



Georgia Department of Human Services

Housekeeping Rules

- Make sure your computer speakers are on.
- Use Microsoft Teams, your computer audio, or dial into the meeting. Attempting to use multiple audio options will create feedback.
- Mute yourself if you are not speaking. If you have dialed in to the meeting by phone, please use *6 to mute and unmute yourself.
- When there are calls for action item votes, all participants will be unmuted to ensure that board members are heard.
- Please state your name when making a motion or seconding the motion.
- We will check the chat box for any questions or comments throughout the meeting.
- Please let us know if you experience any audio issues or have trouble viewing the PowerPoint presentation.





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Agenda Approval by DFCS Advisory Board



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Aging Services

Division of Aging Services Updates

MaryLea Boatwright Quinn, MSW, LCSW
Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Division of Aging Services

Division of Aging Services

— VISION —

LIVING LONGER,

LIVING SAFELY,

living well



Congratulations, Anna Thomas!

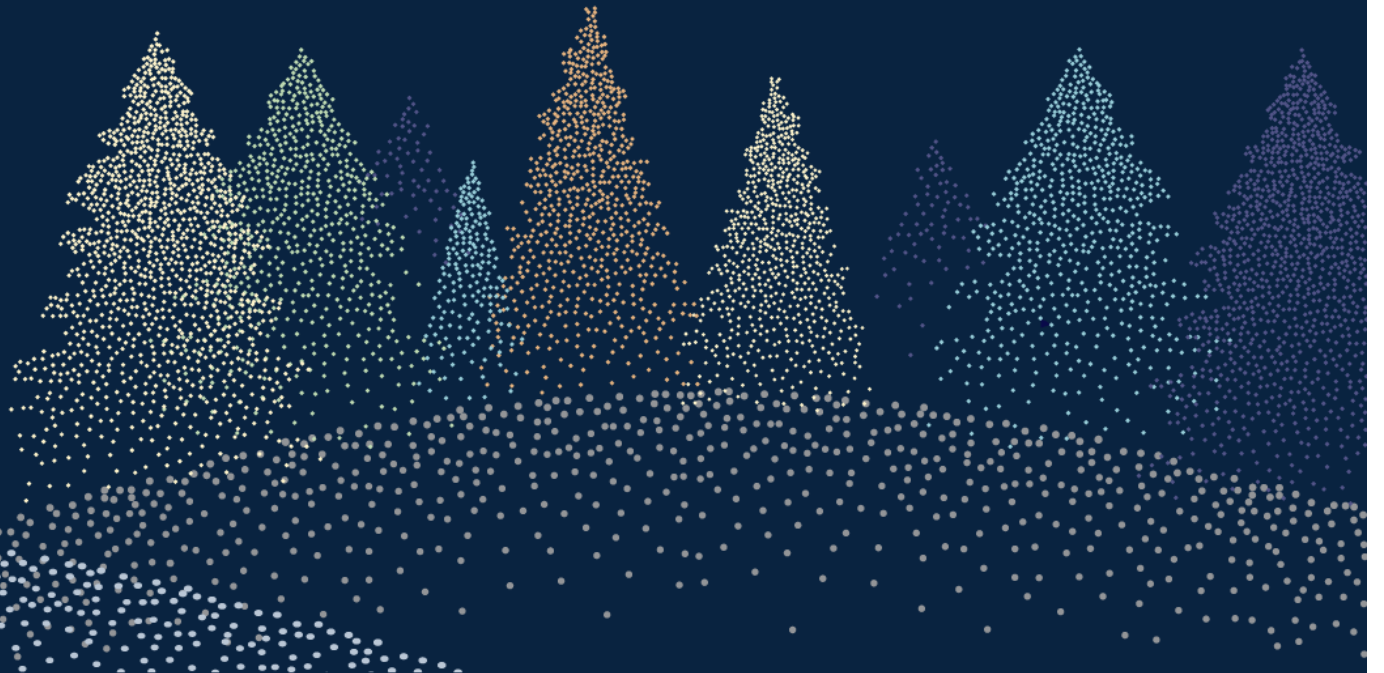


Light up

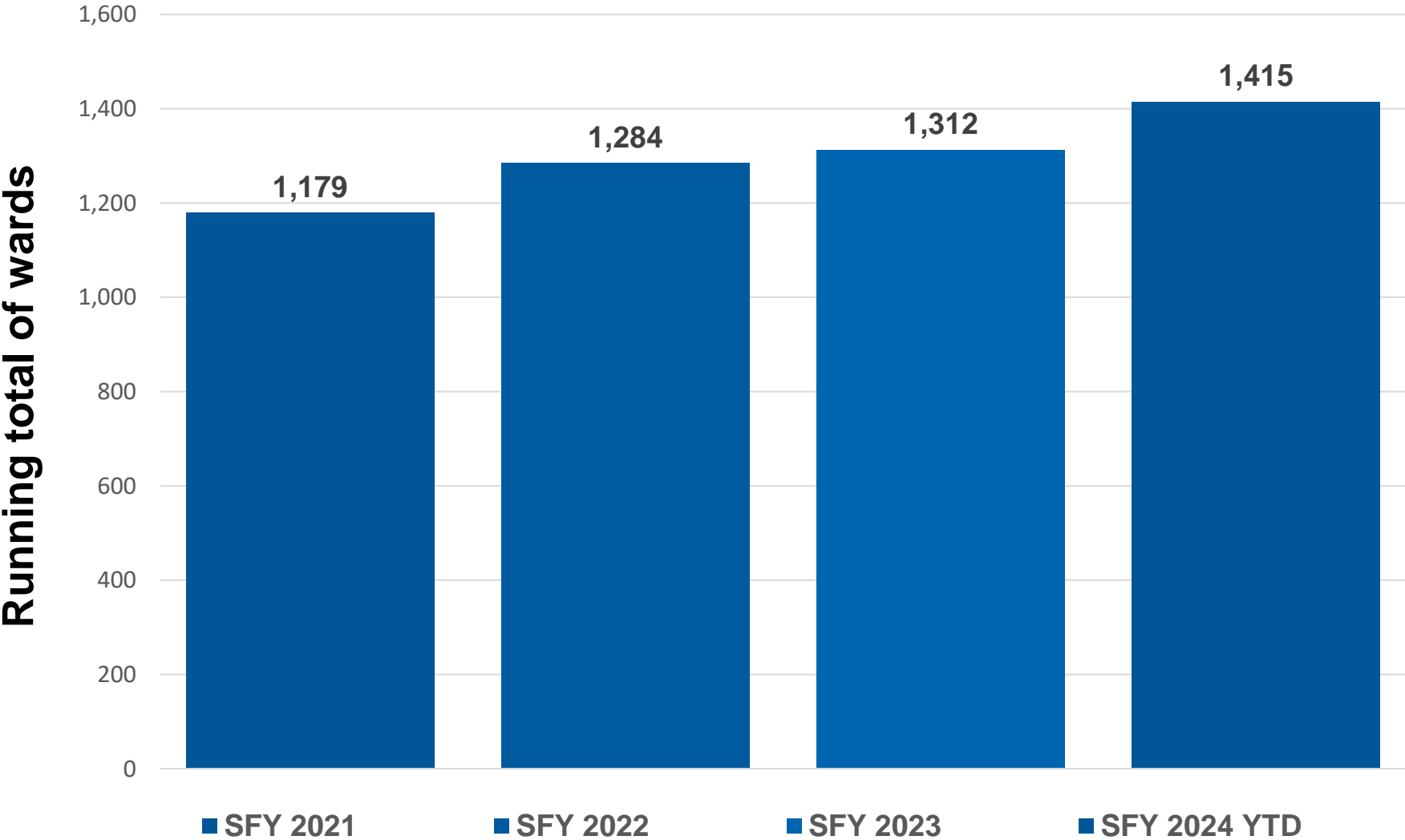
THE
HOLIDAYS
FOR A VULNERABLE GEORGIAN



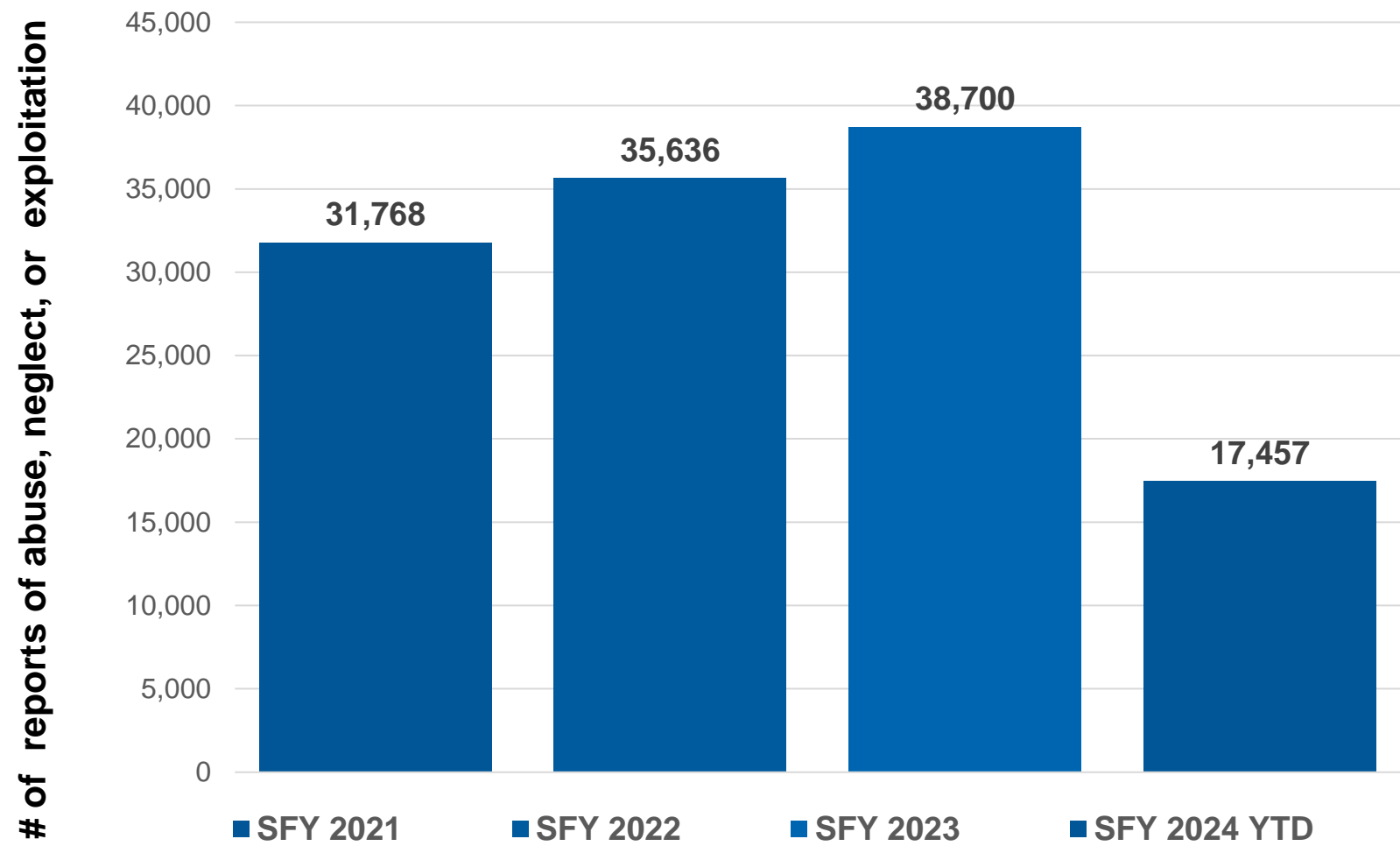
**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Aging Services



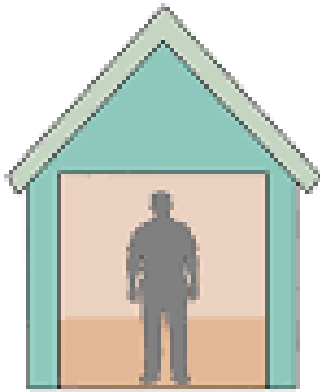
Running total of PGO Wards



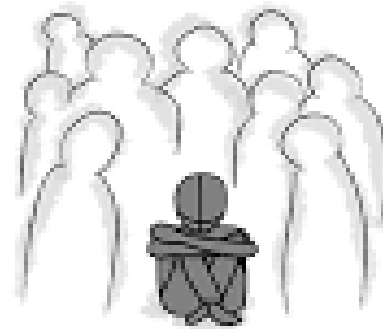
Number of APS Reports Involving Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation



Social Isolation and Loneliness



Social Isolation



Loneliness

**An emerging
crisis for our
older adult
population**

Social Isolation and Loneliness – The Facts

Loneliness is a greater health danger than:

Cancer

Cardiac disease

Depression/anxiety

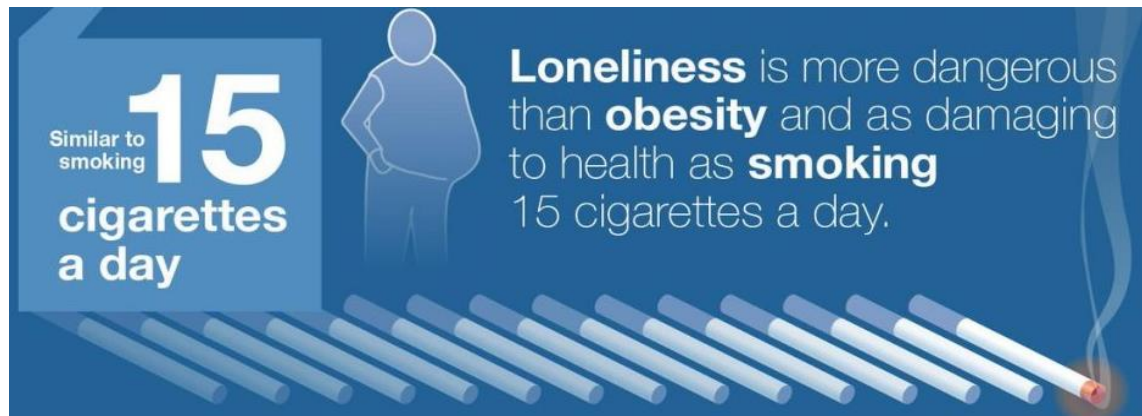
Substance abuse



Social isolation has been associated with a **50%** increased risk of dementia



Poor social relationships have been associated with a **29%** increased risk of heart disease



Costs ~\$6.5 billion/year (Medicare) due to increased hospital stays because community support at home is lacking.



Social Connection Assessments

Appendix D. Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6)

Consumer Assessments	
Assessment ID	Review *
Rater *	Review Date *
Status *	Fund Code
Program	Approved By
Approved Date	Agency
Service Provider	Checkout By
Checkout Status	Checkout Date

Appendix D. Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6)

FAMILY: Considering the people to whom you are related by birth, marriage, adoption, etc...

1. How many relatives do you see or hear from at least once a month?

2. How many relatives do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters?

3. How many relatives do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help?

FRIENDSHIPS: Considering all of your friends including those who live in your neighborhood

4. How many of your friends do you see or hear from at least once a month?

5. How many friends do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters?

6. How many friends do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help?

Score:

Scoring: LSNS-6 total score is an equally weighted sum of these six items. Scores range from 0 to 30, and higher scores indicate more social engagement.

At risk for social isolation?

Referred to:

HCBS:

Empowerline:

Community/Local Resources:

UCLA Loneliness Scale

1. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?	<input type="text" value="Some of the Time"/>
2. How often do you feel left out?	<input type="text" value="Some of the Time"/>
3. How often do you feel isolated from others?	<input type="text" value="Some of the Time"/>
Total Score	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Is client considered lonely?	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>

Referred to:

HCBS:

Empowerline:

Community/Local Resources:

☐ Assessment Declined
Comments:



Mapping Social Isolation in Older Adults

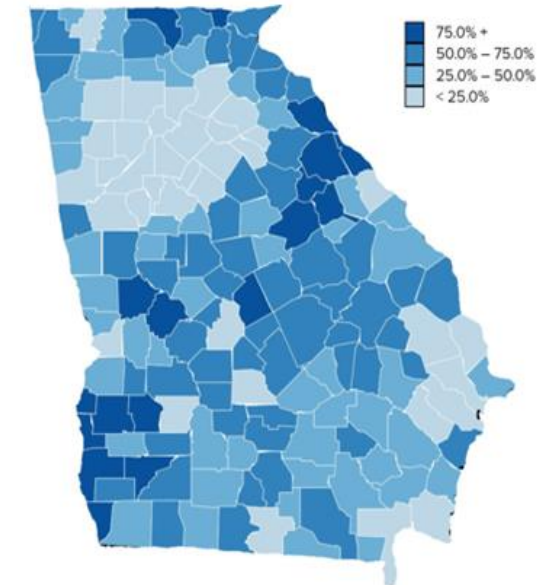
Division of Aging Services Data

- During SFY 2023, **43%** of clients receiving Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) were living alone.
- Year-to-date in SFY 2024: **44%**

Connect2Affect Isolation

Social Isolation in Georgia

- Older Georgians 60+ years (living alone).
 - Nearly half rank within the 25%-50% group.
 - This is evidence that social isolation is still a current issue.



