

Westchester County Department of Social Services **PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET**

A presentation to:
The Committee on Budget and Appropriations
of the
Westchester County Board of Legislators
November 18, 2024

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County Executive

Lawrence C. Soule
Budget Director

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Commissioner

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DEPARTMENT MISSION

The Mission of the Westchester County Department of Social Services is to empower its customers to become independent and to ensure the health, safety and protection of vulnerable adults and children.

DEPARTMENT VISION

In support of our commitment to social justice, our vision is to be an antiracist organization that reflects equity in all aspects of our work, creating a diverse workforce equipped to offer services that are informed by the impact of systemic racism.

Budget Summary

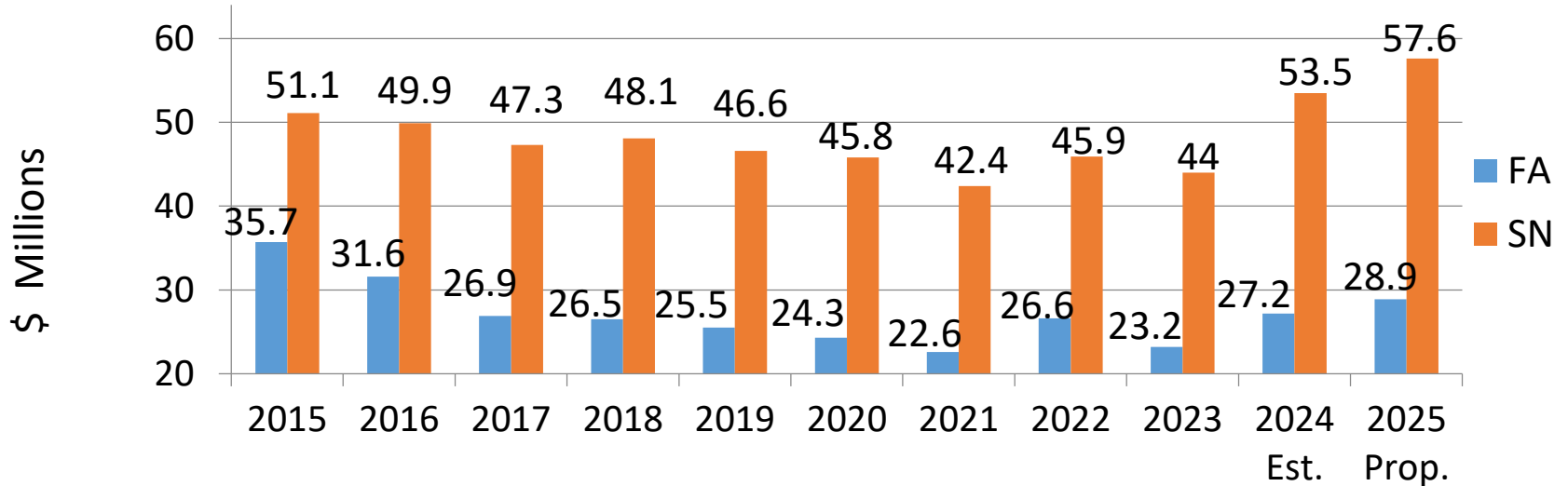
ITEM	2024	2025 Proposed
Operating Positions	1,086	1,088
Trust Positions	30	35
TOTAL POSITIONS	1,116	1,123
Personal Service	88,657,563	90,267,802
Equipment	407,663	217,374
Materials & Supplies	878,336	848,896
Other Expenses	26,180,738	26,183,877
Relief Accounts (excluding MA MMIS)	246,493,908	263,299,000
MA MMIS (including IGT)	298,487,828	321,192,072
Interdepartmental Charges	44,186,621	45,810,126
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	705,292,657	747,819,147

Budget Summary

ITEM	2024	2025 Proposed
Federal Share	203,739,000	226,310,000
State Share	99,597,599	100,003,000
Departmental Revenue	4,042,000	4,805,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$307,378,599	\$331,118,000
DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY	\$397,914,058	\$416,701,147

Temporary Public Assistance

DSS provides Temporary Assistance to families, couples and single adults by way of cash, rental assistance, Medicaid, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and other related benefits. The Department empowers customers by providing them with education, training, and other skills to gain employment and become self-sufficient.

