

Family Supportive Housing Program

Annual Report: State Fiscal Year 2024



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Program Overview

The Family Supportive Housing (FSH) Program provides intensive case management and service coordination to homeless families with children, following evidence-based practice for housing families with complex needs and multiple-systems involvement¹. The program's goal is to reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness through support for families as they transition to and sustain permanent housing over time. Service coordination and case management focus on the root causes of a family's homelessness, promote resiliency for parents and their children, and help households build financial capability. FSH staff take a holistic, two-generation approach using non-judgmental, positive, and trauma-informed communication and engagement in their support of families. The FSH program² is a key component of ending family homelessness in Vermont by strengthening and supporting families with complex needs, increasing housing stability and reinforcing accountability.

The Department for Children and Families (DCF) Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) administered Family Supportive Housing funding for ten community-based providers in FY 2024:

- Winston Prouty Center in Brattleboro and Springfield³
- Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) & Howard Center in Burlington
- Homeless Prevention Center in Rutland
- Upper Valley Haven in Hartford
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) in St. Johnsbury and Newport
- Family Center of Washington County in Barre
- Sunrise Family Resource Center in Bennington
- Pathways Vermont in St. Albans
- John Graham & Housing Services in Middlebury
- United Way of Lamoille County in Morrisville

¹ *A Practice Framework for Delivering Services to Families in Supportive Housing*, <https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Practice-Framework.pdf>.

² For more detail about program design and eligibility [FSH Provider Manual](#) .

³ For part of 2024, Winston Prouty was contracted for the FSH services in the Springfield area but needed to relinquish that part of their contract. As a result, at the writing of this report OEO is out to bid for services in the Springfield area.

These community-based service providers employ Service Coordinators who provided customized home-based case management, financial empowerment coaching, life skills support and referrals, tenant education, parent and child resiliency support, and support recovery and treatment. FSH Service Coordinators align and coordinate services with existing Agency of Human Services programs and initiatives. FSH Service Coordinators support enrolled families for a duration of time appropriate for each family, usually at least two years, and have the flexibility to exit families and/or continue necessary support as appropriate. Each Service Coordinator maintains a caseload of 12 to 15 families. In 2024, Family Supportive Housing was recognized by legislators for helping to rehouse and support families with complex needs experiencing homelessness. The recognition was followed by an increased legislative appropriation, increasing the number of Service Coordinators from 20 to 32 and extending our services throughout all of Vermont.

FSH Partner	2023 Staff Positions	2023 Caseload Min-Max	Post-Expansion Available Staff Positions	Post-Expansion Caseload Capacity Min-Max
Winston Prouty Center in Brattleboro	2 positions	24-30	3 positions	36-45
Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) & Howard Center in Burlington	3 positions	36-45	5 positions	60-75
Homeless Prevention Center in Rutland	3 positions	36-45	5 positions	60-75
Upper Valley Haven in Hartford	2 positions	24-30	2 positions	24-30
Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) in St. Johnsbury and Newport	2 positions	24-30	3 positions	36-45
Family Center of Washington County in Barre	3 positions	36-45	5 positions	60-75
Sunrise Family Resource Center in Bennington	2 positions	24-30	3 positions	36-45
Pathways Vermont in St. Albans	2 positions	24-30	3 positions	36-45
Springfield (TBD)	1 position	12-15	1 position	12-15
United Way of Lamoille County	0	0	1 position	12-15
John Graham Supportive Housing and Shelter	0	0	1 position	12-15
TOTALS	20 Positions	240-300	32 Positions	384-480

State Fiscal Year 2024 Highlights

During FY 2024, Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) expanded the Family Supportive Housing (FSH) by increasing its capacity in 7 communities and launching new programs in Addison and Lamoille counties. The year also showcased positive engagement outcomes with FSH providers prioritizing meeting families where they are, strengthening relationships and collaboration between families and community programs. Additionally, OEO focused training opportunities for FSH providers on how to work with participants on their financial stability. FSH providers continue to engage families in budgeting and savings, aiming to build long term financial stability for the families they serve.

We worked with a family of seven (7) who were evicted and temporarily had their children taken into DCF custody due to substance misuse. The family was able to reunite with a few of the children upon entering our shelter, however the reunification of one child was dependent on the family finding permanent housing. We assisted this family with housing applications, voucher applications, and budgeting. The family was considered for housing through a VSFA apartment. They were denied based on credit. The parents worked hard contacting creditors and setting up payment plans. They were able to make several payments to creditors and clear up some outstanding debt. The denial was overturned on appeal. They were then again denied for the same apartment based on poor landlord reference. The family owed money to a previous landlord who was refusing to work with the family around a payment arrangement. The family appealed the decision and won. They were again denied due to “not being honest on the application”. The issue was an honest mistake, and the family decided to appeal. Many providers attended this third appeal hearing to support the family. There was much collaboration with the DCF worker, the client’s attorney, and addiction counselors. We attended every appeal hearing and supported the parents in gathering the proper documentation including assistance in writing the letters and requesting the appeals. The final denial was overturned, and the family was approved to move into the apartment. This allowed them to be reunited with their daughter who was still in foster care. They continue to maintain the apartment, paying their rent on time and have paid off past debt, improving their credit scores.

