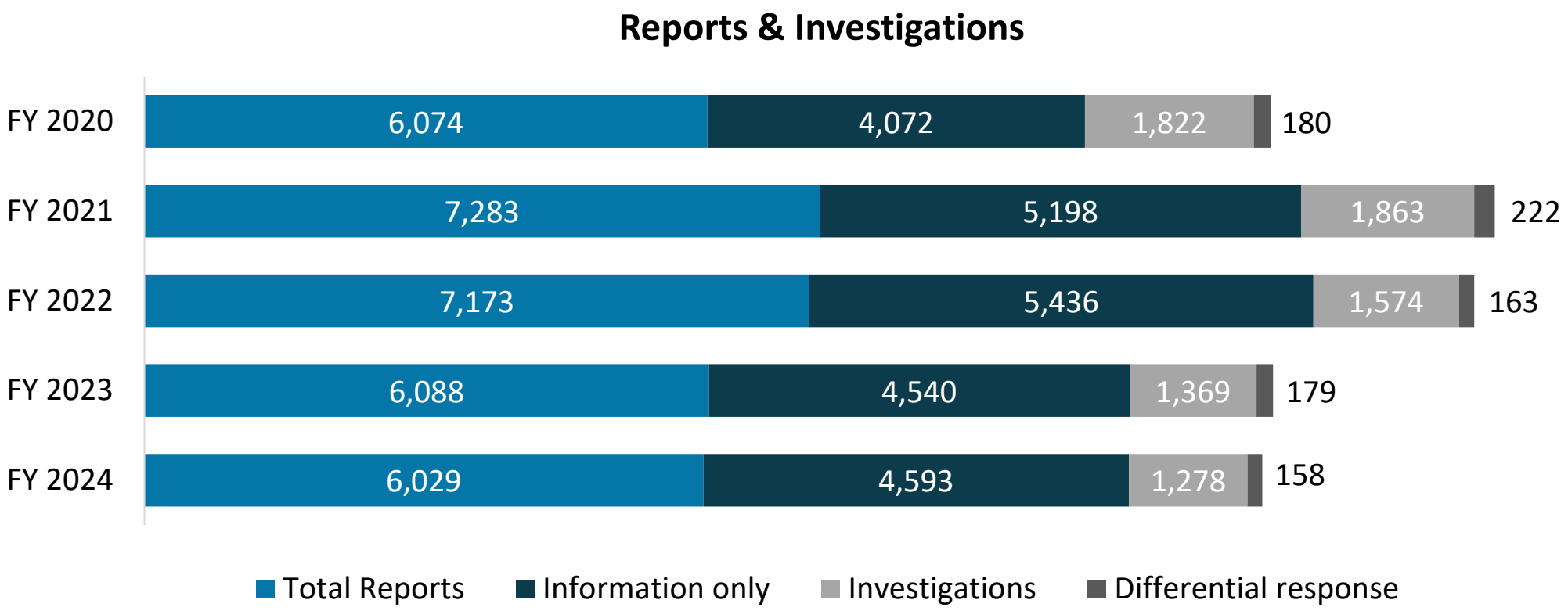
Child welfare's mission is to support and educate families and the community to ensure that children's basic health and safety needs are met in their primary family or other permanent setting. We collaborate with families and the community to assess family strengths, safety issues, and risk of harm to children. We seek to deliver services that assure the safety of children while building upon the strengths of the family.

The following services include:

- Child Abuse & Neglect Investigations & Intake
- Family Engagement Center
- Foster Care & Foster Care Licensing
- Diligent Search
- Permanency & Adoptions
- Independent Living
- Clinical Services
- Child Advocacy Center
- Continuous Quality Assurance & Training
- UNITY & Court Services

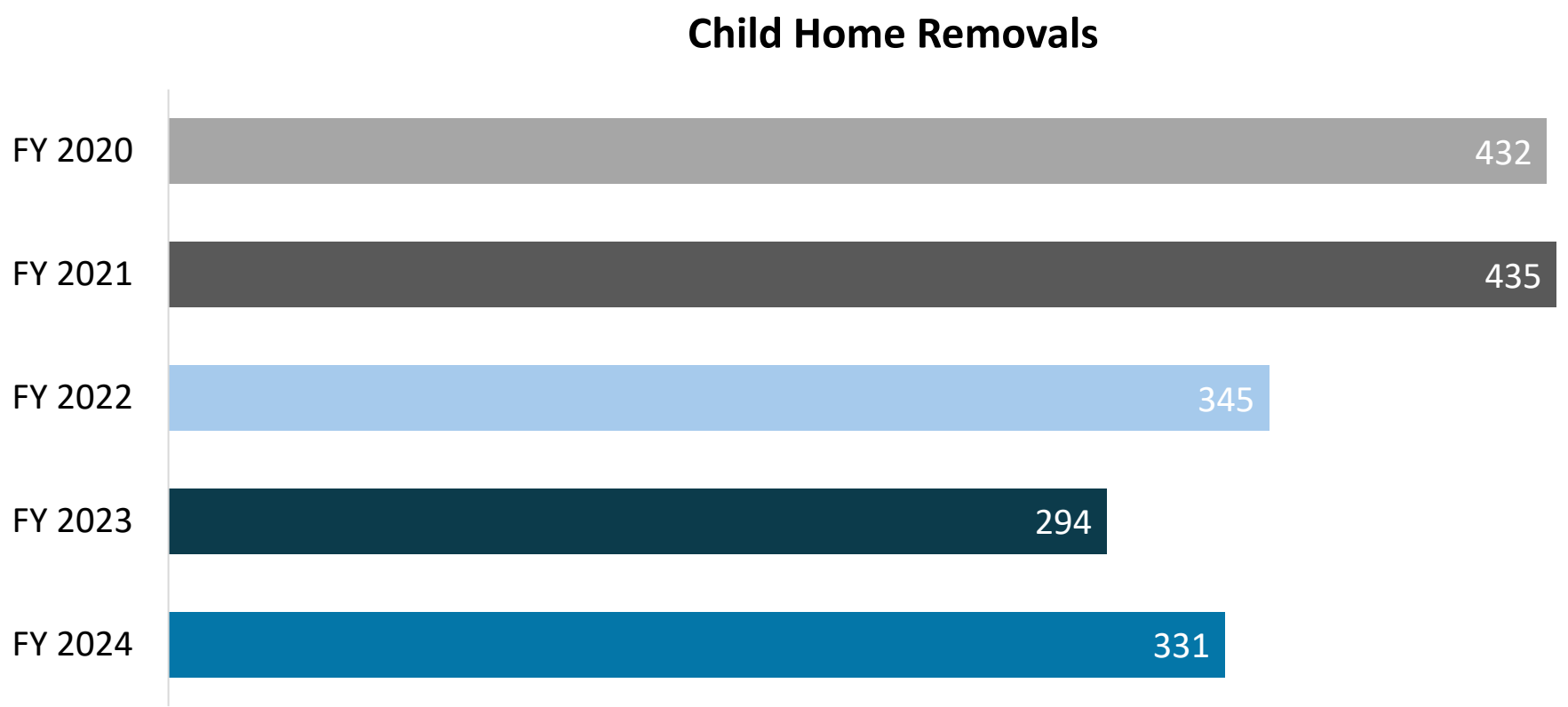
Reports

Child Protective Services (CPS) is a major system of intervention of child abuse and neglect. The first and most critical step in the child protection process is Intake. It begins with CPS staff receiving a confidential report, which is an allegation of abuse or neglect from an external source. Based on the information received from the report, it is assigned a priority level determined on the allegation and amount of imminent risk or danger the child may be in. This leads to what response is required from CPS.



