



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Emergency Assistance (EA) Commission Kickoff

July 18, 2024





Agenda

[10 min] Introduction, Swearing In & Commission Overview

[5 min] Vote on Remote Participation

[10 min] Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program History

[20 min] EA Policies and Processes Overview

[15 min] Fiscal History

[30 min] Discussion



Introduction & Commission Overview

GOALS

- Increase understanding and alignment on current state of Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter program,
 - Build consensus on EA next steps, and
 - Provide actionable recommendations on changes to EA program
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REQUIRED REPORT

- File report of findings and recommendations by no later than December 1, 2024
 - Recommendations to include how to improve:
 - The sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness of the EA program;
 - How to best support and ensure the long-term sufficiency of those seeking shelter;
 - Creating a regional based response to support families in need of shelter
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NORMS

- Guiding principles: transparency and collaboration
- Subject to open meeting law; avoid deliberation (including by email) outside of noticed meetings
- We have a lot to cover, please hold questions until discussion section of agenda
- Monthly meetings moving forward as we prepare for releasing our Commission's report



Vote on Remote Participation

Moved: The Commission encourages in-person attendance of members at all meetings, but will allow remote participation of members in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law.



Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter Program History



EA Program History

1983: Chapter 450 of the Acts of 1983 establishes the Emergency Assistance program for eligible families in Massachusetts. Unlike most jurisdictions in the U.S., MA is a “right to shelter” state for homeless families meeting certain eligibility requirements.

2023: DHCD is established as a Secretariat and re-named the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.



2009: On July 1, 2009, the administration of EA transitioned from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to DHCD. To this day, EOHLC’s EA area offices are co-located with DTA offices.

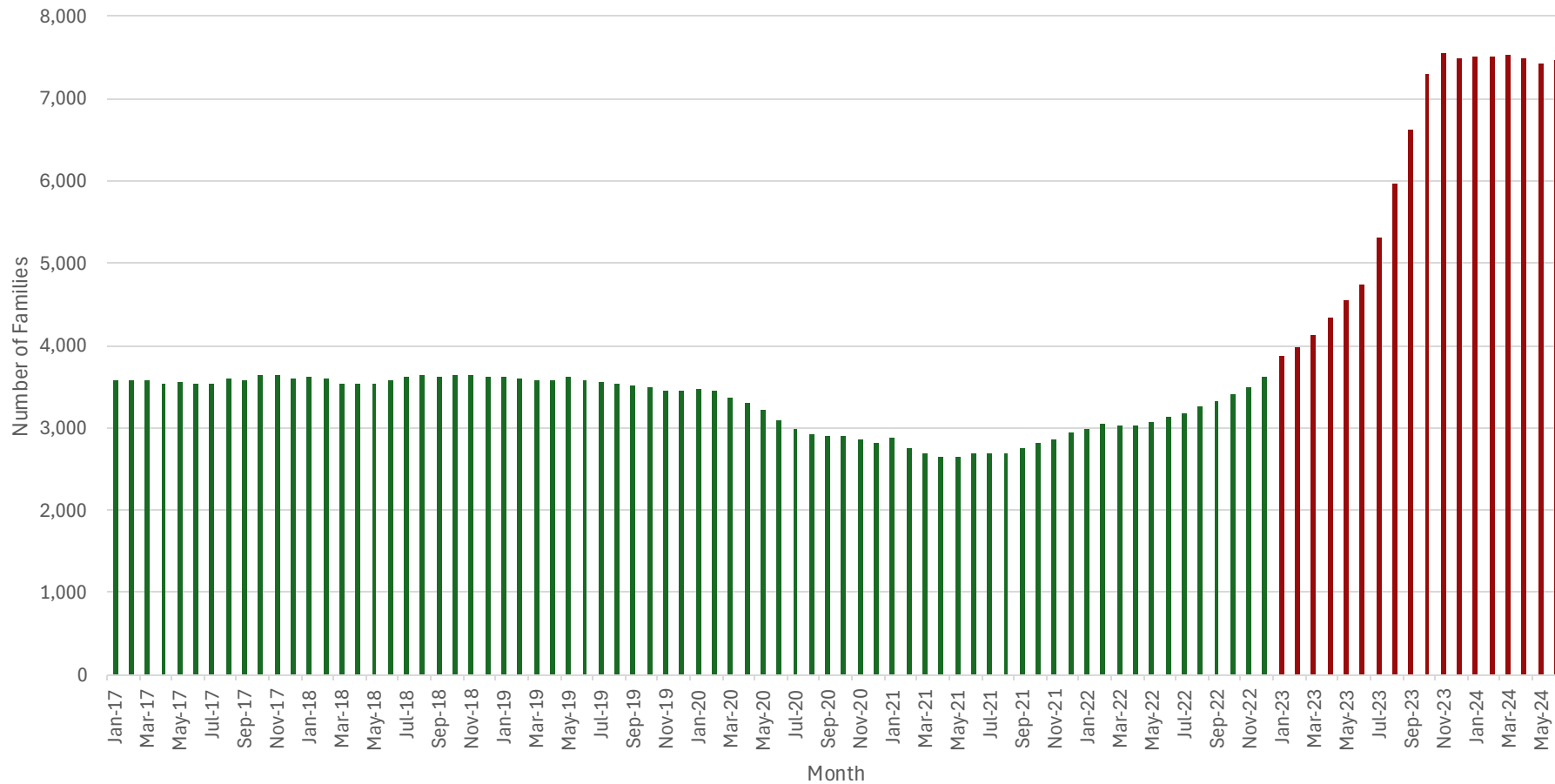
2024: EA is funded by state appropriation (7004-0101) and received \$325 million in the State's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.