FSH Upper Valley Haven

Stories like this one are happening across all of our FSH programs. Service Coordinators are present through a family’s journey, they build stronger relationships and offer meaningful support as the family’s goals change and evolve

SFY 2024 Results at a Glance⁴

Family Demographics

- Total Families enrolled during year: **394**
- Total Adults enrolled during the year: **556**
- Total Children enrolled during the year: **746**
- Total Families exiting the program during the year: **116**
- Total Families active in the program at year end: **281**

Housing Stability

- 58% of active families stably housed.
 - 59% of stably housed families are in good standing with their landlords.

Child Safety

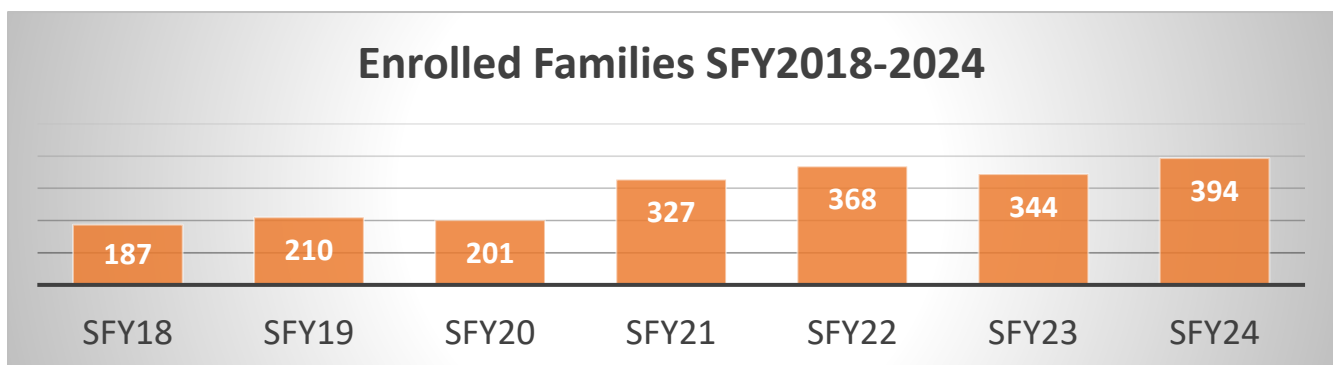
- 64% of Children stably housed at the end of the year.
- 87% of active families have children placed in-home.
- 33% of families had an open case with DCF Family Services at enrollment.
- 18% of enrolled families had an open DCF case with Families Services at the end of the year.
- 88% (746) of enrolled children are up to date with pediatric visits.

Engagement

- 90% of active families participated regularly in case management.

Financial Empowerment

- 26% of active families increased their Financial Capability Score.
- 28% of active families had savings at the end of the year.



⁴ Coordinated Entry – System-wide Homeless Data.

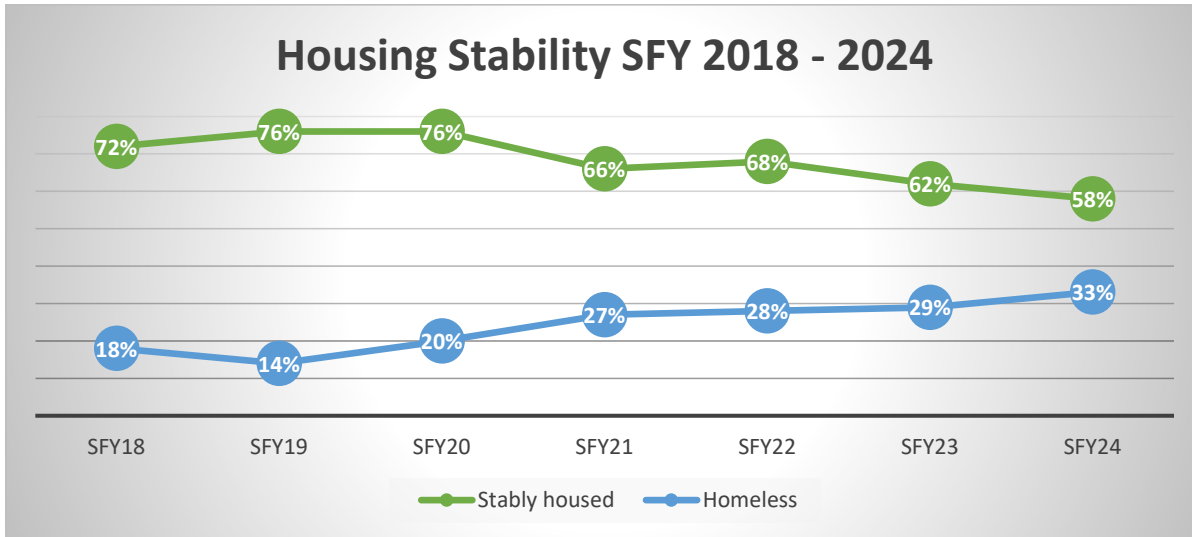
⁴ All percentages in this report based on 281 families active at year end, unless otherwise stated.