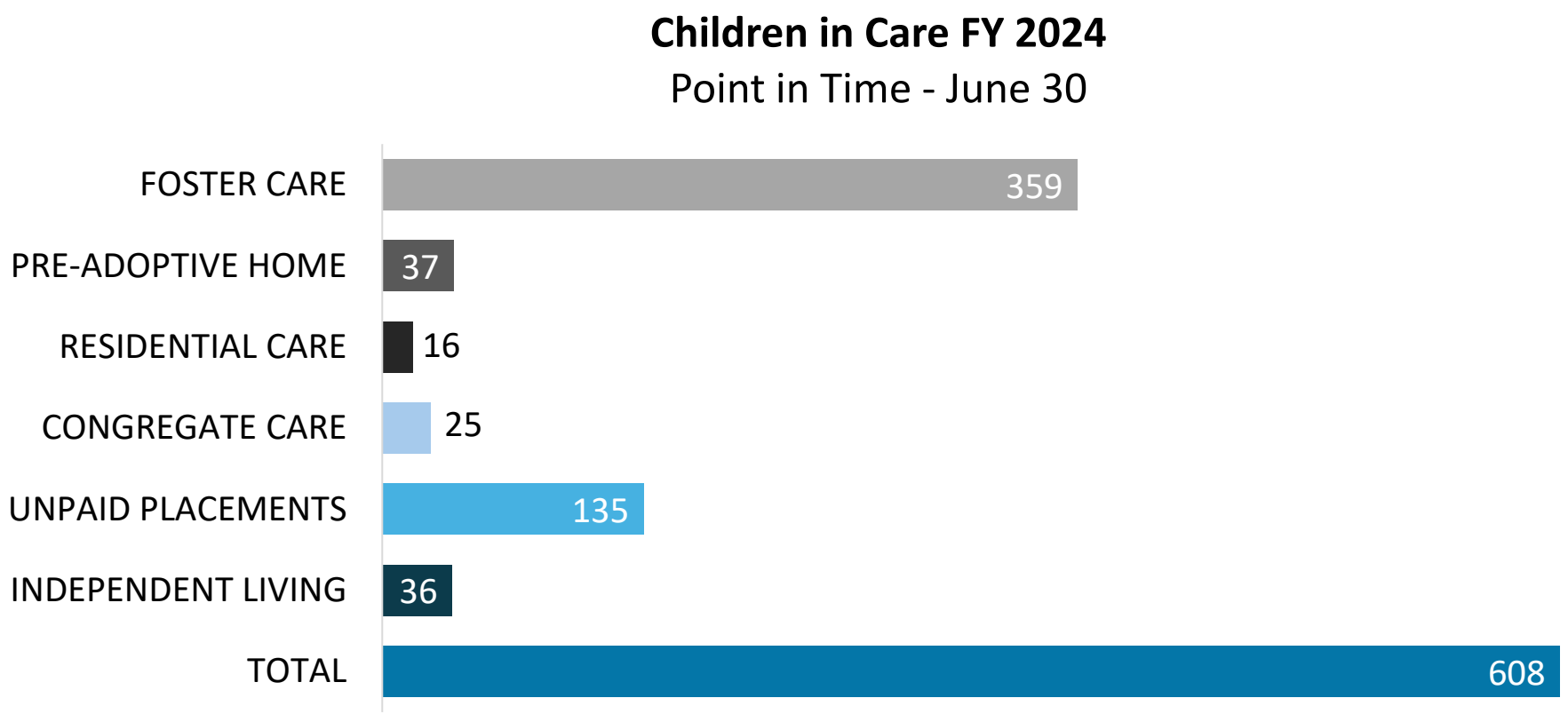
Removals

When an investigation occurs and there are no reasonable efforts that will keep the child safe in their home or there is a present danger of serious harm in the home, then the child is subject for removal. Removing a child from their natural environment is a final recourse of the overall extent of services provided.



Foster Care

When children must be removed from their homes, foster care is a temporary resource for placement to meet the needs of the child who's birth parents or guardians are unable to care for them. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, emergency homes, residential facilities, child care institutions and pre-adoptive homes.

