

Autism Waiver

Legislative Task Force on Autism

October 8, 2025

How it began....

- Sub-committee of this task force recommended intensive intervention for young children
- Initial funding of \$1.5 million from a tobacco tax in 2009
- 1915(c) application was approved by CMS effective 10/1/2011
- First services: January of 2012

Initial Program

- 100 slots, phased in 10 children/month on a first come, first serve basis, as per instructions from the legislature
- DDS has expanded it twice
- Currently, the program has a maximum point-in-time capacity of 180 children statewide

Program Design

- Early intensive in-home intervention program (services are delivered in the child's home and natural community settings)
- Eligible children are between 18 months and 8 years, must enter the program before their 5th birthday
- Maximum length of service is 3 years
- Utilizes a multi-disciplinary team
- NOT strictly an ABA program

Administrative Oversight

Partners team

- Responsible for:
 - Development and maintenance of a secure database
 - Recruiting, training & monitoring provider agencies
 - Managing application process, coordinating eligibility steps, and maintaining waiting lists
 - Overseeing all required processes in compliance with 1915 (c) application
 - Reporting to DDS

Waiver Services

Provided by Community-Based Disability Providers:

- **Interventionist**-master's level; responsible for evaluation and development/monitoring of individualized treatment plans
- **Lead Therapist**- bachelor's level; weekly oversight
- **Line Therapist**- delivers direct intervention

Provided by UA-Fayetteville, Dept of Curriculum & Instruction:

- **Clinical Services Specialists**-(BCBA-D)- independent treatment fidelity reviews

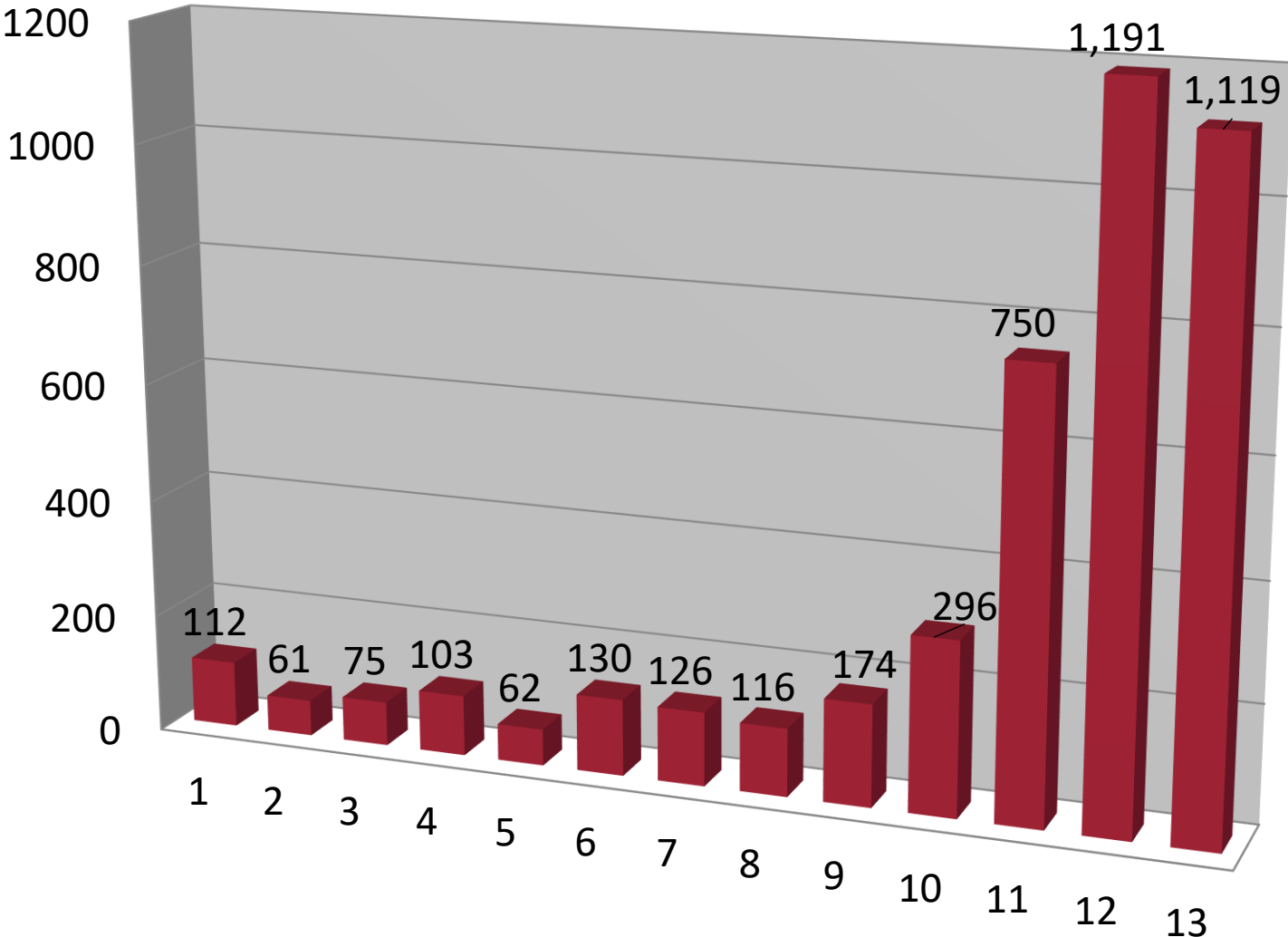
Unique Characteristics

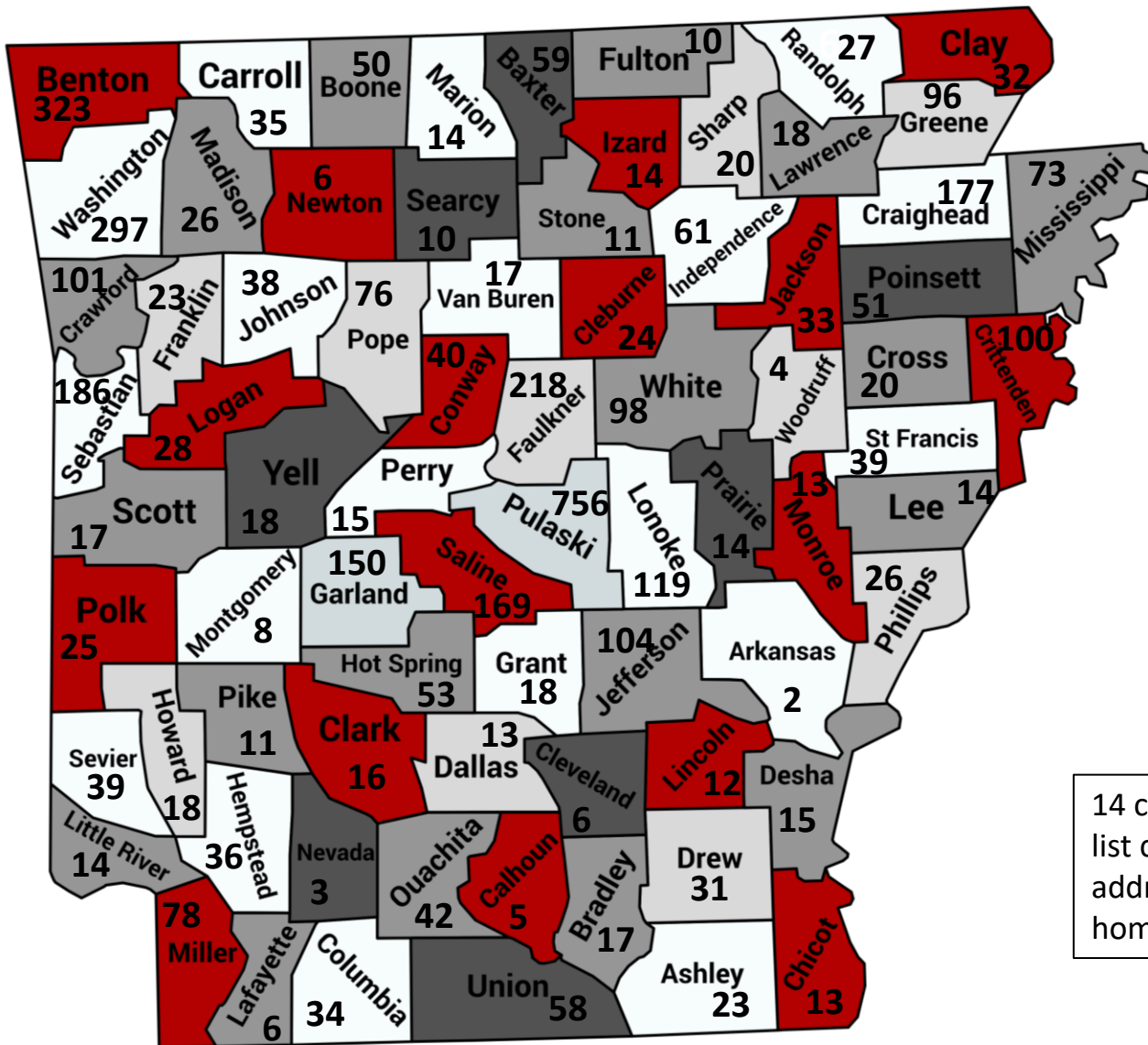
- Natural environments only (child's home, church, Walmart, ballpark, etc.)
- Atypical hours- afternoons, evenings, weekends
- Parents are present and involved in treatment
- Program admin, service implementation and treatment review/assistance provided by different agencies- then DDS reviews it all
- Team members can bill simultaneously
- Child outcomes are tracked in addition to service utilization