EA Program History

The EA program historically has served ~4,000 families with average lengths of stays of over 1 year. The program has faced challenges with flexing to meet variable needs amid a tight housing market.

Historical EA Caseload



Average Length of Stay

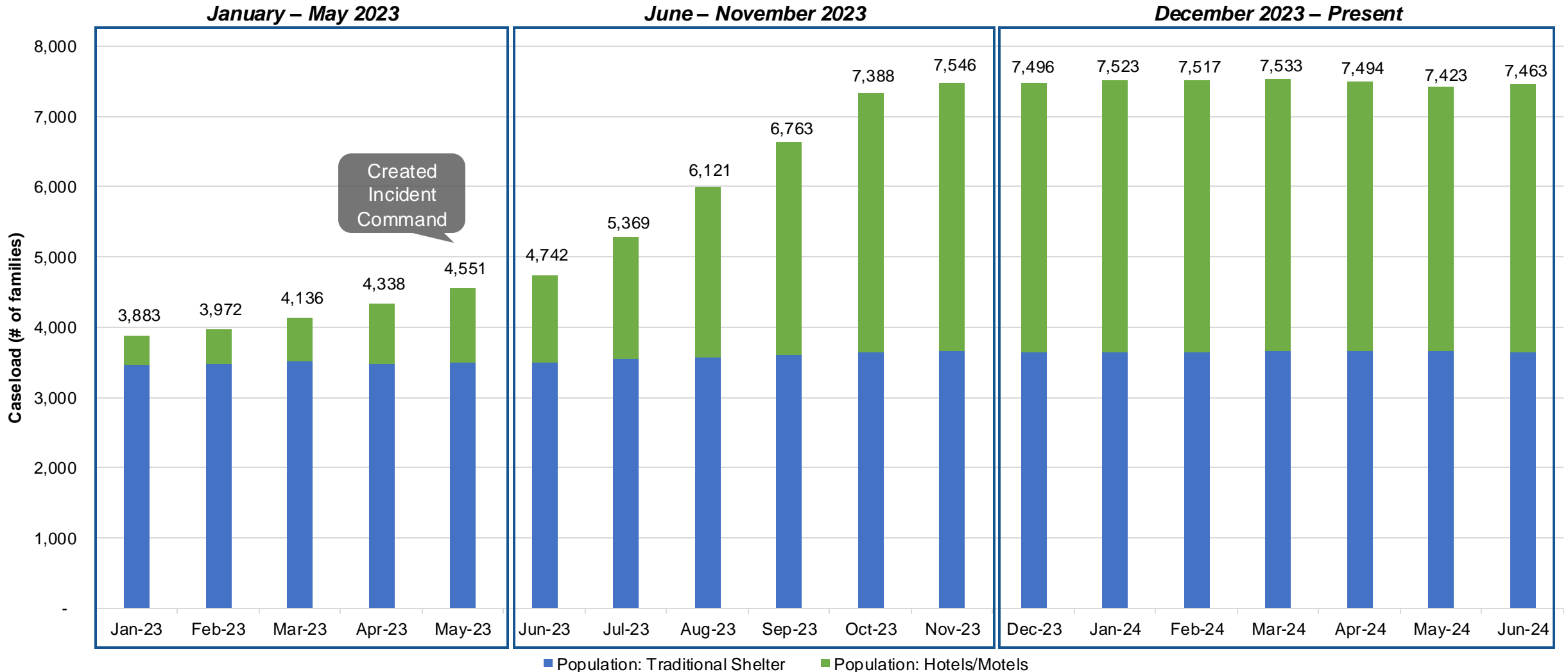
Calendar Year	Average Length of Stay
2021	455 days
2022	431 days
2023	384 days
2024	365 days



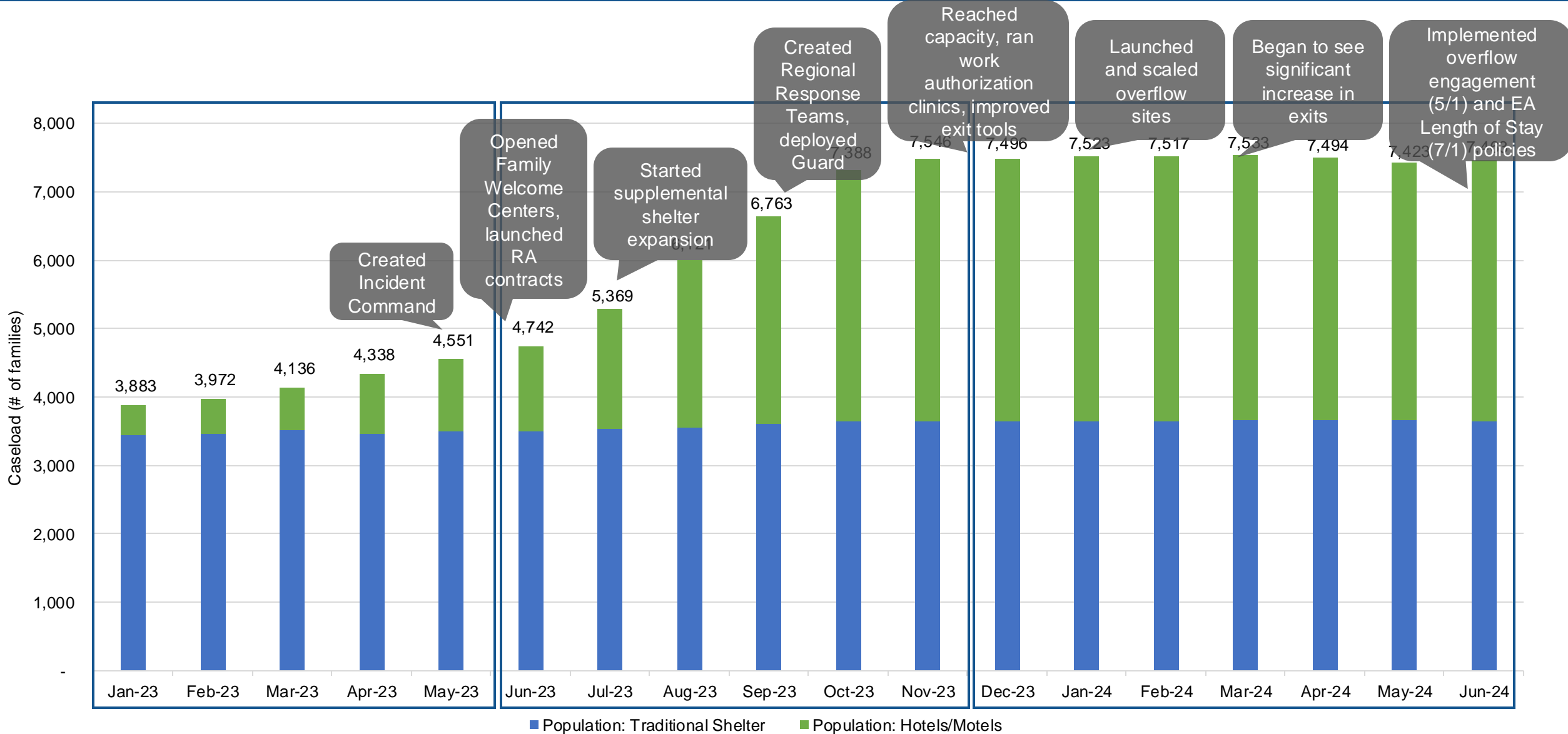
Since January 2023, we have faced rising caseload across 3 phases

