



Ottawa County

Clerk | Register of Deeds

Justin F. Roebuck

2023 Annual Report



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Justin F. Roebuck
County Clerk | Register of Deeds

Introduction from the Clerk/Register

To the Residents of Ottawa County,

To help our customers and encourage their trust in government. This mission is at the very heart of our team, and it's what motivates us to come to work each day. It's a statement that guides our process from the small to the significant decisions.

When it comes to getting county government services, our customers don't have the option to shop around and go elsewhere. You rely on us to provide transparency and integrity, and to solve problems for you on a daily basis. That's why we believe so strongly that building trust matters.

In 2023, our team at the Clerk/Register's Office worked hard to ensure a transparent, cost-effective and customer-focused experience for our residents. We hosted four "Coffee with the Clerk" community events in each corner of the county, giving residents a chance to ask questions and give input on topics related to our office. We collaborated with each of our 23 local units of government on an efficient and secure solution for early voting, saving taxpayers nearly \$1 million in our upcoming 2024 elections. We continued to serve thousands of our residents over the counter, online and by mail, recording land documents, issuing vital records, assisting with court filings and so much more.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, I am deeply grateful for the team I get the privilege of leading and serving with every day. Our employees are the engine that drives our customer service. Their dedication to people, love of learning and authenticity are all qualities that make our mission of encouraging trust possible. I am also thankful for the incredible support we receive every day from the many other Ottawa County departments with whom we work. We could not do what we do without the help of so many excellent county employees across many areas of expertise.

Finally, I am grateful to you, our residents, for the privilege of serving as your Clerk and Register of Deeds. The trust that you've put in me and our team is not taken for granted, and we will continue to advance our mission of helping customers and encouraging their trust in government.

Mission, Vision, Values



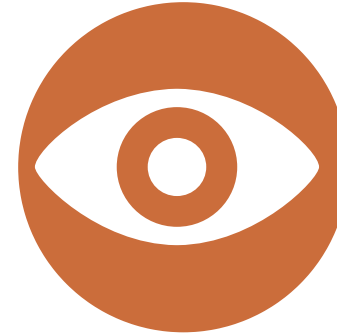
MISSION

WHY DO WE EXIST?

To help customers and encourage their trust in government.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Create and preserve records for current and future generations.



VISION

HOW WILL WE SUCCEED?

Exceed the expectations of our customers in every aspect of service.

Be creative, strategic, and forward thinking leaders to continually improve.

Create a positive, caring, and engaging environment for our employees and coworkers.

Be conscientious of taxpayer resources.

VALUES: How do we behave?



We provide excellent customer service.



We are humble.



We value people.



We are authentic.



We are eager to learn.

