

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

HOUSE CHILD WELFARE AND FOSTER CARE COMMITTEE
SECRETARY LAURA HOWARD | 1.22.2025

FOSTER CARE OVERVIEW

DCF MISSION STATEMENT

TO PROTECT CHILDREN, STRENGTHEN FAMILIES, AND PROMOTE
ADULT SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

OUR MISSION:

To protect children, strengthen families
and promote adult self-sufficiency.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:



PEOPLE HAVE THE CAPACITY:

- To progress
- To succeed
- To grow
- To do well in life



PEOPLE ARE THE EXPERTS ON THEIR LIVES AND HAVE:

- Voices
- Choices
- Needs
- Strengths
- Life Stories



WE VALUE COMMUNITIES AND THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THEM UNIQUE:

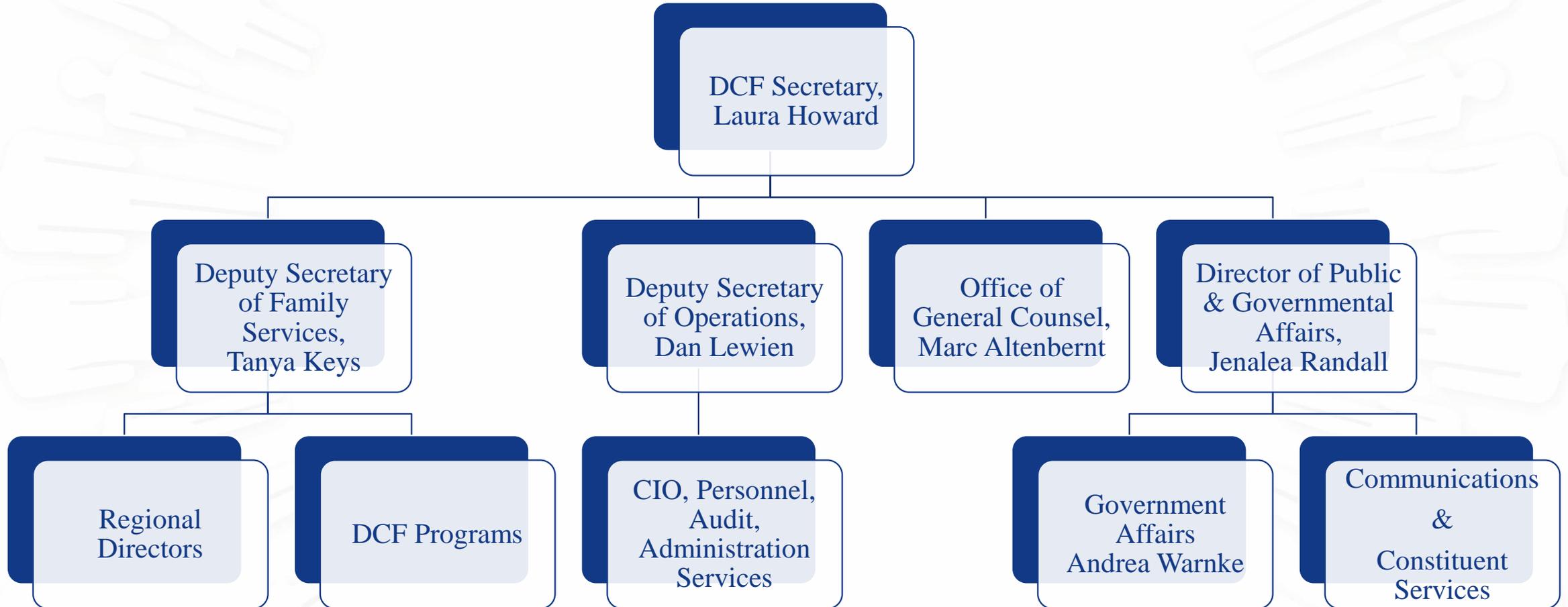
- We honor the whole person
- We rely on each other
- We are partners, not competitors
- We all benefit from a collective impact approach
- Communities bring strength through relationships and resources



WE LEAD WITH AUTHENTICITY, CURIOSITY, AND RESPECT:

- We are innovative
- We are inclusive
- We are experts
- We are leaders
- We are authentic
- We are diverse
- We care about each other, our work and the people we serve
- We share success stories

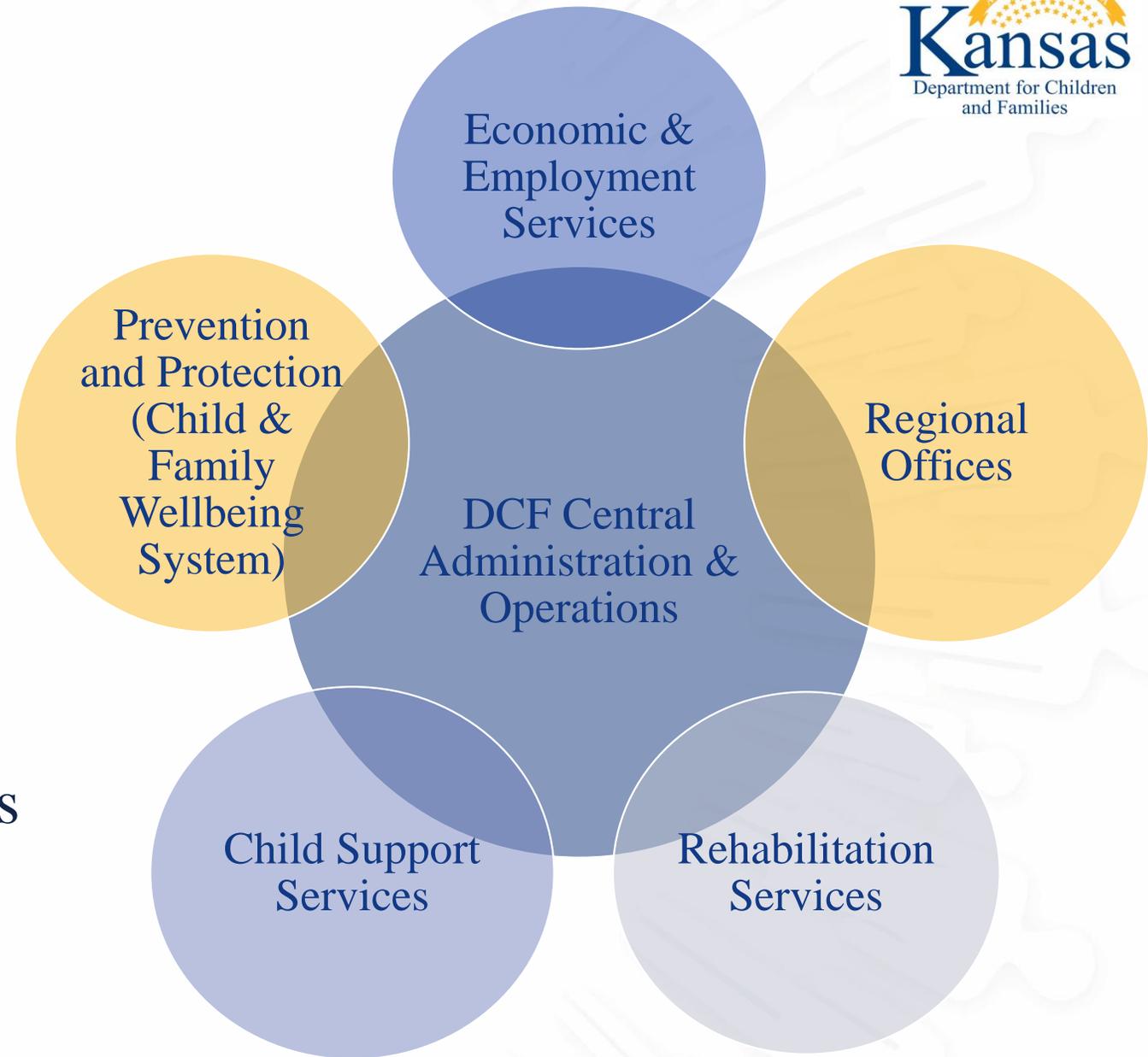
DCF ADMINISTRATION



ORGANIZATION

DCF Major Programs

- Programs collaborate for family and individual outcome achievement
- Programs are supported by core operations.
- Program and practice are carried out by teams in 36 service centers across 6 Regions