Half of the current family population are immigrant families who have a lawful presence in the U.S.

Family Shelter Population: 2023 – Present



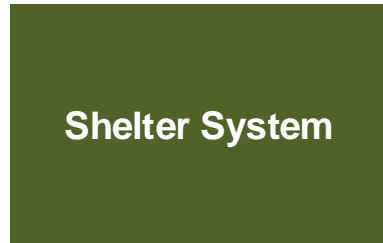
The Administration has responded over time for each of these phases to support families and manage caseload



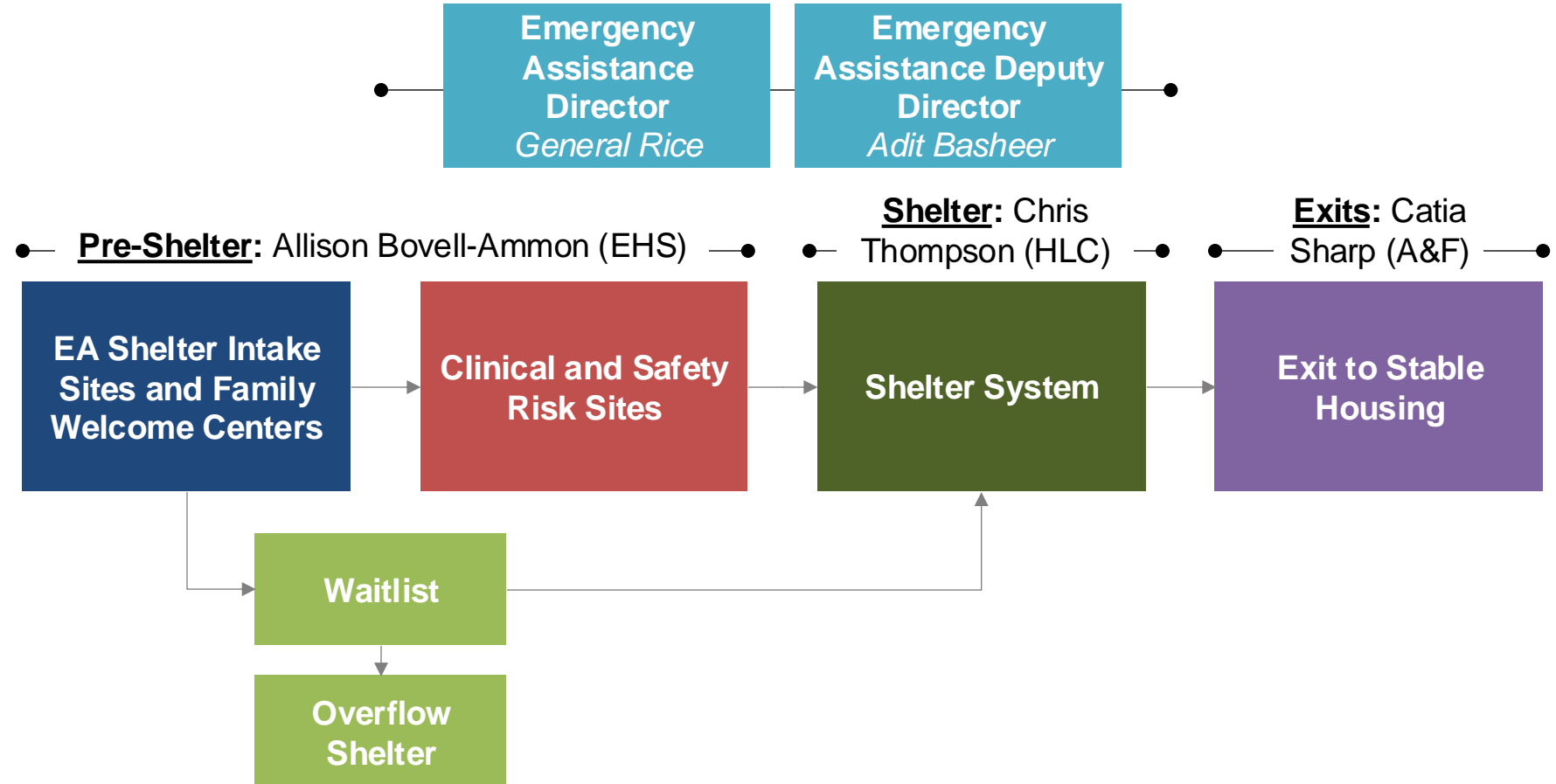
The Incident Command (IC) structure was created in May 2023 to respond to the crisis and bolster support