Summary of Total Applicants

- Partners received 4,556 applications from the beginning of the program to September 26, 2025.
- Applicants represented all seventy-five counties in Arkansas, one county in Missouri and one in Tennessee.
- The counties with the greatest number of applications in the current fiscal year are Pulaski, Benton, Washington, Crittenden and Sebastian.

Total Applications Received by Program Year

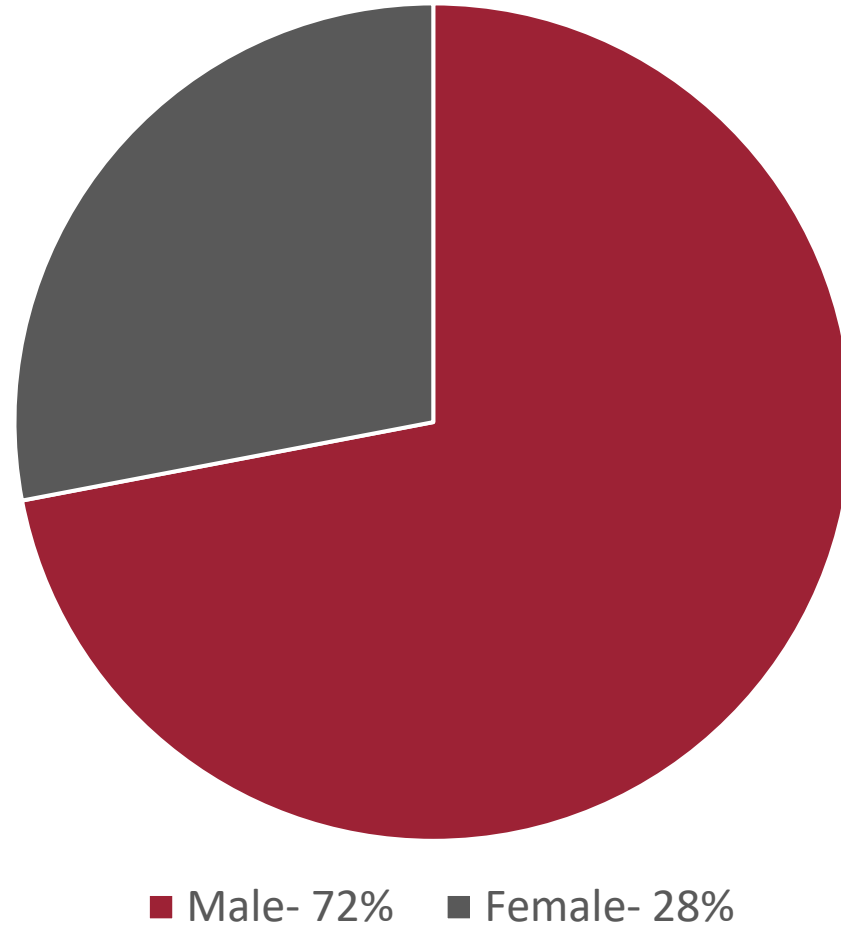




14 children