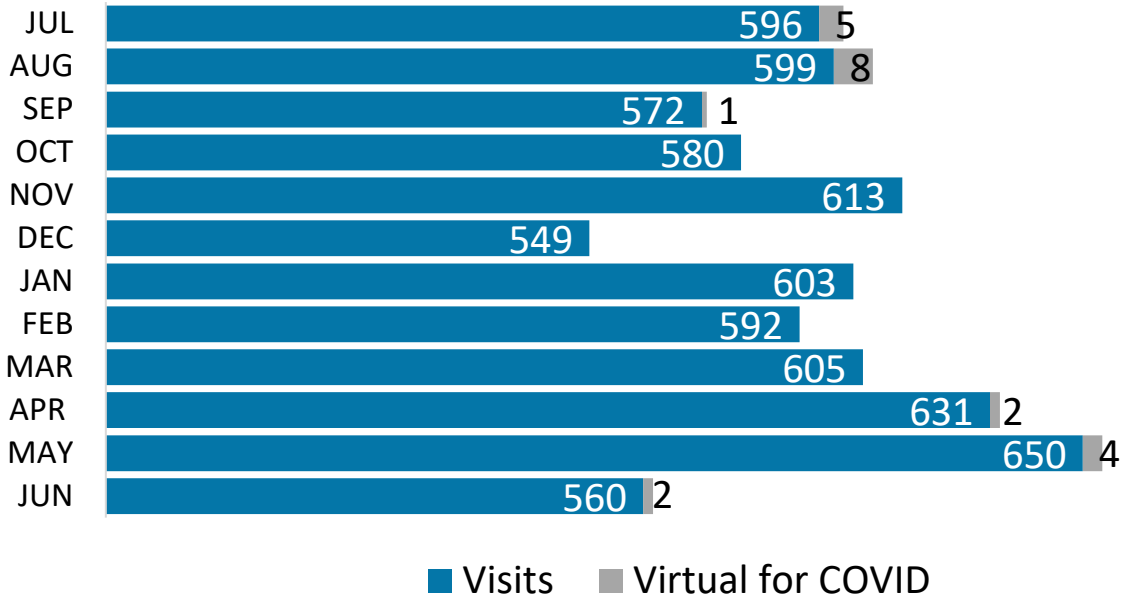


Family Engagement Center

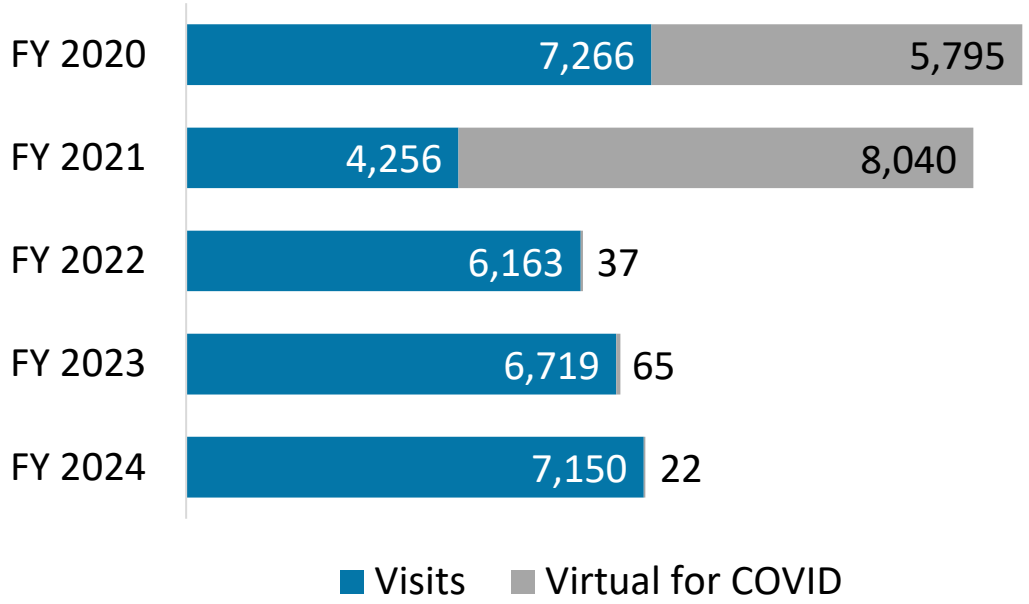
When a child is removed from their home, often times, the parent's only interaction with them is during a scheduled supervised visitation. The purpose of supervised visitation is to ensure that parents are capable of interacting and spending time with their child, without placing them at risk of being harmed.

The Family Engagement Center (FEC) is a focal point for family connection, allowing families working toward reunification to have a place of exploration and healing to call home. The FEC creates a positive family dynamic that is key to strengthening parent-child relationships and improving patterns of interaction that build a safe and stable home, not only for the child's well-being, but for the family as a whole.