Analysis of 2024 Results

The FSH program measures performance in several key areas including:

- Housing Stability
- Family Engagement
- Child Health and Safety
- Financial Wellness
- Exits

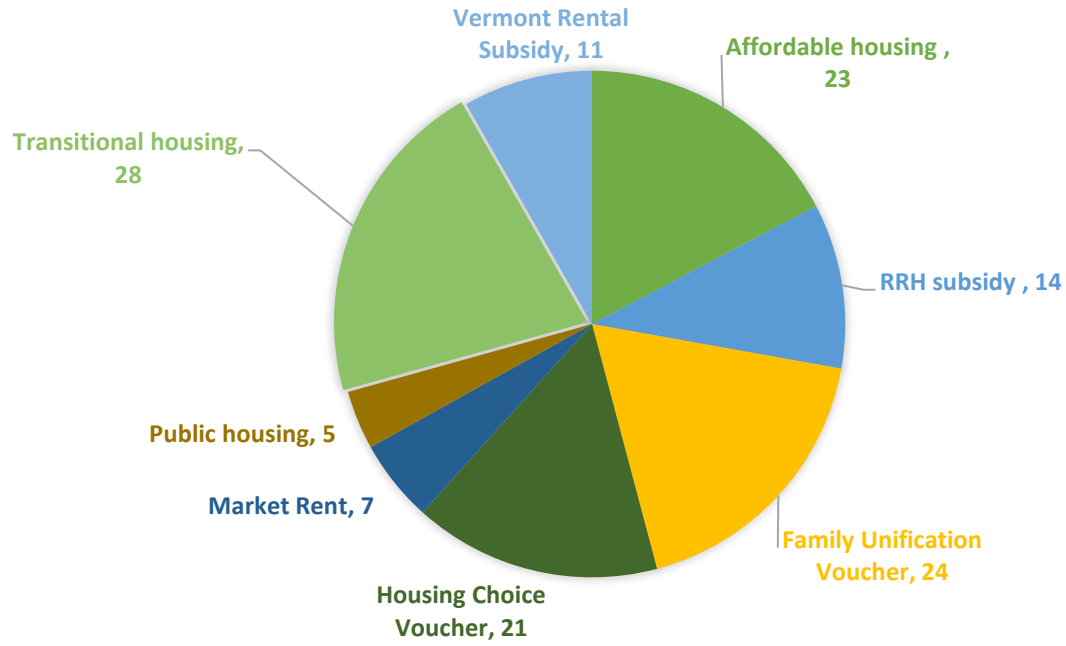
Housing Stability



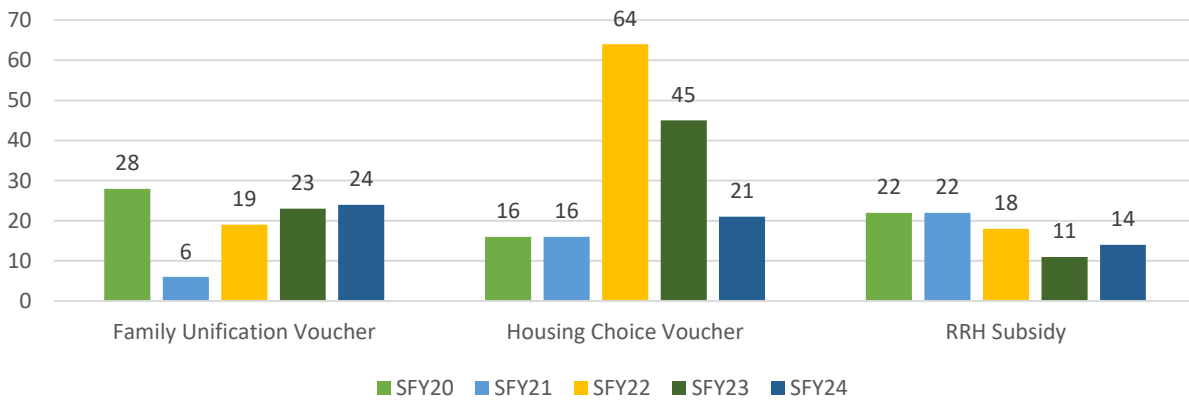
At the end of SFY 2024, 58% (163) of active families were stably housed. The remainder of active families include 33% (93) who were experiencing homelessness and searching for housing, 8% (22) who were housed but considered at risk of homelessness, and data was not collected on 1% (3) of families. With the expansion of the program in SFY24, it is not necessarily surprising to see an increase in the percentage of families experiencing homelessness as all new families enter the program experiencing homelessness. OEO will continue to monitor this data in the year ahead as the caseload stabilizes.