list current
address as
homeless

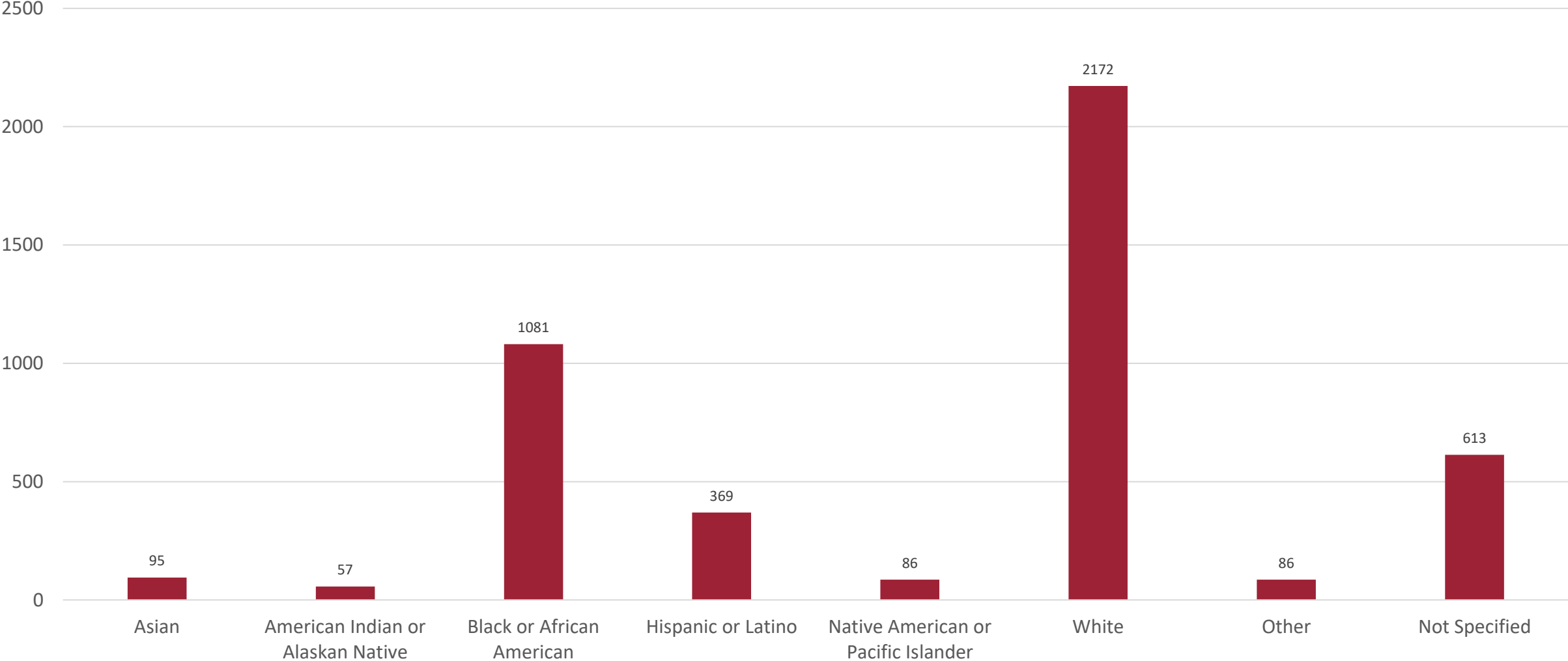
September 2025

Applicants By Gender
January 1, 2012 to September 26, 2025

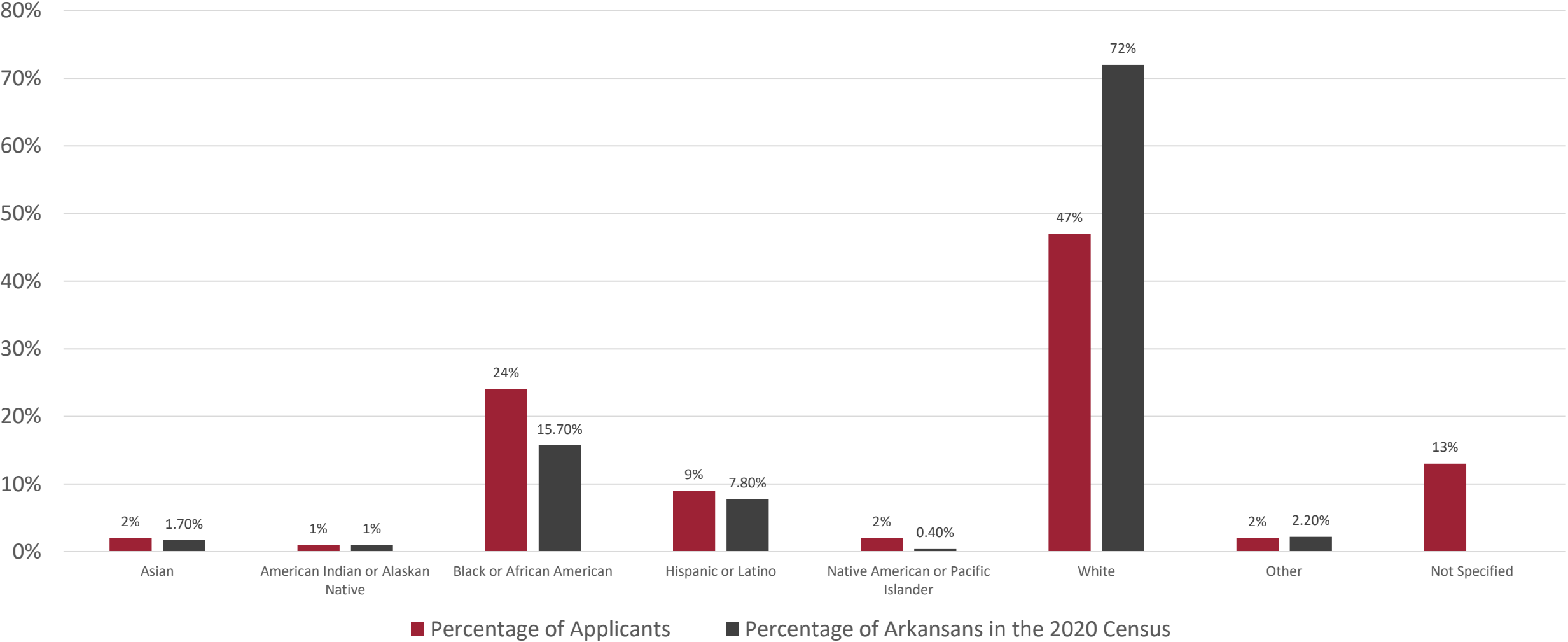


89 families did not disclose gender on incomplete applications

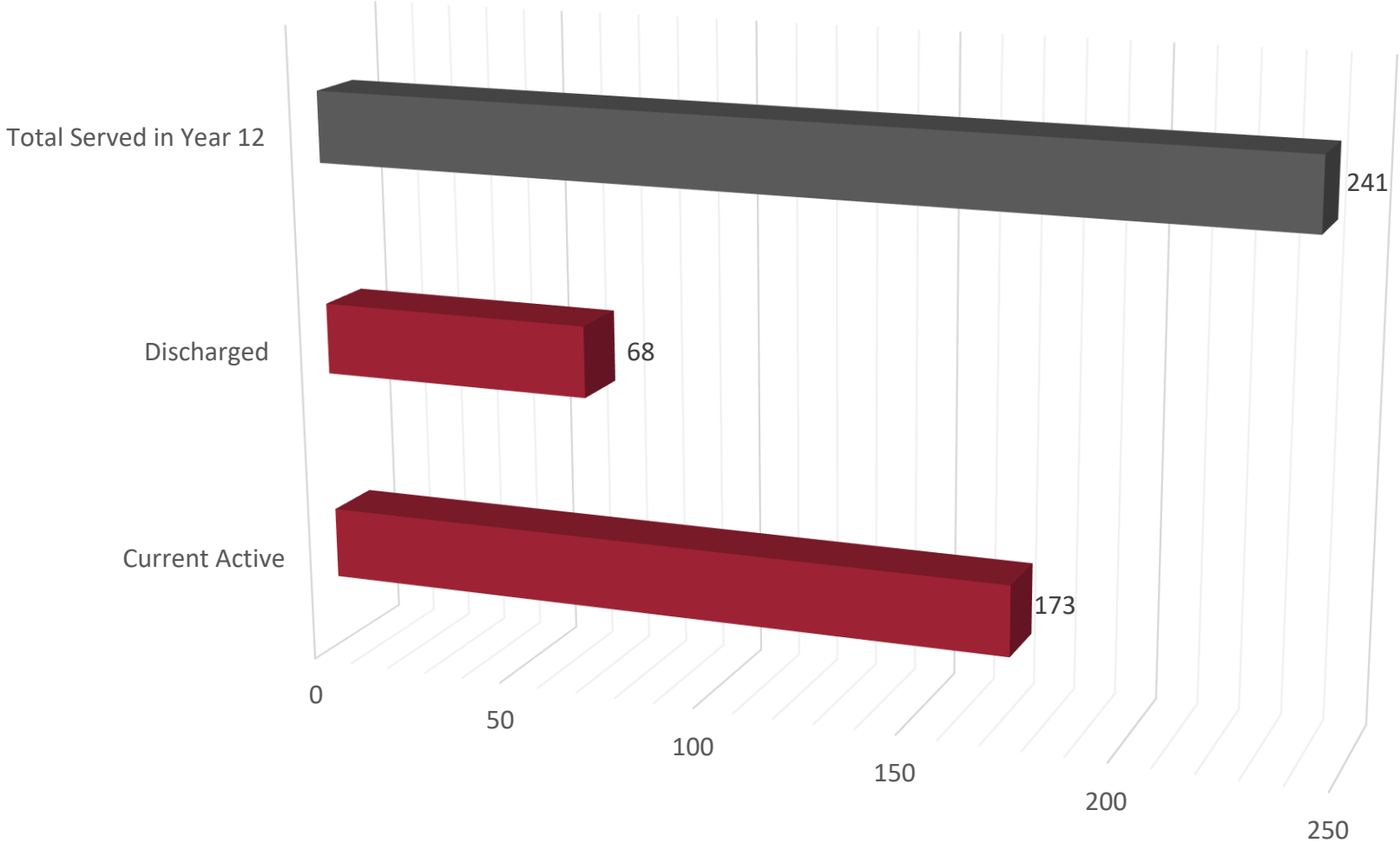
Applicants by Ethnicity from January 1, 2012 to September 26, 2025



Percentage of Applicants from January 1, 2012 to September 26, 2025 Compared to the U.S. Census Race Data