Previous EA Structure



Current Incident Command EA Structure



Other cities and states across U.S. have supported new arrival families over time with various policies



We are in regular contact with officials in Chicago, New York, and Denver on their evolving policies and lessons learned.

- Other peer cities and states have grappled with similar influxes of new arrivals (families and individuals) since Fall 2022, including New York, Chicago, and Denver. Denver and Chicago have served over 40,000 new arrivals and New York over 150,000 new arrivals.
- Initially, these cities significantly expanded their capacity to support new arrivals. Unlike in MA, they did so using programs outside of their traditional shelter systems. Over time, they have begun to scale back their programs to address financial and capacity constraints.
- Recently, these cities have implemented new policies – such as time limits in shelter and new rehousing programs – that place constraints on sheltering new individuals and focuses on supporting those who are already in shelters.

Current Policies for New Arrival Shelter

CHICAGO

- **Families & Individuals:** 60-day limit with ability to re-apply

NEW YORK CITY

- **Individuals:** 30-day limit
- **Families:** 60-day limit
- Families and individuals can receive extensions for extenuating circumstances and can re-apply after they reach their time limit

DENVER

- **Families & Individuals:** 72-hour limit (*previously 3 weeks*)

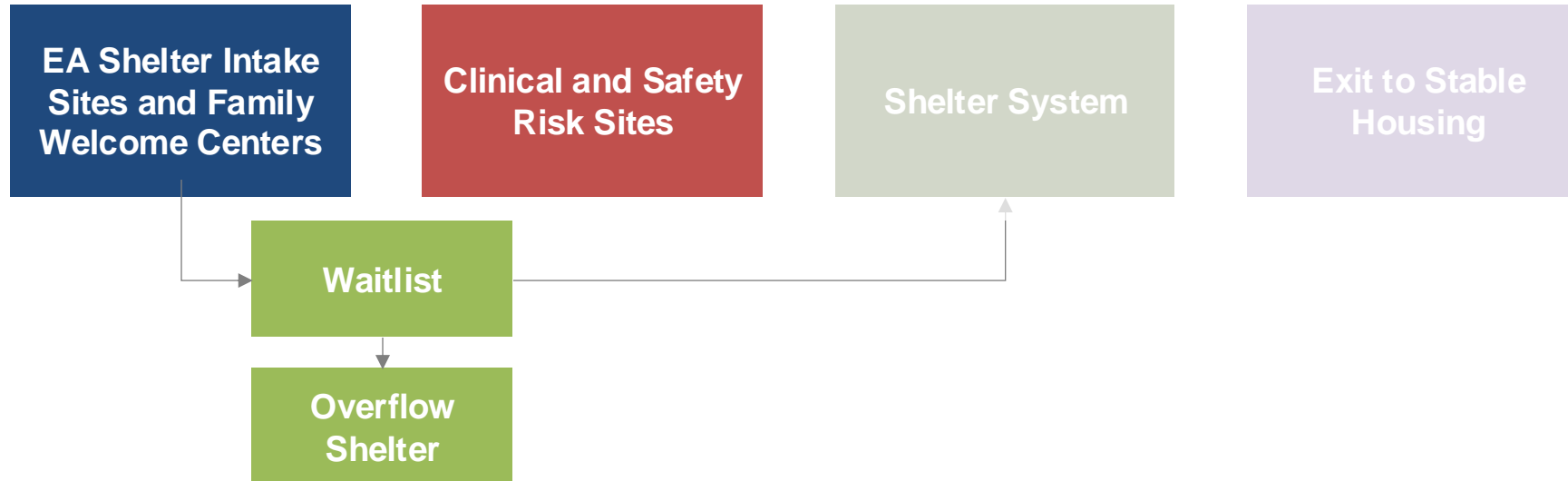


EA Policies and Processes Overview



Reception and Placement

Historically, reception and placement were conducted solely through EOHLC. Family Welcome Centers and other “pre-shelter” supports were added in response to the crisis.