Fifty-two percent (147) of housed families were reported as being in good standing with their landlord. Good standing is defined as the absence of lease violations and that the landlord and tenant have an agreed upon plan to address the issue if back rent is owed. Providers report that for those not in good standing, most are struggling to pay their rent or owe rent. FSH providers continue to utilize a wide range of financial supports to help families find and retain stable housing, and a majority of FSH households live in affordable housing or receive some type of rental assistance. Those supports include rapid re-housing subsidies, Housing Choice vouchers, Family Unification vouchers, and more.

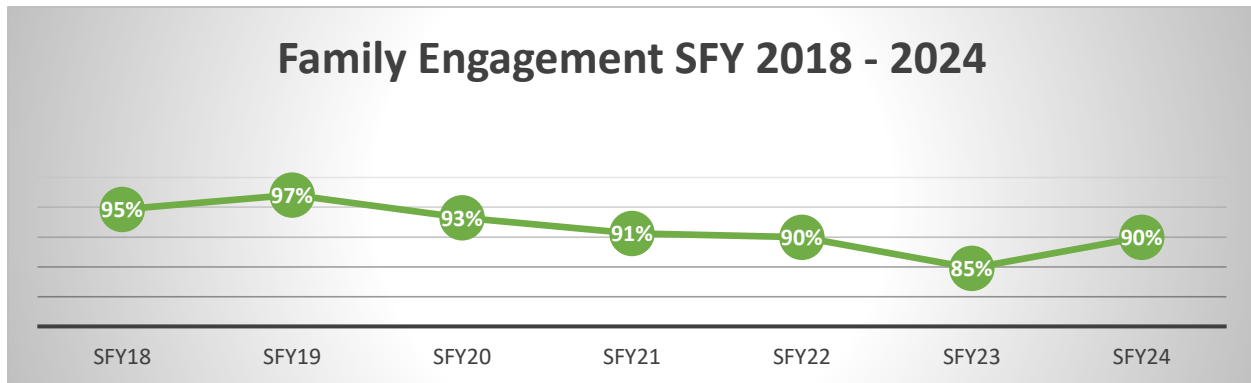
2024 YEAR END RENTAL SUPPORT SNAPSHOT



Rental Support SFY 2020-2024



Family Engagement



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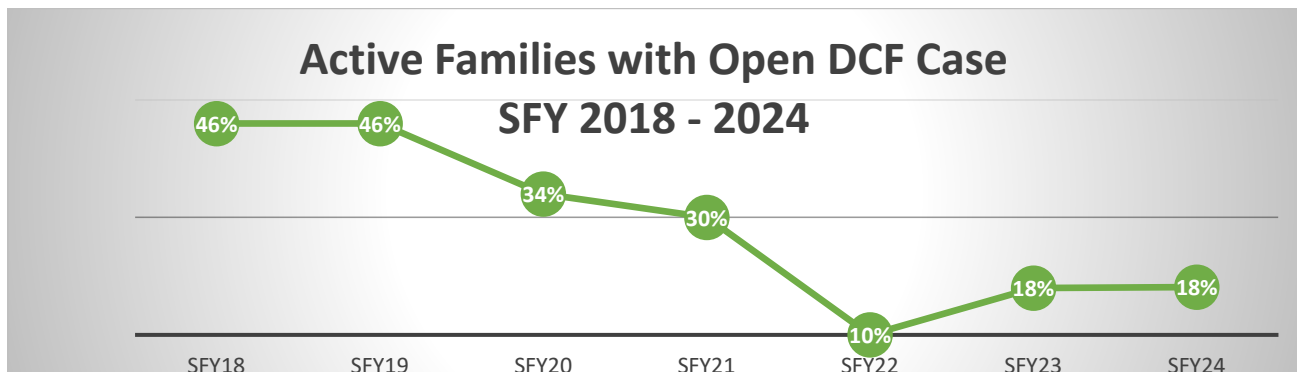
In Q4 of SFY 2024 90% (253) of active enrolled families participated regularly in case management, showing an increase from 2023.

Keeping families engaged in services can be challenging. In addition to face-to-face meetings, Service Coordinators use communication such as phone calls, texts, emails, and social media to ensure families stay connected in a way that works for them. Building relationships, routine check-ins, managing crises, goal setting, and offering interim support and resources are examples of ways Service Coordinators work to keep families engaged while waiting for the right housing opportunity.

⁵ Graph based on measure “Families regularly participating in case management and program meetings active Q4”

Child Health and Safety

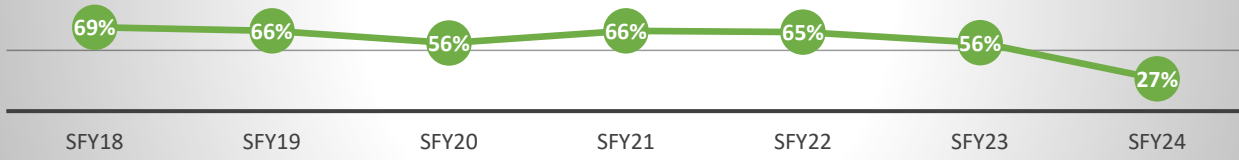
FSH works holistically with families, including addressing child safety and offering parenting support. At the end of SFY 2024 about 18% (51) of the families served had some level of involvement with the child welfare system and 16% (45) families had children placed out of the home. Service Coordinators work closely with families and the Family Services Division to help create a safe environment for children and offer ongoing encouragement to the family as they work toward reunification and/or having their child welfare case closed.