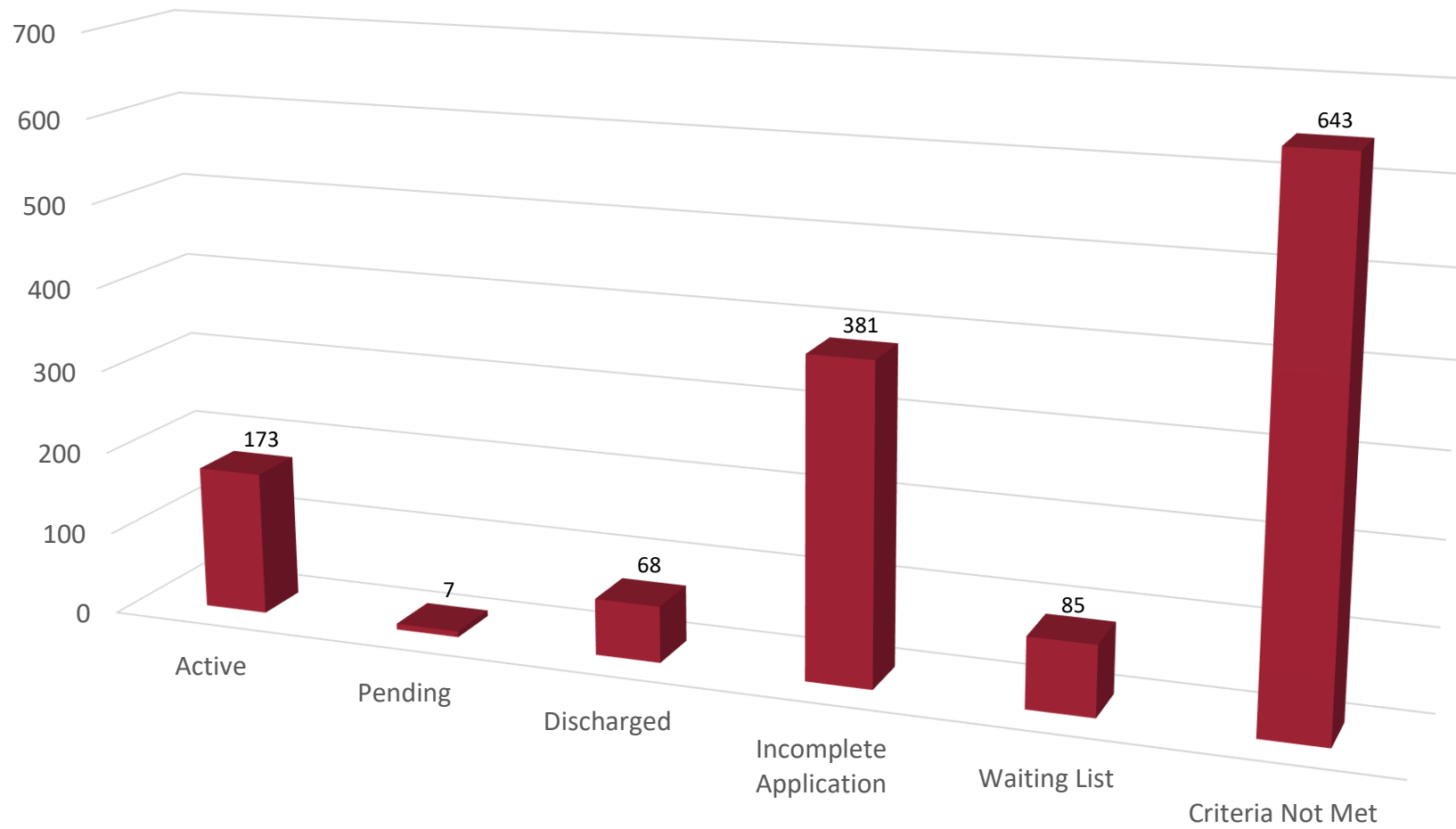


Children Receiving Services July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