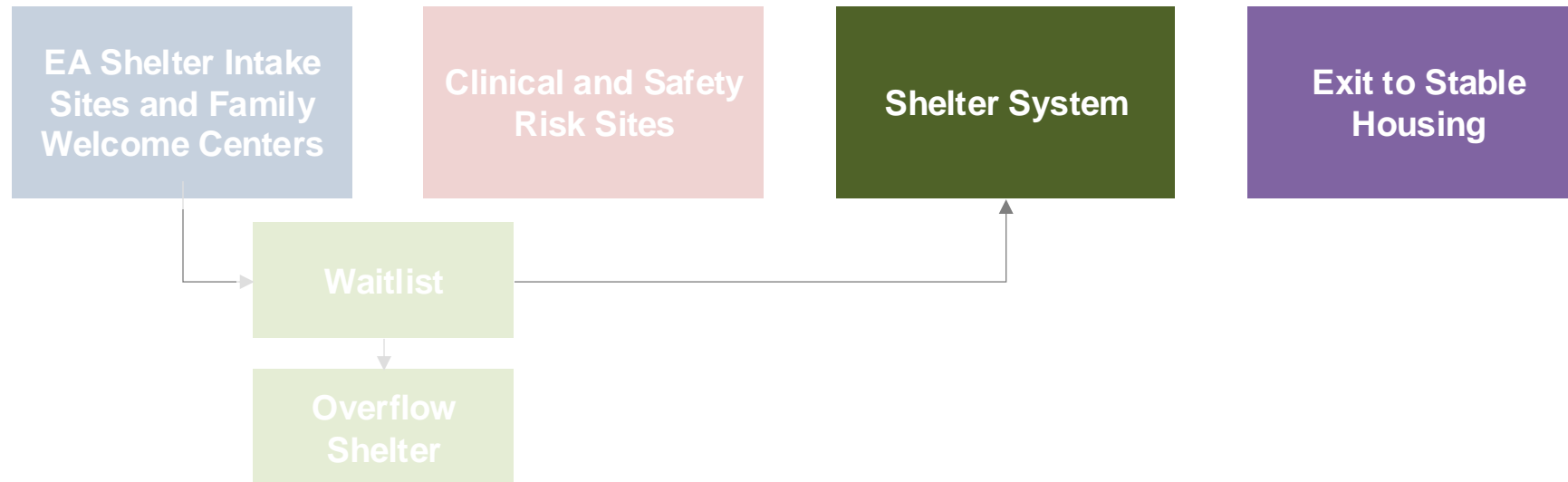


- + Family Welcome Centers which provide access to basic needs, benefits enrollment, legal assistance and immigration-related services, and connections to local, culturally appropriate resources.
- + Clinical and Safety Risk Assessment (CSR) sites to provide shelter and case management support for prioritized families (P1-3) on the waitlist.
- + Overflow sites to provide shelter, case management, and diversion support for P4 families on the waitlist.
- + Increased diversion services and tools.



Supportive Services and Prevention Strategies

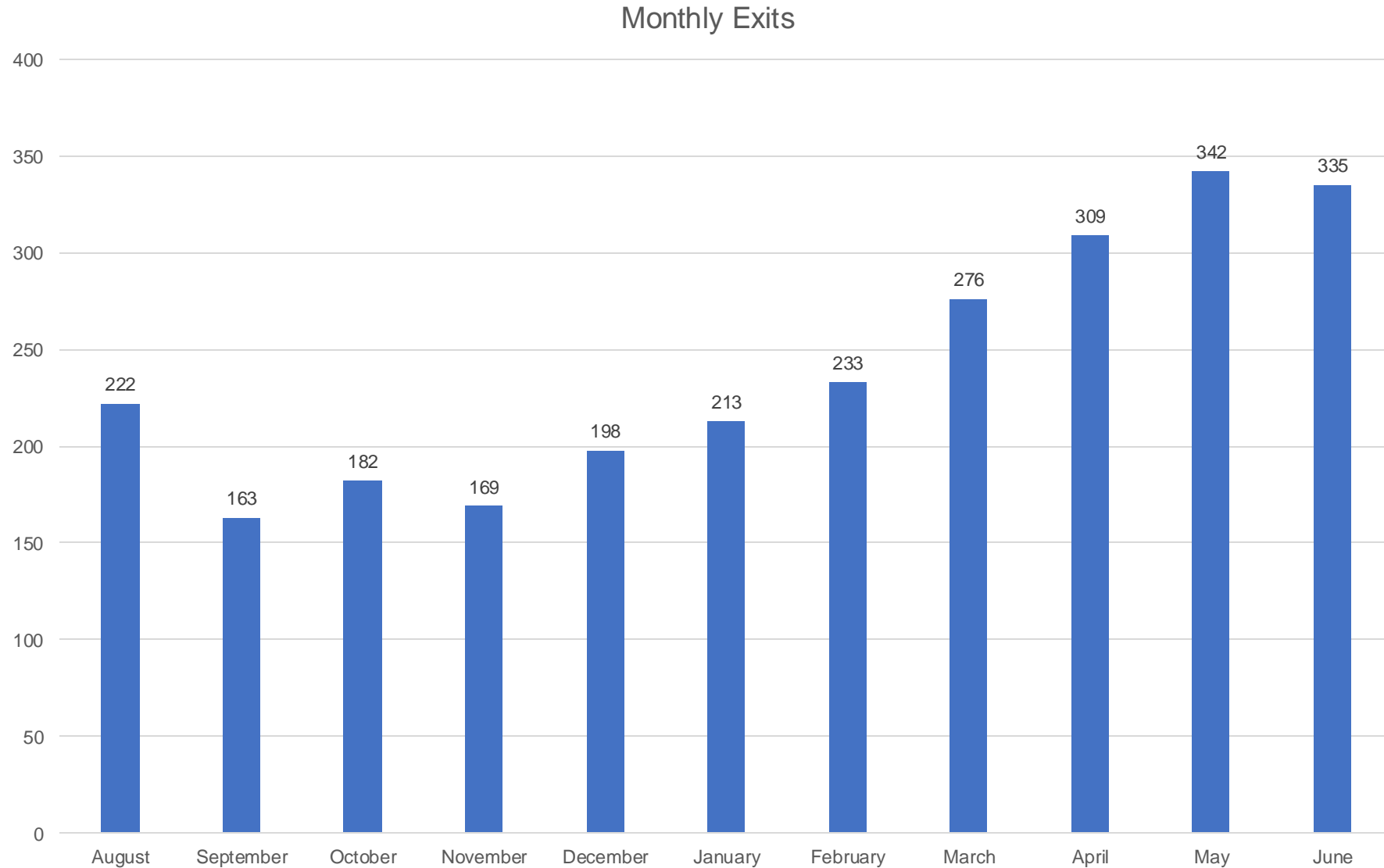
EOHLC has infused additional regional support and prevention strategies into the program throughout the crisis.