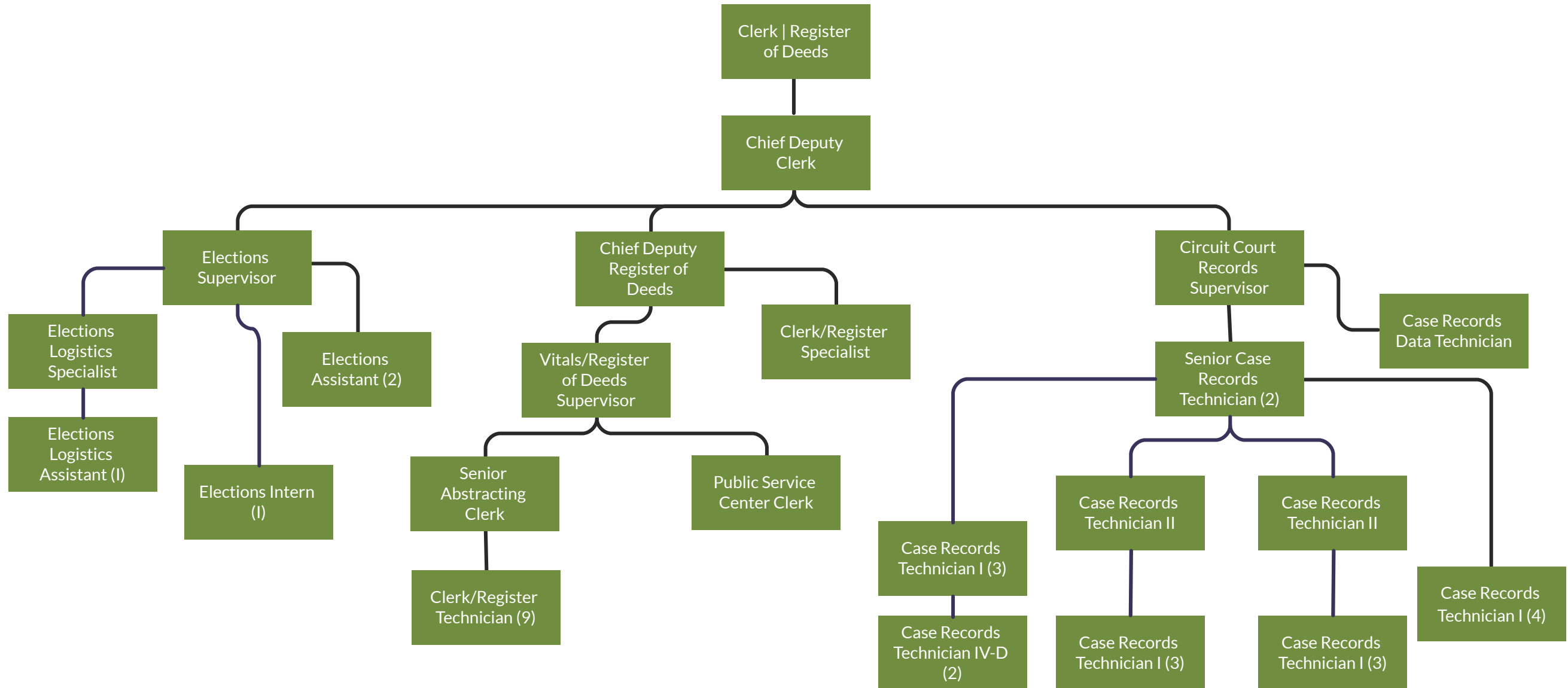


We seek input from others.



We are accountable.

Organizational Chart



Goals Accomplished in 2023



Launching .Gov Website

To enhance the security of our election results reporting, and in keeping with best practice standards from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), we developed and launched a new elections website with the .gov domain designation. In addition to the protections of hosting election results on a recognizable government domain, the new site will also include user-friendly upgrades.



Coffee with the Clerk

During the course of 2023, our team held four “Coffee with the Clerk” events, in order to connect with members of our community and hear their feedback on how we are doing with the services we’re providing. We met with residents in Grand Haven, Holland, Allendale, and Hudsonville to have coffee and discussion. Topics ranged from civic education to election integrity and efficiency in court processes. We believe that building relationships and having face to face conversations are critical to our mission, and we loved being able to join the community for coffee and conversation!



Elimination of Modems for Election Results Transmission

Modems are devices currently used in many communities across Michigan for the electronic transmission of unofficial election results from the precinct to the county clerk. Our team eliminated the use of this technology beginning in 2023 and began implementing a new chain of custody process for efficient and secure physical delivery of election results data on Election Night.



Team Development - StrengthsFinder® Coaching

In 2023, our Leadership Team completed the goal of an individual coaching session for each member of staff, personalized for their StrengthsFinder profile. The StrengthsFinder assessment is a tool used by thousands of organizations to help their teams discover what they naturally do best, and learn how to develop their greatest talents into strengths that can be used to better themselves personally, as well as the organization. Through the generosity of a licensed StrengthsFinder coach, we were able to provide this service to our entire team at no cost to taxpayers.

In the Community

We aim to apply our values not just to colleagues and customers, but outwardly in our community as well.

In 2023, our team partnered with organizations such as the West Coast Chamber for Community Action Day and Harbor Humane Society and Resilience Safe House by collecting donations to serve their work.

Donated items gathered for the Resilience Safe House.



Staff after cleaning up at Camp Blodgett during Community Action Day.



Our team gathered items to donate to our local Humane Society.