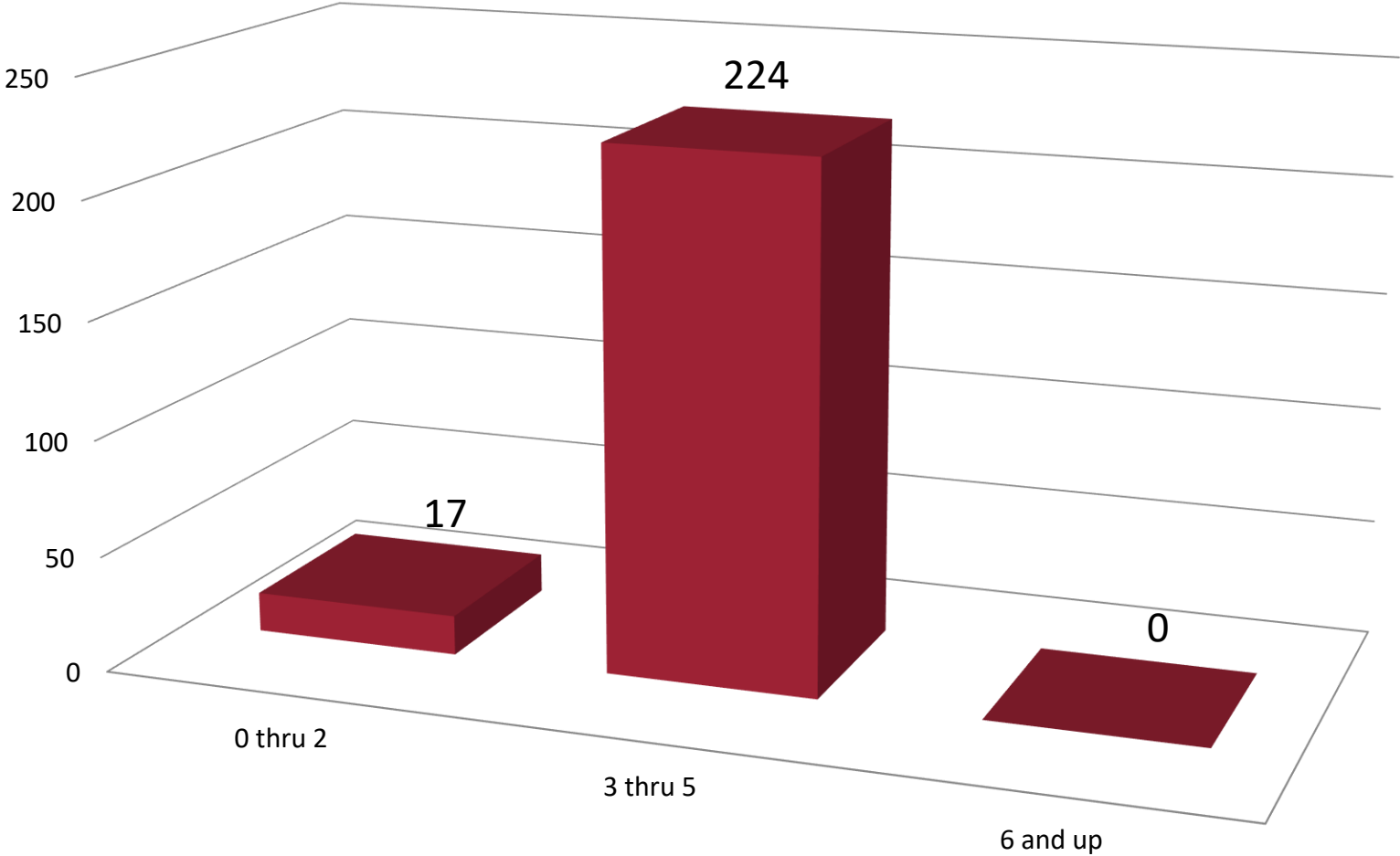


7 children pending approval

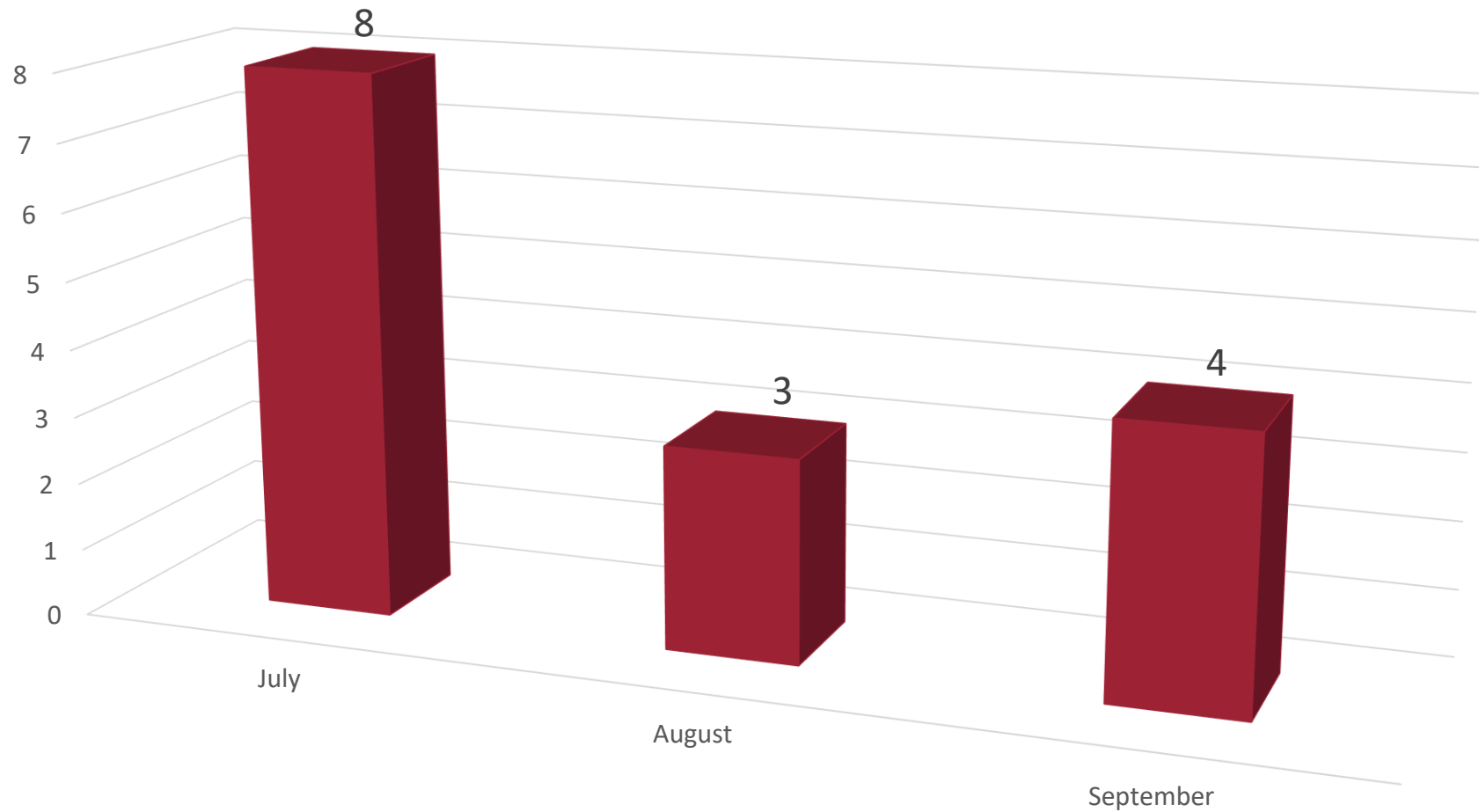
Current Status of Participants July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025



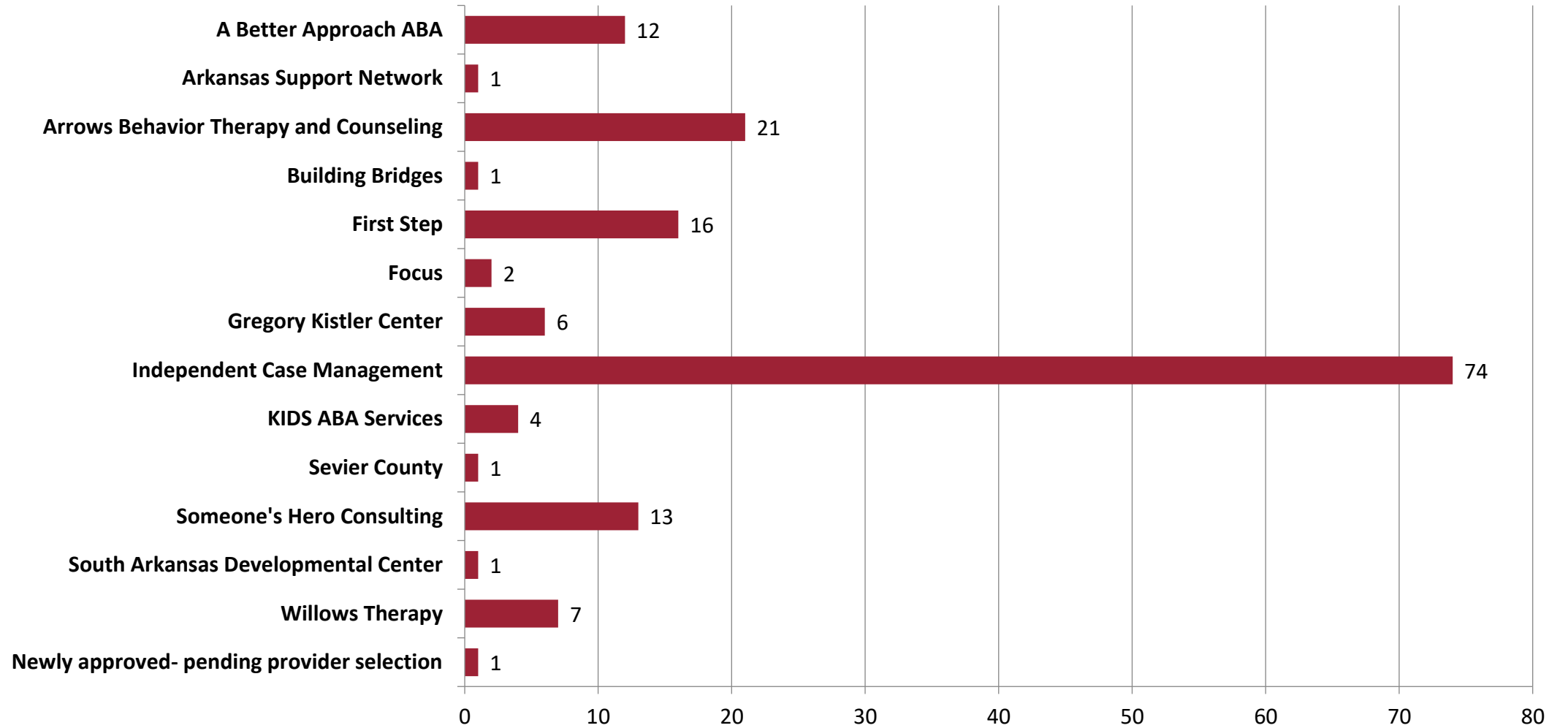
Children Receiving AAP Services July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 By Age at the Start of Services



Children With a Completed Application on the Autism Waiver Wait List Who Turned 5 Years Old Before a Slot Was Available in the Current Fiscal Year