- + Created new Regional Response Team in response to caseload growth into hotels to provide localized support to families. As we have brought providers to all sites, we are transitioning these team members to new regional support roles for providers.
- + Increased exits and employment services, tools, and funding. This included making changes to the HomeBASE program and providing more flexible funds to providers.
- + Created new regional Housing Search Specialists roles at EOHLC to support providers in rehousing families.



As we have shifted our supports and services, exits have increased





Fiscal History



Budget History

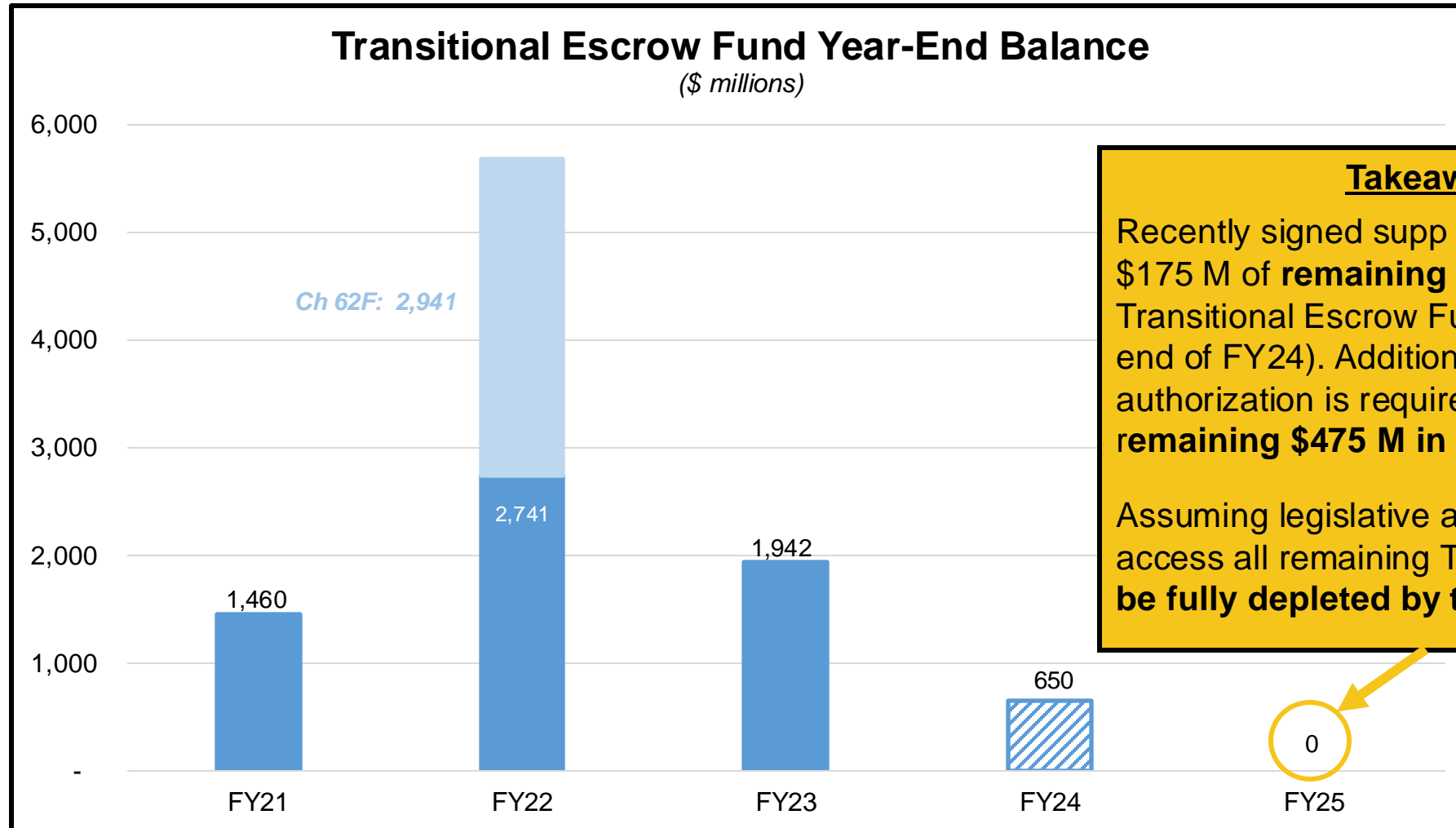
The legislature has appropriated \$1.4 billion for the EA program since November 2022.

Date Established	Account Name	Amount	Statute	Available Through
November 10, 2022	Immigrants and Refugees Housing Reserve	\$14,000,000	Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022	June 2027
March 29, 2023	Immigration and Refugee Reserve	\$40,061,776	Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023	June 2024
March 29, 2023	Immigrants and Refugees Supports Reserve	\$7,000,000	Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023	June 2024
August 9, 2023	EA Family Shelters and Services	\$325,251,902	FY24 GAA	June 2024
December 4, 2023	Family Shelter and Services Reserve	\$250,000,000	Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023	June 2024
April 30, 2024	Family Shelter and Services Reserve	\$251,000,000	Chapter 88 of the Acts of 2024	June 2025
April 30, 2024	Family Shelter and Services Reserve	\$175,000,000	Chapter 88 of the Acts of 2024	June 2025
TBD	EA Family Shelters and Services	\$325,251,902	FY25 GAA (pending, amount is included in both HOU and SEN)	June 2025

Most supplemental appropriations (those not attached to the 7004-0101 GAA line item) have been funded through the **Transitional Escrow Fund (TEF)**, a temporary source of funding created by the legislature to store one-time savings from FY21 and FY22 year-end surpluses. If EA expenditures continue to be funded this way, **the TEF will likely be fully depleted by the end of FY25**, requiring future EA expenditures in FY26 and beyond to come from the General Fund or other sources.