Monthly Visitations FY 2024

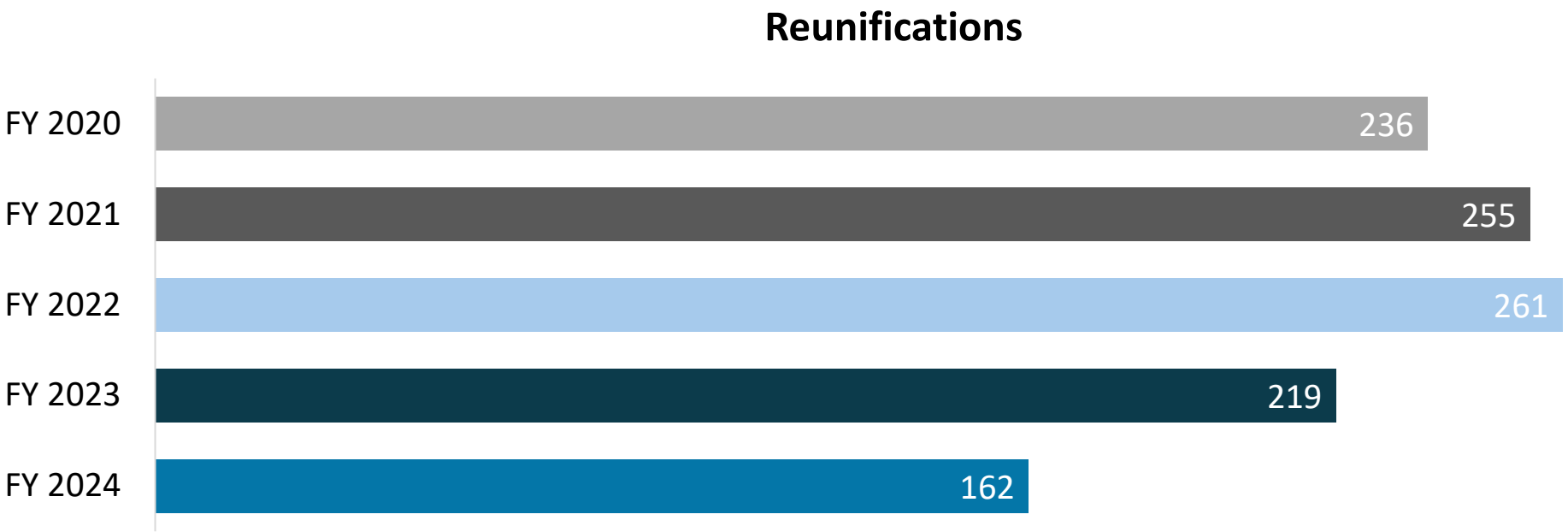


Yearly Visitation Totals FY 2024



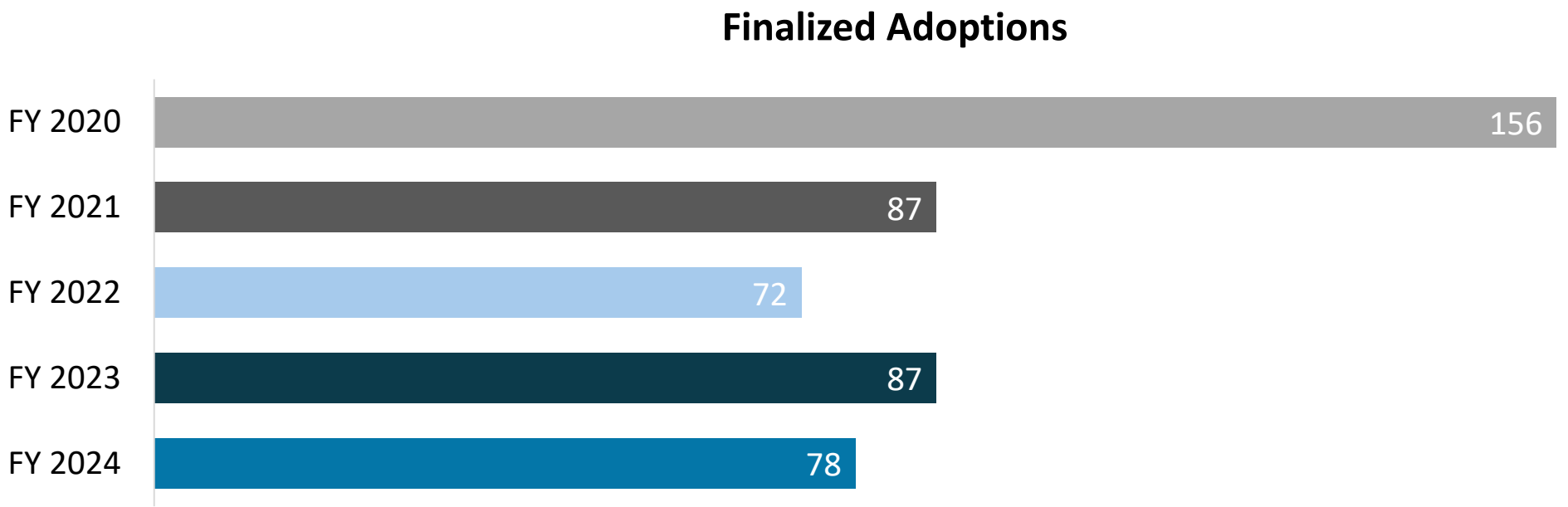
Reunifications

When children are in the foster care system, the first goal is to reunite them with their families as soon as possible. WCHSA implements multifaceted strategies to help build on family strengths and address concerns. Such strategies may include family engagement, maintaining family and cultural connections, connecting families to evidence-based services, regular and frequent visits among family members and with the worker, and parent education, among others. Returning children home often requires intensive, family-centered services to support a safe and stable family. Services are tailored to each family's circumstances and address the issue(s) that brought the child and family into the child welfare system.



Adoptions

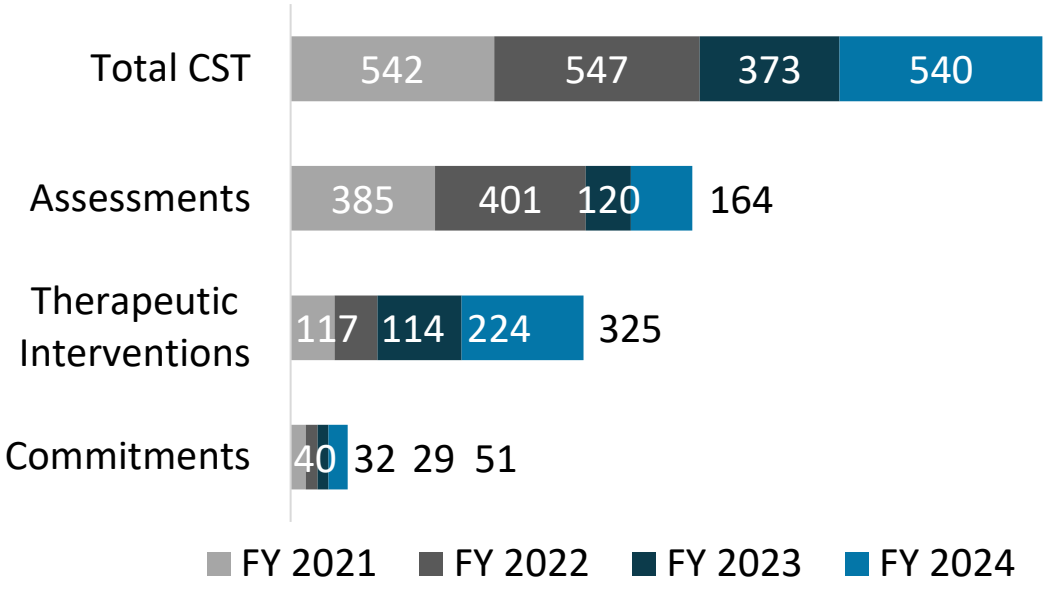
Foster children of all ages in the child welfare system await permanent homes when the rights and responsibilities of their biological parents have been permanently terminated by court order. Adoption is the process that transfers those social and legal rights, responsibilities and privileges of parenting to another individual or married couple whom did not have that relationship by birth- allowing them to become the child's legal parent(s). They will have the same rights and obligations that exist between a child and their biological parents. The primary purpose of adoption is to provide children with a committed family that can give them the love, care, protection and opportunities essential for their health, personal growth and development. The main objective of the placement of children for adoption is the well-being of the child. The Adoption Services program is child-focused and strives to find families for children, not children for families.



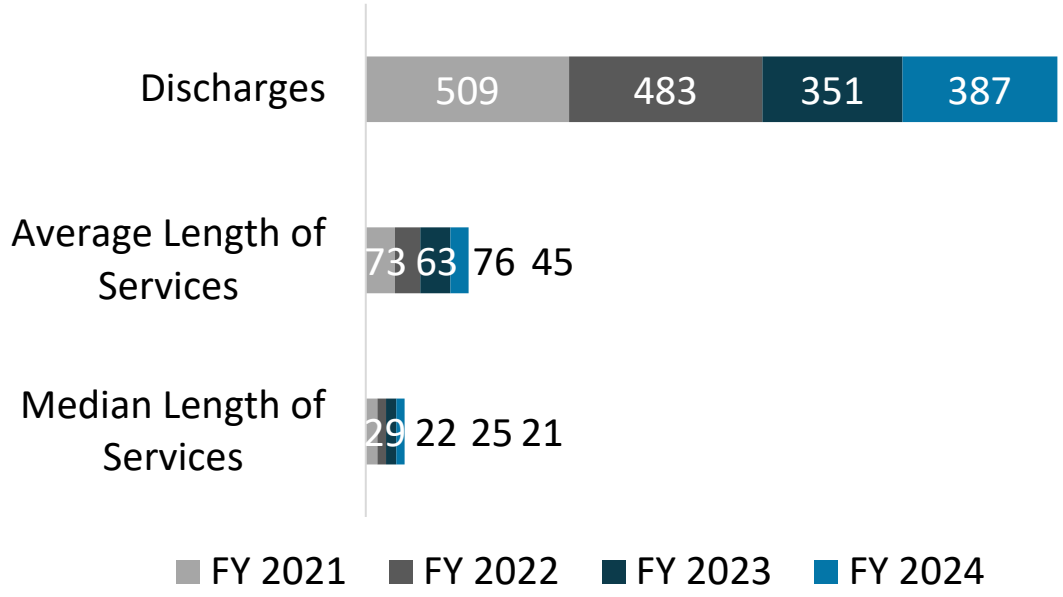
Clinical Services

Clinical services is comprised of a Clinical Services Team (CST), who provide short-term, evidence-based mental and behavioral health services to clients involved in the programs within WCHSA. CST is designed to ensure the psychological and emotional well-being of children, parents, caregivers; and families, by addressing their identified behavioral or mental health needs. The Clinical Services Team can be involved prior to or at the beginning of a child welfare report or case; during the life of a child welfare case; or upon permanent placement of children. All CST clinicians adhere to strict standards of confidentiality.