FSH looks at child health and safety beyond involvement with the child welfare system. Eighty-eight percent (656) of children active at the year-end were up to date with pediatric well visits, similar to the year before. Twenty-seven percent (198) of families active at year end reported experiencing food insecurity compared with 56% (122) in SFY 2023.⁶The decline of families reporting food insecurity in Vermont may be attributed the expansion of access to state and federal food assistance programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), free and reduced school meals, and other local incentives that ensure food security for children.

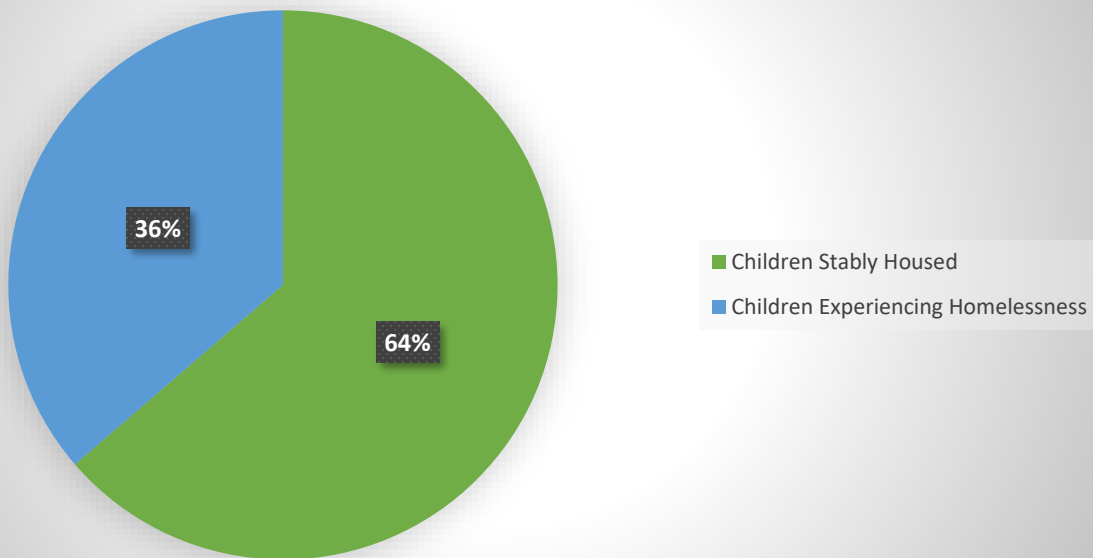
⁶ As measured by the Hunger Vital Sign. [The Hunger Vital Sign™ - Children's HealthWatch \(childrenshealthwatch.org\)](https://www.childrenshealthwatch.org) and [SNAP Vermont](#)

Families Reporting Food Insecurity via Hunger Vital Sign SFY 2018 - 2024



Sixty-four percent of children were housed at the end of the year. Housing status and homelessness has a significant on the health and safety of children: disrupting emotional, cognitive, and social development; leading to school transfers, absences, and low performance; as well as other impacts that persist with impacts into adulthood.⁷