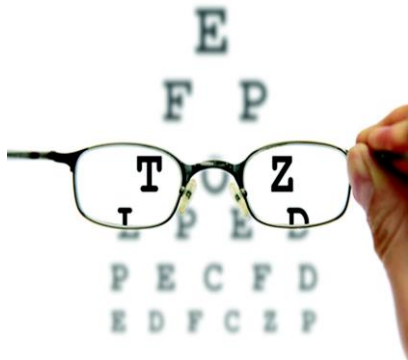
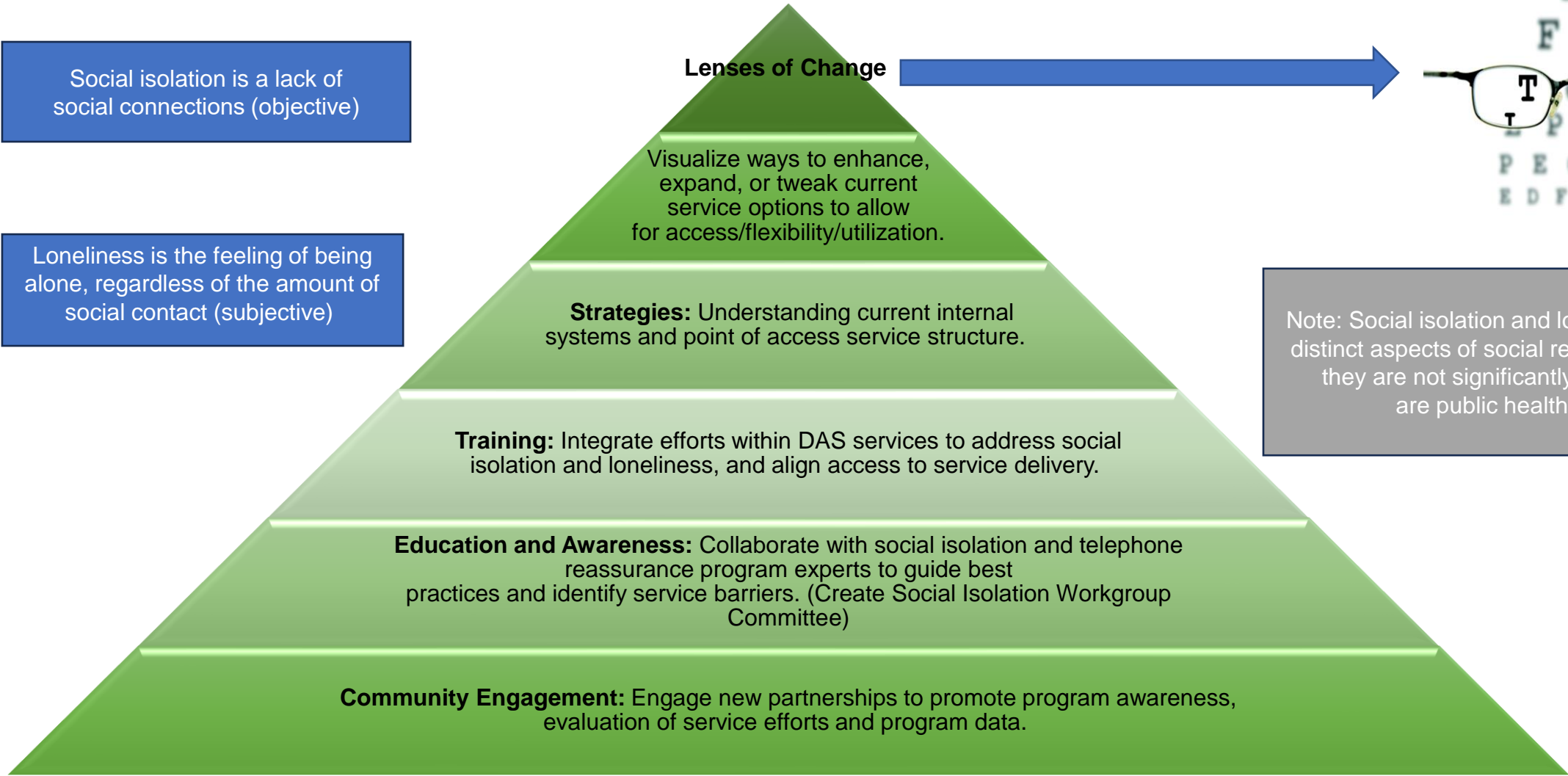
*The following visualization was generated from connect2affect, which is an interactive data visualization tool developed by NORC at the University of Chicago.



Goals of Social Isolation and Loneliness Project

Social isolation is a lack of social connections (objective)

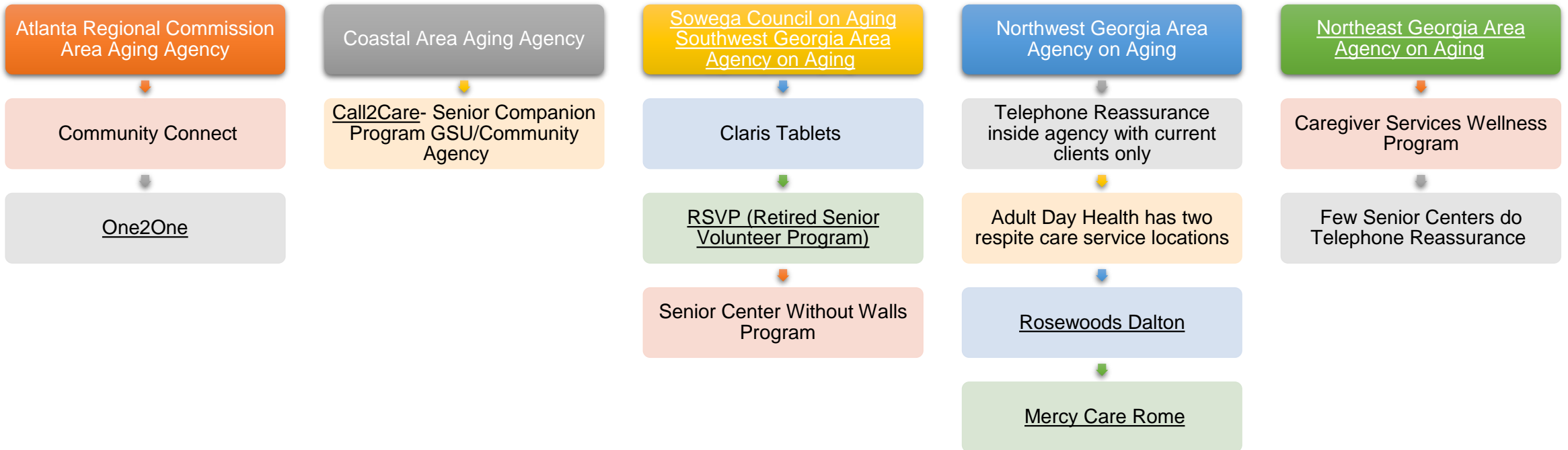
Loneliness is the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact (subjective)



Note: Social isolation and loneliness are two distinct aspects of social relationships, and they are not significantly linked. Both are public health risks.



Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Partners



System Change Impact?

- Developed visual workflow to help improve, enhance, and expand current service options to allow for access/flexibility/utilization (Complete)
- Partner across the division and within the community to promote social connection health impact awareness (Complete/In Progress)
- Skills Development and Technical Assistance Training (In Progress)
- Social Isolation Collaborative workgroup to help guide and align service access, data and delivery processes(Complete)
- Integrate evidence-based programs and alternative service options to address social connection needs (isolation and loneliness) (In Progress)
- Create evaluation of services and referral follow-up (In Progress)



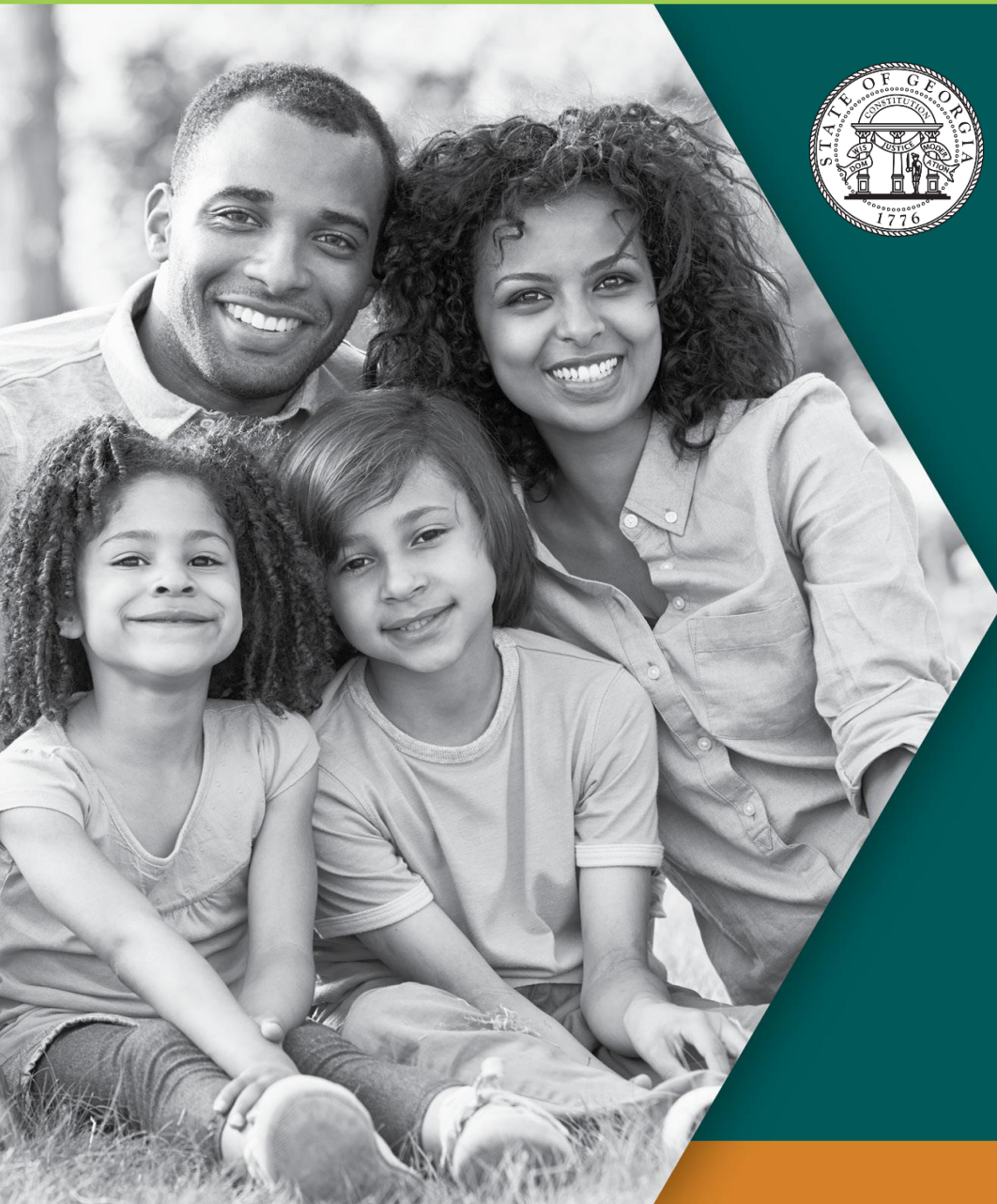


**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Aging Services

Questions?

MaryLea Boatwright Quinn, MSW, LCSW

Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Division of Aging Services



Georgia Department of Human Services

DCSS FFY 2023 Performance Outcomes Board Meeting – November 2023

Christopher Ayers

Assistant Deputy Director Field Operations

DCSS' FFY 2023 Year-end Performance Outcomes

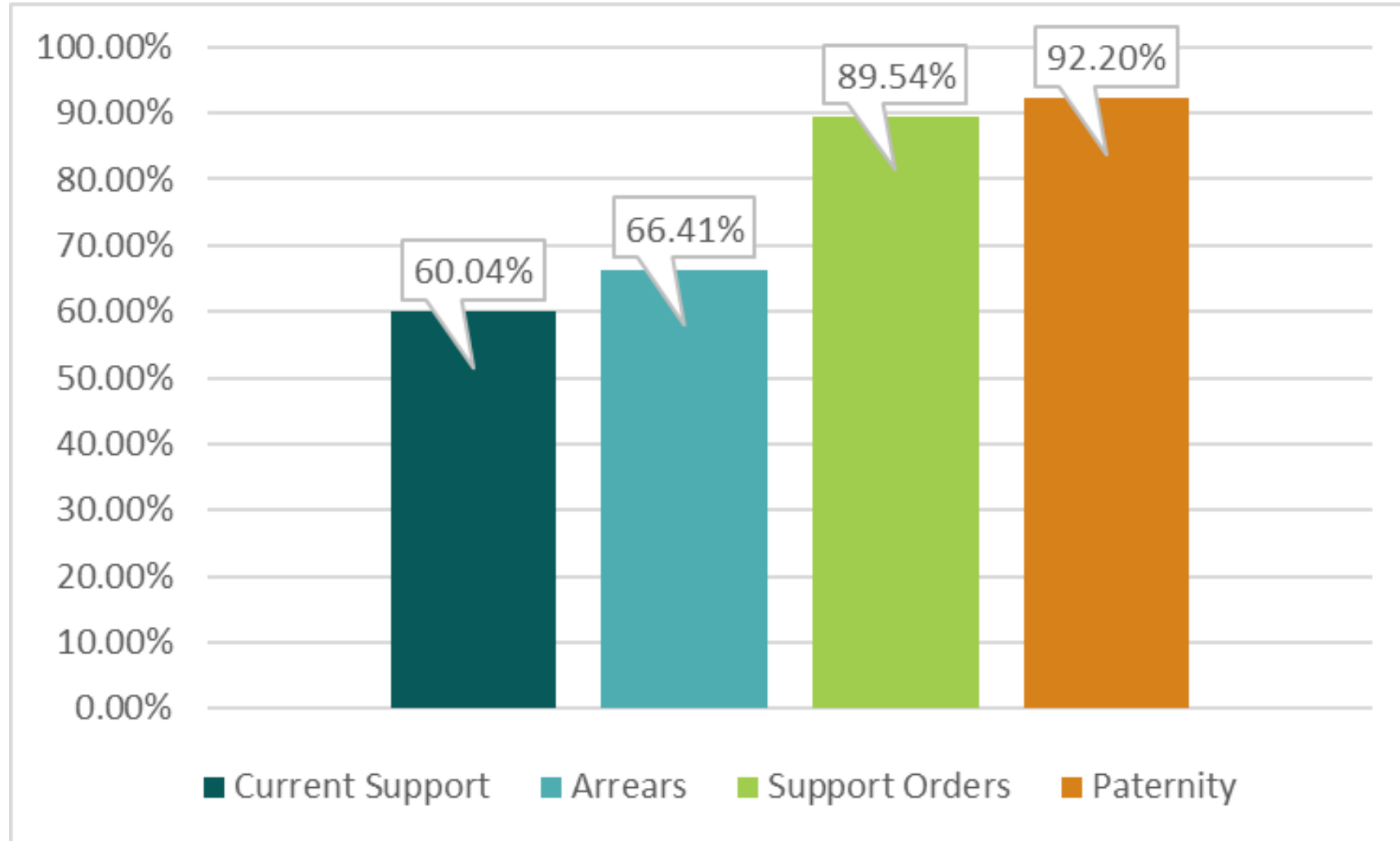


**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Division of Child Support Services



FFY 2023 Performance



Current Support



312,560

Active cases

428,631

Children received services



\$498,261,713

Total amount distributed as current support in
FFY 2023



Arrears



173,204

Cases paying toward arrears



\$172,069,005

Total amount distributed as arrears in FFY 2023

Support Orders



279,875

Cases with a
support order



11,469

Families that
received services
to establish an
order in FFY 2023

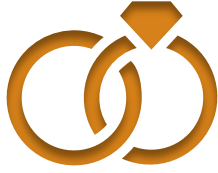


156,215

Families with health
care ordered



Paternity



57,072

Children born to
unmarried parents
in FFY 2022



52,618

Children with
paternity
established in
FFY 2023



9,293

DCSS genetic test
referrals initiated



FFY 2023 DCSS Highlights

.....



Southern Hospitality

Georgia hosted the
2023 ERICSA Training Conference & Exposition

DCSS provided a team of volunteers and
conference speakers to welcome over 550
attendees and make their conference experience
a great one!



Eastern Regional Interstate
Child Support Association



Staff in the Spotlight



Elizabeth (Liz) Schriber
2023 NCSEA Emerging Leaders Award

Mary Stewart

ERICSA Award for Professional Excellence
for a Frontline Child Support Professional



Monica Hall
ERICSA Board of Directors
(Two-year term)

Angie Hill

ERICSA Gordon Moseley Rising Star
Scholarship



Safe Access for Victims

DCSS was awarded a five-year Safe Access for Victims' Economic Security (SAVES) Demonstration Grant to implement comprehensive domestic violence services to survivors who need assistance accessing child support.

\$385,500

March 2023
Supplemental funding
award for SAVES grant

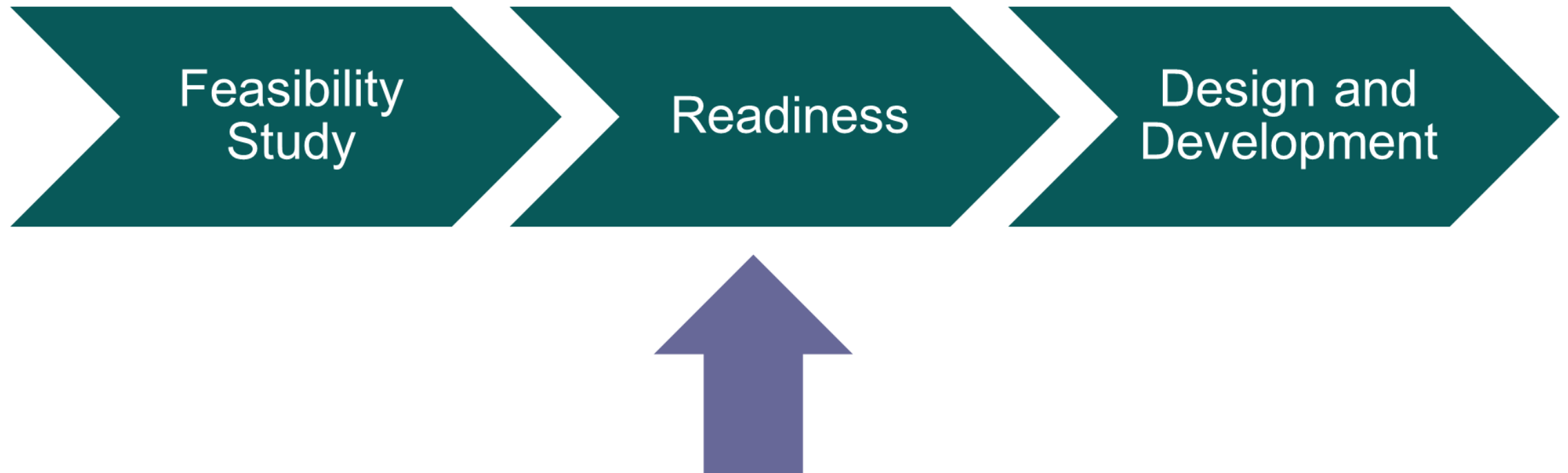
\$210,000

June 2023
Supplemental funding
award for SAVES grant



System Modernization

- On January 31, 2023, DCSS Feasibility Study received approval from the federal Office of Child Support Services (OCSS), paving the way for system modernization.