Available One-Time Funding Sources are Running Out



Takeaway

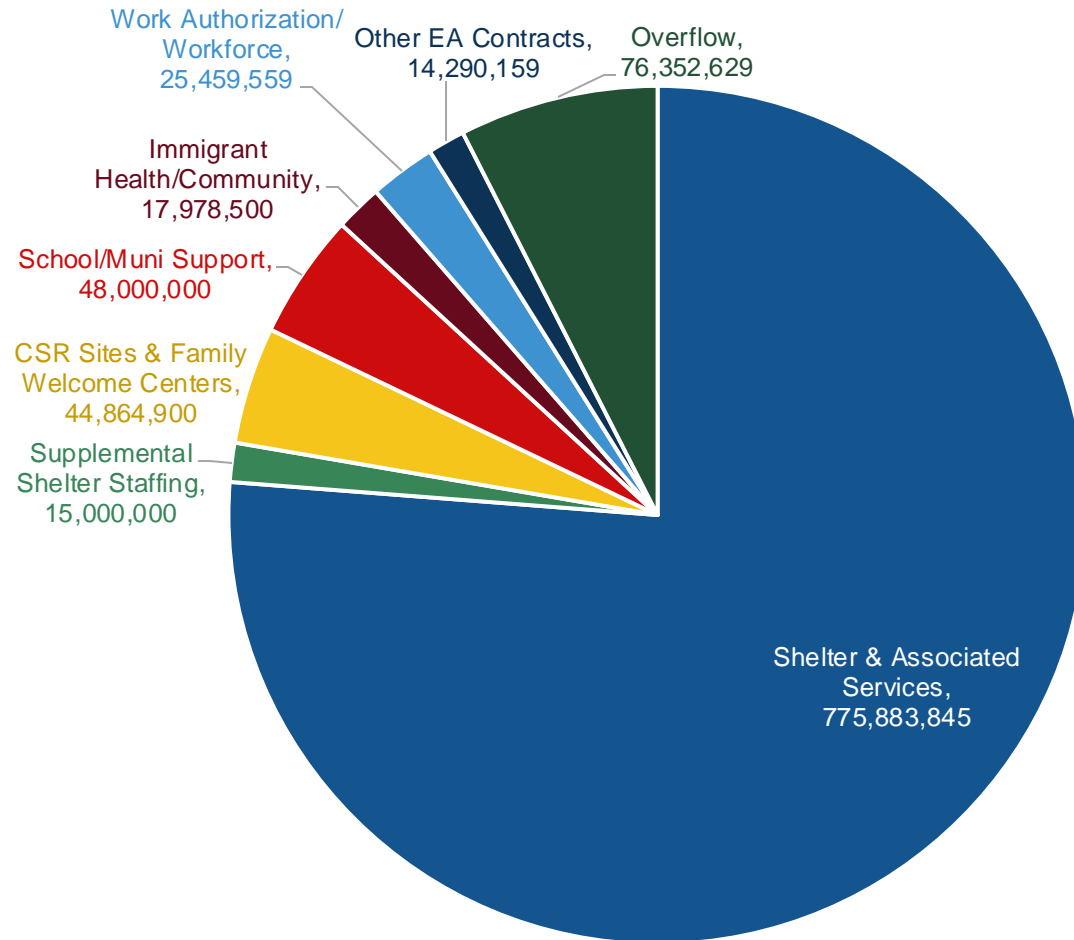
Recently signed supp authorizes use of \$175 M of **remaining \$650 M** in Transitional Escrow Fund (anticipated at end of FY24). Additional legislative authorization is required to access the **remaining \$475 M in January**.

Assuming legislative authorization to access all remaining TEF, the **TEF will be fully depleted by the end of FY25**.



Projected FY25 Spending

The EA program is projected to cost over \$1 billion in FY25.



Total: \$1,017,829,592

Assumes the following remain in place for all of FY25:

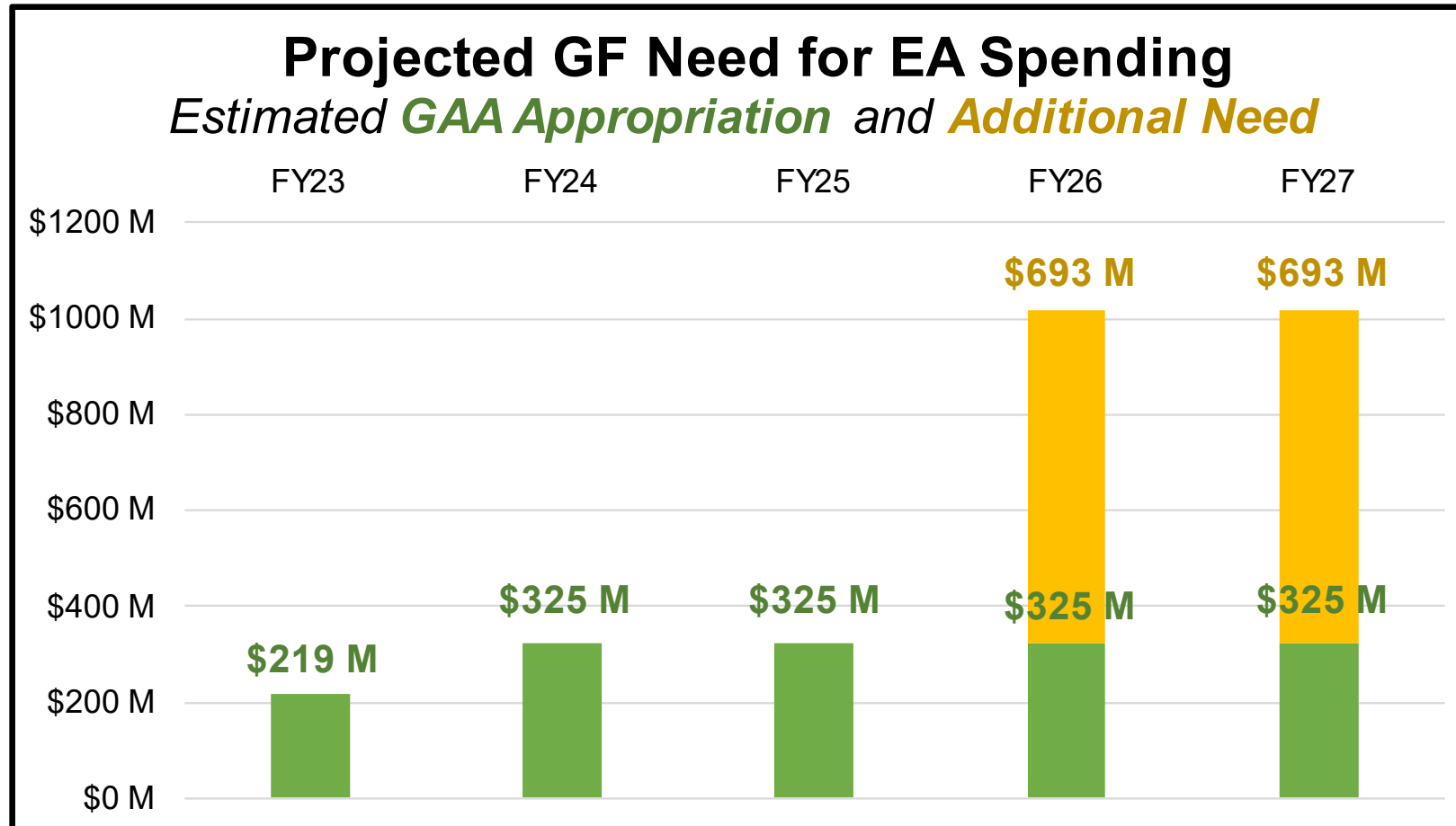
- 7,500 families in shelters
- 4 overflow sites
- Same level of services and supports from FY24

Figure incorporates revised estimates as of mid-July that will be incorporated into upcoming legislative reports



Out-Year Needs

Continued spending at current caseload, level of services, and continued \$325M GAA appropriation without TEF leads to large out-year General Fund needs.



*Note: no additional FY25 GF need anticipated, **so long as** remaining TEF funds are appropriated above currently provided level*

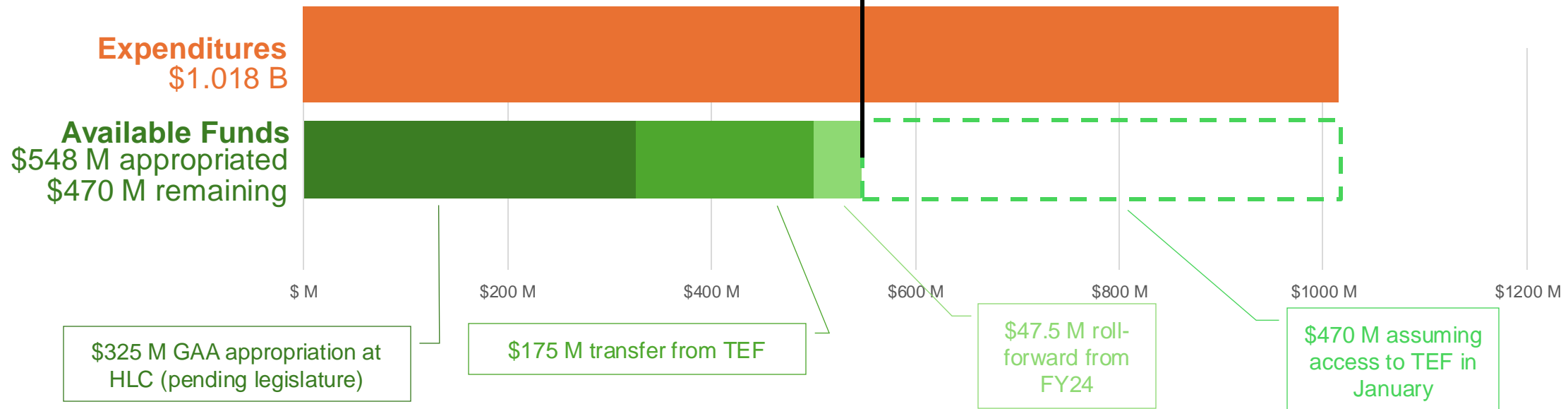


Expected FY25 Runout

Roughly half of anticipated FY25 expenditures have been appropriated so far. Without further appropriations tapping the remainder of TEF, FY25 will require actions such as:

- *Structured caseload reduction in direct shelter (76% of costs)*
- *Reduction or end of overflow shelter (8% of costs)*
- *Curtailing or ending of additional services (16% of costs)*

Expected Runout Date: January 1, 2025





Discussion



Discussion: What are your goals for the Commission?