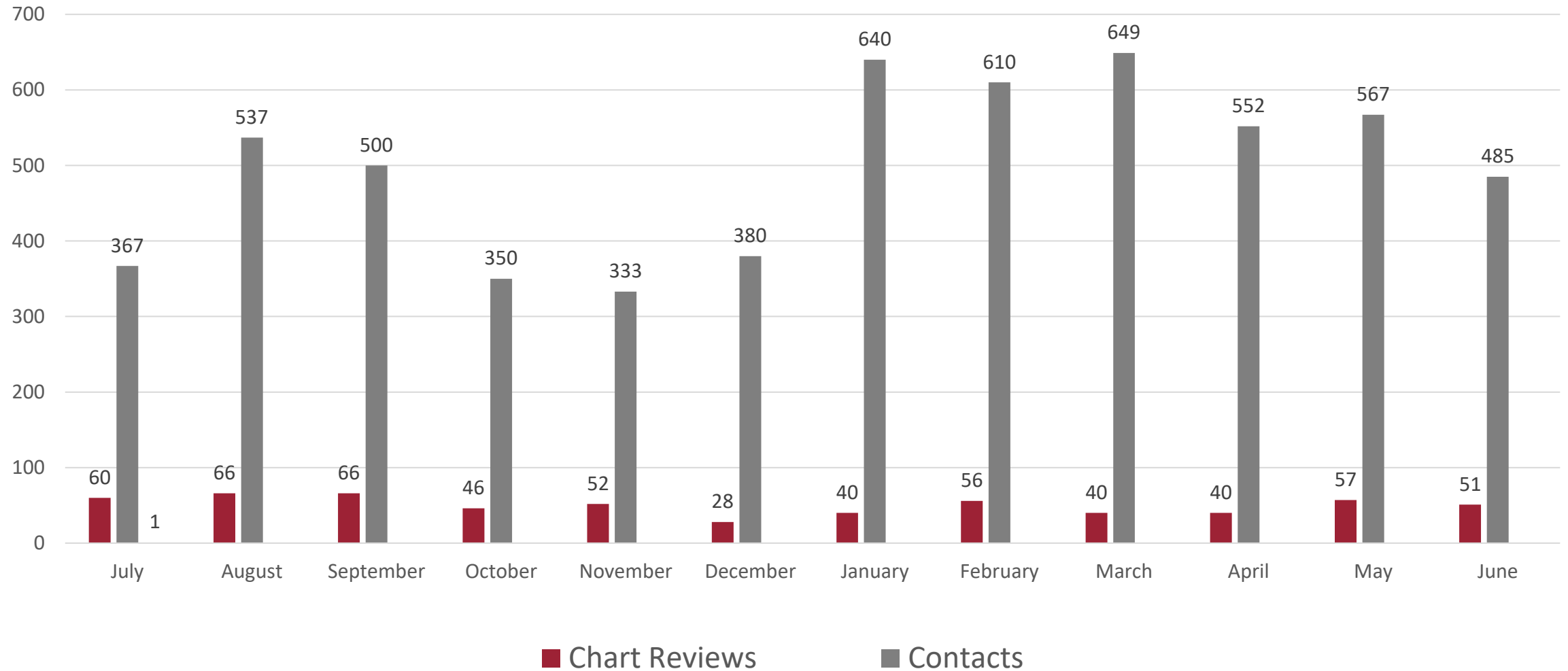


Current Active Cases by Provider

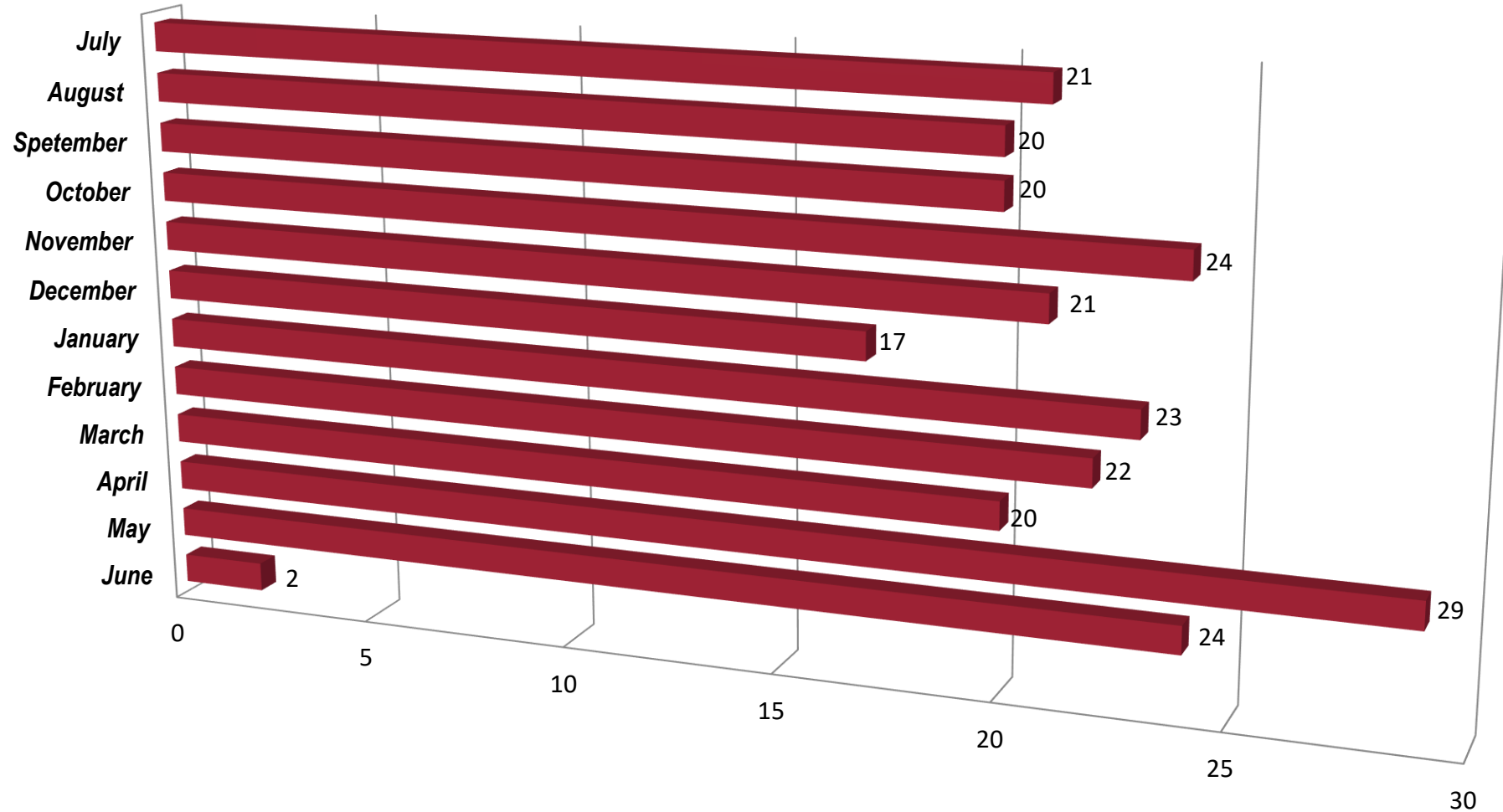


All previously certified providers met the requirements for recertification. Their new certificates were sent on 9/1/2025 for a 10/1/2025 start date.

Required chart reviews and team contacts completed by Partners' Staff July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025



Visits Completed by Partners Staff from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