Questions

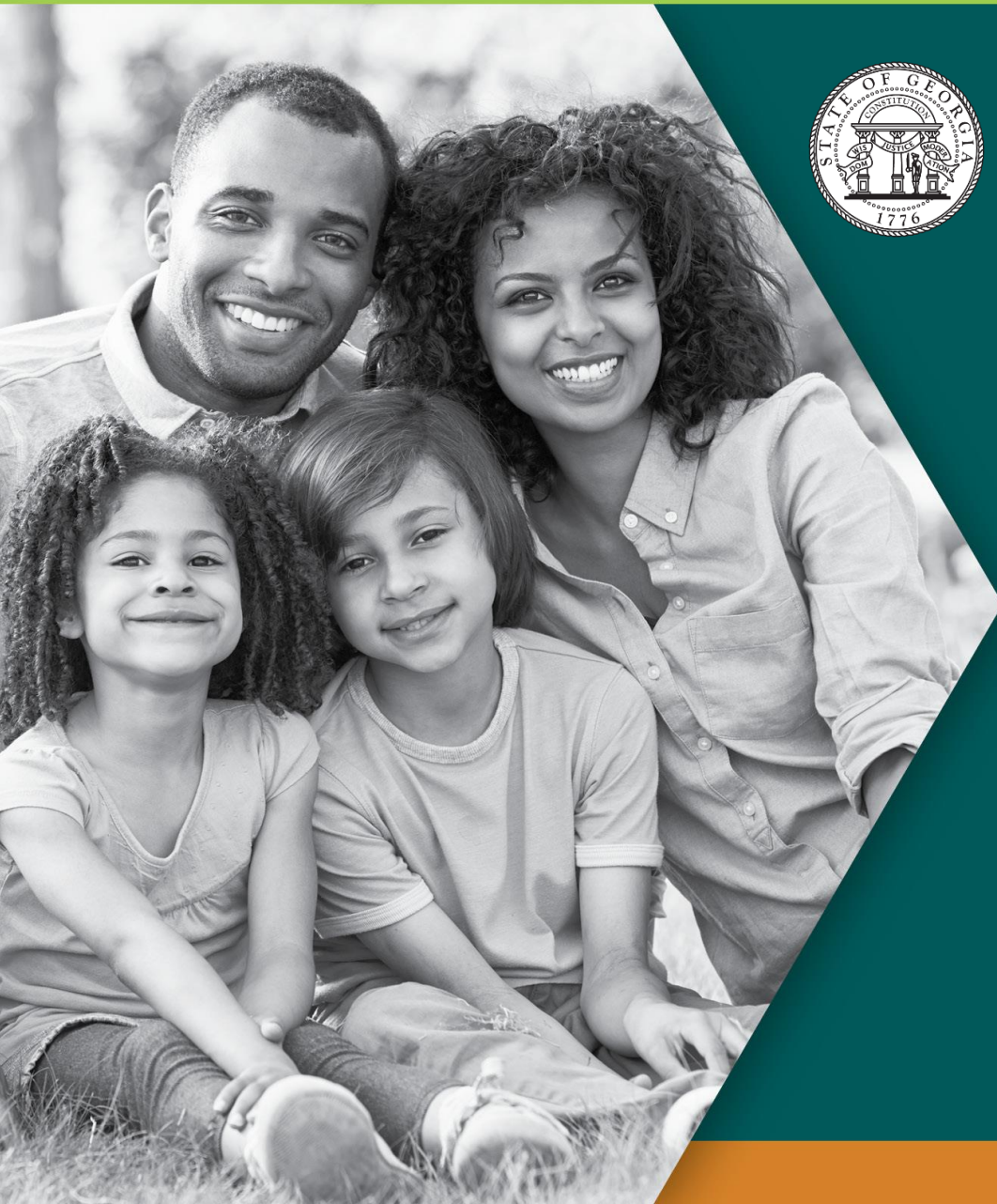


Christopher Ayers

Assistant Deputy Director Field Operations
Division of Child Support Services
Georgia Department of Human Services

christopher.ayers@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services

OFI Monthly Data Report

November 2023

John Hallman

Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Family
Independence

2023 OFI Roadshow

- OFI leadership completed a listening tour of the state, visiting two offices in each district and both Customer Contact Center locations. The purpose was to hear directly from the workers and ensure leadership and field priorities are aligned.
- These visits focused on improvements through People, Process, and Technology.

People

- Increase overtime participation
- Better support new hires
- Encourage veteran workers to become supervisors
- Introduce OFI Career Path

Process

- Meet capacity – 13 cases standard
- Improve case registration process

Technology

- To better route work
- To streamline the eligibility determination process



2023 OFI Roadshow



Muscogee County



Troup County



Ware County



Richmond County



Fulton County



DeKalb County



2023 OFI Roadshow



Laurens County



Lowndes County



Chatham County



CCC Clayton County



2023 OFI Roadshow



Floyd County



Gordon County



Clarke County



CCC Albany



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

Completed:

- Staff Retention and Acquisitions
- D-SNAP Pre-Registration System
- QR Codes on Forms
- The Work Number – TALX Corporation
- UGA Hunger Study

Ongoing:

- Field Staff Phone System
- Policy and Manual Management System



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

Staff Retention and Acquisitions

Financial support to pay salaries, supplements, overtime, stipends

- Supplements to support staff pay until a long-term compensation solution could be reached
- Overtime pay for caseworkers to increase capacity to meet the increased workload associated with the public health emergency unwinding
- Cover the cost of hiring new case managers as we expand our workforce to meet demand



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) Pre-Registration System

Food assistance to low-income households with food loss caused by a natural disaster

- Manual process creates long lines, delays benefits access
- Online pre-registration system simplifies process by removing:
 - Paper applications
 - Client information collection during the interview
 - Documentation verification
- Decreases time spent per client, reduces human errors and increases efficiency
- Caseworkers can process D-SNAP applications remotely from anywhere in Georgia

The screenshot displays the 'D-SNAP Pre-Registration' web application. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Georgia Department of Human Services logo, 'GA Gateway', '¿Habla Español?', and 'Logout' links. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > D-SNAP Pre-Registration'. A horizontal progress bar with eight orange circular markers indicates the steps: 'Start', 'Head of Household Information', 'Household Situation', 'Household Members', 'Income', 'Resources & Expenses', 'Supporting Documents', and 'Acknowledgements & Certifications'. The main content area is titled 'D-SNAP Pre-Registration' and contains a 'Program Description' section explaining the program's purpose and eligibility. Below this is a 'Completing the Pre-Registration' section with instructions and a list of required information for each household member. A 'Next' button is visible at the bottom of the form.

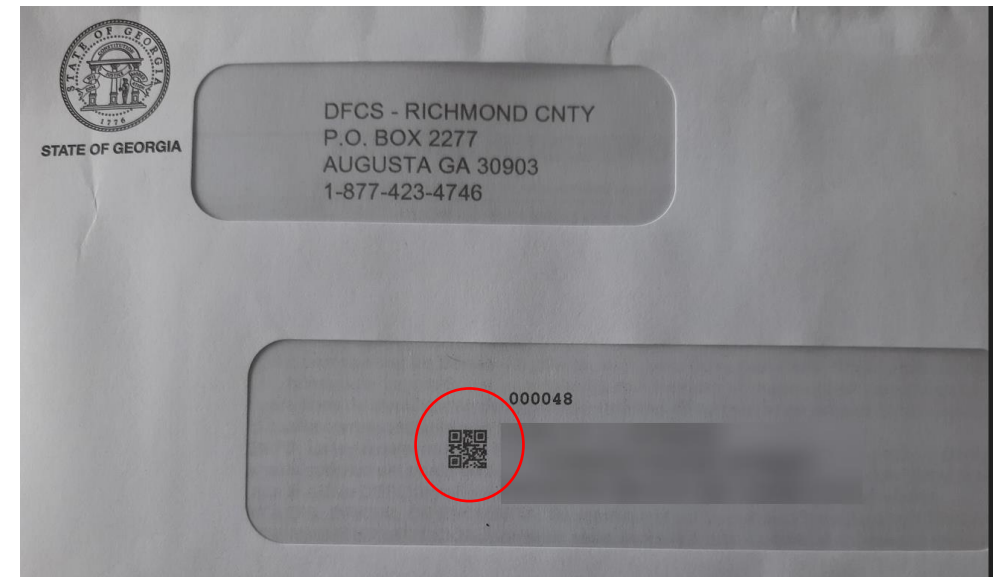


American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

QR Codes on Mail and Customer Forms

QR codes have been added to all Gateway generated notices sent to customers to automate these previously manual processes:

- Returned mail
- Routing of documents returned by customers
- Tagging of documents in our content management solution



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

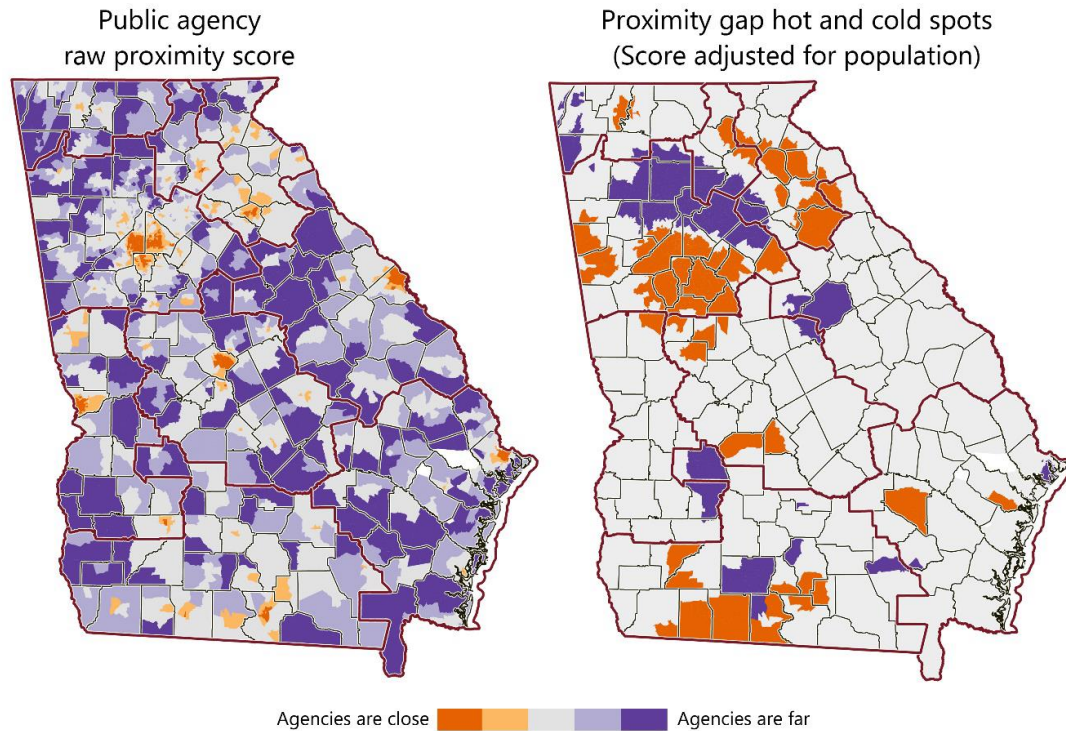
The Work Number – TALX Corporation Employment and wage verification

- Caseworkers must verify client employment and wages
- Caseworkers no longer need to request information from clients to verify income
- Work Number offers real time data from employer databases
 - Also known as Equifax Workforce Solutions or Equifax Verification Services
- SNAP and TANF share costs for use



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

UGA Hunger Study



The University of Georgia team researched the availability, accessibility, and use of charitable food assistance programs and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Georgia in partnership with DHS and Georgia's foodbank network.

The study:

- offered insight into strategies to improve equitable and effective food assistance
- provides unprecedented data on food pantry operations and individual clients



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

Field Staff Phone System

Moved from three different phone systems to one

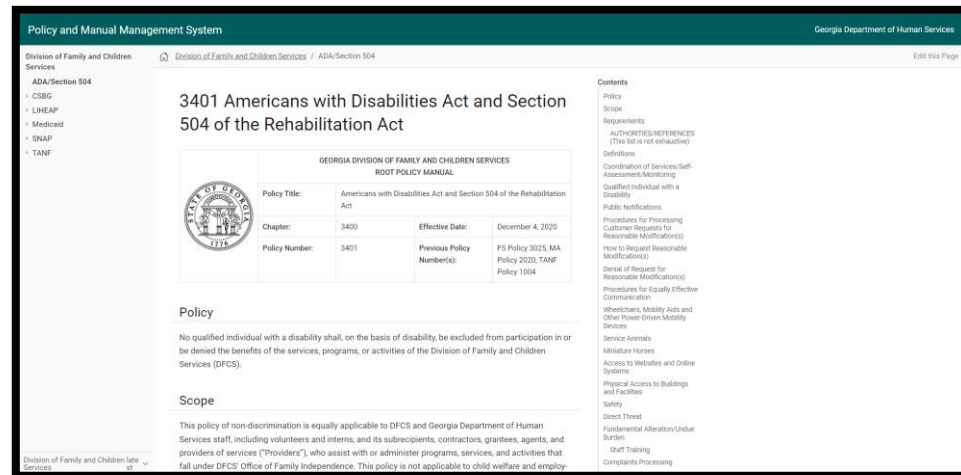
- Reduces cost
- Technology alignment with the Customer Contact Center
- Moved from basic features to added functions:
 - Calls transcribed so case managers can focus on talking to clients instead of taking notes
 - Call history to record completed and attempted calls for audit/hearing purposes
 - Call monitoring for training and supervision
 - Barge-in capabilities that allow supervisors to join calls to assist case managers



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects

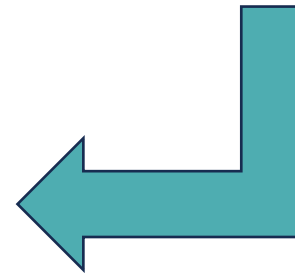
Old System: ODIS

- PDF documents
- Unfriendly user interface
- Labor intensive backend



New: Policy and Manual Management System

- Modern web-based navigation
- Advanced search capabilities
- Chat bot capability
- Easier backend maintenance



Medicaid Redetermination Update

- We've reached the midway point in the 14-month, federally mandated Medicaid redetermination process.
- DHS and DCH are continuing our multi-platform campaign to reach members with critical information and the actions they can take to stay covered.



- Like all states, Georgia must complete the process for all 2.8 million members by May 2024.



Medicaid Redetermination Update Contd.

- DHS and DCH are sharing information, action steps, and resources with members in the following ways:
 - Ongoing digital advertising and social media outreach campaign that has reached 111 million impressions so far
 - Television and radio advertising that has reached 14 million impressions to date
 - Forging community partnerships and hosting community briefings to share information with and hear concerns from local service organizations and community leaders
 - Media outreach campaign that has resulted in more than 200 placements in outlets that reach millions of people per month
 - Outdoor advertising, including high-visibility billboards and bus stop signage

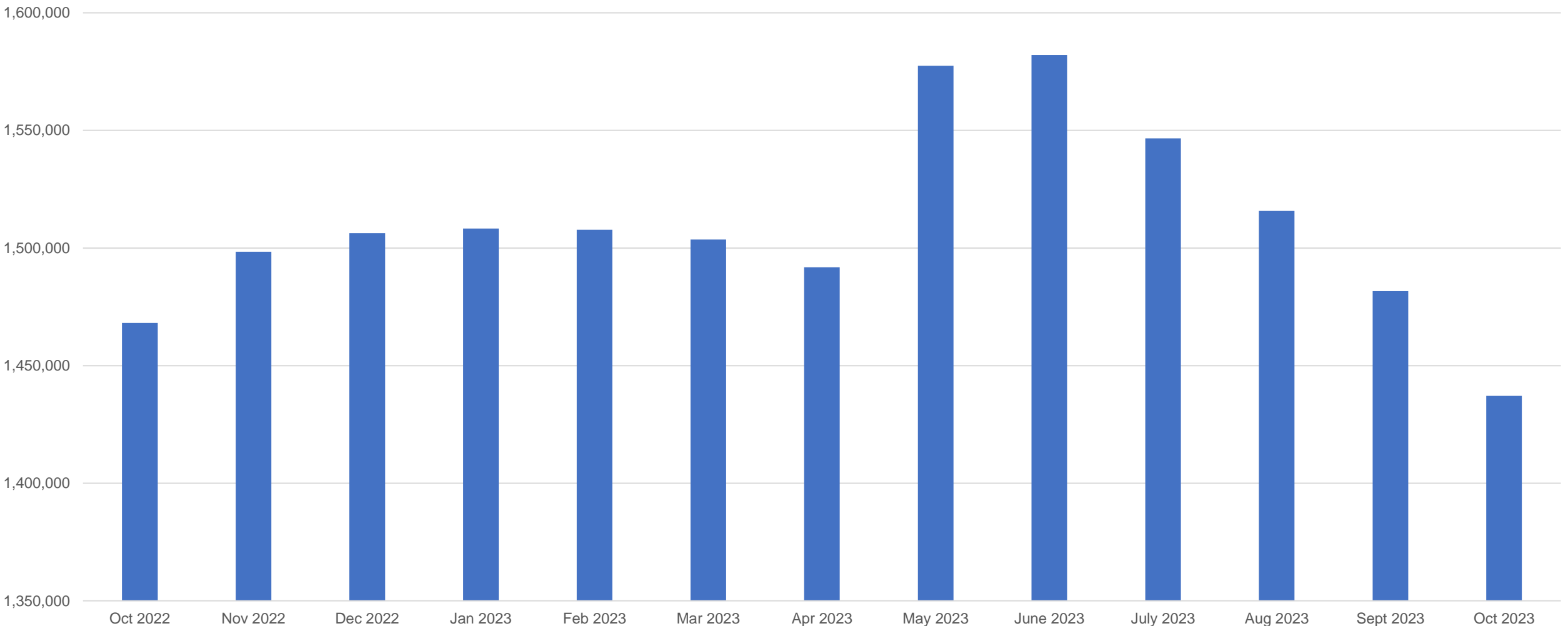


Medicaid Redetermination Update Contd.