PREVENTION & PROTECTION SERVICES



Director of Prevention – Jennifer Bretsnyder

Director of Permanency and Licensing – Rebecca Gerhardt

Director of Practice Model & Performance Improvement – Deanne Dinkel

Director of Children’s Mental Health & Medicaid – Brenda Soto

PPS helps families and vulnerable adults by providing:

- Protection services (PRC and investigations)
- Family-based assessments
- Family support services
- Family preservation
- Families first prevention services
- Foster care
- Adoption services
- Independent living services for older youth
- Licensing foster homes



Kansas Protection Report Center
1-800-922-5330

STRENGTHENING PREVENTION

- Family Preservation since 1997
- Family First Prevention Services since 2019
- Family Crisis Response since 2021
- Expand Parent Legal Representation
 - Title IV-E Federal Funding for Legal Representation – Family First Parent Advocate Program in Butler, Cowley, Douglas, Johnson, Kingman, Leavenworth, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, Sumner, and Wyandotte since 2023

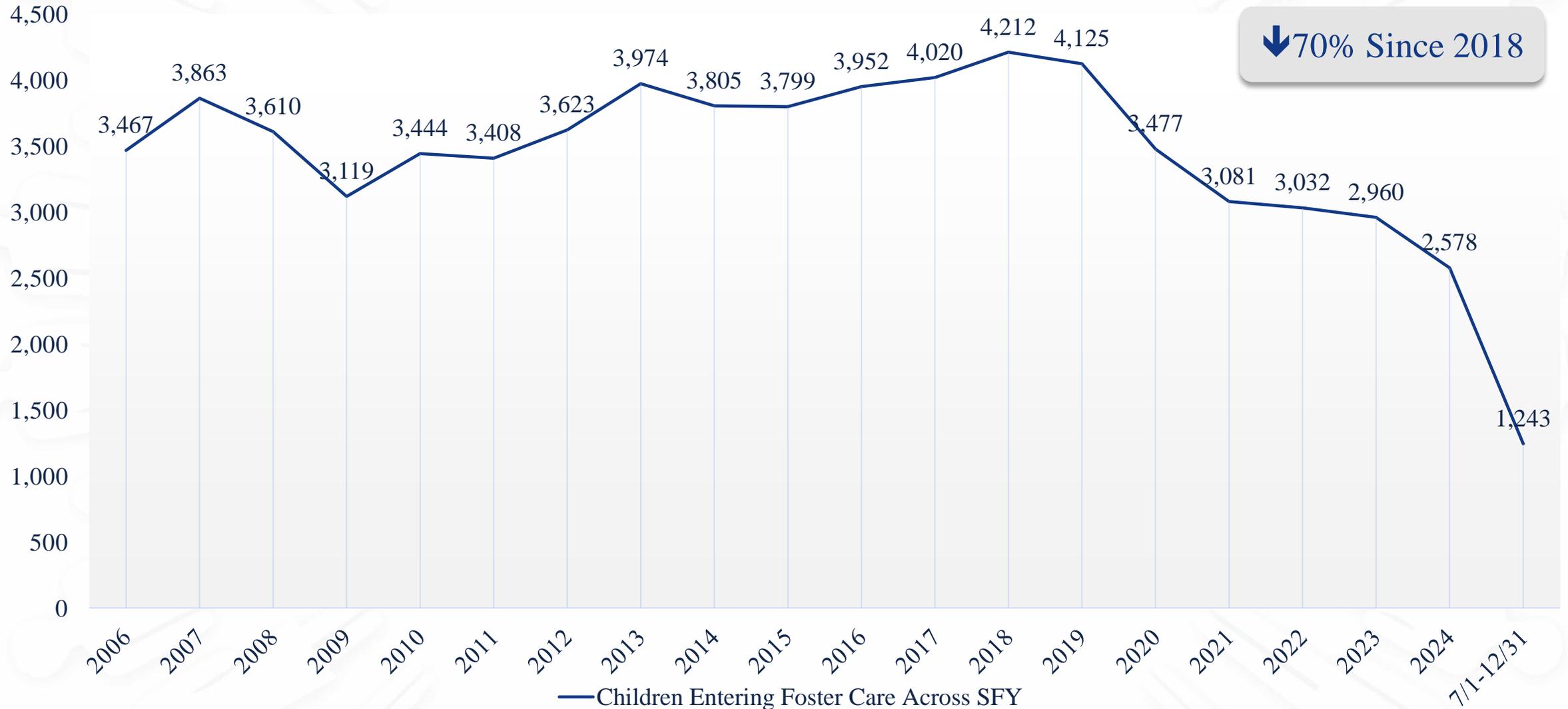
FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES - OUTCOMES

- 90% of children and youth who have reached 12 months from time of referral remain home without need for foster care
 - Goal = 90%
- 5% of children and youth served have been placed in foster care during an open Family First case
 - Goal = >10%
- Since implementation in 2019, over 6,404 referrals made to Family First Prevention Service programs

ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE

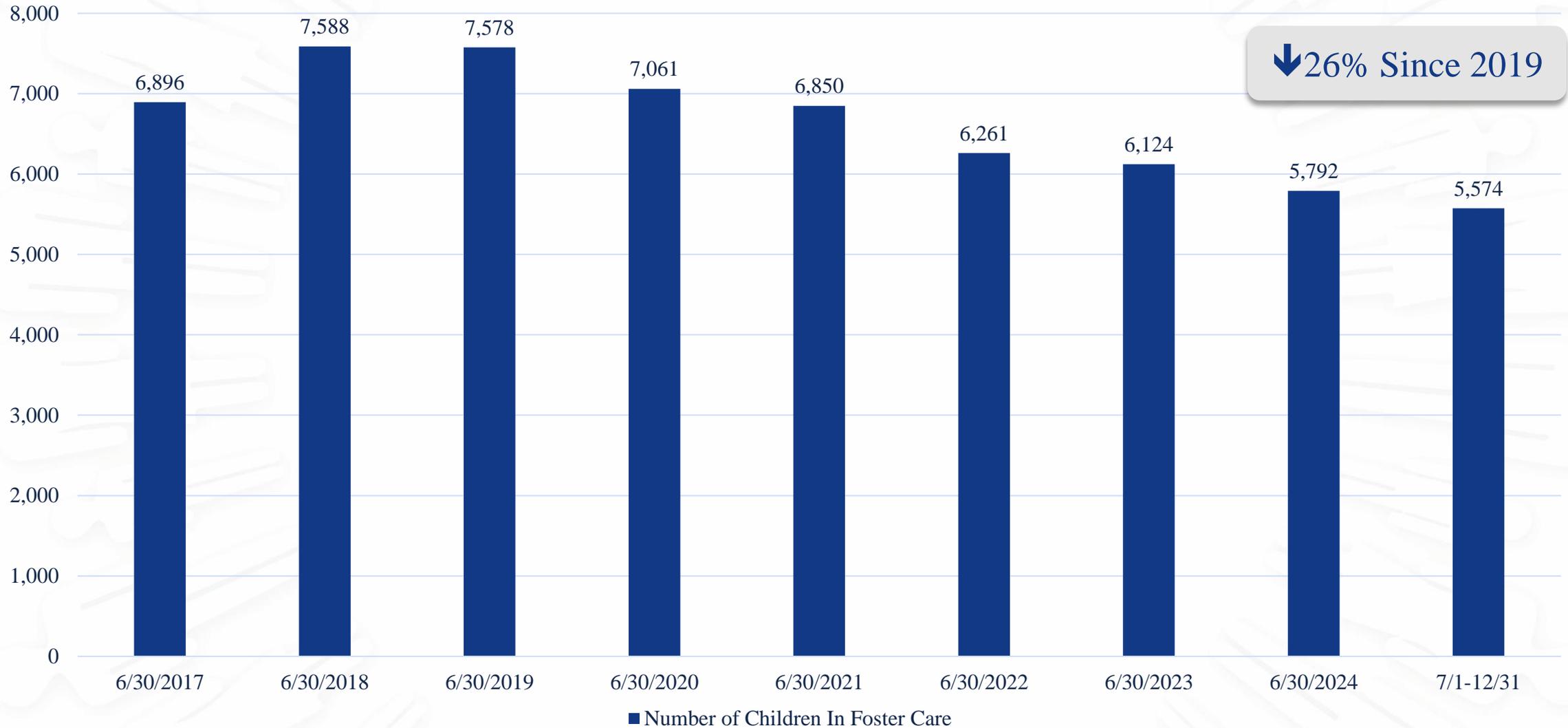
- Only law enforcement and the court can remove a child from a parent's custody.
- DCF does not remove children or decide to take children into state custody without a court order.
- During a safety staffing if determined a child has been or is likely to be separated from their parent or caregiver, a Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting is held if criteria is met.
- There are times when the safest decision for a child is protective custody removal into foster care.
- If a child is determined unsafe due to the current danger and the danger cannot be mitigated with an immediate safety plan, DCF may initiate protective action to remove the child from the danger, which may include law enforcement or court involvement
- Temporary custody hearing are held within 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) of a child being placed in protective custody and determine who should have temporary custody of the child.
- An adjudication hearing to formally find the child "in need of care" usually must be held within 60 days of the filing of a CINC petition
- The state's burden of proof is clear and convincing evidence

CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE ACROSS STATE FISCAL YEARS



— Children Entering Foster Care Across SFY

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE



CHILDREN ENTERING & EXITING FOSTER CARE ACROSS YEARS



FOSTER CARE CASE MANAGEMENT

Foster Care Case Management contractors work to support families, manage individual cases, and achieve case plan goals

Services provided by case management grantees include:

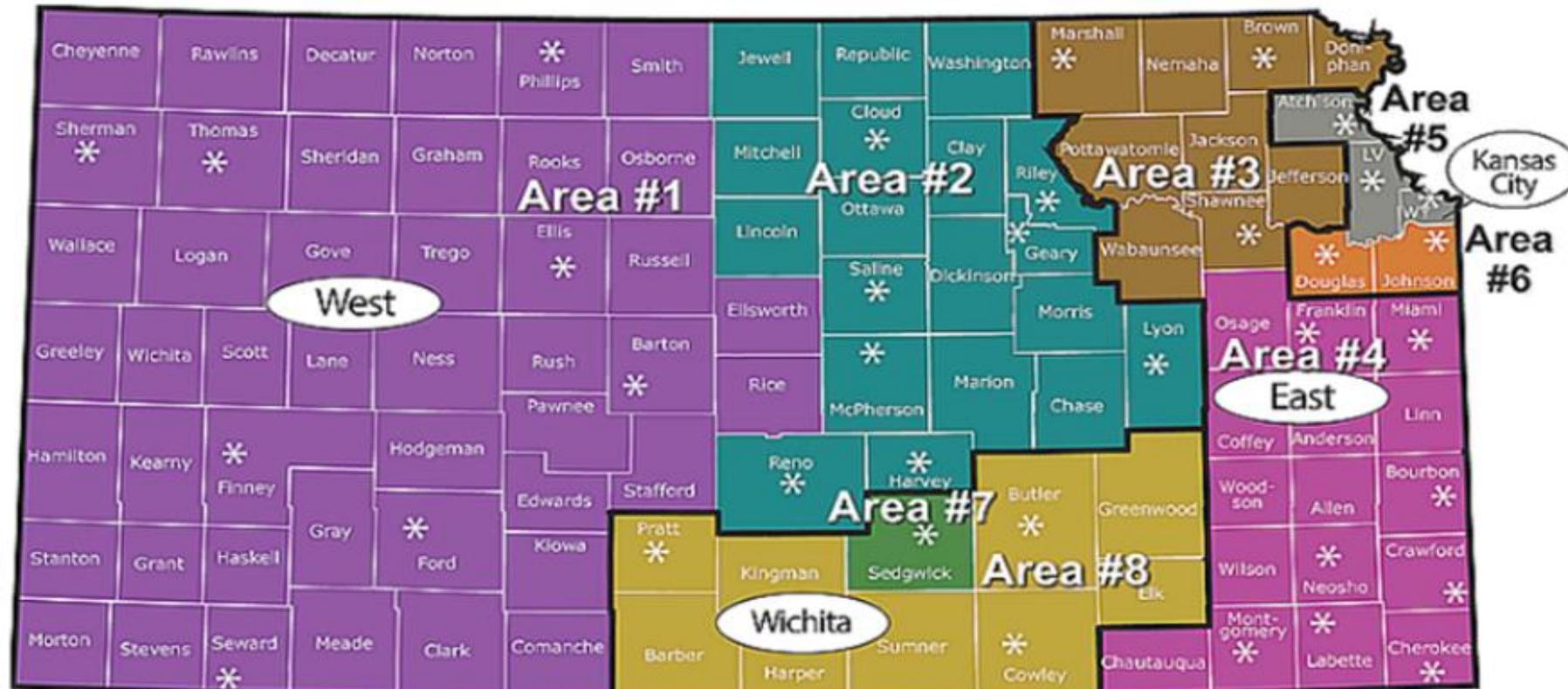
- Initial and ongoing screenings and assessments
- Facilitation and engagement for family meetings
- Case plan development
- Placement stability support
- Facilitation of parenting time and parent/child interactions
- Parent skill building
- Coordination/referral to other services (ex: mental health, disability)
- Coordination with MCOs

Five case management grantees:

- Saint Francis Ministries
- KVC Health Systems, Inc.
- TFI Family Services
- Cornerstones of Care
- EmberHope Connections