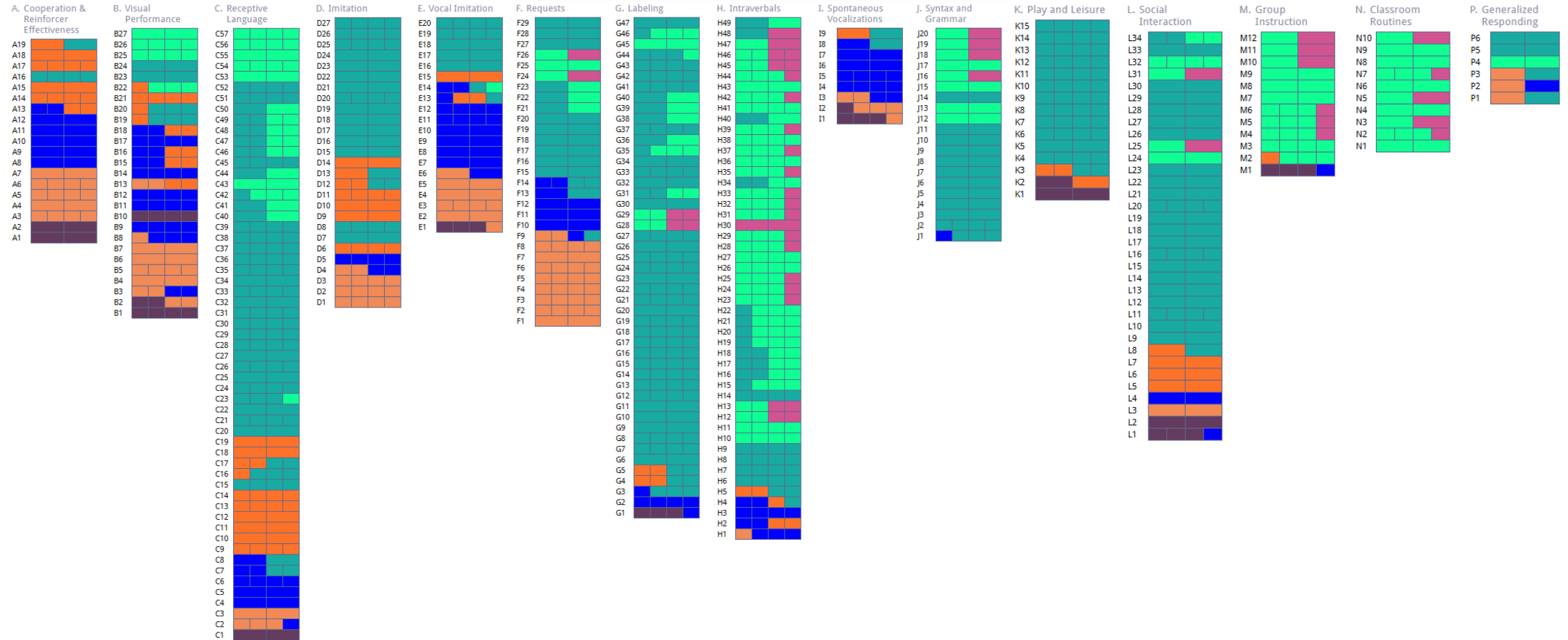


Visit totals include new intake visits, renewal visits and problem/ transition visits.

Outcomes

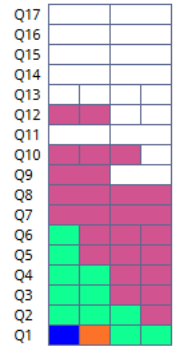
- Historical ABLLS Comparison
 - 318 children who received the full autism waiver programming from 2012 until June 30, 2025 and have multiple ABLLS assessments.
 - The average initial ABLLS assessment score was 182 objectives with the final ABLLS assessment score of 749 objectives, a 412% increase.
 - Total number of objectives acquired per child ranged from 51 to 1347 with an average of 567 objectives.