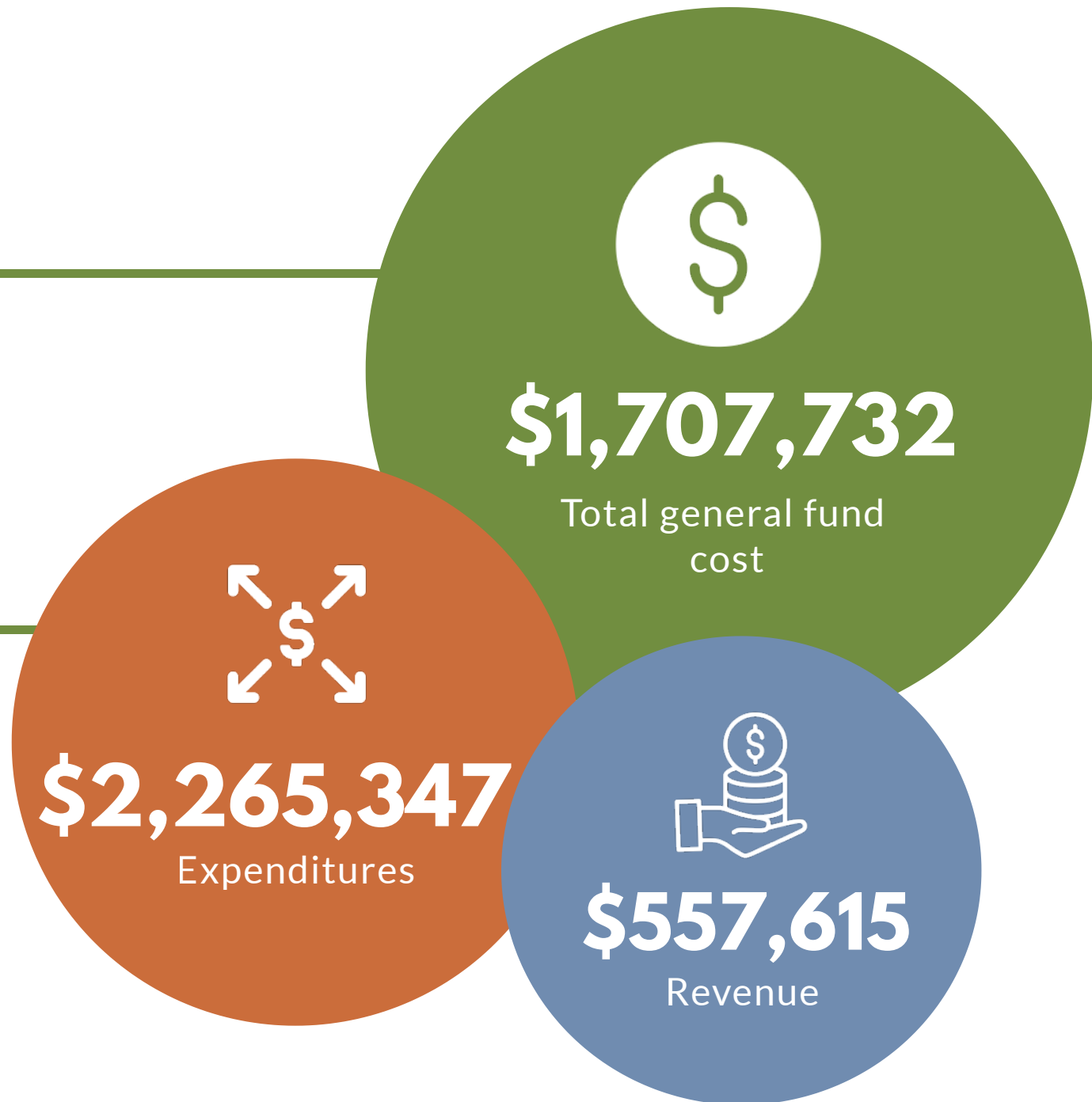


Vital Records

The Vital Records division is the official registrar for birth certificates, death certificates, marriage licenses, concealed pistols licenses, notary applications, and business license registrations.