- Direct mail sent to more than 130,000 difficult-to-reach Medicaid members across the state
- DHS participation in baby fairs, public school gatherings, and community events
- Outreach to health care providers and clinics around the state to provide key information and resources to share with their patients



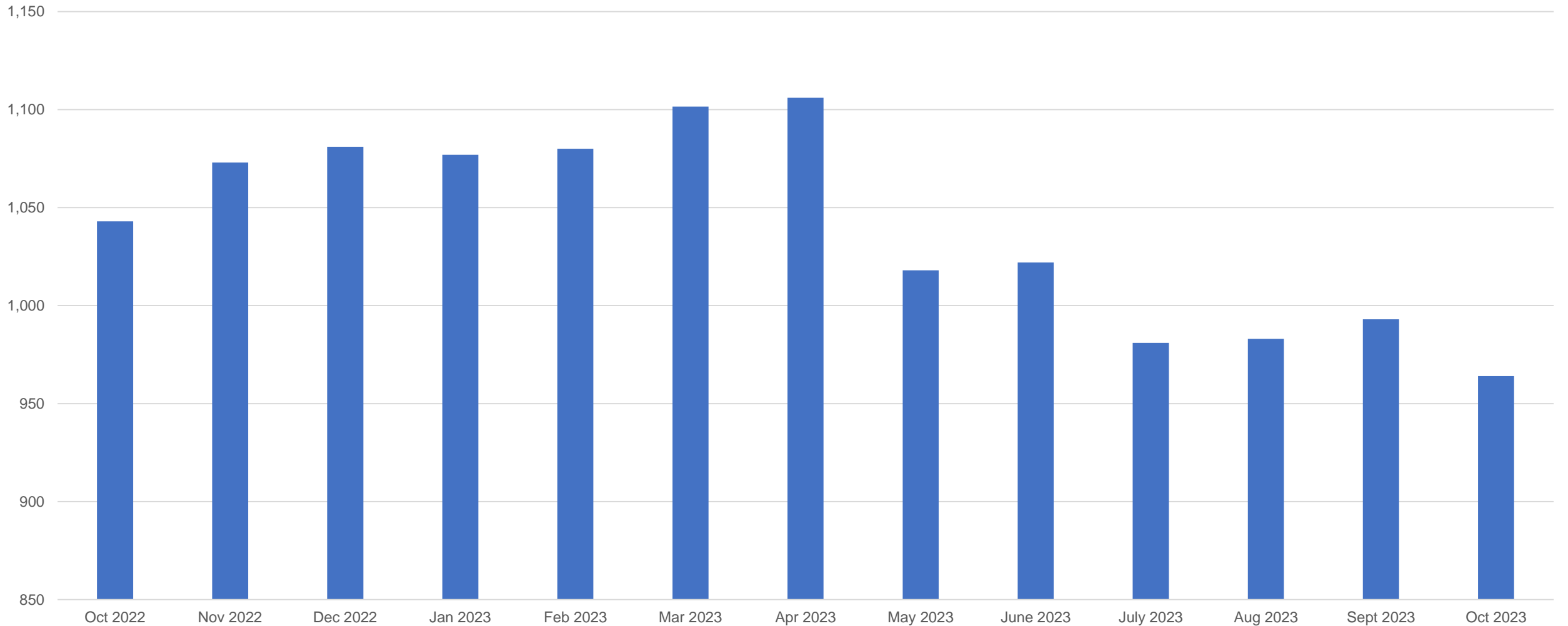
Unduplicated Families Served Across All Programs



There were 1,437,136 active unduplicated families in October 2023.

Source: DFCS Transparency Data

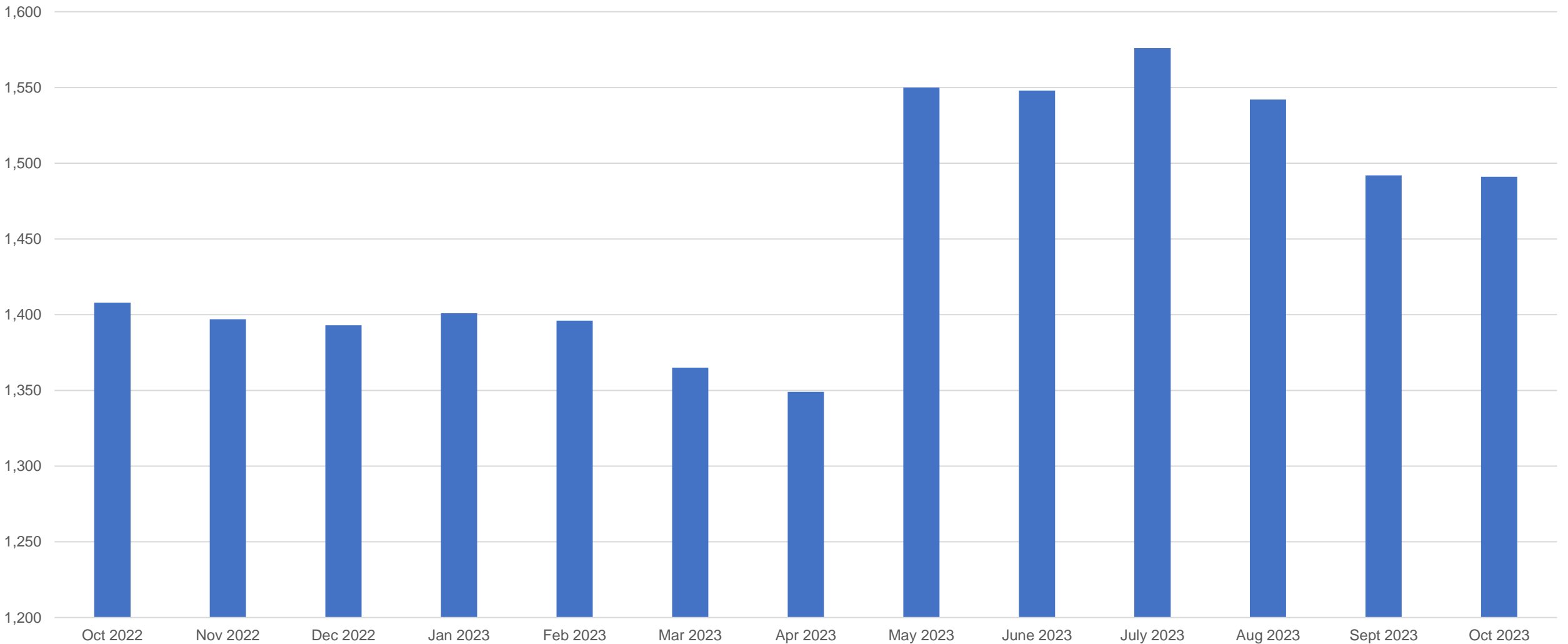
Caseload Size



The average caseload size in October 2023 was 964.
Source: DFCS Transparency Data



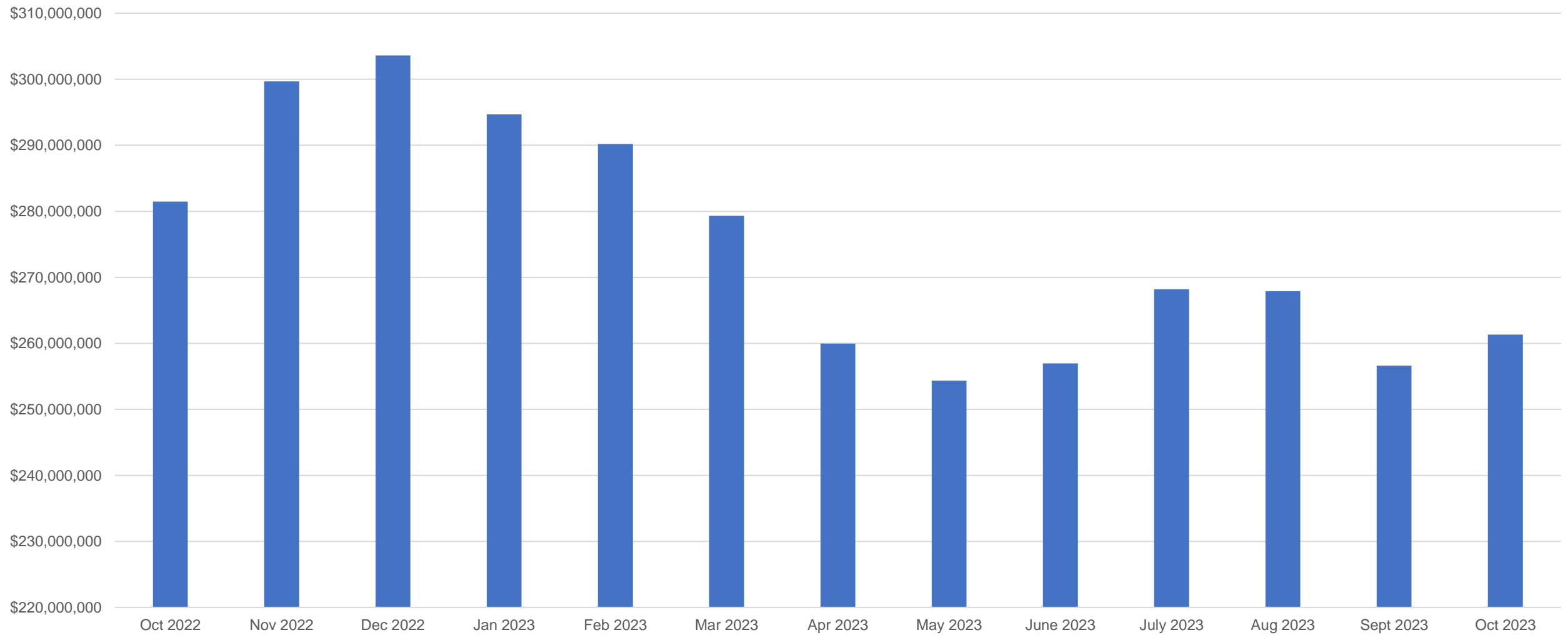
Frontline Staffing Levels



Our frontline staffing level (staff processing cases) was 1,491 in October 2023.
Source: DFCS Transparency Data



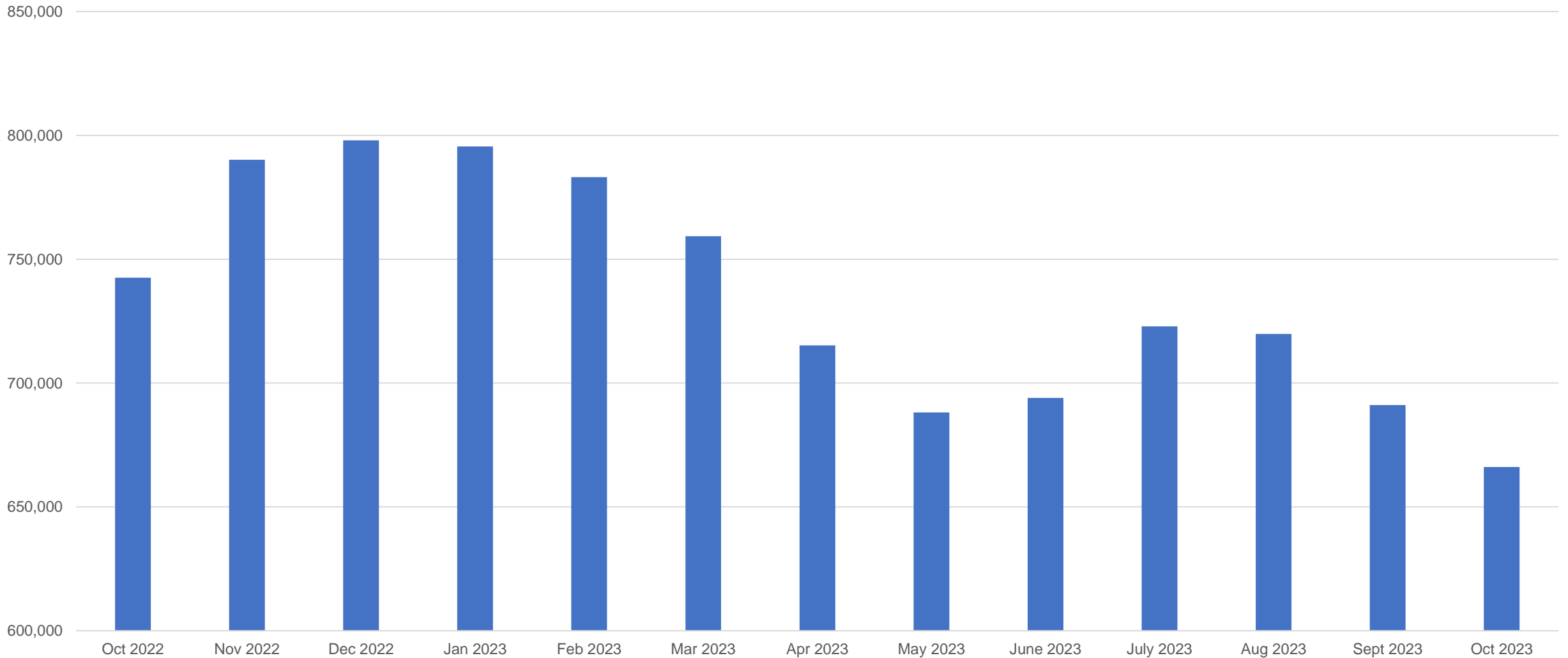
SNAP Issuance



SNAP issuance in October 2023 totaled \$261,311,806. The average issuance per family was \$392.
Source: DFCS Transparency Data



SNAP Families

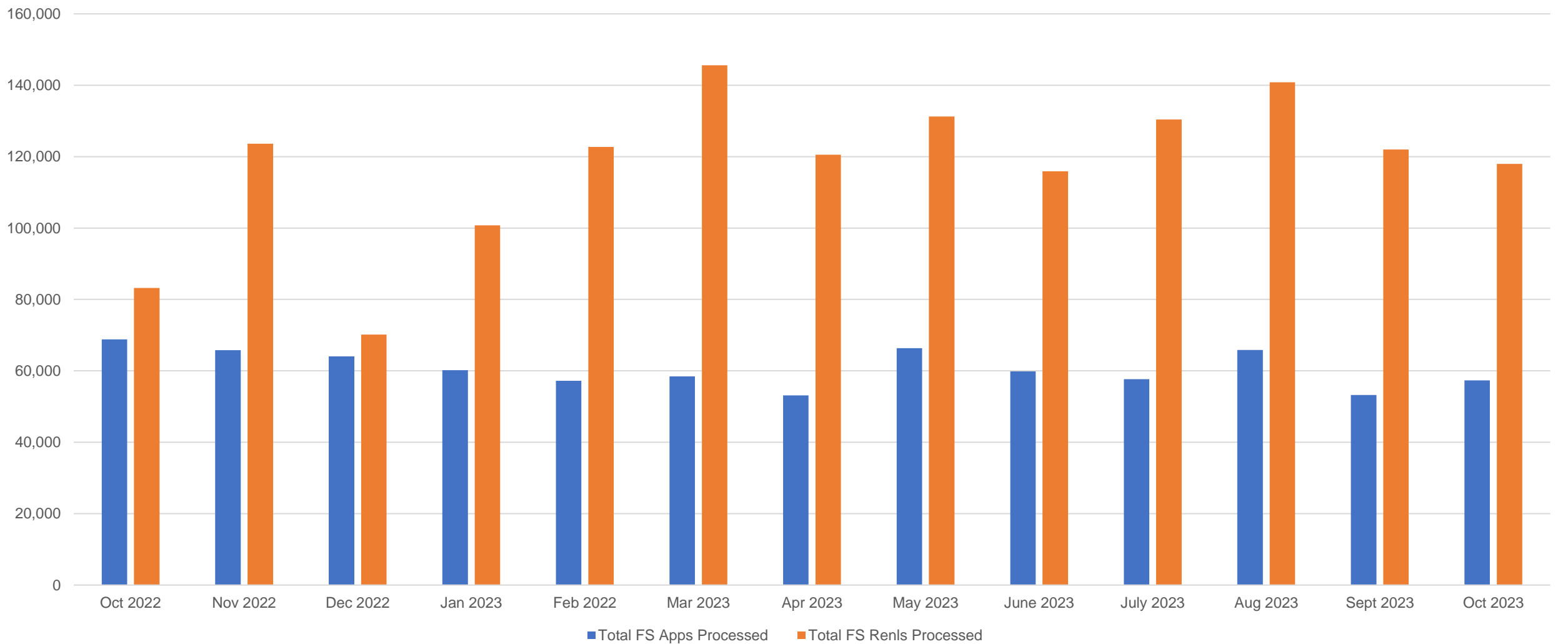


There were 666,098 SNAP families in October 2023.

Source: DFCS Transparency Data



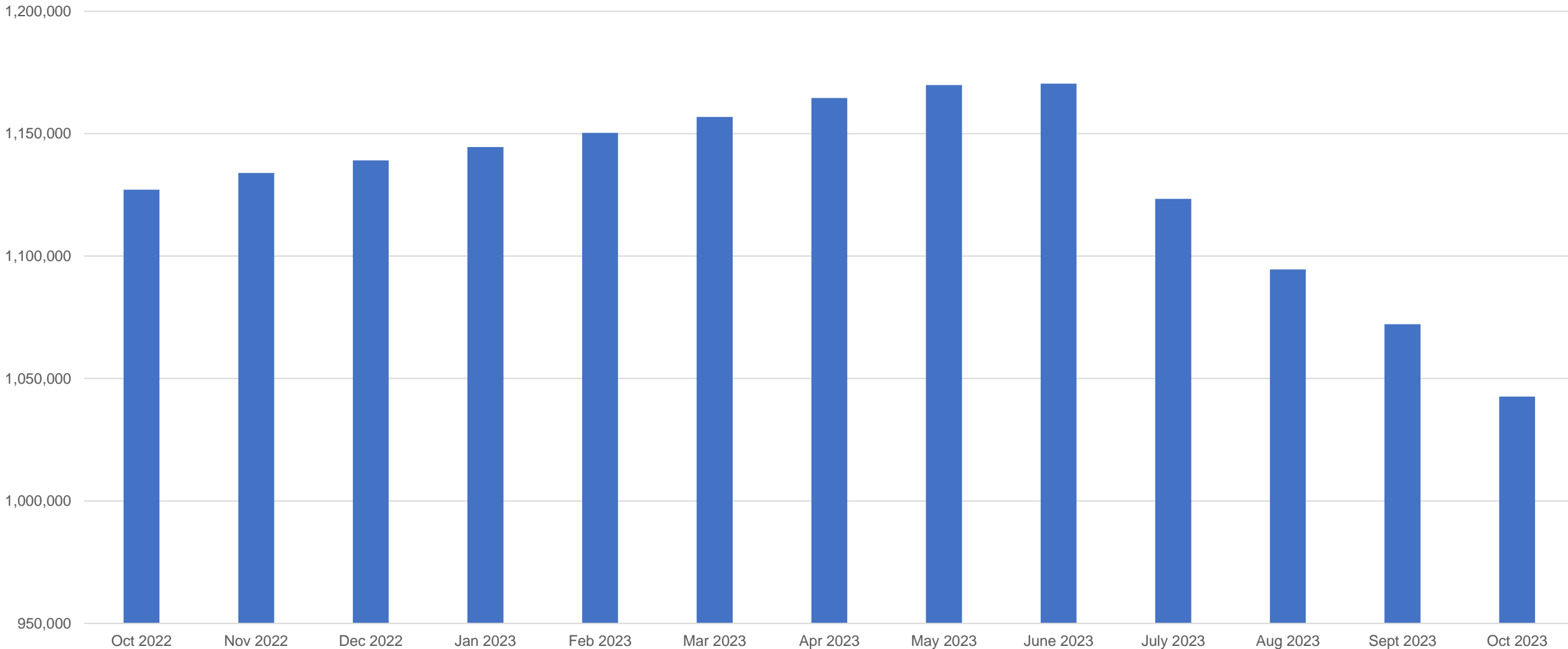
SNAP Applications and Renewals Processed



57,308 SNAP applications and 117,982 SNAP renewals were processed in October 2023.
Data Source: DFCS Transparency Data