Clinical Service Team (CST) Referrals



Clinical Service Team (CST) Discharges



Adult Services

Cara Paoli, Division Director

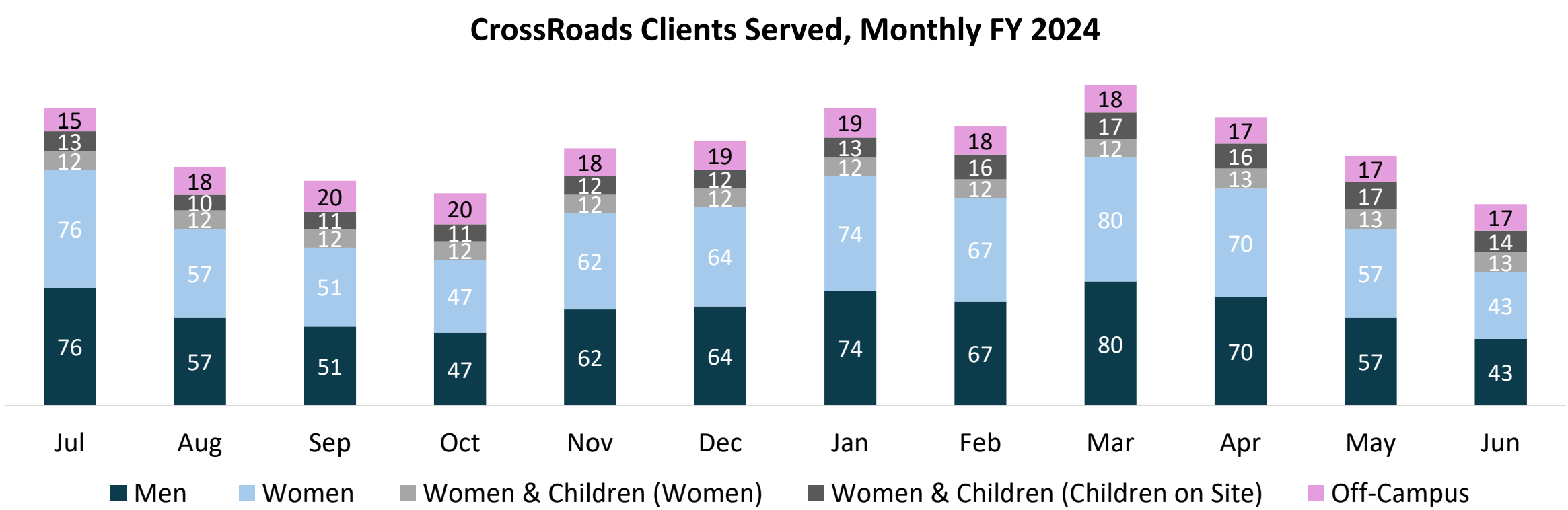
The Mission of Adult Services is to implement and administer programs that provide human services to all eligible individuals and families by providing referrals, support, prevention, outreach and relief to persons who are indigent, medically needy or at-risk in a courteous and timely manner. The Adult Services Division provides case management services for those individuals in nursing homes and adult group care settings. Adult Social Services also provides coordination and payment for burial and cremation services to Washoe County residents. In addition, the Adult Services Division provides payment to the homeless shelter; as well as, operating a supportive living program.

The following services include:

- CrossRoads,
- Nursing Home & Extended Care Facility Services
- Adult Group Care
- Burial & Cremation Assistance
- Rental & Deposit Assistance & Case Management

CrossRoads

CrossRoads is a WCHSA lead initiative providing a tiered/modified housing first approach, through effective programming, services and community collaboration. The program works to identify, intervene and stabilize highly complex individuals in Washoe County who are generally homeless and may be suffering from a substance use disorder, mental health condition or both. Individuals who qualify for the CrossRoads program are provided with a wide- range of support and services based on their individual needs.



Senior Services

Cara Paoli, Division Director

The Mission of Senior Services is to help improve the quality of life for seniors by offering services, support, and activities that empowers their personal independence, and encourages healthy aging, social connection and education.

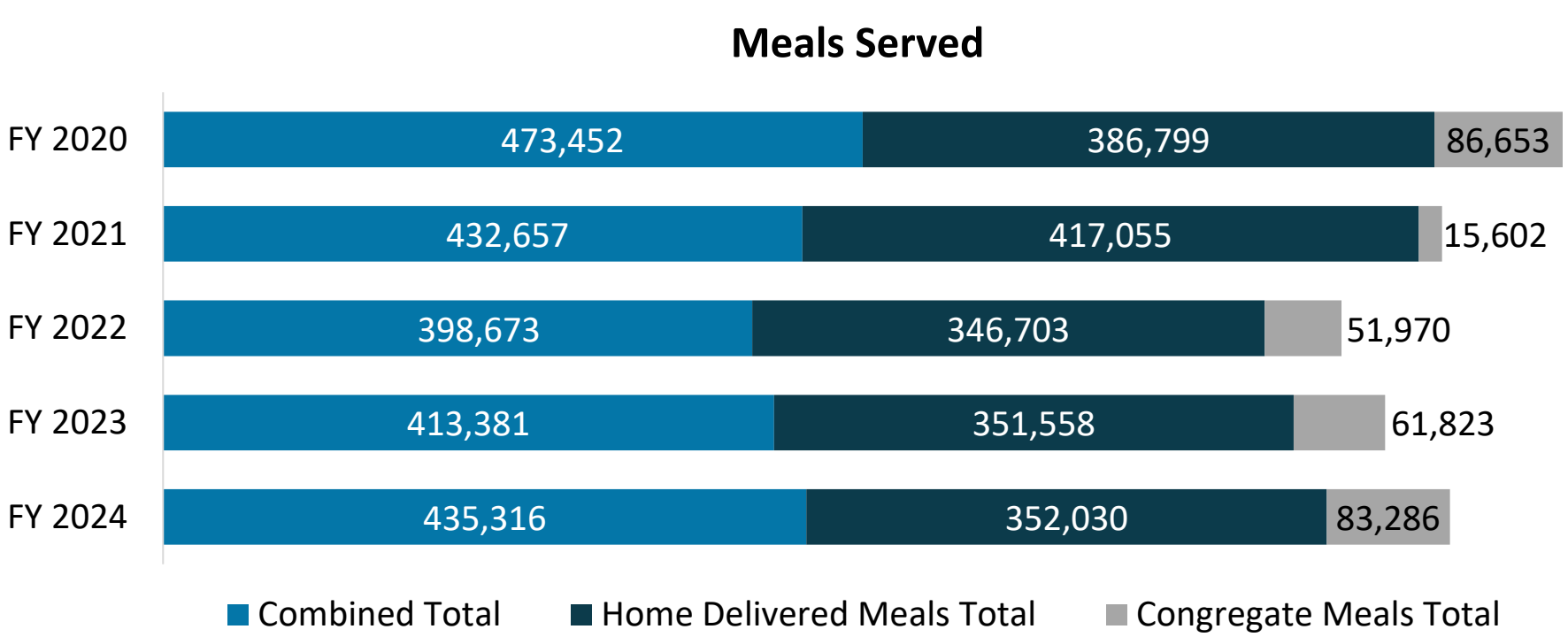
By maximizing opportunities to create fulfilled relationships, HSA's goal is to build every aspect of viability for all aging residents and maintain happy, healthy communities.