ABLLS Assessment

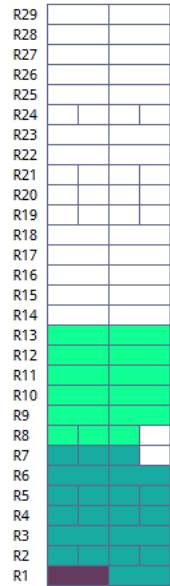


ABLLS Assessment

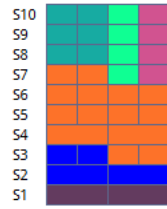
Q. Reading



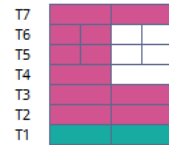
R. Math



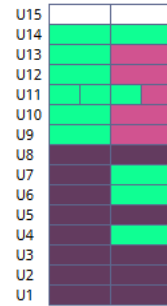
S. Writing



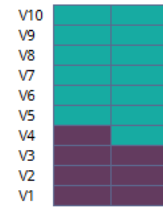
T. Spelling



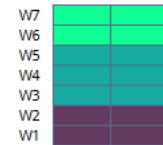
U. Dressing



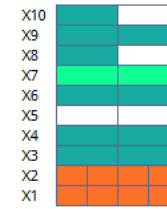
V. Eating



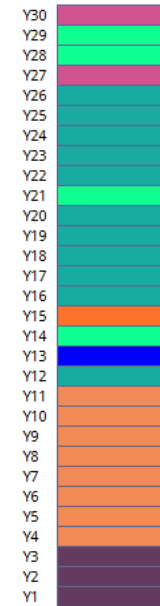
W. Grooming



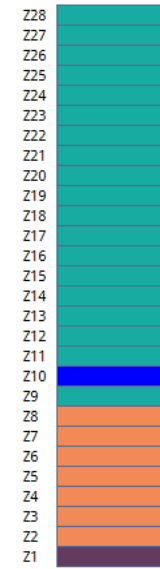
X. Toileting



Y. Gross Motor



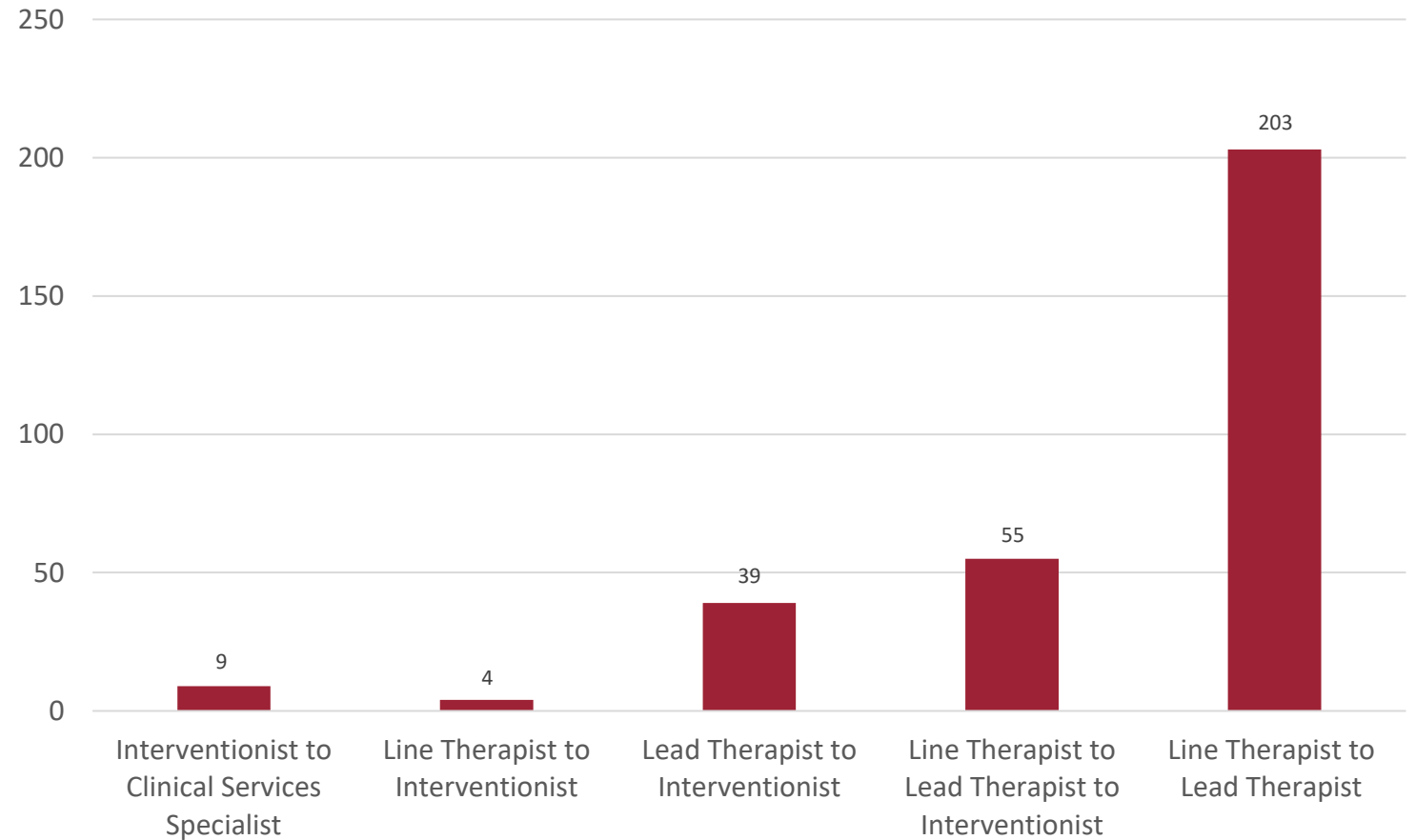
Z. Fine Motor



Change in Workforce

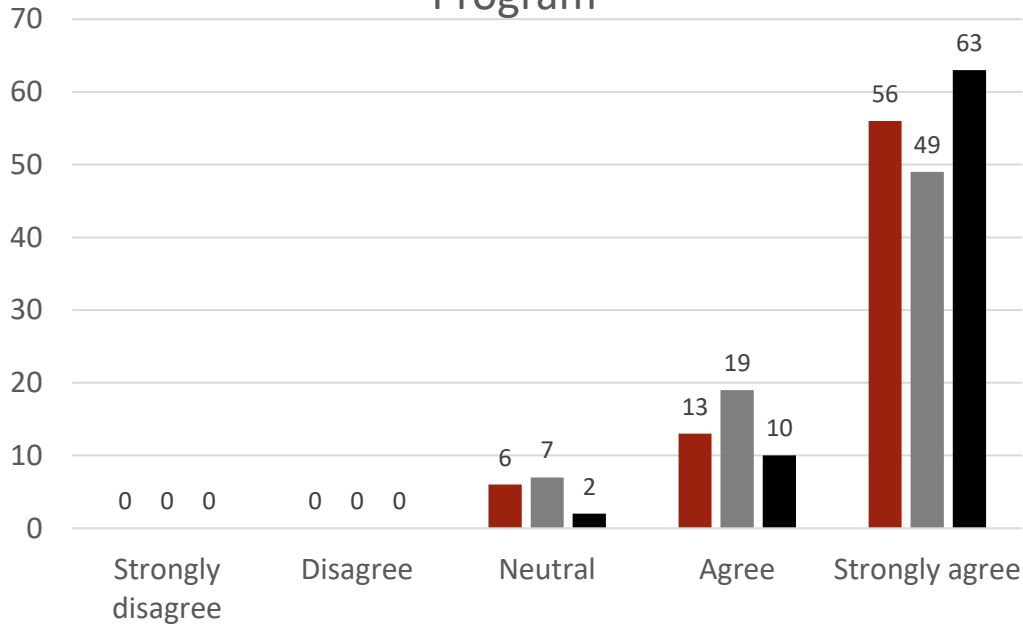
- An unanticipated, but valuable, outcome from this program has been the career path created for workers
- Reflects staff satisfaction & desire to increase their participation in the program

Growth of Autism Waiver Workforce



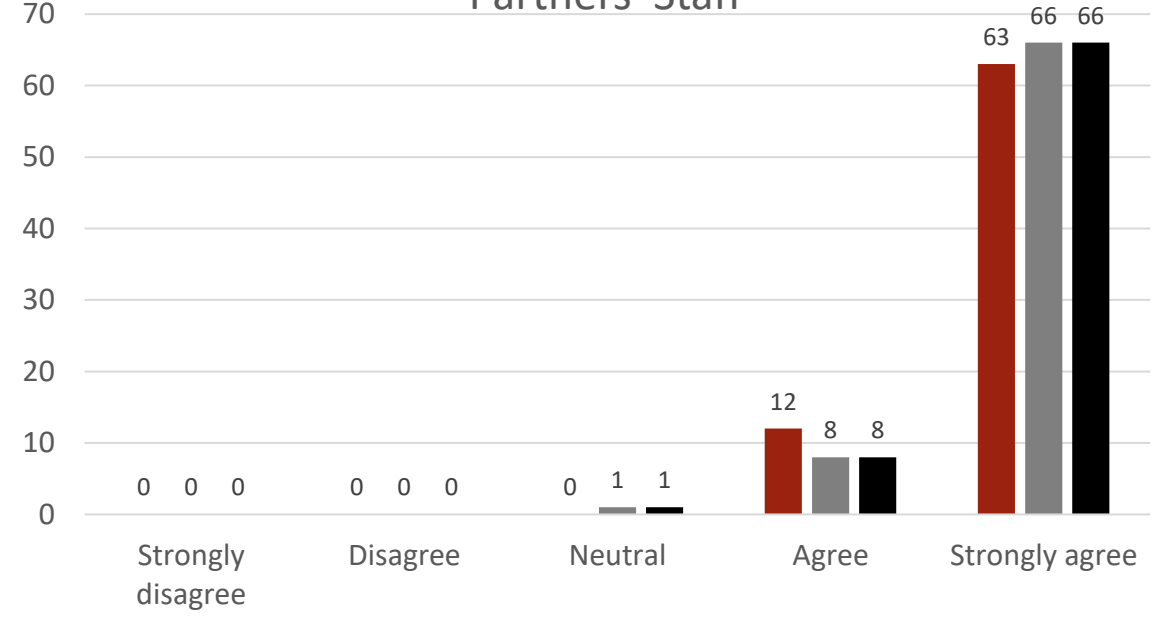
Parent Satisfaction and Comments

Overall Satisfaction With the Autism Waiver Program



- This program has contributed to my child's success.
- This program has contributed to reducing the stress in my family.
- I would recommend this program to other families.

Overall Satisfaction With the Partners' Staff



- Partners' staff have explained the program in a clear and concise manner.
- Partners' staff have interacted with me in an appropriate, professional manner.
- Partners' staff have responded to issues I have raised to their attention.

Parent Satisfaction and Comments from Anonymous Surveys

- *Thank you so very much for all your help!!*
- *We have a great team and enjoy the program.*
- *The program has been extremely helpful to my family!*
- *Great communication and we like how they keep track of his progress and health.*
- *Estamos muy Felices con todos los servicios que nos and Brindado- (We are very happy with all the services we have had provided.)*
- *We are grateful to be a part of program.*
- *Very Grateful.*
- *Child's line therapist has done amazing with him. We love her and she's the best.*
- *It's a very important source in the development of a child with autism. They are excellent supporters.*
- *I could not be more thankful for this program for my son.*
- *I'm so thankful to have gotten involved with the program, it has been a blessing and helped so much!*
- *This is a great program. I have seen good progress in B..... I look forward to continuing.*
- *Program is amazing!*
- *Very happy with the program.*
- *Thank you for everything!*
- *Thank you for Autism Waiver, it has been very helpful.*
- *I am very satisfied and thankful for all the help. I would recommend to anyone!*



Evelyn is our beautiful, goofy, smart and tenderhearted six-year-old. I started noticing signs like sensory sensitivity and that Evelyn would get easily frustrated but could not ask for help. If I tried to help, she would get angry. Evelyn was diagnosed with Autism 2023. Later that year we started receiving services through the Arkansas Autism Partnership- Autism Waiver.

Evelyn has gone from playing alone all the time to seeking out friends and inviting them to play with her. She is an absolute chatterbox now and has reduced her frustration level by working with her autism waiver team. Her gain of social confidence has reduced our worries of her having a hard time interacting with others and just getting to be a kid. She has learned imaginary play and enjoys playing with her brother!

Evelyn loves her autism waiver team and looks forward to her sessions. The one-on-one interaction she has with the team is helping her grow mentally, emotionally and developmentally while improving her social interactions and skills through play. Evelyn loves it!

Without the Arkansas Autism Partnership- Autism Waiver, I am not sure where Evelyn would be, but that isn't something we, as parents, have to be concerned about now!

Cherie- Evelyn's mom

Current Need

- Applications as of September 26, 2025
 - 420 families actively working to complete application packets
 - 113 of these children will likely age out before a slot is available
 - 103 children with completed packets are on the autism waiver waiting list
 - 13 of these children will likely age out before a slot is available

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