County Clerk Budget

Includes Vital Records and Circuit Court



Birth Records



1,999

Babies born



4,523

Copies of birth
certificates



1%



decrease in births
from 2022

Top Baby Names of 2023

Boy Names:

-  Theodore
-  Ellis
-  Levi, Oliver (Tie)
-  Ezra, James, Owen (Tie)
-  Carter, Elijah, Jackson, Henry, Liam, Wyatt (Tie)

Girl Names:

-  Olivia
-  Amelia
-  Evelyn
-  Charlotte, Eleanor, Nora (Tie)
-  Aurora, Harper, Hazel, Lily, Sophia (Tie)

Death Records



1,930
deaths



15,943
Copies of death
certificates



0.9%
decrease in
deaths from 2022

Notary Public

Our office processed 507 Notary Public applications.

To be a Notary, applicants must:

Obtain a \$10,000 bond, most often from a state-licensed insurance agency or a bonding company

Fill out an application online and visit our office to finalize the application

Mail the completed application and applicable fee to the Michigan Department of State, Office of the Great Seal

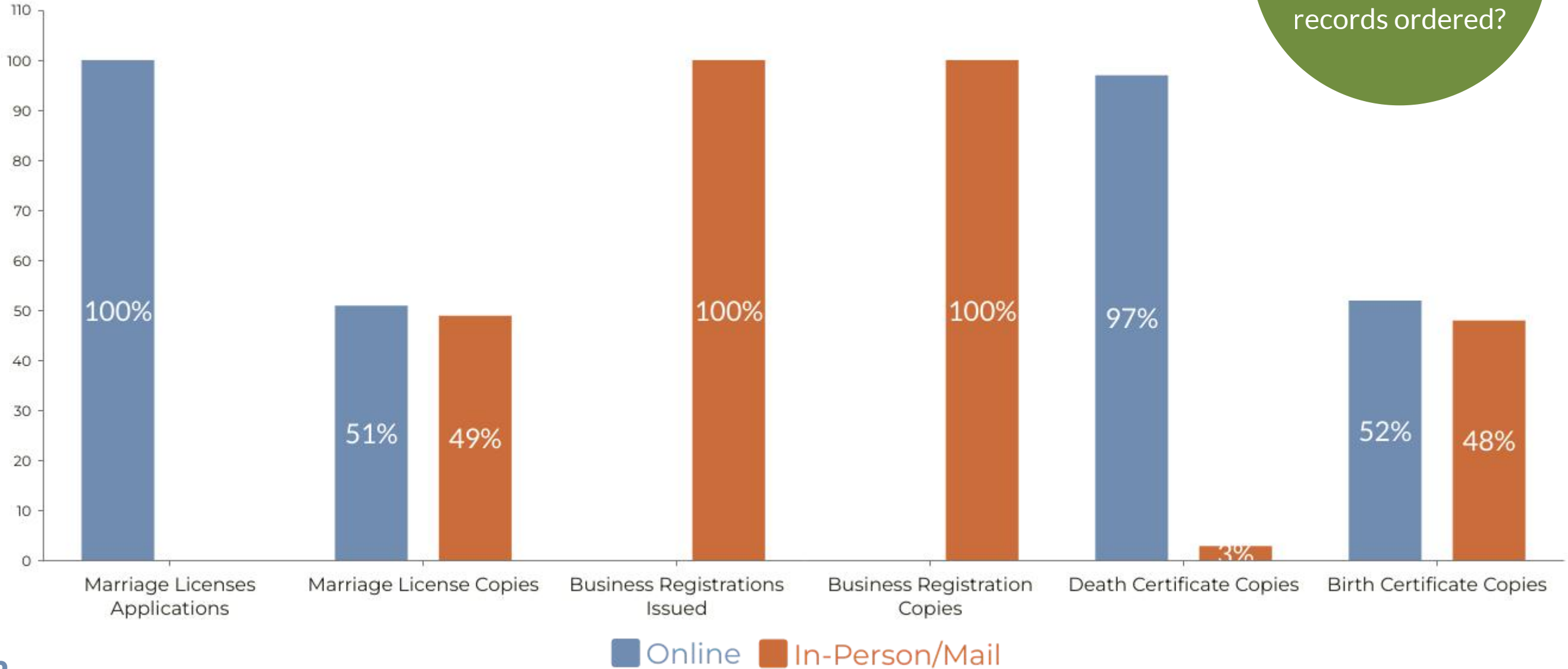
Doing Business As (DBA)