The following services include:

- Senior Centers
- Nutrition
- Representative Payee Services
- Homemaker Services
- Senior Ambassador Program Partnerships
- Volunteer Services
- Legal Services
- Case Management

Nutrition

The Nutrition Programs supply well-balanced meals daily to Washoe County's senior population. Meals provided are in accordance with established dietary guidelines and food safety standards. The Nutrition Programs fall into two categories, Home Delivered Meals, which Provides delivery of meals to homebound seniors 60+ who are unable to participate in the Congregate Meal program due to an illness or a disability. Congregate Meals, which provides one hot meal or fresh salad for lunch Monday through Friday to seniors 60+ and qualified individuals at ten senior meal locations.



Housing & Homeless Services

Dana Searcy, Division Director

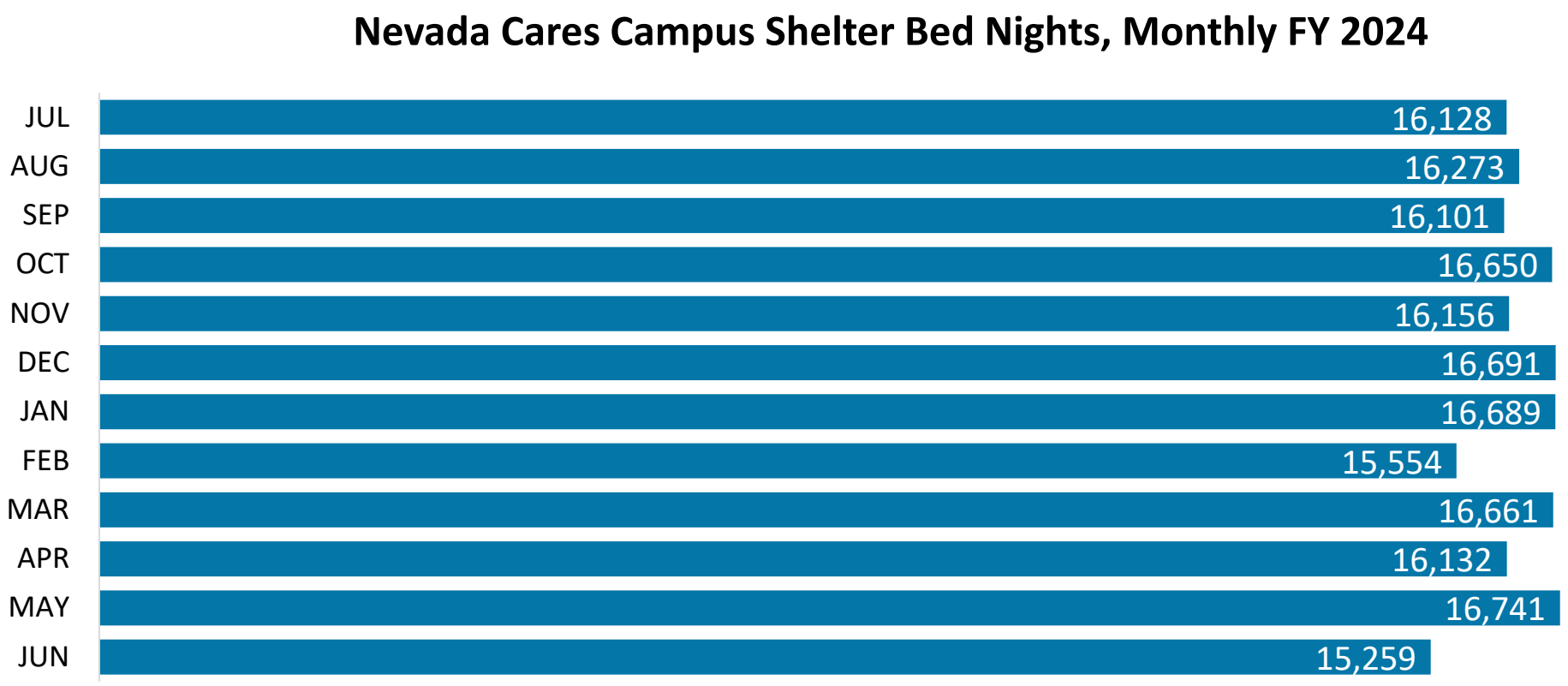
The mission of the Housing and Homeless Services Division, is to work toward minimizing homelessness throughout Washoe County by leading the community in building a system that is capable of housing people experiencing homelessness. Services and support are provided so that homelessness becomes rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.