FOSTER CARE CASE MANAGEMENT 7/1/24

FOSTER CARE CONTRACT EFFECTIVE 7/1/24



* DCF Service Center

— DCF Regions

1

St. Francis Ministries

2

St. Francis Ministries

3

KVC

4

TFI

5

Cornerstones of Care

6

KVC

7

EmberHope

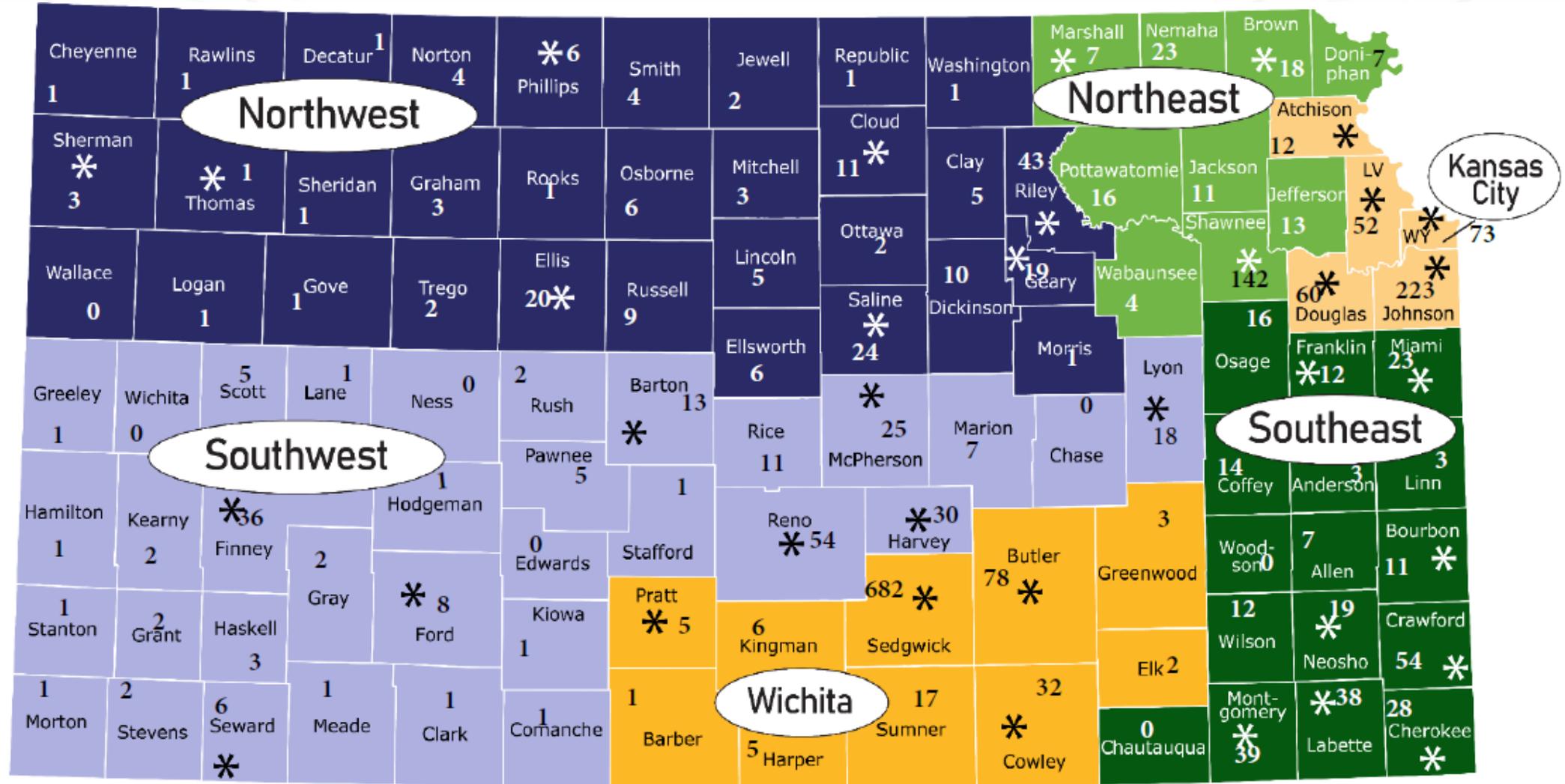
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TFI

CASE PLANS & PLACEMENTS

- After a child is adjudicated to be a CINC, a disposition hearing is held in which the court will set the case plan goal for the child.
- Placement decisions are a responsibility of case management providers.
- Courts must hold permanency hearings to determine progress toward accomplishment of a permanency plan within 12 months of the court's order authorizing removal from home.
 - The court will continue to have final say over the child's case plan
- Case Plan goals include: reintegration, permanent guardianship, adoption, SOUL, and other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)
- After a child has come into custody of the Secretary they will be placed in the setting with a level of care most appropriate for their individual needs
- Placements are reimbursed by DCF based on the type and the child's level of care needs.
- Types of placements include:
 - Relative & Non-Related Kin placement
 - Family foster home
 - Therapeutic Family Foster Homes
 - Residential facilities
 - Emergency shelters
 - Qualified Residential Treatment Program
 - Staff secure facilities

FOSTER HOMES PER COUNTY



* DCF Service Center

Foster Homes Per County as of
01/19/2025 Total: **2,210**

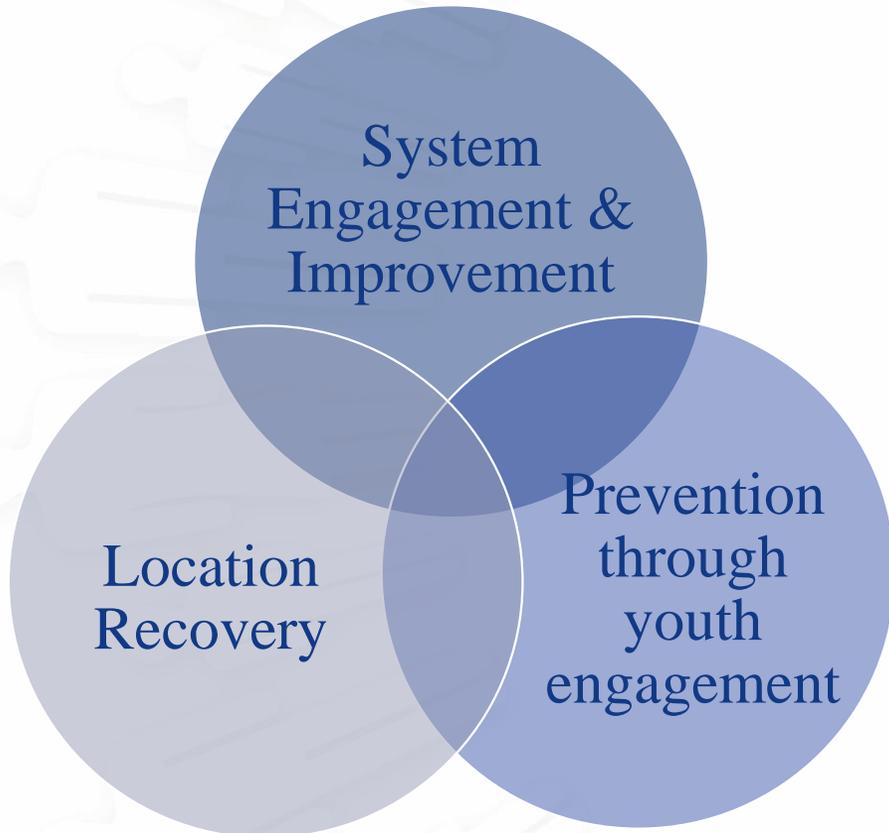
CAPACITY & NEED FOR FOSTER PARENTS



- There is strong capacity in the number of foster homes; however, gaps and/or barriers are at times experienced when it comes to available placements being able to meet specialized identified needs, including but not limited to children and youth experiencing:
 - High acuity
 - Older than age 12
 - Reservations about or refusal of a placement
 - Medical or developmental disability concerns
 - Emotional crisis to prevent PRTF/Acute care
- More specialized and in-home supports are needed to fill the identified gap
 - This would include a category of homes or level of care trained to meet children with higher needs and compensated accordingly.
 - DCF and KDADS researching professional foster home model in Missouri and treatment foster homes.
 - Build capacity for therapeutic family foster homes through grants. In December, 31 homes.
 - Children's Behavior Interventionist and Functional Family Therapy in home supports are helpful.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM PLACEMENT

SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM



- Statewide network of DCF and foster care provider staff
- Expanded in 2019 to 10 members and in 2020 to 12 Response Team Specialists
- Non-caseload carrying positions for immediate specialized support
- Strengthen practice surrounding relational permanency: create lifelong stability for young people.
 - SOUL family permanency with Annie E. Casey Foundation and Think of Us (Support, Opportunity, Unity, Legal Relationship)
 - Family Finding/Seeing

FAILURE TO PLACE A CHILD

Children experiencing a failure to place staying overnight in case management offices

A child or youth is considered to have experienced a failure to place (temporarily housed or maintained overnight at a case management provider office) when that child has arrived at a case management agency office before 12:00 a.m. midnight of one day and there is failure to place the child in an appropriate placement before 6 a.m. of the following calendar day absent extraordinary circumstances

- No placement is located; or
- Placement located, but youth declines the placement

FAILURE TO PLACE A CHILD

Processes when there is a Failure to Place

- Case Management Provider submits a Critical Incident to DCF
- As soon as possible, Case Management providers schedule and facilitate a Placement Stability Team Decision Making (PS-TDM) meeting.
- PS TDM Stages
 - Introduction
 - Identifying the solution
 - Assessing the situation
 - Developing ideas
 - Reaching a decision
 - Recap and Close
- There is continued encouragement to engage youth in where they would want to stay or feel the most safe

FAILURE TO PLACE A CHILD

COLLABORATION: ELIMINATE FAILURE TO PLACE



Working Well:

Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Border Agreement with MO Partnerships with group or foster providers/family to assure openings for placement and supervision

Opportunities:

Stronger youth engagement to support planning, their networks voice and choice for placements in an emergency.