Active Medical Assistance Families

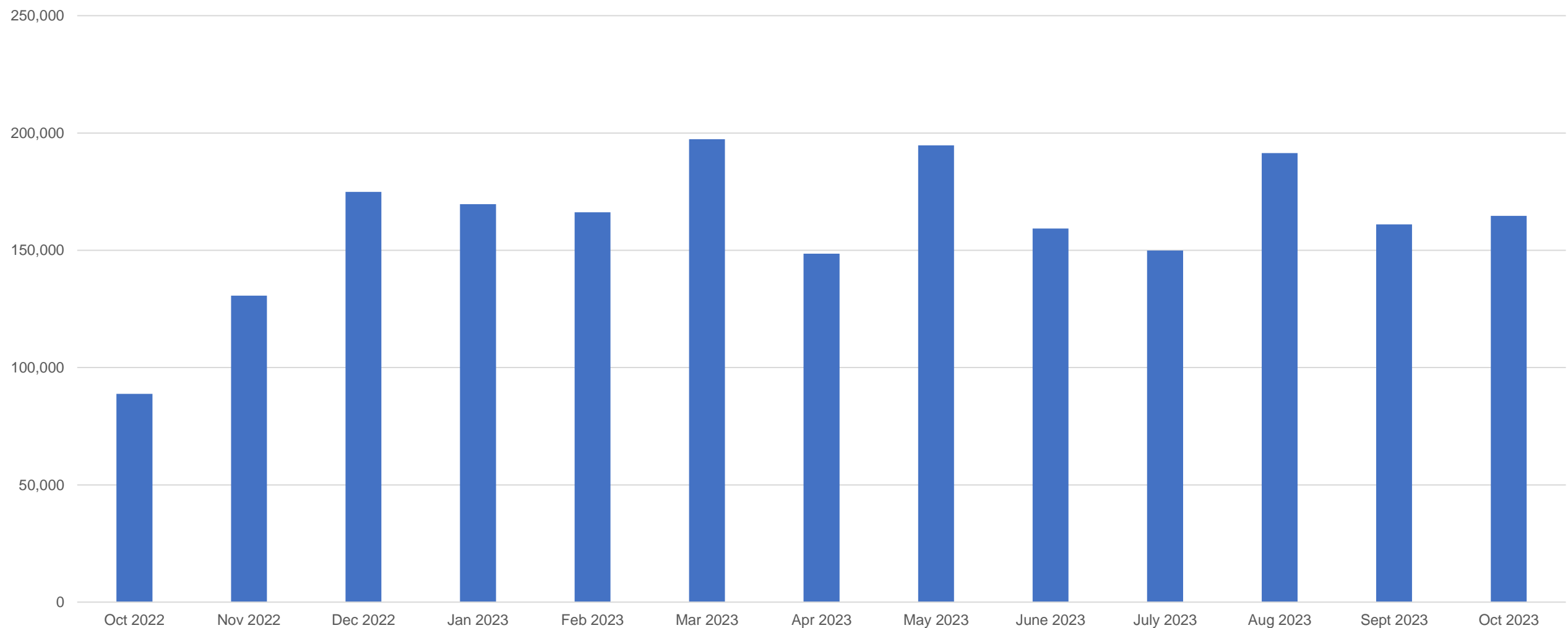


There were 1,042,617 active Medical Assistance families in October 2023.

Data Source: DFCS Transparency Data



Total Medical Assistance Applications Processed

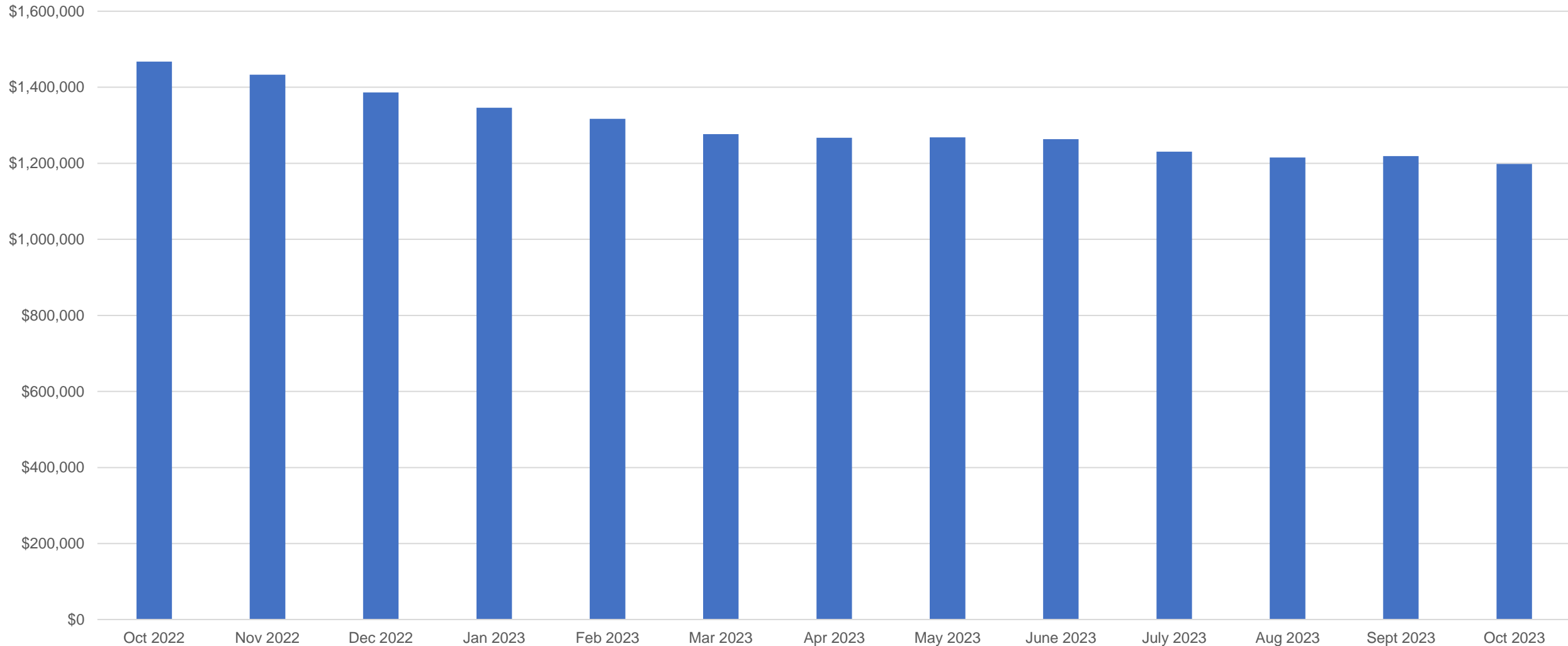


164,709 Medical Assistance applications were processed in October 2023.

Data Source: DFCS Transparency Data



TANF Issuance

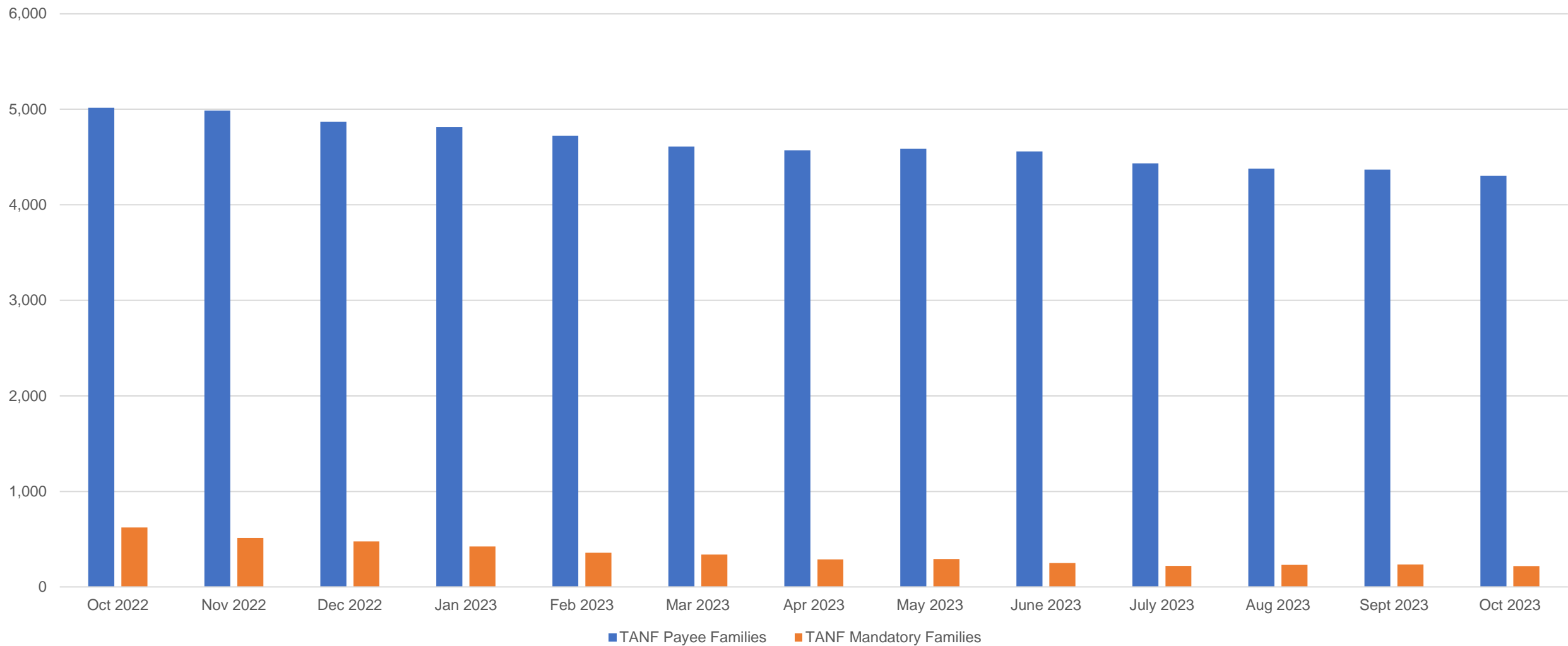


TANF issuance in October 2023 totaled \$1,198,369. The average issuance per family was \$265.

Source: DFCS Transparency Data



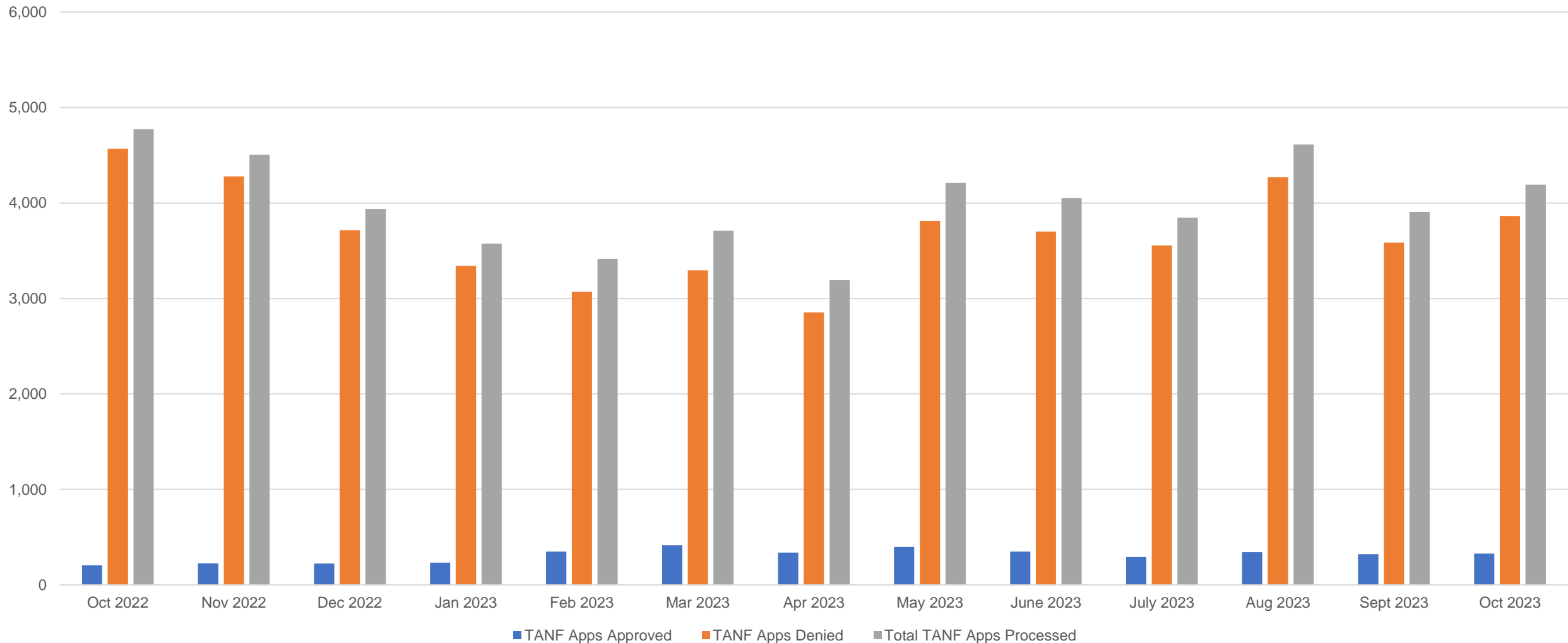
TANF Work Mandatory vs. Payee Only Cases



There were 4,522 TANF families in October 2023.
Data Source: DFCS Transparency Data



TANF Applications Approved and Denied



4,192 TANF applications were processed in October 2023.

Data Source: DFCS Transparency Data



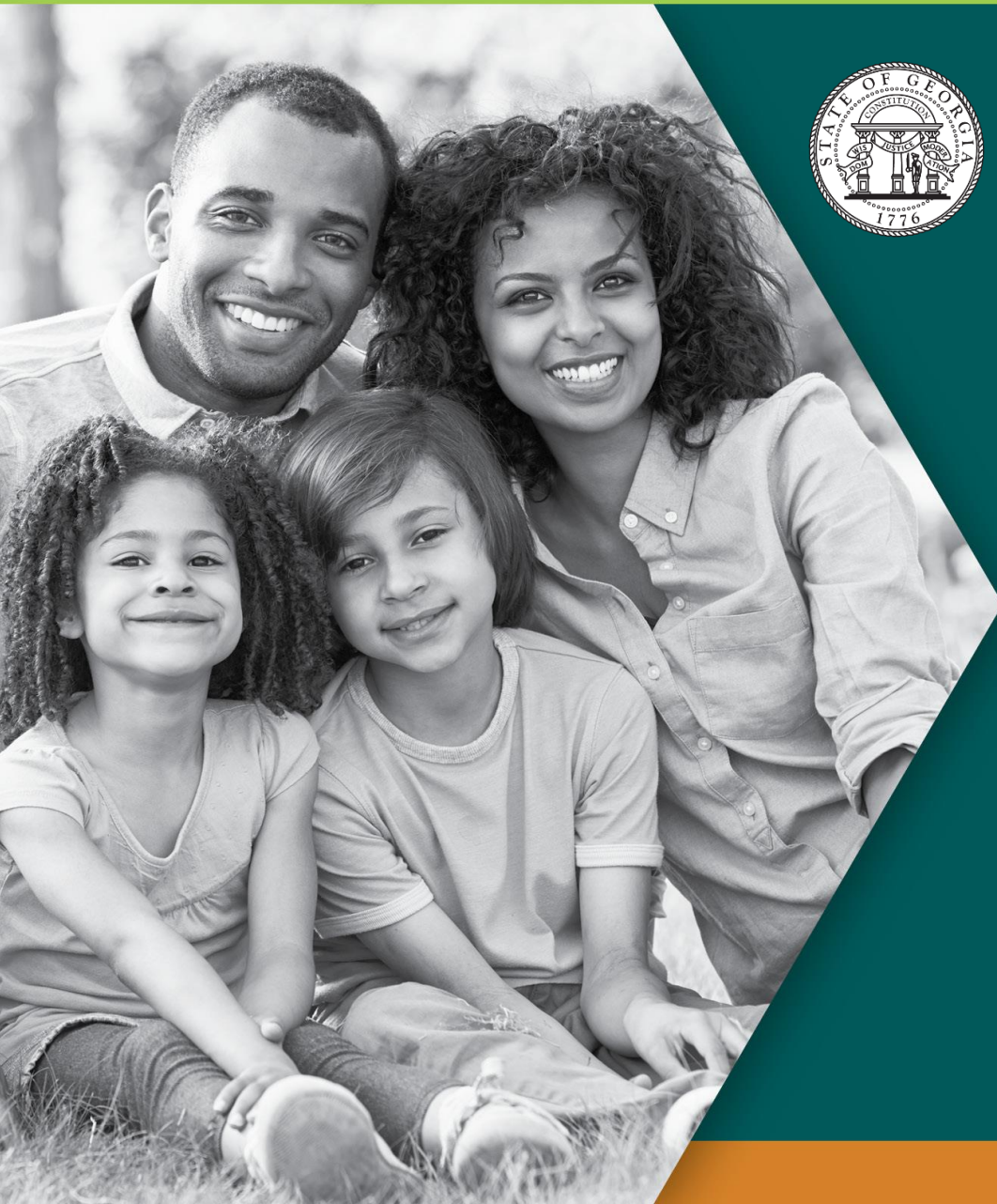
Questions?

John Hallman

Deputy Commissioner | Office of Family Independence

john.hallman@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Updates and Monthly Data Report

Mary Havick

Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Child Welfare

Technology Modernization

- Throughout 2023, DFCS has prioritized our technology modernization efforts.
- This year:
 - **Argo Placements** launched statewide and was updated to allow placement search across all placement types.
 - Ninety-eight new delivered service providers were onboarded in the **Argo Community Portal**, making our network of providers stronger than ever.
 - **mCase** launched statewide and is helping case managers remotely manage their cases
 - Phase one of **Georgia Communicare** launched in DFCS Regions 2 and 5 with functionality.



Argo Placements

- In October, DFCS launched Argo Placements statewide.
- Argo Placements is connected to SHINES, our existing DHS System of Record, and supports the placement process by allowing DFCS staff to:
 - Search for a foster home or group home for a child by matching the child's needs to the home's attributes
 - Create the necessary application paperwork electronically, for any placement type, by leveraging all data available within SHINES
- Within Argo Placements, case managers receive:
 - Detailed search results which show the placement locations that best fit the child's needs
 - Contact information for the selected placement locations
 - A shareable application to initiate the placement of the child in a home



Argo Placements cont.

Search for placement:

- Case managers can search for a placement based on the child's attributes and needs.
- There are several placement types within Argo Placements such as DFCS Foster Home and Child Placing Agency (CPA) Foster Home.