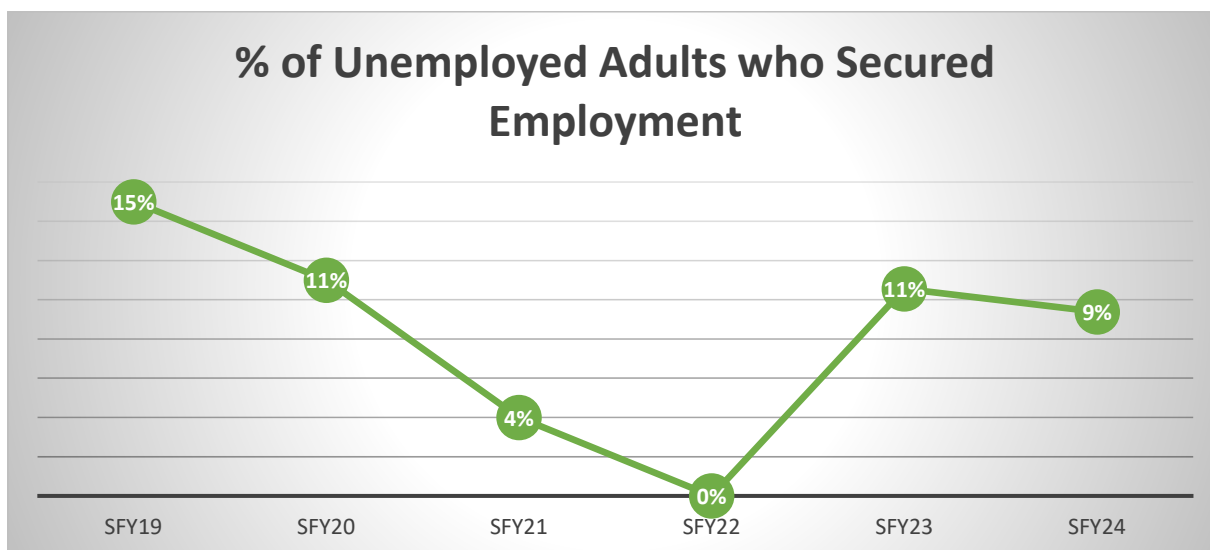
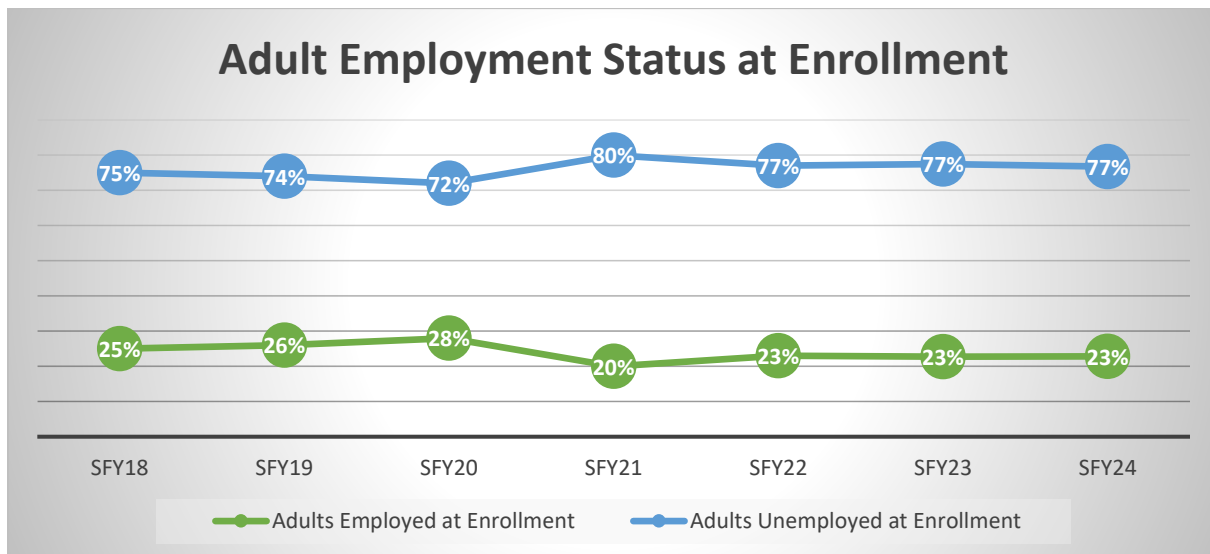
Children Housing Status End of SFY 2024