Records Ordered

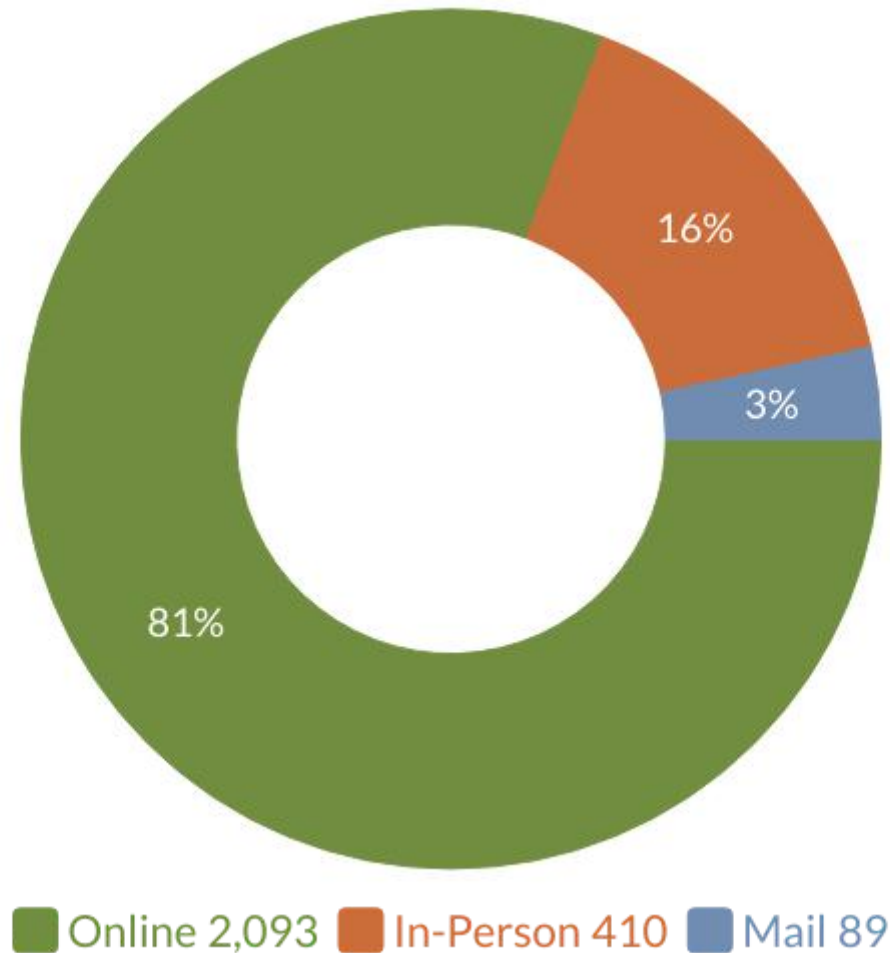


How were vital records ordered?



Concealed Pistol License

How did Ottawa County applicants choose to renew?