Increase service array for youth with high needs.

More partnerships to help with emergency overnight traumatic disruptions.

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS & BUDGET

- For case management services, The current payment structure includes a monthly payment to case management providers which is based on a calculated caseload average determined at the beginning of each year. The monthly payment for the year remains the same based on that calculated caseload.
 - Any unspent funds will be returned to DCF at the end of each year.
- Direct Placement and Child Placing Agency Administration payments are paid twice a month based on days in placement and child's level of care.
- There are other various payments for adoption home studies, stand by bed programs and QRTP assessments. These expenditures consist of primarily Grants along with some smaller Contracts.
- The cost of the PRTF placements and other medical costs are covered by Medicaid or budgeted in other parts of the State budget.

FOUNDATIONAL CHANGES

BECOMING A CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING SYSTEM



Collaboration

- Communities and families are experts and innovators.
- Cultivate community-based continuums of supports.
- As a learning organization, engage others in co-design.

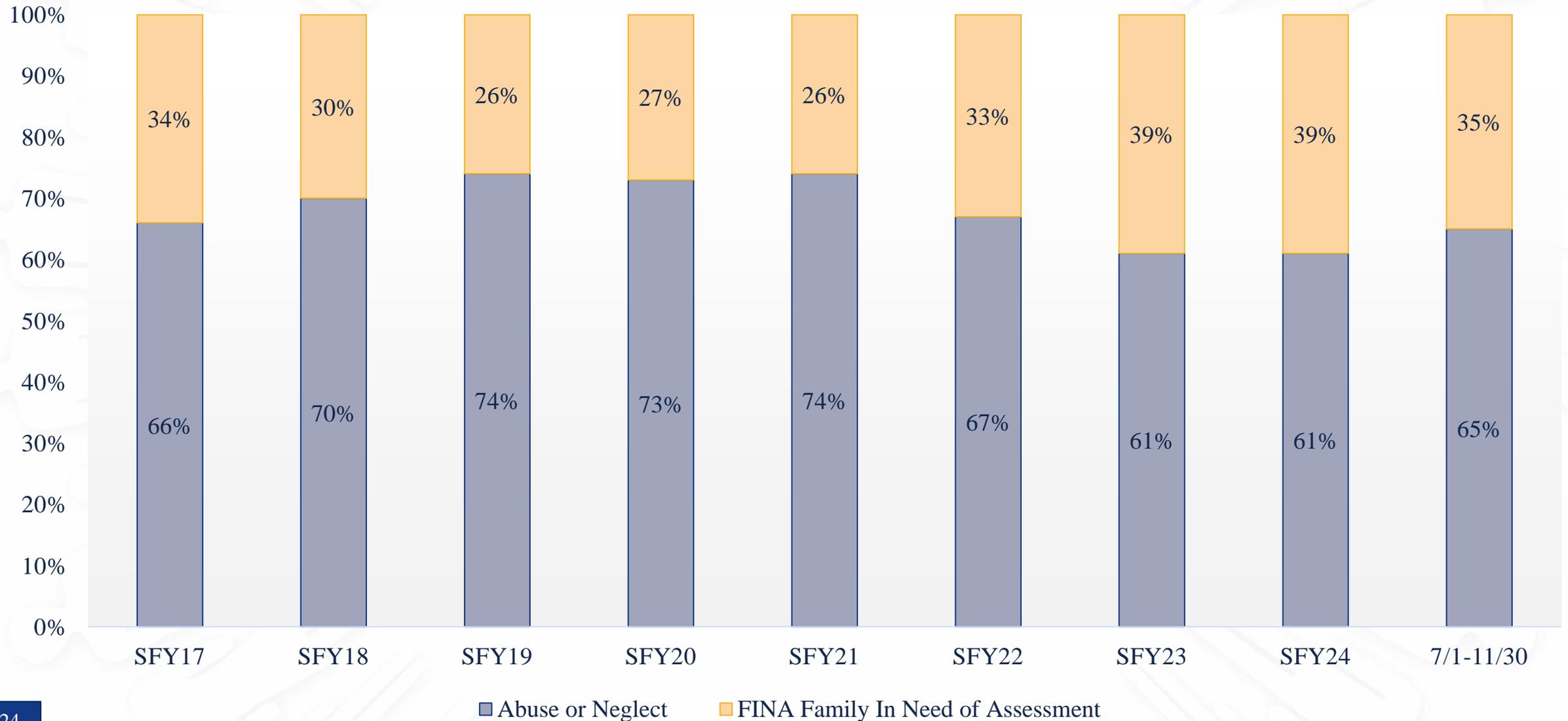
Community Engagement

- Prevent the need for a family or others to contact a child welfare formal system.
- Earliest support possible.
- Shift: from Mandated Reporters to *Mandated Supporters*.
- Understanding responses to adversity related needs and distinguishing adversity from neglect.

DATA SNAPSHOT

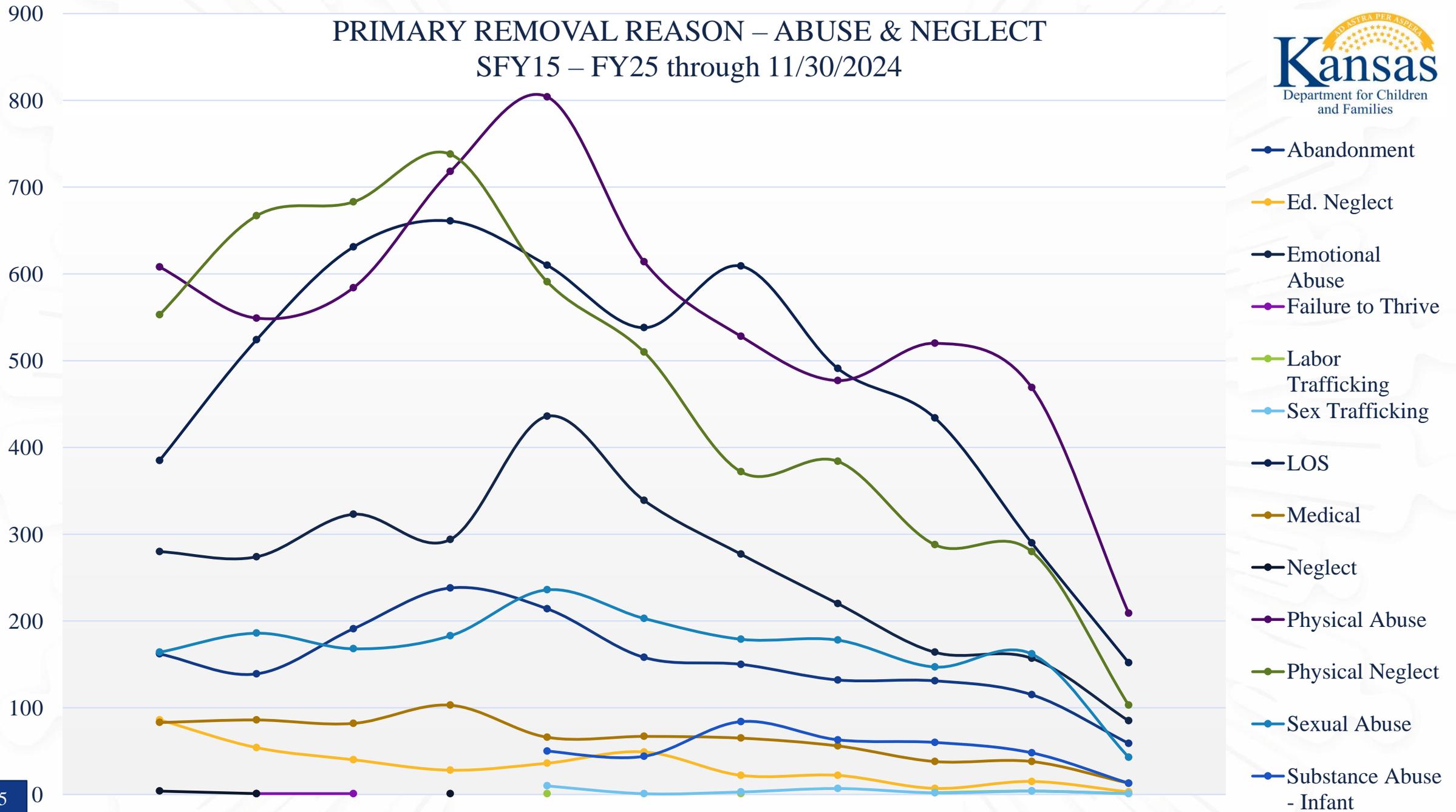
TEN YEAR LOOKBACK AT KANSAS CHILD WELFARE DATA