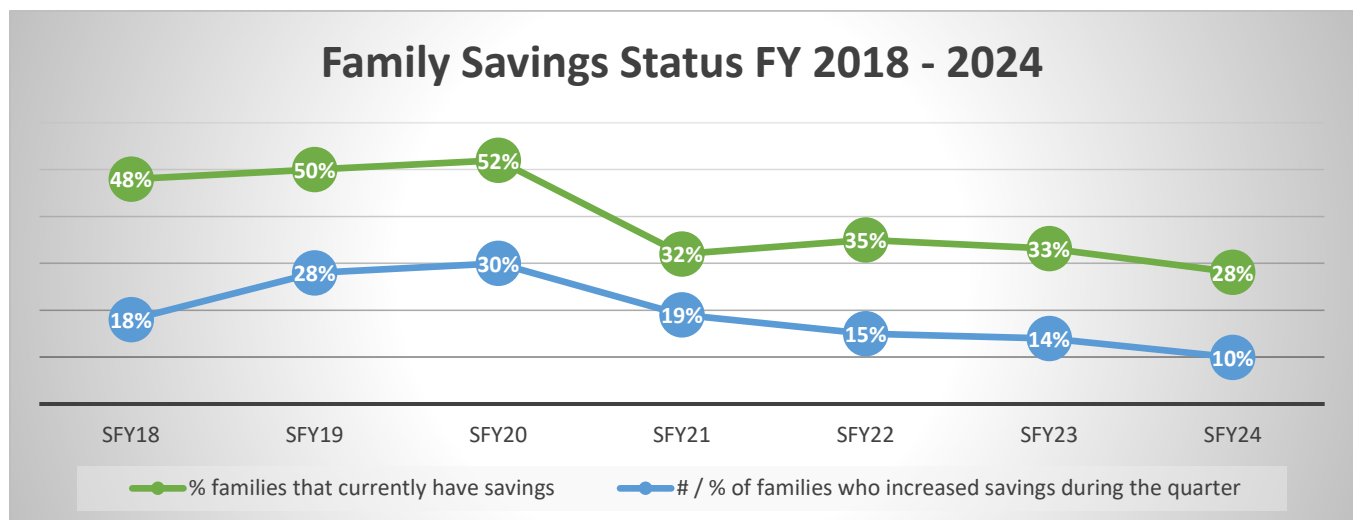
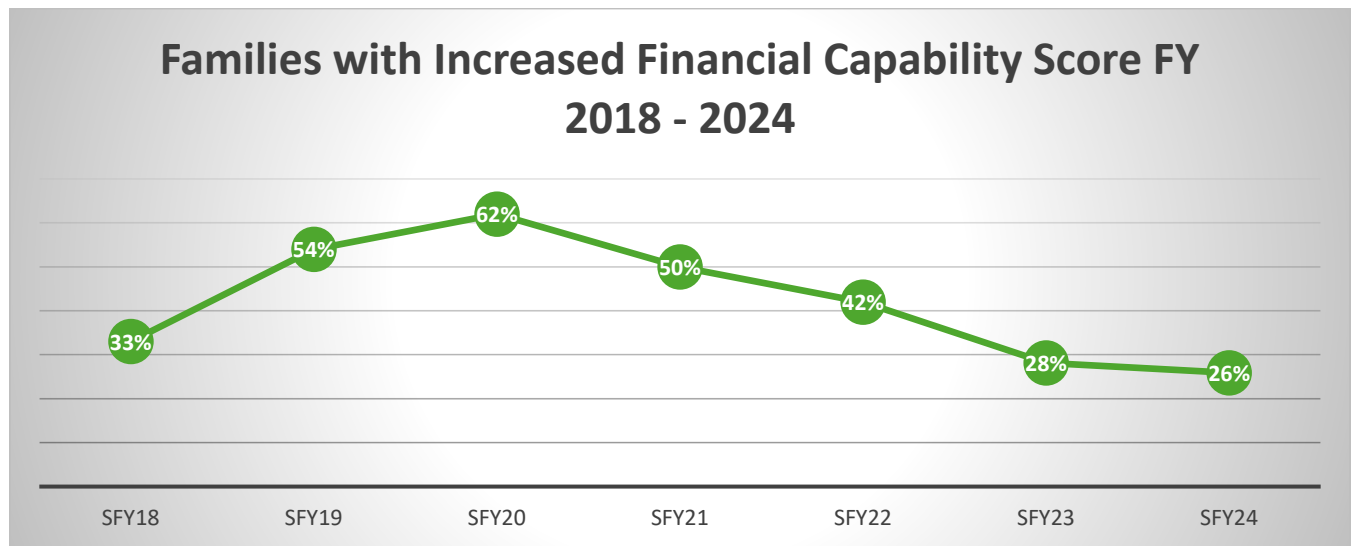
⁷ Impact of Permanent Supportive Housing on Families and Youth
<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25133/chapter/8>

Financial Wellness

In SFY 2024, a total of 556 adults were enrolled in FSH. Seventy-seven percent (427) were unemployed at enrollment, and 23% (127) were employed at enrollment. Of the 427 adults who were unemployed at enrollment, 8% (36) secured employment by year end, 4% (17) entered a job training or education program, and 30% (130) secured other income. Fourteen percent (53) of active employed adults-maintained employment for 6 or more months during the state fiscal year.



OEO continues to prioritize financial empowerment training and technical assistance to FSH providers. In SFY 2024, 28% (79) of active families reported having savings at year-end and 10% (28) of families reported increasing savings during Q4 compared with 14% (30) of families who increased savings last year. Sixty-two percent (174) of active families had access to mainstream banking⁸ services at year end. Twenty-six percent (73) of active families reported an increased financial capability score⁹. Inflation and increased housing costs are impacting families and savings related outcomes.



⁸ Defined as access to a FDIC or NCUA insured account.

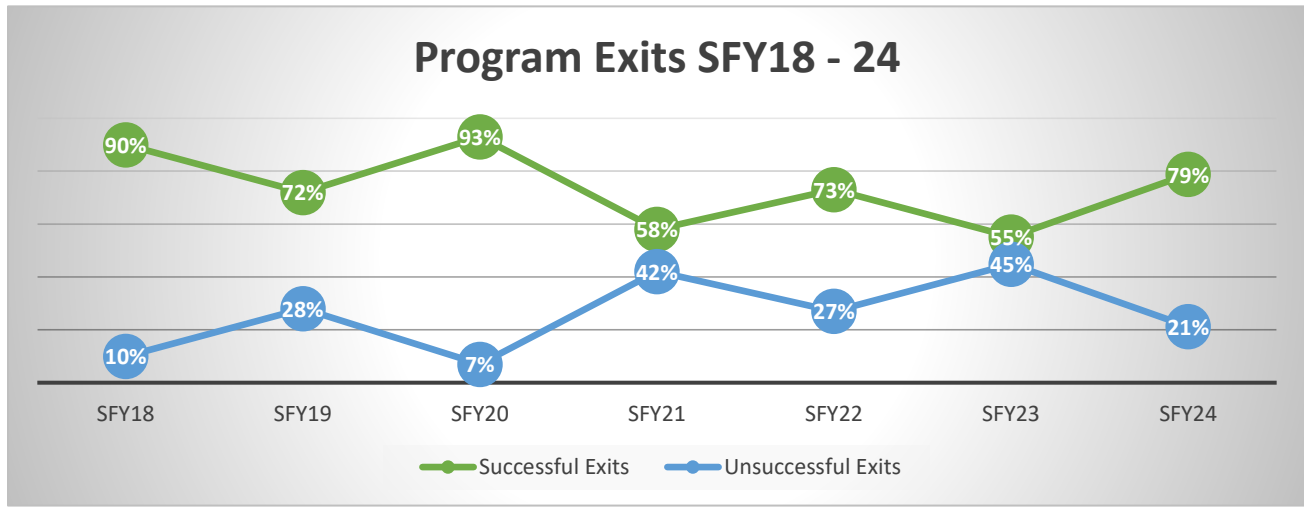
⁹ The financial capability score measures financial knowledge and wellbeing from the perspective of the family. [Financial Capability Scale \(FCS\) – Financial Coaching Strategies \(wisc.edu\)](https://www.wisc.edu/financial-coaching-strategies/)