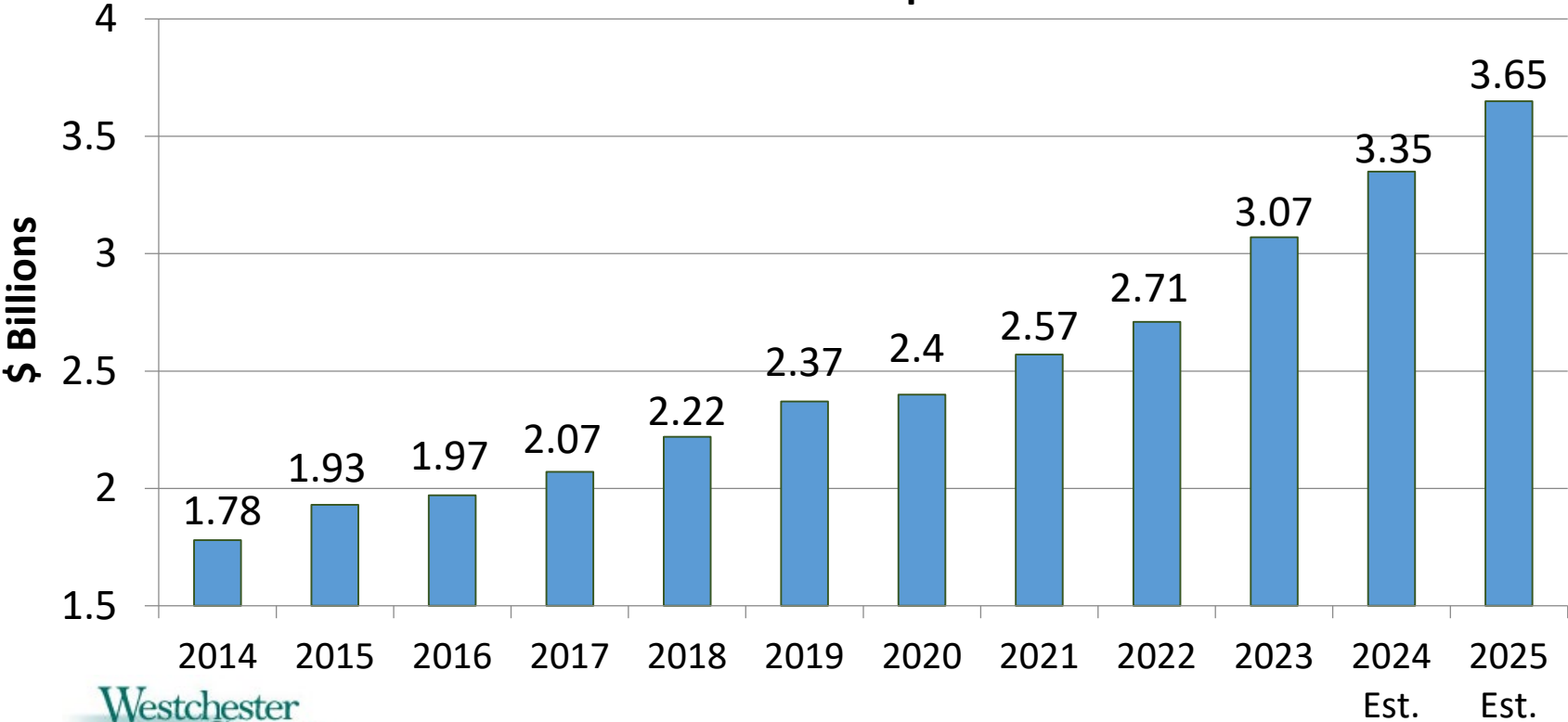


Assistance Type	2024 Estimate		2025 Proposed	
	Cases (average)	Expense (millions)	Cases (average)	Expense (millions)
FA	1,407	\$27.2	1,480	\$28.9
SNF	642	\$12.6	705	\$15.3
SNS	2,150	\$40.9	2,279	\$42.3
Total	4,199	\$80.7	4,464	\$86.5