STATEWIDE CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE PRIMARY REMOVAL REASON

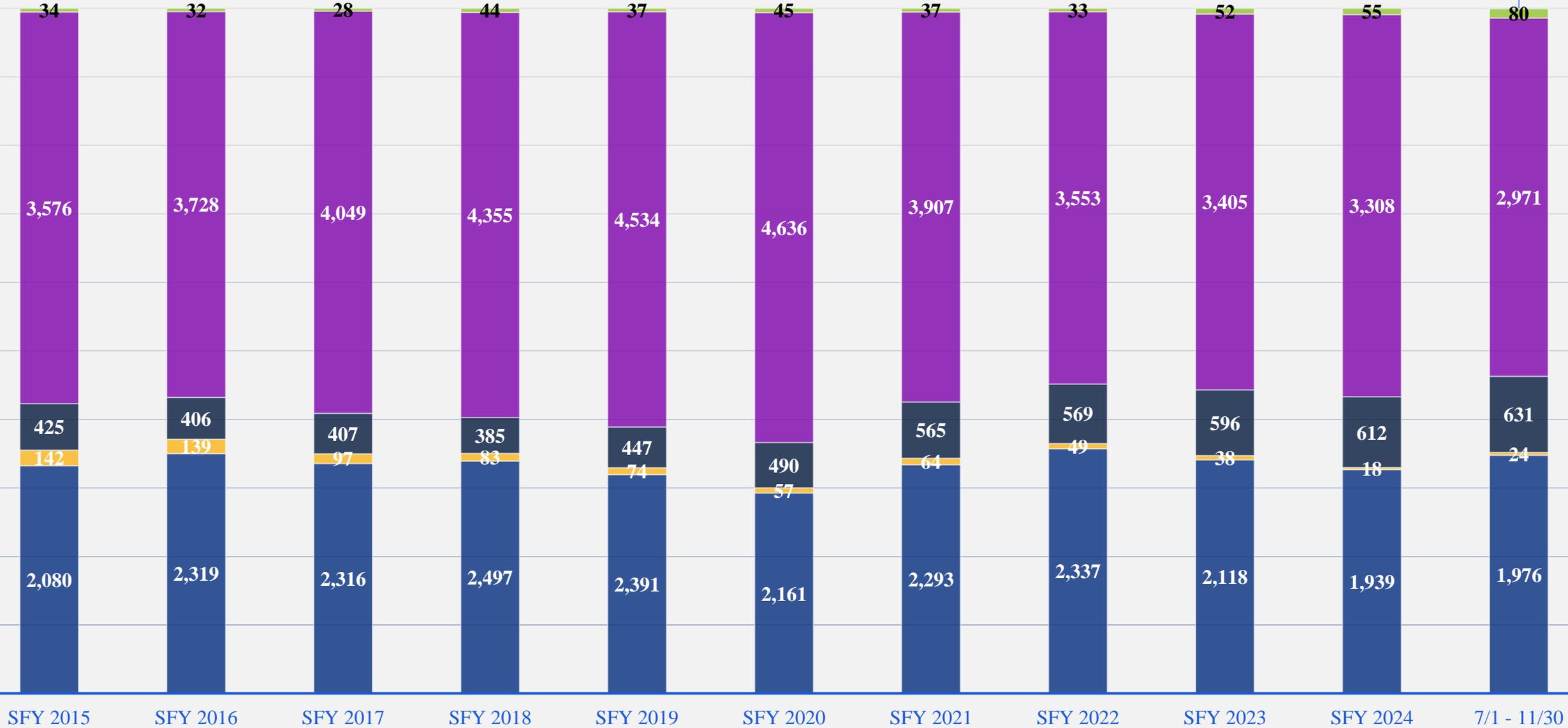


PRIMARY REMOVAL REASON – ABUSE & NEGLECT

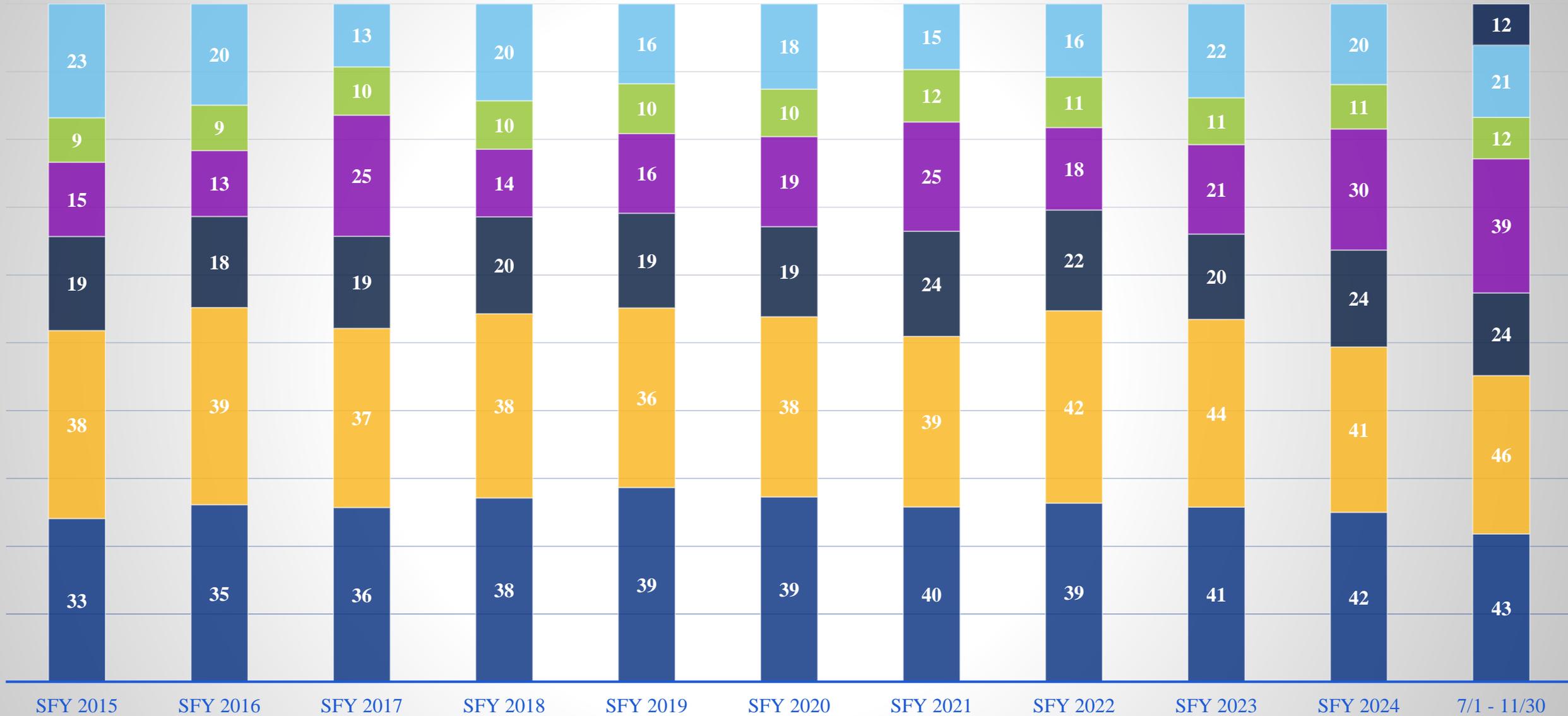
SFY15 – FY25 through 11/30/2024



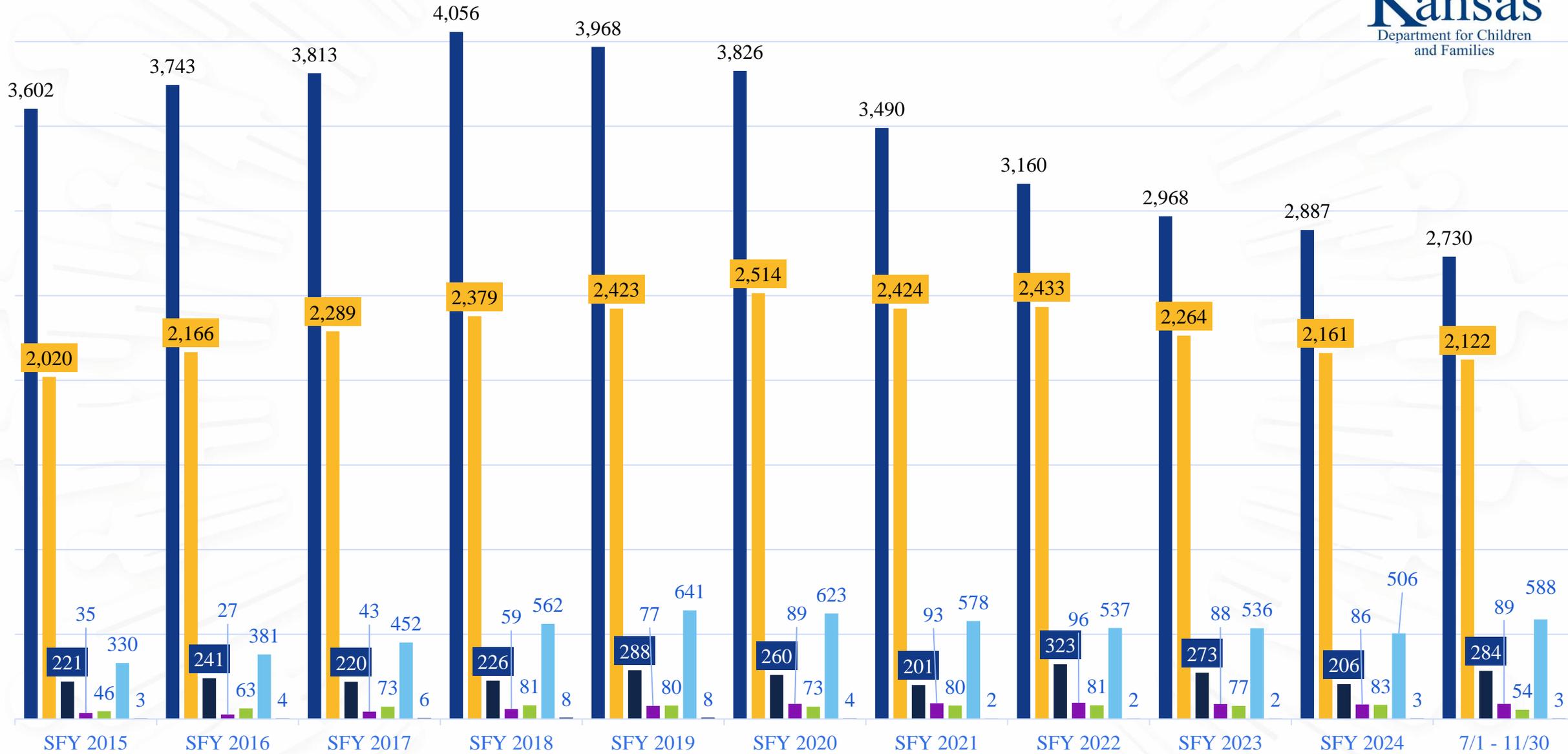
Average Number of Children by Permanency Goal for Children in Foster Care



Average Number of Months in Foster Care by Permanency Reason



AVERAGE OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT SETTINGS BY SFY



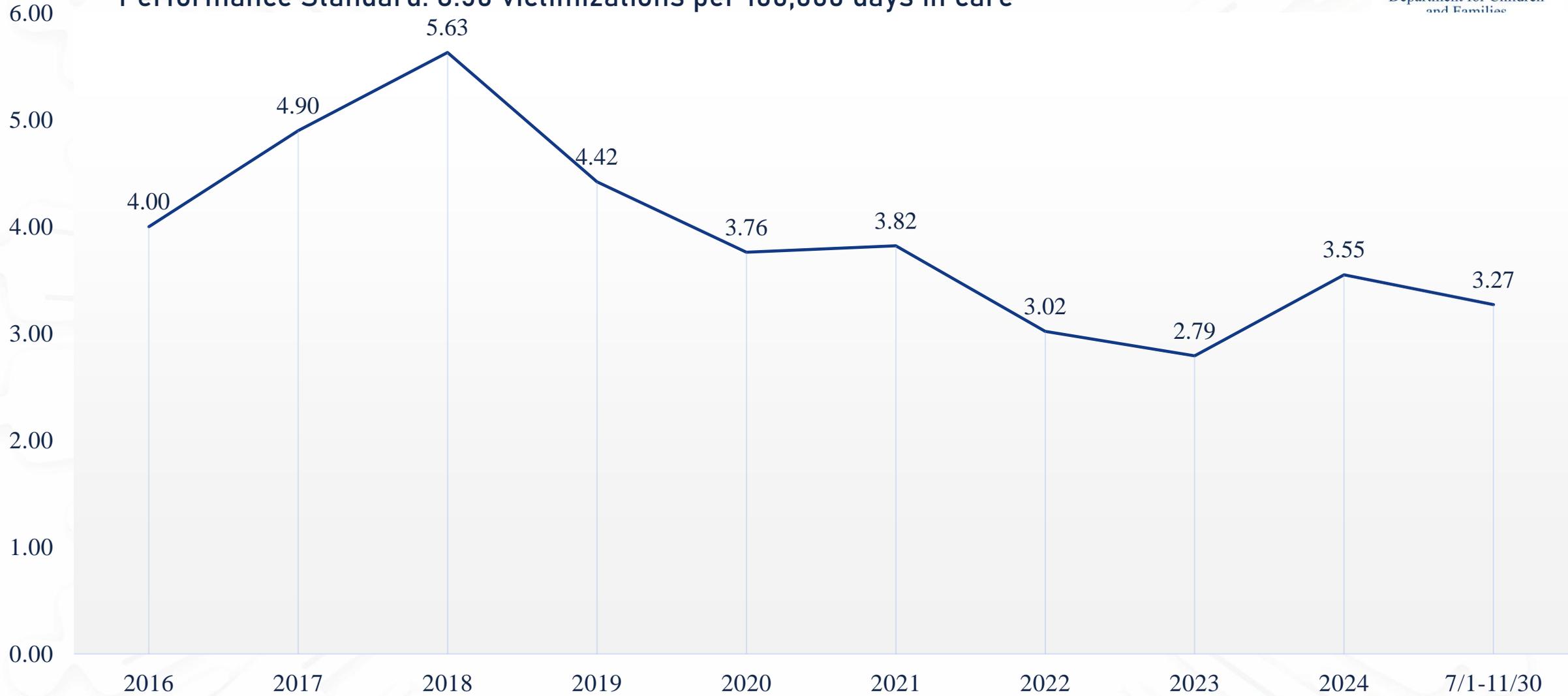
FEDERAL OUTCOMES

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Quality Assurance
 - 15 Aggregate Data Performance Outcomes
 - Monthly data management reports
 - Quarterly case reviews
- Performance Improvement Plans
 - PIPs may be developed by Regions or Case Management Agencies when performance does not meet standard.
 - Agreed upon progress goals are developed.
- A penalty schedule may be applied at end of year if performance does not meet agreed upon after PIP implementation.
- Incentive schedule for success applied to outcomes met.