The screenshot displays the 'Argo Placements' application interface. The top navigation bar includes the Georgia Department of Human Services logo and the title 'Argo Placements'. The main content area is divided into a sidebar with 'Placements', 'Saved Work', and 'Help' options, and a main panel with a progress bar showing 'Confirmation', 'Characteristics', 'Age & Capacity', 'Summary', and 'Search' steps. The 'Confirmation' step is active, showing a confirmation message: 'Please confirm that you have applied for a waiver or that no waiver is needed.' with a toggle switch set to 'I have applied for a waiver/no waiver needed.' Below this, there are two sections: '1) Verify the program designation and home you're searching for.' and '2) What types of placements should we search for?'. The first section has input fields for 'Program Designation' (set to 'Foster Parent Waiver Only for BWO') and 'Home Type' (set to 'Basic'). The second section shows a list of placement types with checkboxes: 'DFCS Foster Home' (checked), 'Child Placing Agency (CPA) Foster Home' (checked), 'Child Caring Institution (CCI)' (unchecked), 'Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF)' (unchecked), 'Transitional Living Program (TLP)' (unchecked), 'Independent Living Program (ILP)' (unchecked), 'Maternity CPA' (unchecked), and 'Maternity Home CCI' (unchecked). A note at the bottom of this section states: 'Values in green support search. Values in gray support the Universal Application only.' Below the placement types, there is a section for 'Hansen, Nathan' with a 'Add sibling' button. This section displays the child's name, DOB (12/21/2017, Age 5), and Person ID (9432354). The final step, '3) Verify the following demographic data for Nathan before moving on.', shows a 'VERIFIED ADDRESS' section with fields for 'Address1' (1 MAIN ST.), 'Address2' (empty), and 'City' (CONYERS).



Argo Placements cont.

Detailed search results:

- Case managers will be presented with a list of available homes based on the search criteria entered for the child.
- The homes receive a score based on location, school district, placement characteristics, and current capacity.
- Case managers can access detailed information for each home listed within the search results.

The screenshot shows the 'Argo Placements' interface for a child named Richmond, Ella (DOB: 6/25/2012, Age 10, Person ID: 19927489). The interface includes a sidebar with 'Placements', 'Saved Work', and 'Help'. A progress bar at the top indicates steps: Confirmation, Characteristics, Age & Capacity, Summary, and Search. The main content area displays a table of available homes with columns for HOME, TYPE, SLOTS/CAPACITY, and SCORE.

HOME	TYPE	SLOTS/CAPACITY	SCORE
<input type="checkbox"/> Coleman, Donald Or Toshib Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Christian City Crossroads	1 Slot Open, Capacity 5	81.67%
<input type="checkbox"/> Chadwick, Gwen Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Meridian-Macon	3 Slots Open, Capacity 3	81.67%
<input type="checkbox"/> Baker, Matthew Or Kimberly Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Fairbridge	5 Slots Open, Capacity 5	81.67%
<input type="checkbox"/> Kemp, Jeannie Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Murphy-Harport Children's Center	1 Slot Open, Capacity 3	81.67%
<input type="checkbox"/> Burroughs, George Or Jerr Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Meridian Shipping Stores - Macon	2 Slots Open, Capacity 4	81.67%
<input type="checkbox"/> Hilburn, Peggy Carroll County	Non-DFCS Home Murphy-Harport	2 Slots Open, Capacity 4	81.67%

The screenshot shows the 'Argo Placements' interface for a child named Richmond, Ella (DOB: 6/25/2012, Age 11, Person ID: 19927489). The interface includes a sidebar with 'Placements', 'Saved Work', and 'Help'. A progress bar at the top indicates steps: Confirmation, Characteristics, Age & Capacity, Summary, and Search. The main content area displays a table of available homes with columns for HOME, TYPE, SLOTS/CAPACITY, and SCORE. The 'CC/ILP/TLP' tab is selected, and a search bar is visible.

HOME	TYPE	SLOTS/CAPACITY	SCORE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Georgia Baptist Child Palmetto Fayette County	Child Caring Institution Palmetto Campus	59 Slots Open, Capacity 76	70%
<input type="checkbox"/> Methodist Home - Valdosta Chatham County	Child Caring Institution dba Valdosta Group Home	6 Slots Open, Capacity 12	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Georgia Baptist Chrm - Baxley Forsyth County	Child Caring Institution Baxley Campus	34 Slots Open, Capacity 48	20%



Argo Placements Cont.

Detailed home information:

- Case managers will be able to open additional details for each home loaded in the search results.
- Here, they will be able to see where there are matches and mismatches to a child's needs.
- They can access information such as capacity, current placements, distance to relatives, and home interests.

Home Detail

Home Information

Home Name Tobe, Jonathan Or Daniels	Legal Name Tobe, Jonathan or Daniels, Xavier	Resource ID 16928108
Category Resource Parent	Status Approved (Full) - Active	
AD Exchange Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver Exists	

Home Demographics

Religion Protestant	Language English
Respite <input type="checkbox"/> Non-DFCS Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Current Home Study Exists	Marital Status Married Couple
School District Fulton County	Non-DFCS Certifying Entity Wellroot Family Services- Newnan
	<input type="checkbox"/> Previous Home Study
	Elementary Renaissance ES
	Middle Sandy Springs Middle School
	High Creekside High School

Address List

Type Primary	Vendor ID 178858	Address 578 Gantwood Way, Fairburn, GA 30208-4668	County Fulton
-----------------	---------------------	--	------------------

DONE



Argo Community Portal

The Argo Community Portal is designed to improve the management of the Service Authorization process and interactions with delivered services providers by:

- Providing case managers with a platform to engage providers directly, reducing previous research and response times
- Giving providers a common platform to access and manage their workload
- Increasing providers' access to Service Authorizations

Over the past six months, **more than 100,000** service requests have come through the Argo Community Portal.



mCase

mCase gives our case managers access to case data and the ability to document case notes, forms, photographs, and more in the field. mCase provides users the opportunity to:

- Access electronic versions of forms, minimizing the need to carry paper forms
- Upload photos to the case directly from their mobile device
- Collect electronic signatures from parents
- Reduce the timeline to submit case documentation



GEORGIA
mCase

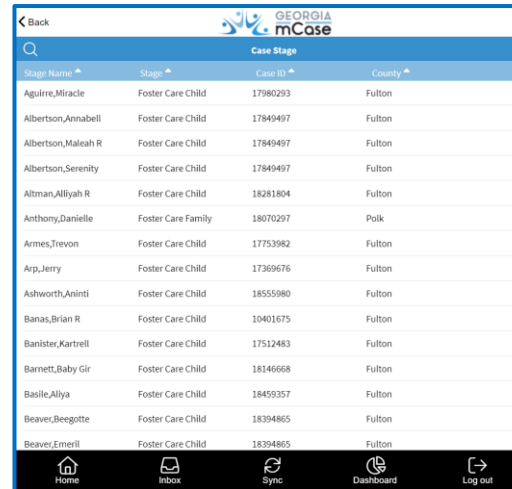
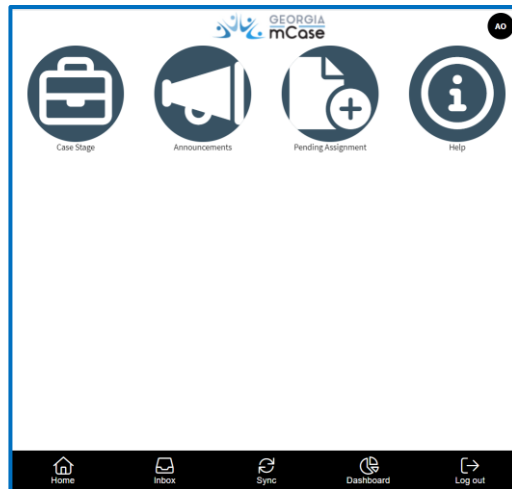
sarah.caseworker

Password

Offline mode ☒


Log In

[Forgot Password?](#)



Stage Name	Stage	Case ID	County
Aguirre,Miracle	Foster Care Child	17980293	Fulton
Albertson,Annabell	Foster Care Child	17849497	Fulton
Albertson,Maleah R	Foster Care Child	17849497	Fulton
Albertson,Serenity	Foster Care Child	17849497	Fulton
Altman,Allyiah R	Foster Care Child	18281804	Fulton
Anthony,Danielle	Foster Care Family	18070297	Polk
Armes,Trevon	Foster Care Child	17753982	Fulton
Arp,Jerry	Foster Care Child	17369676	Fulton
Ashworth,Aninti	Foster Care Child	18555980	Fulton
Banas,Brian R	Foster Care Child	10401675	Fulton
Banister,Kartrell	Foster Care Child	17512483	Fulton
Barnett,Baby Gir	Foster Care Child	18146668	Fulton
Basile,Allyia	Foster Care Child	18459357	Fulton
Beaver,Beegette	Foster Care Child	18394865	Fulton
Beaver,Emriel	Foster Care Child	18394865	Fulton

Home Inbox Sync Dashboard Log out



GEORGIA
mCase

17849497 - Albertson,Maleah R - Foster Care Child

Case Stage

Case Information

Case Name Albertson,Rose

Case ID 17849497

County Fulton

Stage Details

Stage ID 18779592

Stage Name Albertson,Maleah R

Stage Foster Care Child

Date Opened 07/11/2018

Date Closed

Home Inbox Sync Dashboard Log out



Georgia Communicare

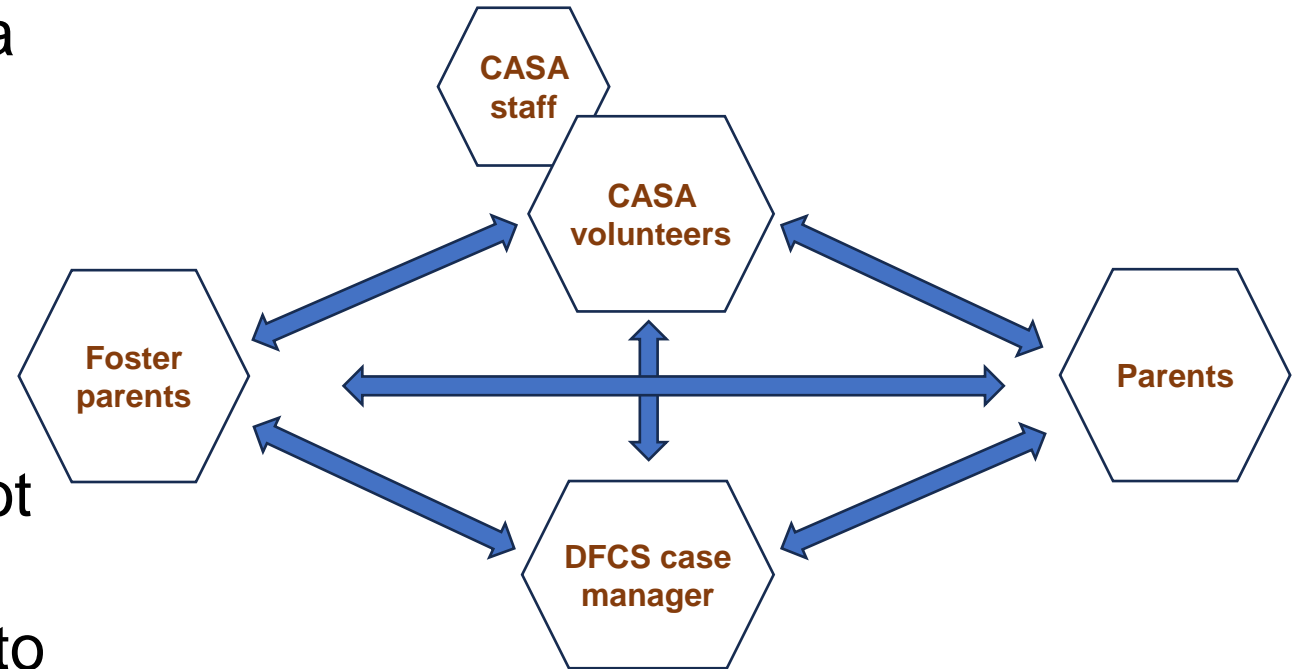


- In September, we launched phase one of Georgia Communicare in DFCS Regions 2 and 5.
- Georgia Communicare is a set of interconnected web portals designed to support and enhance child welfare programs.
- It serves three primary user groups: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), foster parents, and parents.
- Georgia Communicare seamlessly integrates with SHINES, our existing DHS System of Record, to ensure efficient and secure data management and communication.
- In December, we will pilot the Georgia Communicare mobile app in DFCS Regions 2 and 5.
- In early 2024, we will begin the statewide rollout.



Georgia Communicare Cont.

- Georgia Communicare enhances and streamlines communication and data access between DFCS case managers and external parties to a foster care case.
- Until the creation of Georgia Communicare, our foster parents, parents, and CASA partners have not had direct access to data and documents. This has required them to request documents from case managers manually, usually causing an information request backlog.

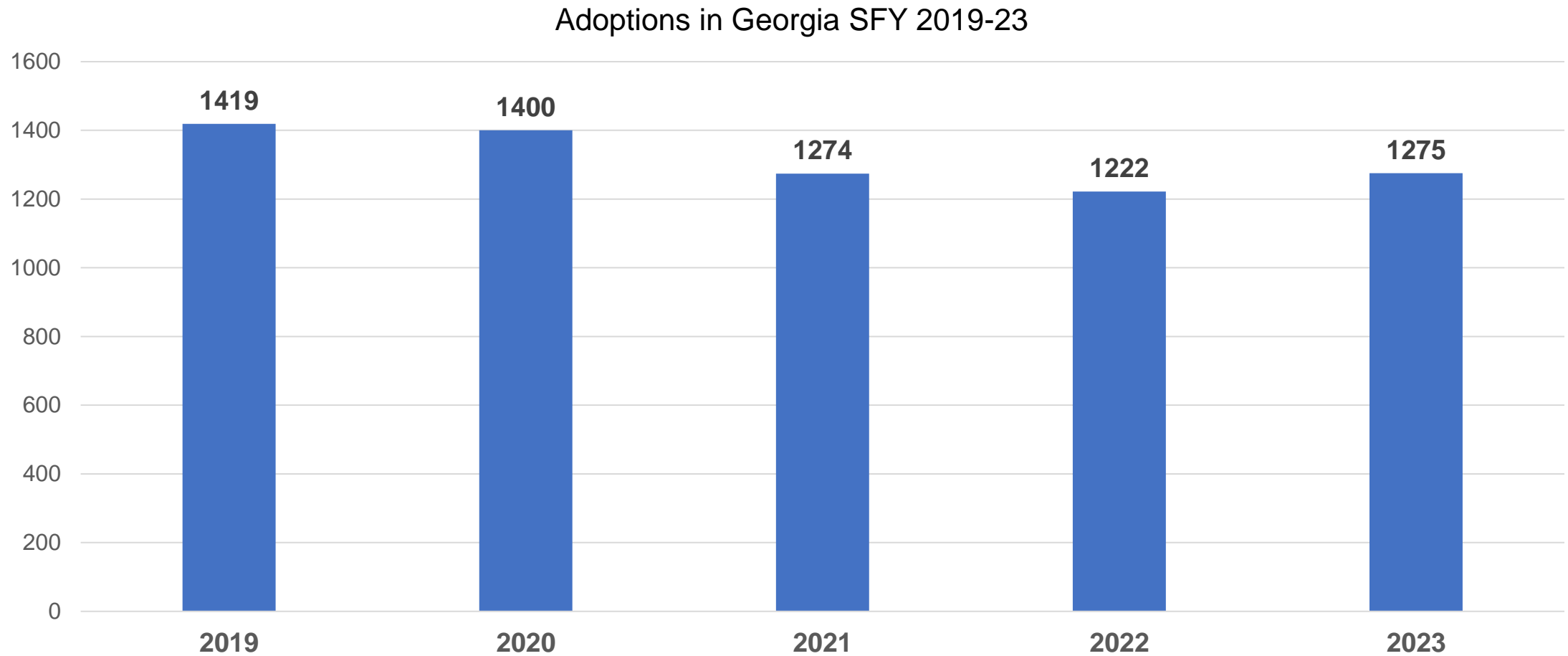


Adoption Month

- November is recognized nationally as Adoption Month.
- During Adoption Month in Georgia:
 - Governor Brian P. Kemp proclaimed November as Adoption Month in Georgia.
 - The State Adoption Unit hosted a family matching event in Marietta. The event served as a networking event for DFCS staff, CPA staff, and families looking to adopt. The State Adoption Unit was able to present information on children eligible for adoption to the families in attendance.
 - Adoption Case Manager Britney Sullivan was named the 2023 Adoption Case Manager of the Year. She was recognized for her extraordinary service and dedication to Georgia's children and state permanency efforts.
 - Several regions across the state hosted local adoption events to celebrate Adoption Month, share information about adopting in Georgia, and raise awareness for the children looking for their forever homes.

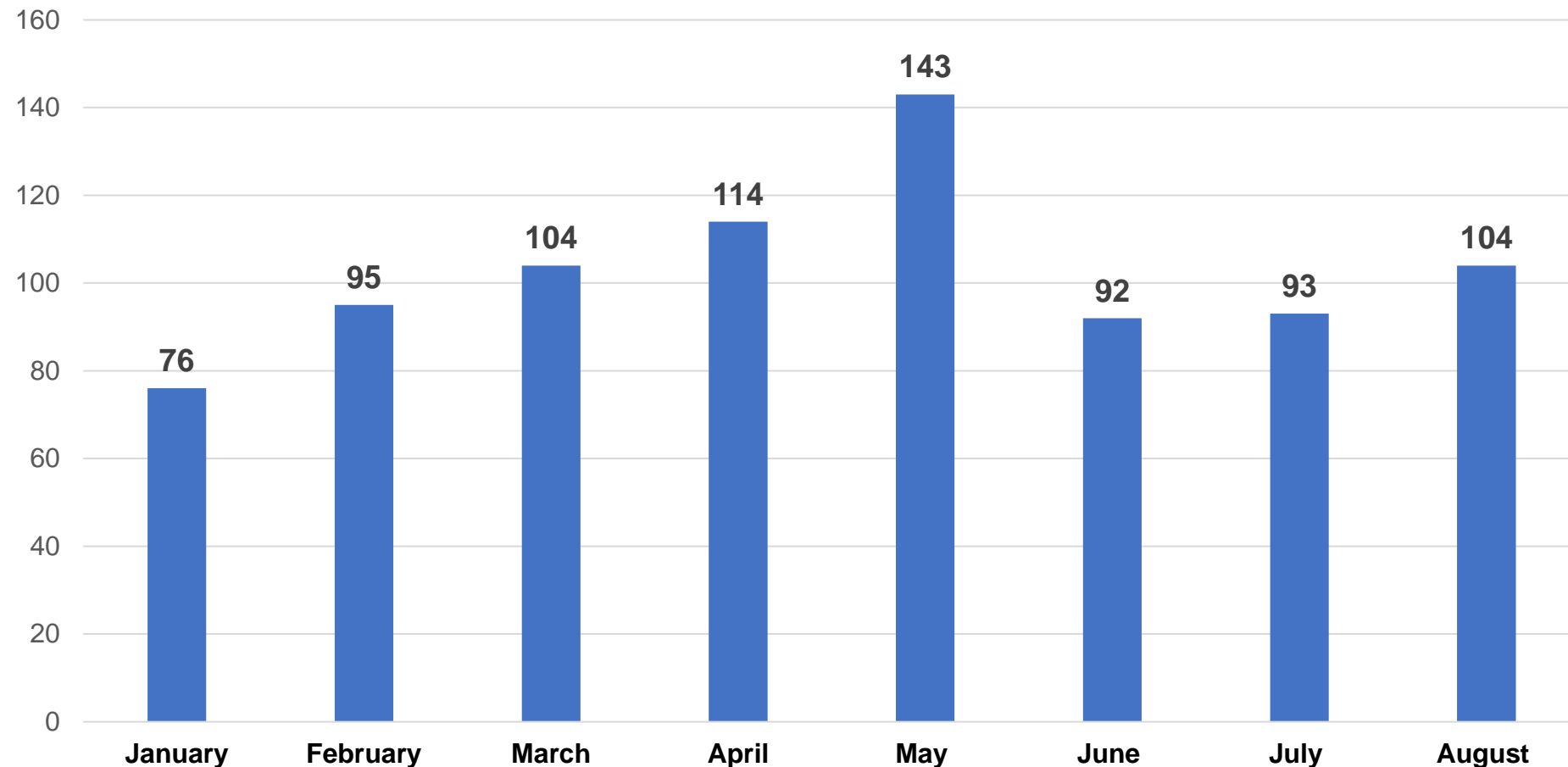


Adoptions in Georgia SFY 2019-23



Adoptions by Month

Adoptions by Month 2023



Kinship Month

- Kinship Care Month is celebrated in September each year.
- During Kinship Month in Georgia, DFCS hosted a forum for kinship families at the Methodist Children's Home in Macon.
 - During the forum, caregivers participated in workshops and peer engagement activities.
 - Fifty caregivers from across the state attended this year's forum.