Services include:

- Regional Governance and Coordination
  - Northern Nevada Continuum of Care (CoC)
  - Built For Zero – Washoe County
- Shelter and Services
  - Our Place Campus
  - Nevada Cares Campus and Safe Camp
  - Street Homeless Support & Outreach
  - Case Management
  - Behavioral Health
- Housing
  - Tenancy Support
  - Affordable Housing Trust Fund
  - Permanent Supportive Housing

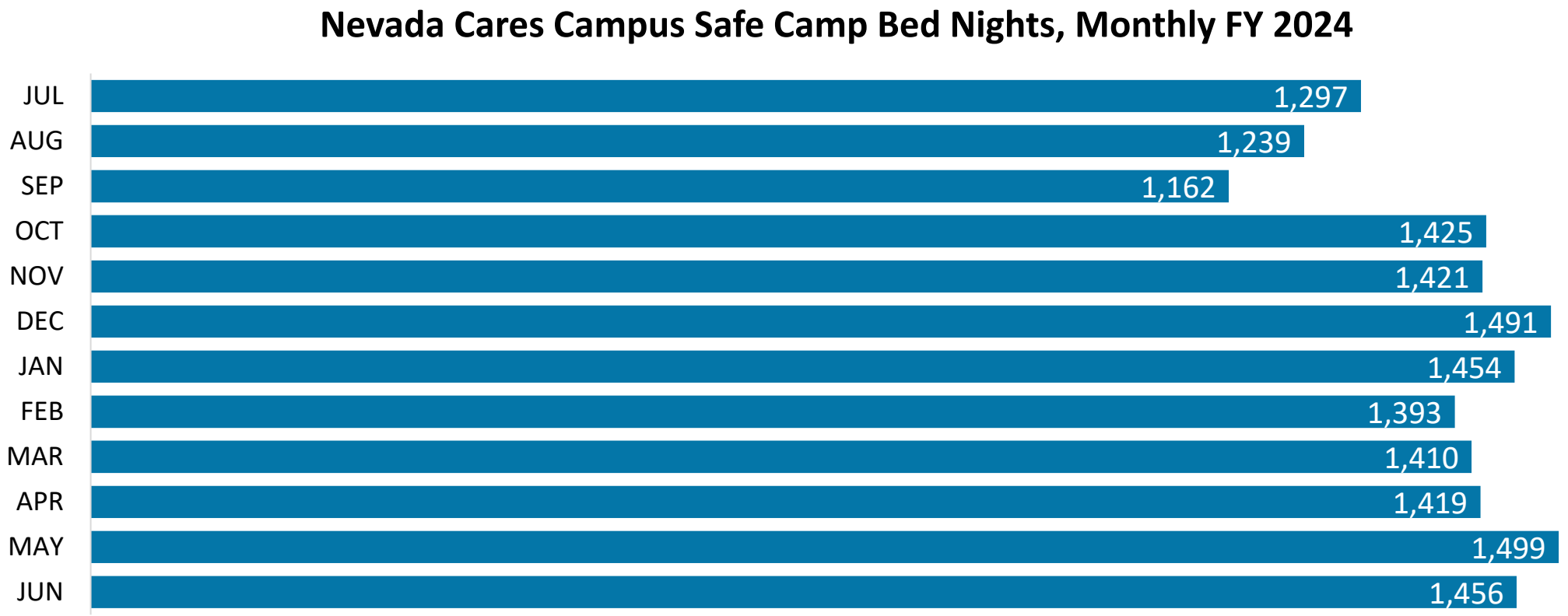
Nevada Cares Campus

The Nevada Cares Campus Shelter provides low barrier shelter for men, women (primarily referred to Our Place Women & Family Program), and couples experiencing homelessness. Staff meet individuals where they are on their journey to move into stable and sustainable housing. Case management, behavioral health support and other community partners will be on-site to provide support and provide assessments and referrals for needed services. The Campus provides basic facilities including restrooms, handwashing stations, laundry, showers, and meals.



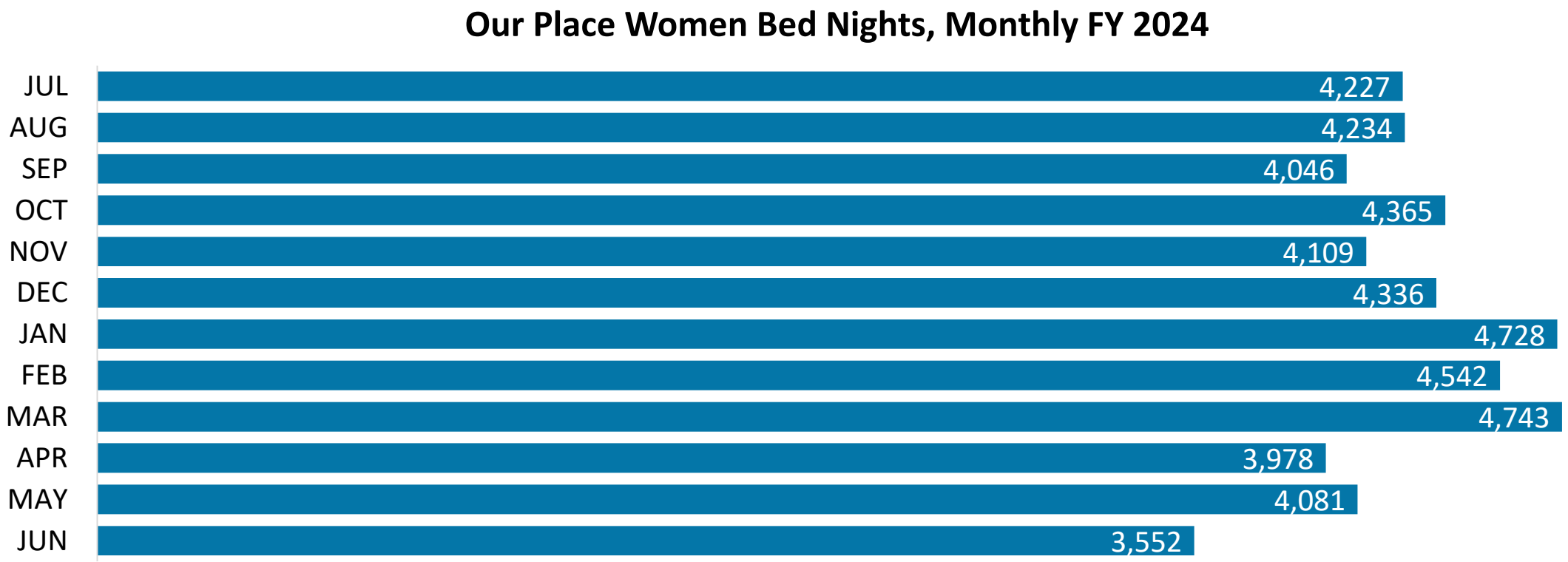
Nevada Cares Campus Safe Camp

The Nevada Cares Campus Safe Camp serves as a low barrier shelter where unsheltered individuals in Washoe County can relocate. Staff meet individuals where they are on their journey to move into stable and sustainable housing. Case management, behavioral health support and other community partners will be on-site to provide support and provide assessments and referrals for needed services. The Campus provides basic facilities including restrooms, handwashing stations, laundry, showers, and meals.