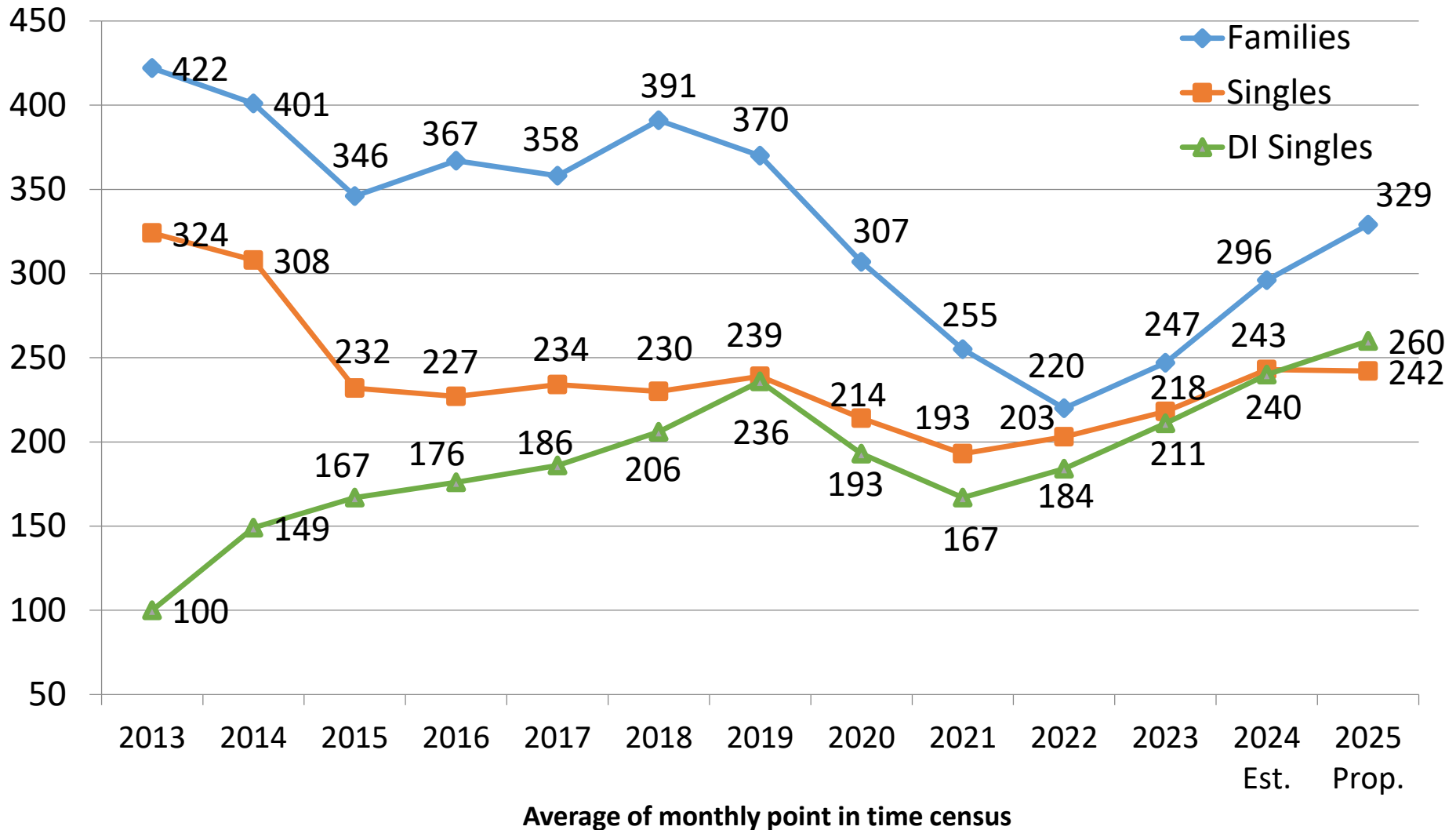
Medical Assistance

Medical Assistance was provided in September 2024, to nearly 240,650 Westchester residents who cannot afford to pay for health care by issuing Medicaid benefits. DSS maintained a local caseload of 47,736 households during this period, of the more than 160,630 cases County-wide. Westchester residents' MA benefits totaled \$3.07 billion in 2023, and is increasing at an average rate of nearly 9% annually and estimated to be \$3.35 billion in 2024, and \$3.65 billion in 2025. The County's 2025 share of Medicaid is \$221,192,072 (includes FMAP savings) which is significantly less than the County Share without the cap.