County Director Summit

- Quarterly, our county directors meet virtually for the County Director Summit.
- During the Summit, county directors receive important updates on statewide child welfare initiatives, provide valuable feedback on projects, and brainstorm new ideas to improve policies and technology across DFCS.
- This past July, the County Director Summit was held in-person over two days.
- County directors were given the opportunity to update their professional headshots, attend in-person lectures and trainings, and collaborate with their peers.



Together Georgia Conference

- Together Georgia is an alliance of children and family service providers ranging from child placing agencies and mental health service providers, to family preservation and support services providers and child caring institutions.
- Annually, Together Georgia hosts the Georgia Conference on Children & Families (GCCF).
- The 2023 GCCF was held in October and featured training opportunities, specialized classes, and keynote speakers with the goal of improving outcomes for the children and families served.
- During GCCF, there is an award ceremony recognizing the efforts made by providers, community partners, organizations, and staff members statewide.
- This year Lashana Taylor, a DFCS case manager from Laurens County, won the Outstanding Child Welfare Service Professional Award for State Agency.
- Samantha Valentine, a DFCS Parent Advisory Council member, won the Community Partner award.



ACF Commissioner Visit

- Rebecca Jones Gaston is the commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), at the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Earlier this month, Commissioner Jones Gaston came to Georgia to meet with human services and child welfare leadership from across the southeastern United States.
- While in Georgia, Commissioner Jones Gaston met with a kinship support group, a Together Georgia youth placement workgroup, youth advisory members, and the Adoption and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG).



Questions?

Mary Havick

Deputy Commissioner | Child Welfare

mary.havick@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of Inspector General

DHS Office of Inspector General – Internal Audit Unit

Wanda Houston, Director of Internal Audit

Office of Inspector General Structure

The Office of Inspector General is comprised of 193 staff across five regulatory units, including:

- Benefit Integrity Recovery Unit (BIRU)
- Internal Audit Unit (IAU)
- Background Investigations Unit (BIU)
- Residential Child Care and Licensing (RCCL)
- Internal Investigations Unit (IIU)



Information Sources

The Internal Audit Unit receives information through various avenues, such as:

- Interagency requests for investigations
- Internal Audit email addresses
- OIG hotline
- Private citizens
- Other governmental partners

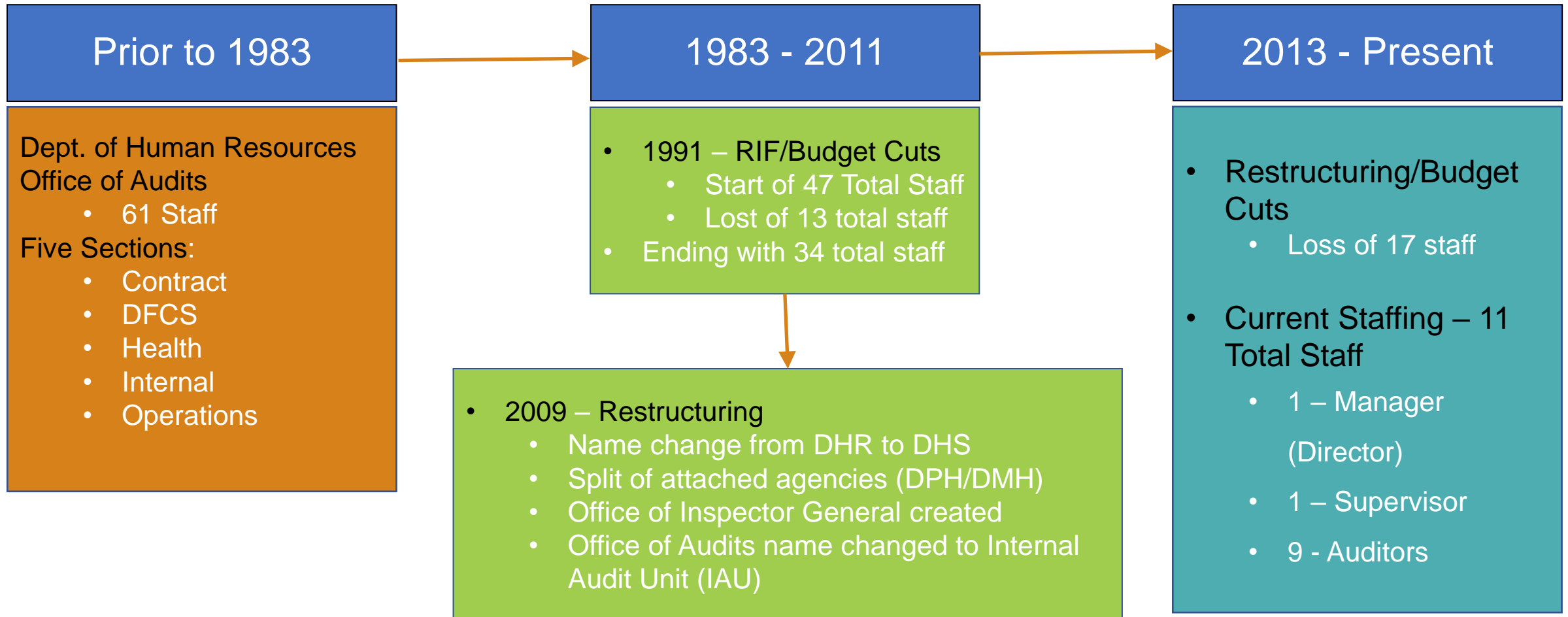


Internal Audit Mission Statement

The mission of the Internal Audit Unit is to provide a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of internal controls, operational procedures, and risk management.



History of Internal Audit Unit



Internal Audit Responsibilities

- The Internal Audit Unit has oversight responsibility for all DHS programs and offices by performing various audits, investigations, and/or reviews.
- Responsible to report the facts and findings of audits and investigations based on relevant laws, rules, regulations, and policy.
- Report facts of an audit and/or investigation.
- Makes recommendations based on findings. Final actions or determinations are left to the leadership of the affected office, program, and/or executive leadership.



Functions of Internal Audit



Based upon assessed risk, conduct audits, reviews, and evaluations as required to mitigate those risks



Conduct compliance and performance audits of DHS' divisions, offices, and programs.



Conduct compliance and performance audits of various financial accounts maintained by divisions and/or offices.



Review audits performed by private sector auditors on entities that receive departmental funding



Conduct various special projects and/or investigations



Types of Audits

Financial

- TPR - Complete third-party review (TPR) of Annual Financial Statements of contractors/subrecipients.
- NCR – Prior to awarding a new contract, complete a New Contractor Review (NCR) to determine if the entity is financially stable.

Performance

Complete performance audit to determine if a program, function, operation, etc. are performing effectively and efficiently according to the policies and procedures that guide the applicable areas.

Compliance

Complete compliance audits to determine if the applicable areas of the audit are following the external laws, rules, regulations, internal guidelines, policies, and procedures.

Investigation

When requested/informed by both internal and external customers of potential fraud, waste, and abuse, the Internal Audit Unit will perform a preliminary investigation and determine if additional work is to be completed. Investigations are performed on a case-by-case basis.



Audit Outcomes – DFCS Regional Accounting

Financial Findings Current – Pending CAP

- **>\$1M** in account since 2012; the source and purpose of these funds are unknown.
- **18 various** restricted fund accounts totaling ***\$787K**
- **111 of 236** restricted fund client accounts reviewed reflected that **\$347K are dormant**.

Performance and Internal Control Findings

- Segregation of Duties issues.
- Policies continue to be outdated and/or partially updated after audit findings.
- Staff payroll overpayments have not been tracked in several years.
- Travel overpayments
- Fixed Assets not recorded in PeopleSoft

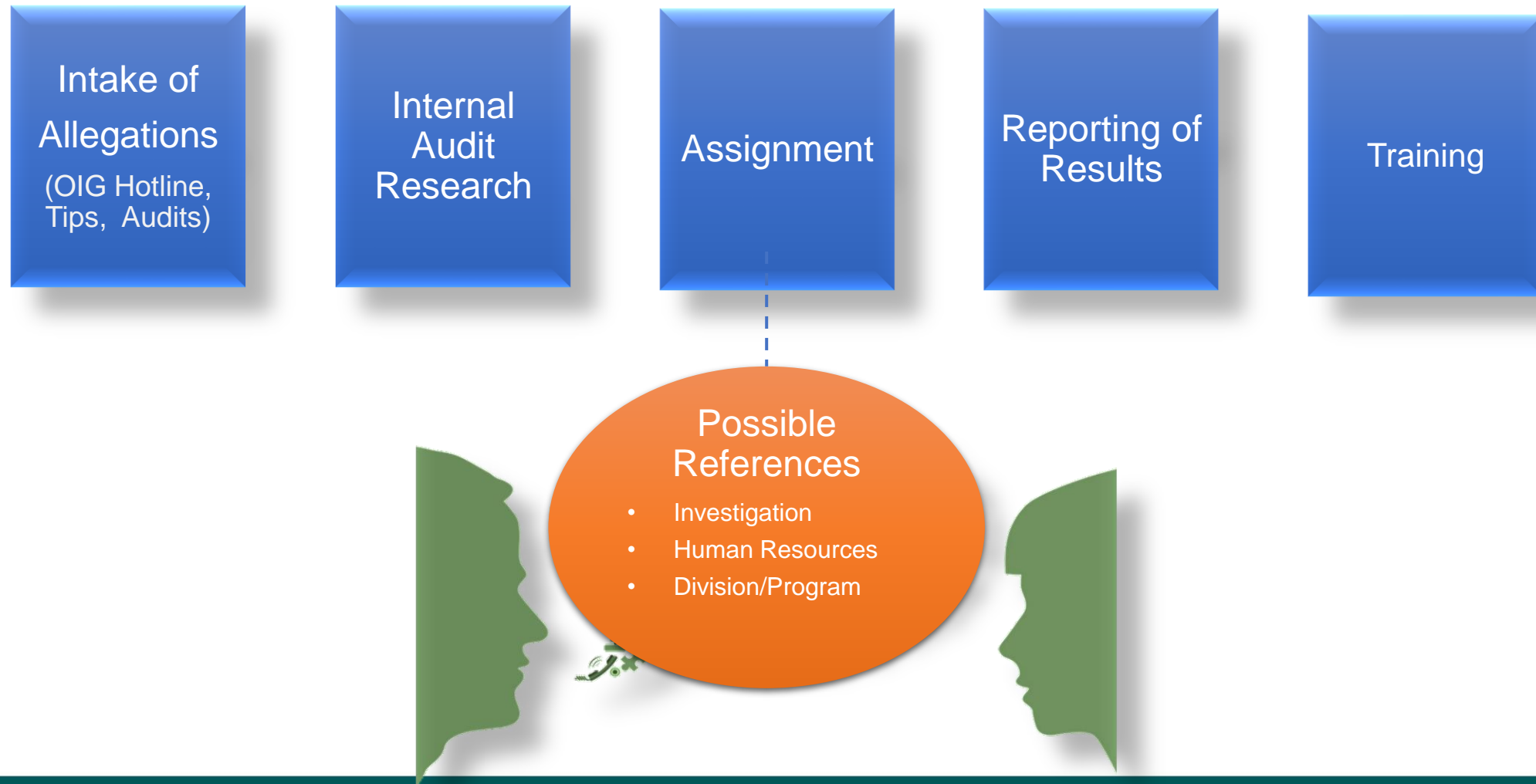


Internal Audit Investigations

- Allegations
- Audits
- Tips

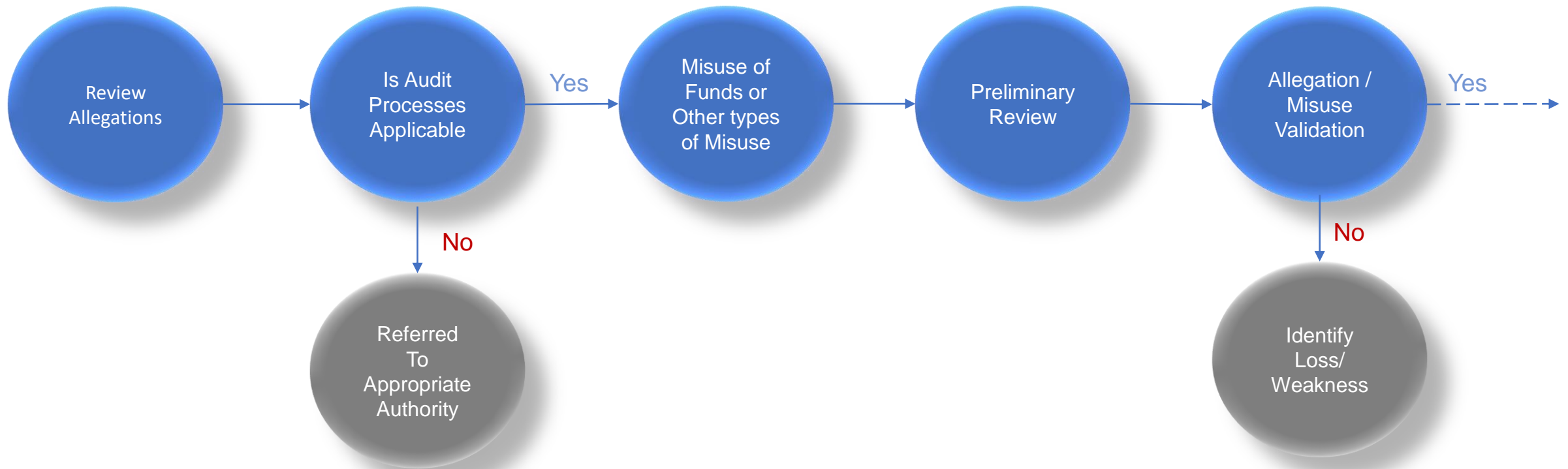


Allegation Flow



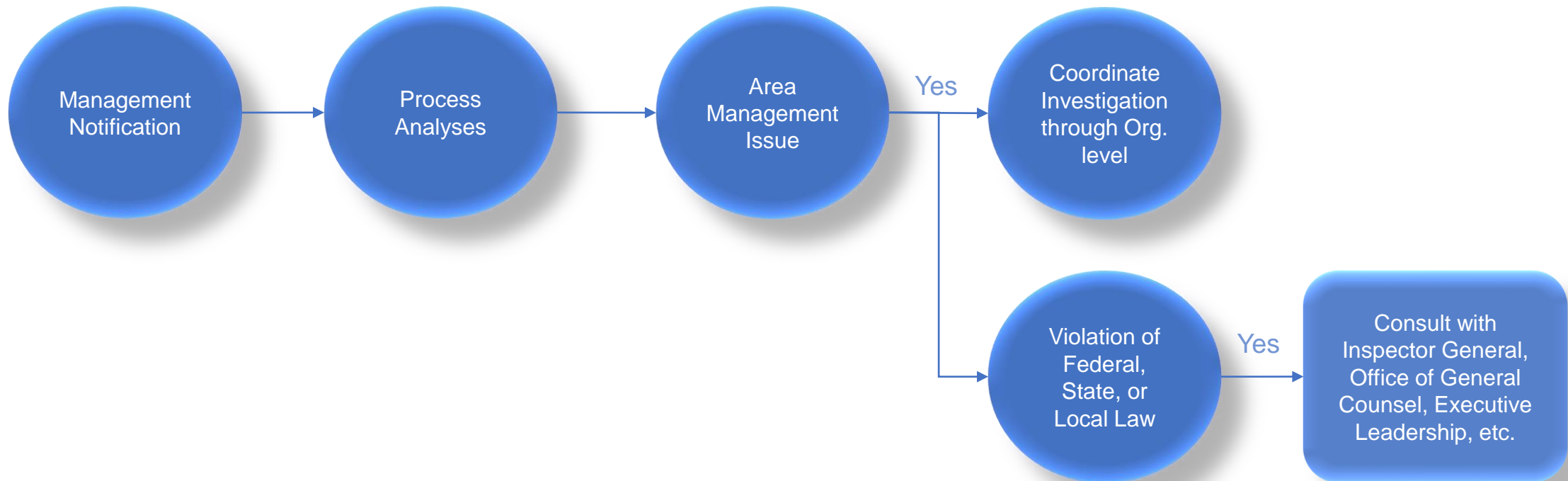
Investigation Process

Internal Audit is responsible for conducting investigations where there has been an allegation of an improper departmental act, such as fraud, misuse of agency resources or program funds.



Investigation Process Cont.

Internal Audit is responsible for conducting investigations where there has been an allegation of an improper departmental act, such as fraud, misuse of agency resources or program funds.