Client "D" receives Reach Up monthly, as her only income. She lives (successfully) in a subsidized apartment, is responsible for the electric bill and her monthly rent portion, but sometimes struggles around money management. She has a young son who lives with her, for whom she often has many expenses. "D" also has a car a family member is paying for, so she has some debt around that. "D" has voiced it is sometimes hard for her to budget and have money for all family needs. "D" also experiences a lot of generalized anxiety, so conversations around money can be tough. Over the last several months, Pathways service team has continued to build rapport and trust with her, having tough discussions around creating goals centered around financial capability. To support this work further, the team reviewed her budget with her and created an envelope system with 'play' money to represent the income she was going to be receiving. "D" met the goal around using this tool to budget her real money and earned a \$25 gas card. Though she still experiences anxiety around financial matters, the team has/is building on that success to support increasing her financial capability. A successful moment that highlights this further is that "D" was able to identify that driving out of state to shop is not a good financial choice and instead made a choice to shop local and save the extra travel money she was spending for her son's upcoming birthday.

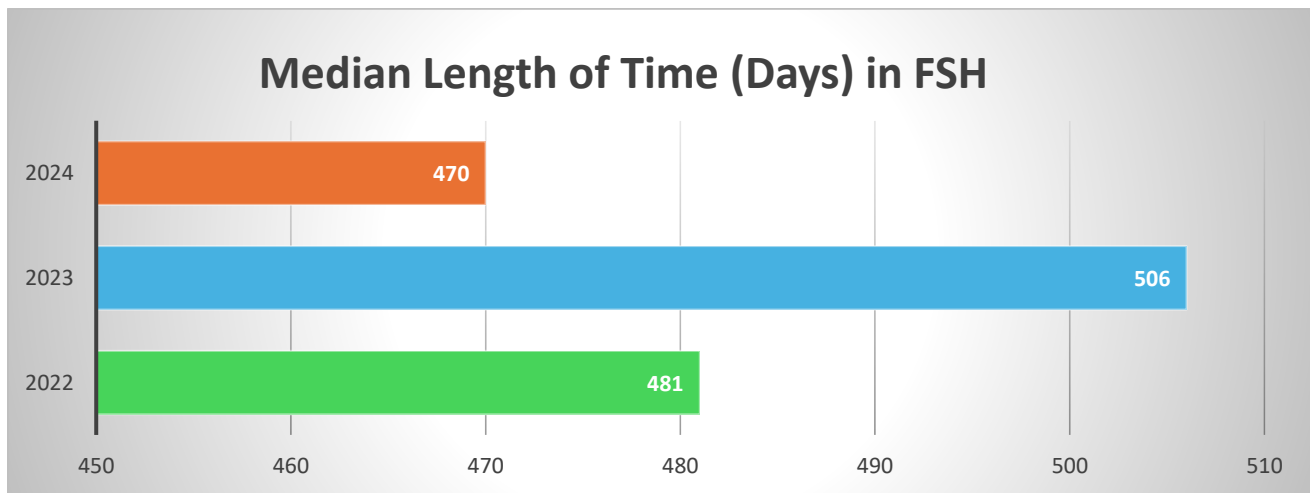
Pathways, St. Albans

An example of how financial empowerment can support a family and be measured in small ways.

Exits



In the fourth quarter of SFY2024 33 families exited FSH. Of these families, 79% (26) exited successfully while 21% (7) exited unsuccessfully. Unsuccessful exits included a mix of households who were still experiencing homelessness and those who were housed. In 2024 FSH providers concentrated on family engagement which is positively reflected in the increase of successful program exits and the decrease of unsuccessful exits.



There is no time limit on Family Supportive Housing services. This year saw a reduction of days in FSH from 506 in SFY 2023 to 470 in SFY 2024. This is likely impacted by the number of new households entering the program in the past year and may be associated with the increase in successful program exits.

Acknowledgements

The Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity would like to welcome our new FSH community partners, John Graham & Housing Services and United Way of Lamoille County, and thank all of our FSH program staff. Those staff play vital roles in addressing the needs families and work hard to end homelessness in Vermont.