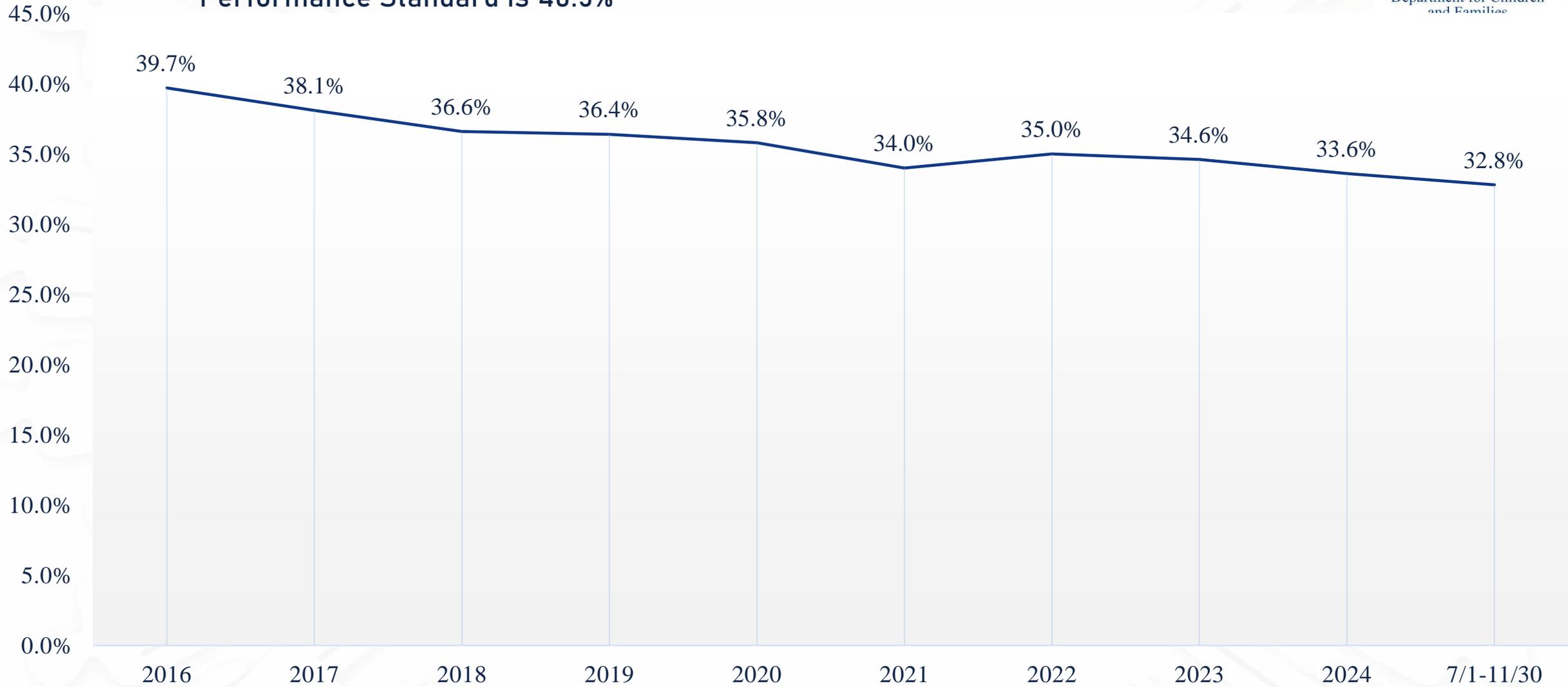
Maltreatment in Foster Care

Performance Standard: 8.50 victimizations per 100,000 days in care



— Rate of Victimization per 100,000 days in care

Federal Timely Permanency in 12 months Performance Standard is 40.5%

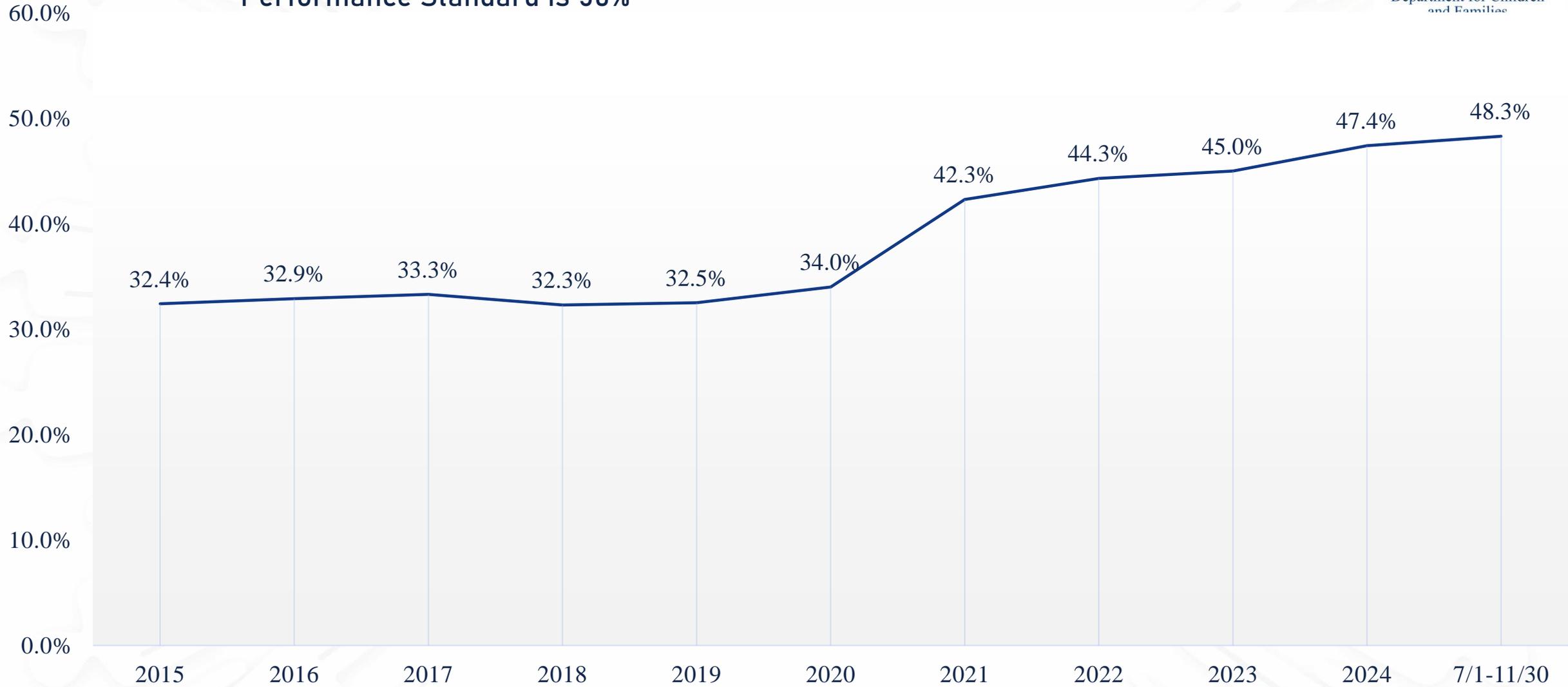


— % of children who discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care and before turning 18

**Placement Stability: Rate per 1,000 days in Foster
Performance Standard is 4.48**



Placement with Relatives or Non-Related Kin Performance Standard is 50%



— % of children in out of home placement living with relative or non-related kin

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA & CONTACTS

2025 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES



DCF has selected three priorities that we hope to work with you all on during the 2025 Legislative Session:

NEGLECT DEFINITION:

Distinguish in statute that poverty is not neglect and prevent separation of a child from a parent solely due to poverty.

PERMANENCY HEARINGS WITHIN NINE MONTHS:

Reducing the number of months within which courts must hold a CINC permanency hearing from 12 to 9 months.

SECURE CARE PLACEMENTS:

Reducing the number of days a child in the custody of the secretary can be authorized for secure care placement by a court from 60 to 45 days.

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QUESTIONS?