Investigation Outcomes

FY2022 – 2024

- **Pending Investigations**

- **1 - DFCS Regional Accounting**

- Bank Account Fraud – External

- **1 - Community Action Agency**

- Mismanagement of Funds -> **\$600K**
 - *Waiting on Corrective Action Plan and determination by Program*

- **2 - Service Provider Investigation**



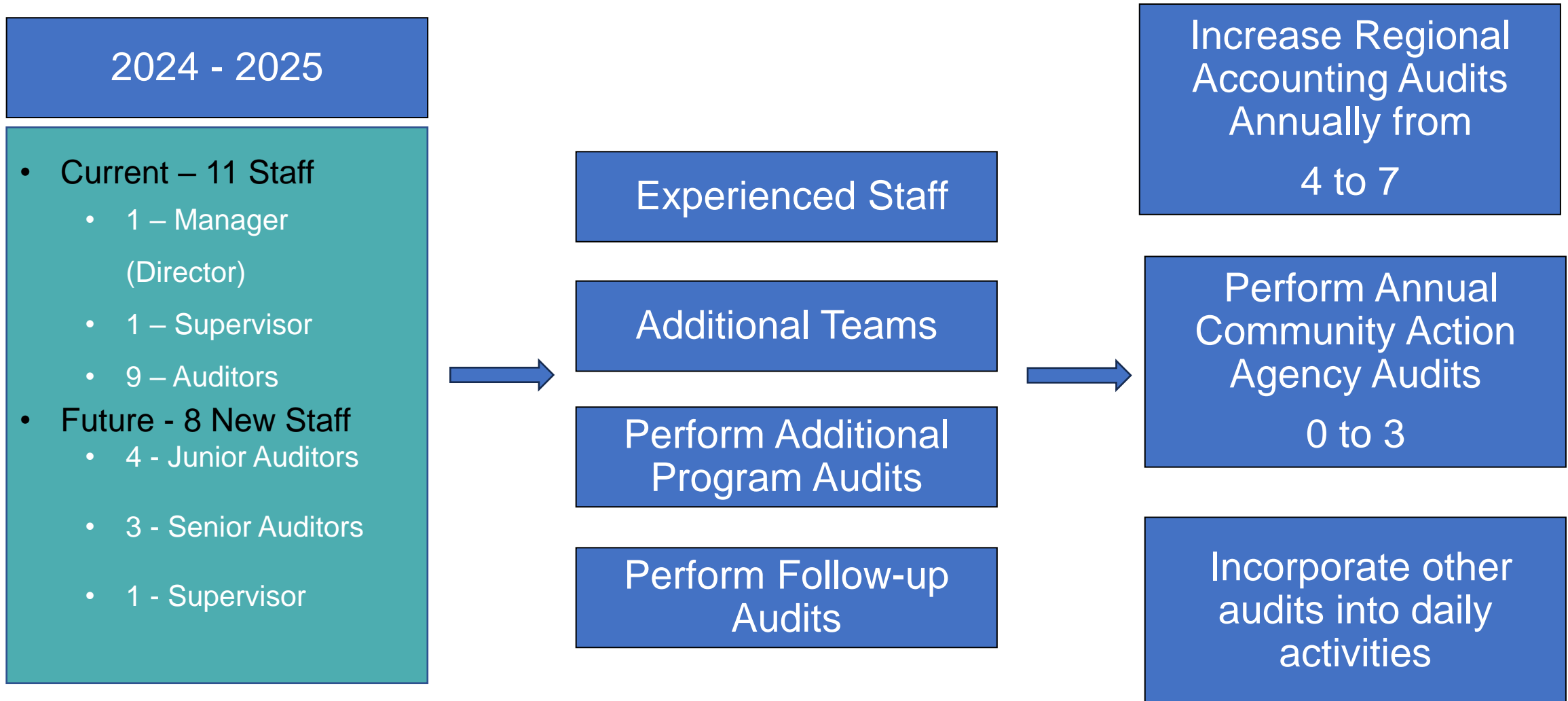
Investigation Outcomes

FY2022 – 2024

- **Completed Investigations**
 - **Community Action Agencies**
 - Various findings
 - Mismanagement of Funds - Recouped - >\$30K
 - **DFCS Regional Accounting**
 - Bank Account Fraud – External
 - **Employee Travel**
 - DCSS Employee Travel Fraud - >\$3,500
 - **Refugee Services**
 - Subrecipient
 - **\$27K** Recoupment of funds due to “ghost employees”



Future of Internal Audit



Laws, Rules, and Regulations

- Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards (GAGAS)
- GAO Internal Controls (Green Book)
- Various Federal Criteria
 - Uniform Guidance- 2 CFR 200 – Compliance
 - Public Welfare
 - Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
- DHS Policy 1201- Standards of Conduct and Ethics in Government



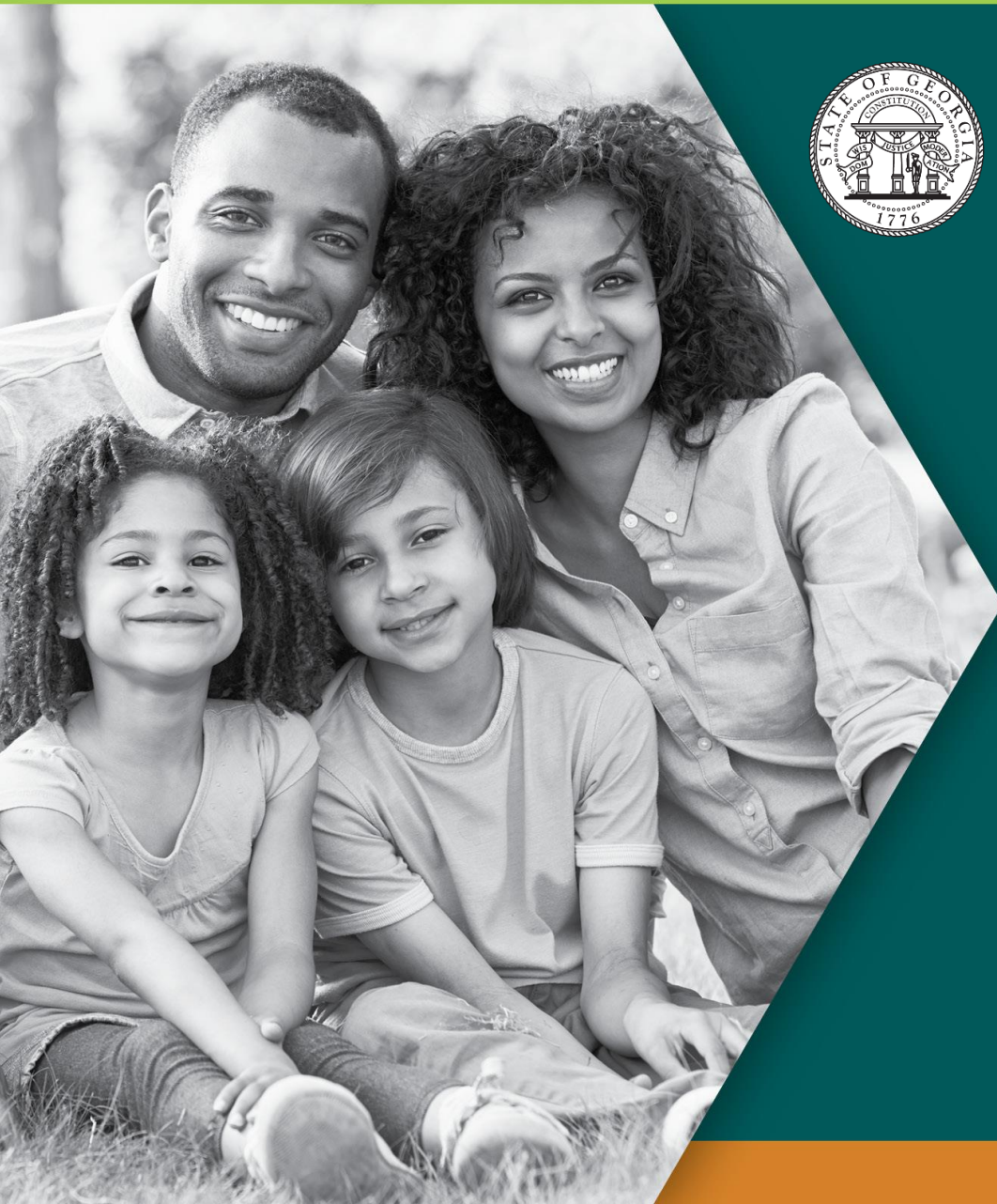
Questions?

Wanda Houston, MBA, MPA, CIGA

Director Internal Audit | Office of Inspector General

wanda.houston@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of General Counsel

DHS Rule Changes

Office of General Counsel

Dana H. Carroll
Deputy General Counsel

Road Map

- Review of Rule Change Procedures
- Review of Proposed Rule Changes
- Public Comment Period
- Final Approval of Rule
- Request to Board



Rule Change Procedure

1. Board Considers Motion to Publish Proposed Rule
2. 30-Day Public Comment Period
3. Public Hearing
4. Motion for Final Adoption of Proposed Rule
5. Send Final Rule to Secretary of State



FINAL - Rule 290-2-31 Respite Care Greater than 72 hours

The rule is needed to provide guidance regarding respite of children in DFCS custody when the caregiver needs respite for more than 72 hours

Proposed Rule:

- Allows for and provides a process for caregivers to give notice of their intent to use respite care for more than 72 consecutive hours to the Division of Family & Children Services and provides a process for appropriate screening of the respite caregiver.

Proposed Change:

- Rule 290-2-31-.01 Provides Definitions
- Rule 290-2-31-.02 Provides Applicability
- Rule 290-2-31-.03 Provides the procedure for respite care of more than 72 hours of children in foster care



FINAL - Rule 290-2-31 Respite Care Greater than 72 hours

The rule is needed to provide guidance regarding respite of children in DFCS custody when the caregiver needs respite for more than 72 hours

Public Comment Period

- Rules Published for Public Comment
August 28 – September 27
- Public Hearing Held
September 18

1 attendee to public hearing

1 comment received related to Rule 290-2-31



Request to Board

Motion for Final Adoption

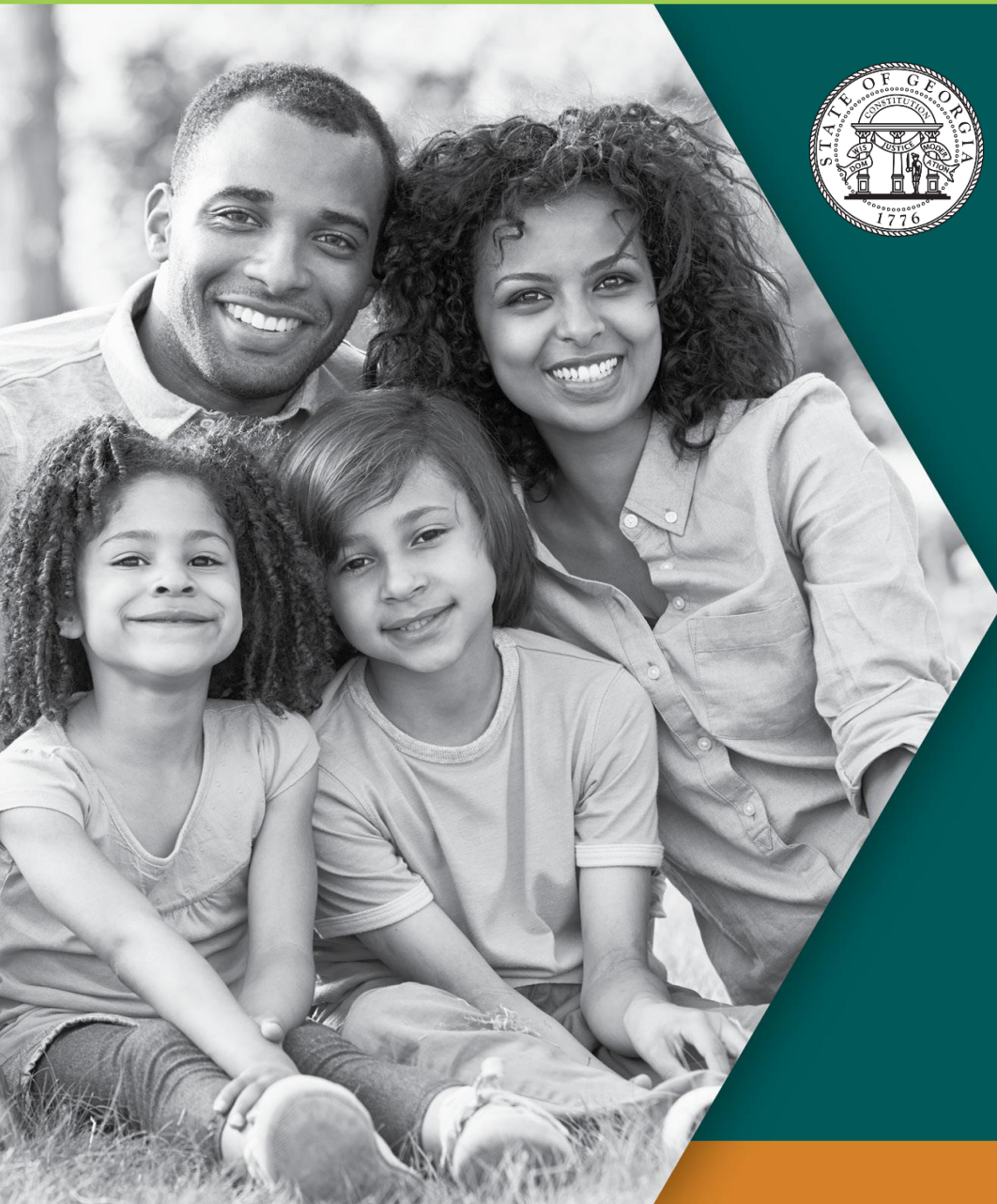
Rule 290-2-31 Respite Care
Greater than 72 hours



QUESTIONS

Dana H. Carroll
Deputy General Counsel
Dana.Carroll@dhs.ga.gov





Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of General Counsel

DHS Rule Changes

Office of General Counsel

Pamela Carr Cosby

Deputy General Counsel

Christopher Henry

Associate General Counsel

Road Map

- Review of Rule Change Procedures
- Initial Approval – Child-Placing Agencies
- Request to Board



Rule Change Procedure

1. Board Considers Motion to Publish Proposed Rule
2. 30-Day Public Comment Period
3. Public Hearing
4. Motion for Final Adoption of Proposed Rule
5. Send Final Rule to Secretary of State



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.01 Definitions

290-9-2-.02 Applicability of These Rules

290-9-2-.03 Agency Organization and
Administration

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Added the definition of an **adult**.
- Added the definition of **reasonable and prudent parenting**.
- Added the definition of **serious occurrence**.
- Clarified that an out of state Child-Placing Agency (CPA) may conduct child placement activity in GA if licensed in GA or have a written agreement with a CPA licensed in GA.
- Removed provision that persons or entities have to consult with DHS before establishing a CPA.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.03 (Cont'd) Agency
Organization and
Administration

290-9-2-.04 Criminal History
Background Checks,
Agency Personnel

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- CPAs no longer required to be non-profit corporation.
- Decreased the composition of Board member requirements.
- Removed specific CPA by-laws requirements.
- Referenced applicable Georgia Code sections related to criminal records checks provisions



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.04 (Cont'd) Criminal History
Background Checks,
Agency Personnel

290-9-2-.05 Agency Policies and
Procedures for Services

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Added provisions for subsequent fingerprint records checks for directors, employees, or foster parents.
- Annual job-related training is no longer calculated from the date of employment for supervisory or social service staff.
- Added provision for policies and procedures relating to reasonable and prudent parenting for foster care services.
- Clarified that CPA staff, contractors, volunteers, foster parents and prospective adoptive parents follow Agency policies and procedures.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.06 Adoption Services

290-9-2-.07 Foster Care Services

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Updated home study provisions related to motivation to adopt/foster and family life.
- Added nurse practitioner to the list of medical professionals who can complete physical examination and general health status statements.
- Updated rule to require that any injury to a child connected to behavior management or ESI must be reported.
- Annual training requirement for foster parents is not contingent on the age of the foster child.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.07 (Cont'd) Foster Care Services

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Clarified that no foster child sleeps in a bed with another child unless both are the same sex, under 5 years of age and sleep in at least a double bed.
- Clarified that no foster child may co-sleep or bedshare with an adult and no foster child over 24 months may sleep in the room with an adult.
- Clarified that dental and health programs have to include policies and procedures for medication use, documentation, and management.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.08 Agency Records and Reports

290-9-2-.09 How to Apply For/Renew a License

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Rule updated regarding confidentiality of records and protection of records from unauthorized use, fire, damage or theft.
- Rule updated to include an illness attributable to a pandemic or infectious disease as a serious occurrence that is required to be reported to RCCL.
- Rule updated to notify applicants that they must attend training conducted by RCCL prior to submitting an application for an initial license.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.09 (Cont'd) How to Apply
For/Renew a License

290-9-2-.10 Variances and Waivers

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Rule clarified that information related to the board of directors is not expected to be included with a completed application, if inapplicable.
- Rule clarified instances where waivers or variances may be granted and updated for consistency with state law requirements.
- Rule identified specific information that must be submitted with an application for a waiver or variance.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.11 Inspections by the
Department and Access by
Department Staff

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Replaced the term ‘entry’ with ‘access’ to clarify that applicants, licensees, and owners of the premises consent to access by DHS once a DHS representative confirms his/her identity.
- Rule prohibiting licensee from making a false or misleading statement updated to include a director, employee, foster parent, prospective adoptive parent and contractors of licensee from making such statements.



Initial – Child-Placing Agencies

The rule changes are needed to eliminate or revise rules in an effort to streamline regulations, update terms and provisions, reorganize rule provisions for clarity, and make certain regulatory requirements less burdensome for providers.

Rule Section

290-9-2-.12 Disaster Preparedness

Highlights of Proposed Rule Changes

- Rule amended to include additional provisions for disaster preparedness plans in order to limit and contain health hazards due to pandemics or infectious disease outbreaks.
- CPA will no longer be required to provide a copy of the disaster preparedness plan to the local EMA and include the local EMA in development of the plan will be removed.



Public Comment Period

Public Comment Period

November 30, 2023 – December 30, 2023

Public Hearing

December 15, 2023



Request to Board

Motion to Publish Notice of Rulemaking

Rules and Regulations for Child-Placing Agencies –
Rules 290-2-9-.01 through 290-2-9-.15



QUESTIONS

Christopher Henry

Associate General Counsel

christopher.henry@dhs.ga.gov

Pamela Carr Cosby

Deputy General Counsel

pamela.carrcosby@dhs.ga.gov





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Commissioner's Report

BREAK





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

August 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes Approval



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

September 7, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes Approval



Georgia Department
of Human Services

Vote on Rule 290-2-31

'Rules and Regulations for Respite Care of More than 72 Hours for Children in Foster Care,'



Georgia Department
of Human Services

Publishing Amendments to Rule Chapter 290-9-2 for 30-day Comment

'Rules and Regulations for Child-Placing Agencies'



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

New Business & Closing Comments



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

August 30, 2023 Meeting Minutes Approval



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Executive Committee Vote



Georgia Department
of Human Services

Committee Report

Regional Trends Committee

Meredith Holt



Georgia Department
of Human Services

Regional Reports

1-2 areas going well, 1-2 areas of improvement in region



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

New Business & Closing Comments