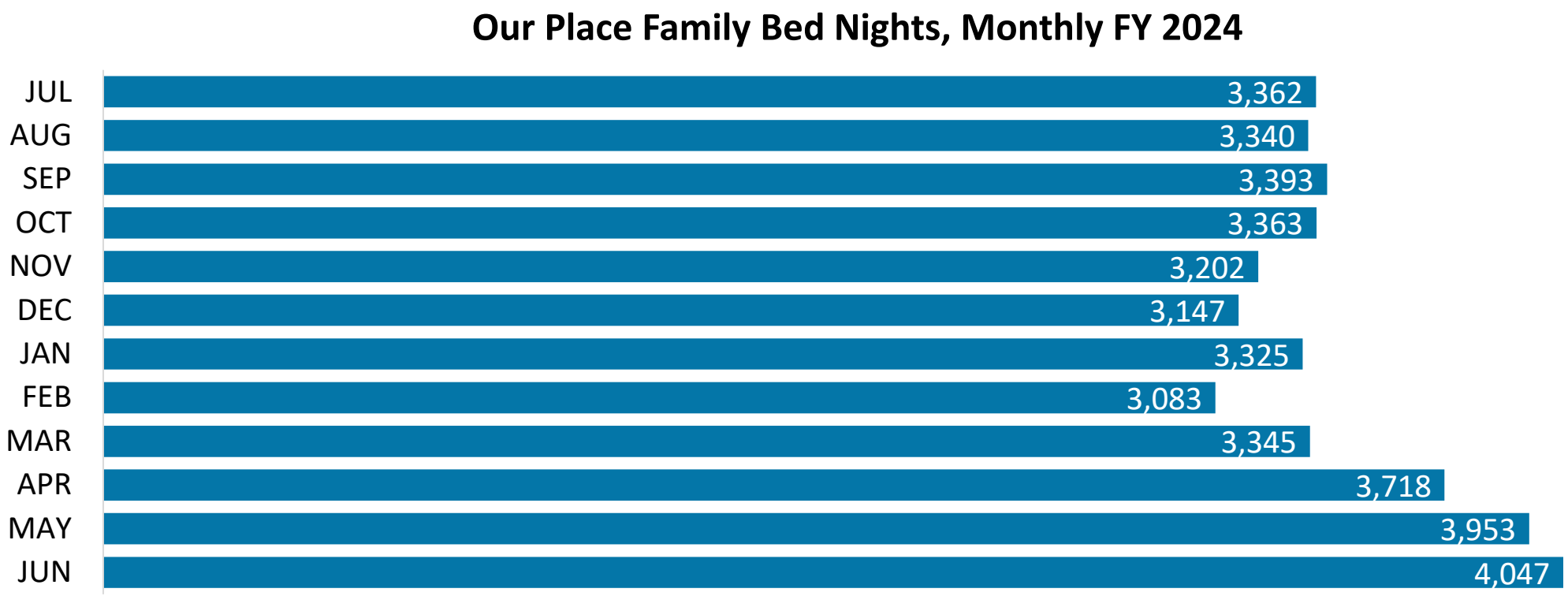
Our Place Women Program

Our Place Women provides low barrier shelter for women experiencing homelessness. Staff meet women where they are on their journey to move into stable and sustainable housing. Case management, behavioral health support and other community partners will be on-site to provide support and provide assessments and referrals for needed services. The Campus provides basic facilities including restrooms, handwashing stations, laundry, showers, and meals.



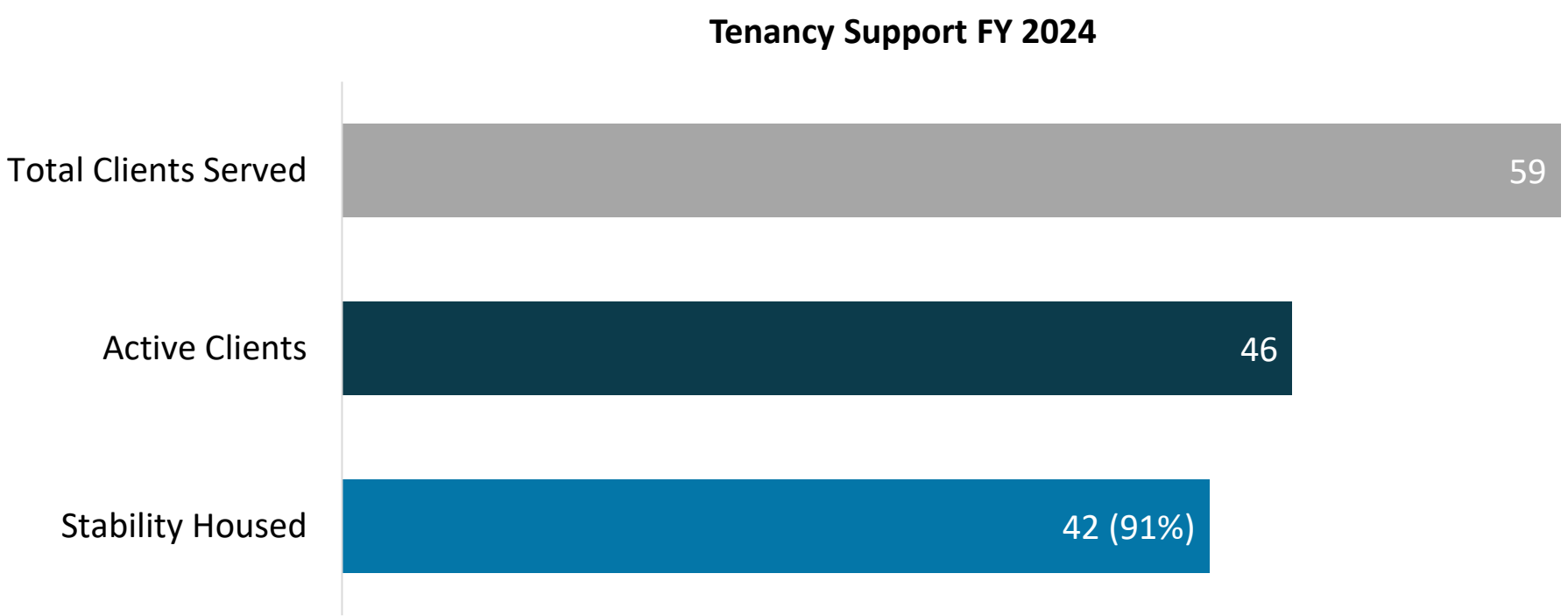
Our Place Family Program

Our Place Family Program provides low barrier shelter for families experiencing homelessness. Staff meet families where they are on their journey to move into stable and sustainable housing. Case management, behavioral health support and other community partners will be on-site to provide support and provide assessments and referrals for needed services. The Campus provides basic facilities including restrooms, handwashing stations, laundry, showers, and meals.



Tenancy Support

Housing and Homeless Services offers tenancy support to those experiencing homelessness. These resources significantly impact the well-being of clients served, by connecting them with various opportunities to obtain and maintain housing, helping build a foundation for long-term stability.



Questions?