MA Benefits Expense



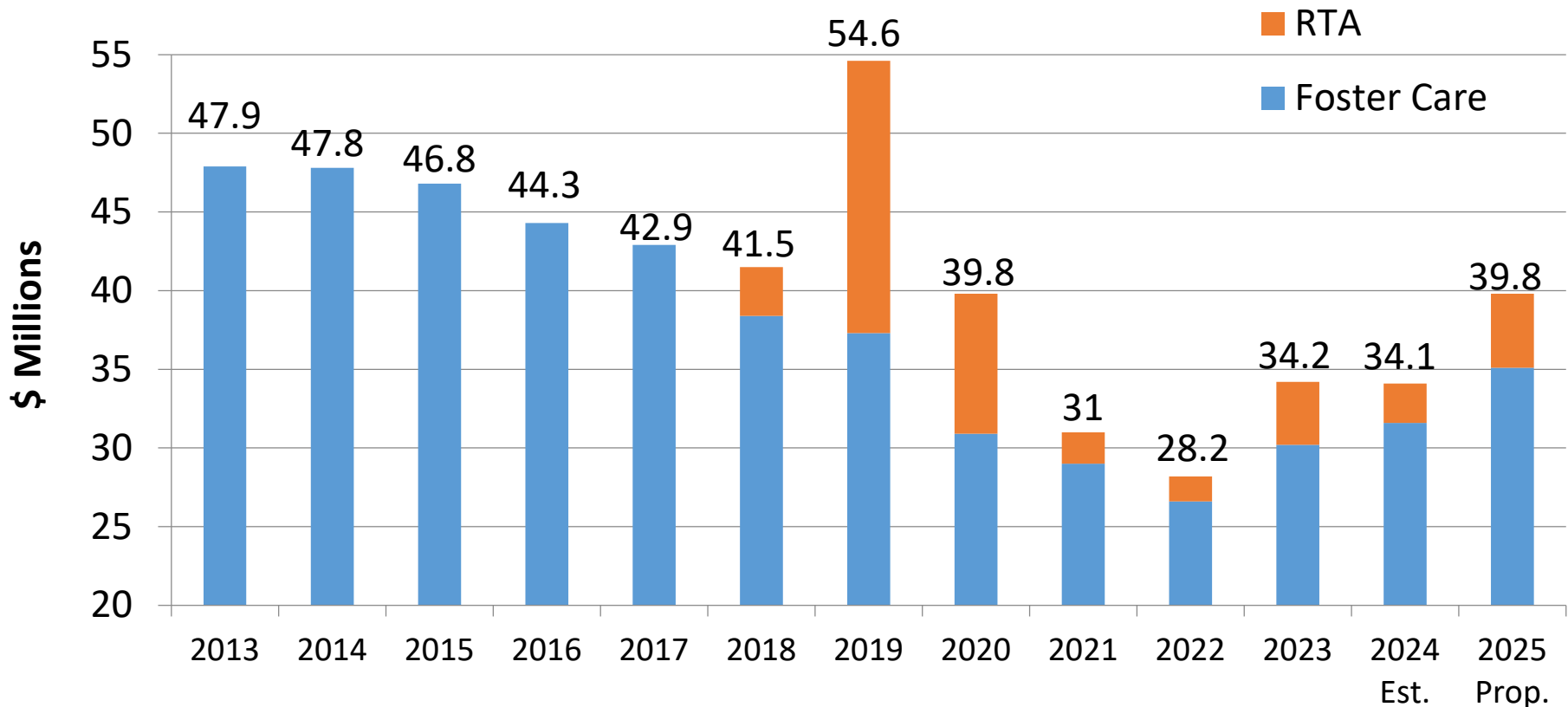
WCDSS Homeless Population



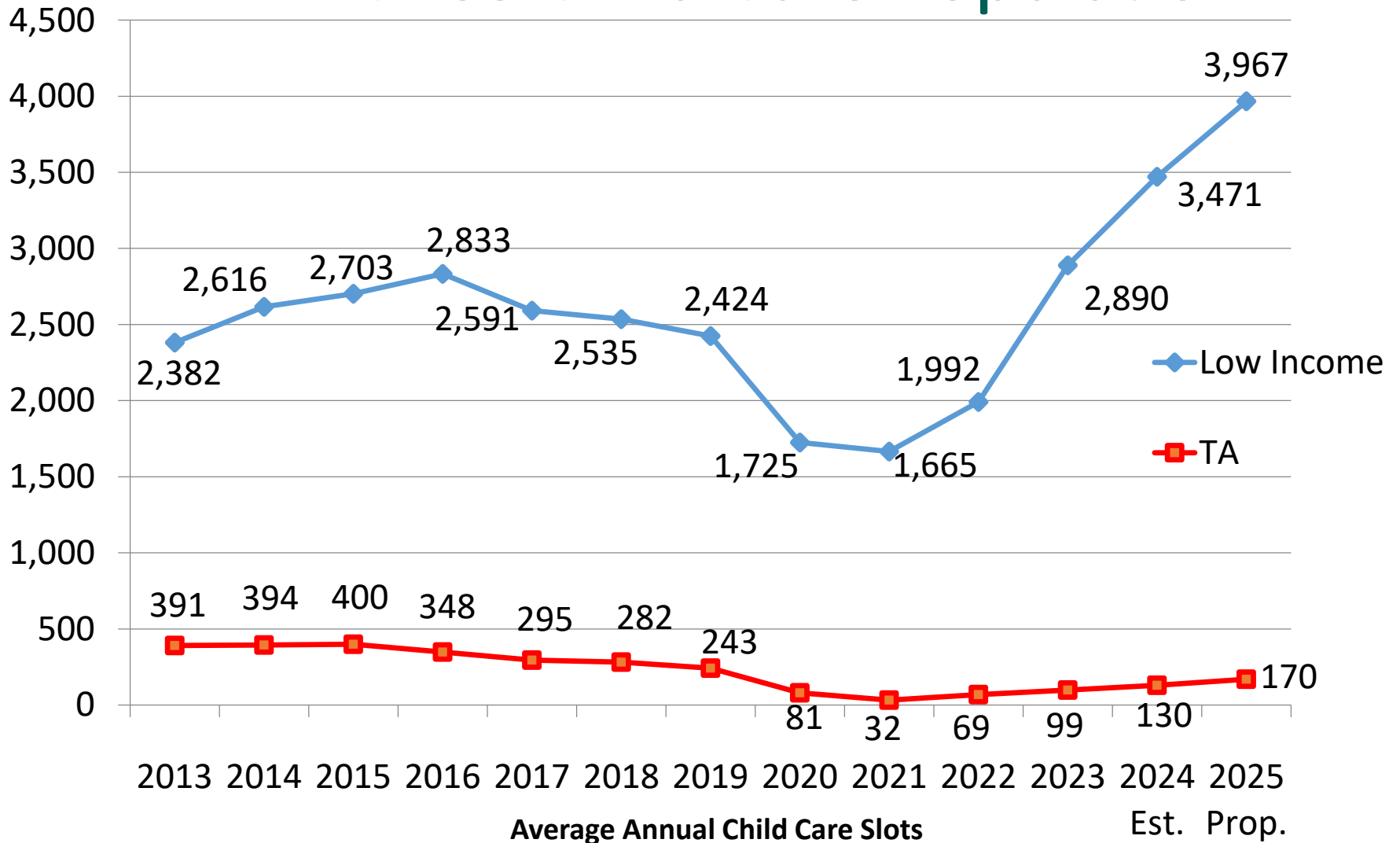
Child Welfare

The Department investigates approximately 6,500 State Child Protective Services reports annually, provides Preventive Services to nearly 1,200 children and their families each month (expected to grow to 1,300 in 2025), and only a small percentage require Foster Care placements. The current population of 325 children in foster care (September 2024) is down 41% from 551 in 2017. DSS also works to safely return children to families or with foster/adoptive families to attain permanency (more than 30 adoptions per year).

Foster Care Expenses



WCDSS Child Care Population



*Qualifying families eligible up to 85% of the State Median Income. A working family of 4 can earn up to \$108,631 and pay State-mandated 1% family share or \$65 per month for child care.

New Initiatives & Program Highlights

Since 2017, the Department has:

- Reduced the number of Westchester County individuals and families reliant on temporary assistance from 4,966 cases to 4,084 cases (-18%).
- Increased the number of individuals and families receiving food assistance (SNAP) from 39,943 cases to 41,007 cases (+3%) along with support to local food pantries.
- Increased the number of Westchester County enrollees in medical assistance (Medicaid) from 202,355 in 2017, to 240,650 in September 2024 (+19%).
- Increased the number of children in paid child day care slots from 2,125 in September 2017, to 4,266 in September 2024 (+101%).
- Reduced the average number of children in foster care from 551 in 2017, to 303 through 2023 (-45%), while increasing the investment in preventive services by \$6M annually to improve outcomes and sustain reductions.
- Reduced the number of individuals and families requiring emergency shelter from 840 cases in December 2018, to 758 cases in December 2023 (-10%).

In addition in 2025, the Department will continue to focus on:

- Eviction prevention, rental support, and legal representation through the Office of Housing Counsel.
- Investment in child and family preventive services.
- Proposed planning and design of necessary capital improvements in DSS Shelters and district offices serving Westchester County residents.
- Staff recruitment, development, and retention to strengthen the Department's workforce.