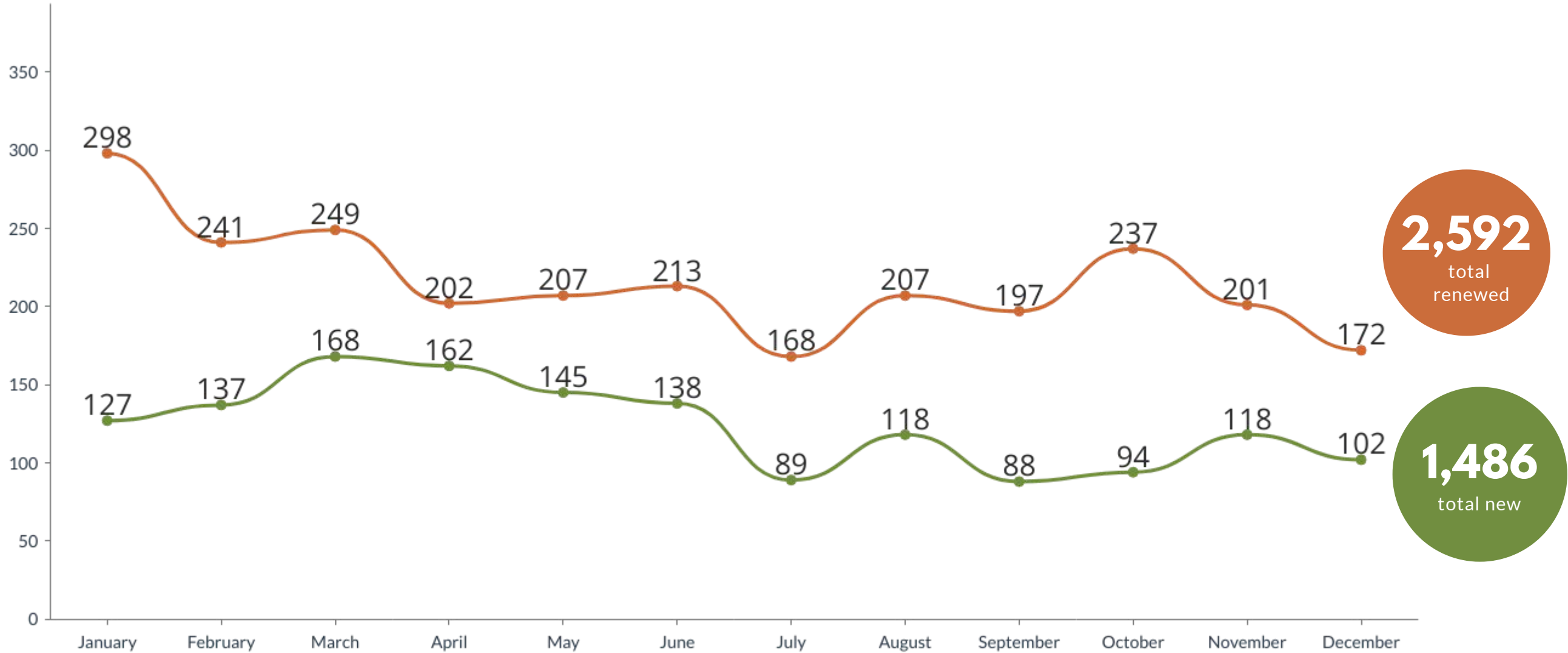


Of the 4,076 CPL applications that we processed:

- 1,486 were new applicants
- 2,592 were renewal applicants

New applicants must apply in-person, but renewal applicants can apply in-person, online, or by mail.

Concealed Pistol Licenses



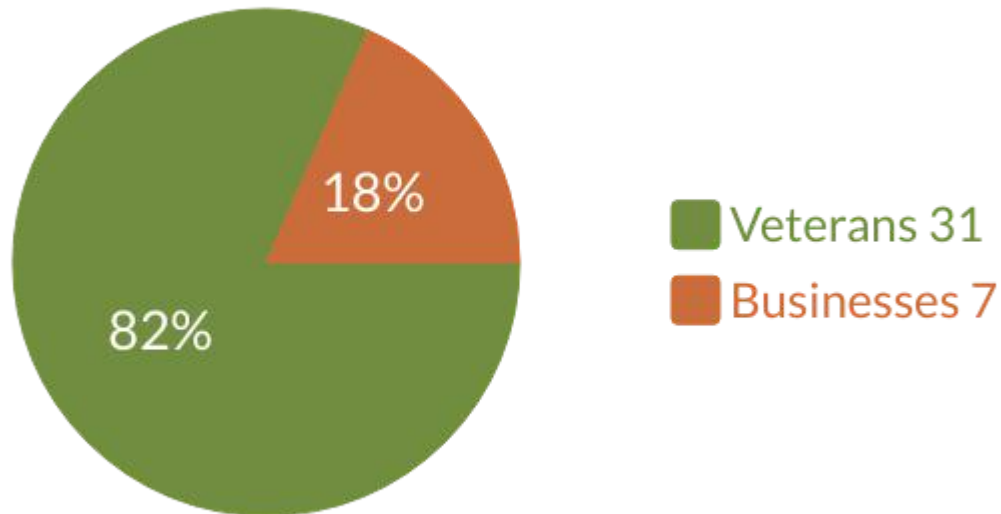
2,592
total renewed

1,486
total new

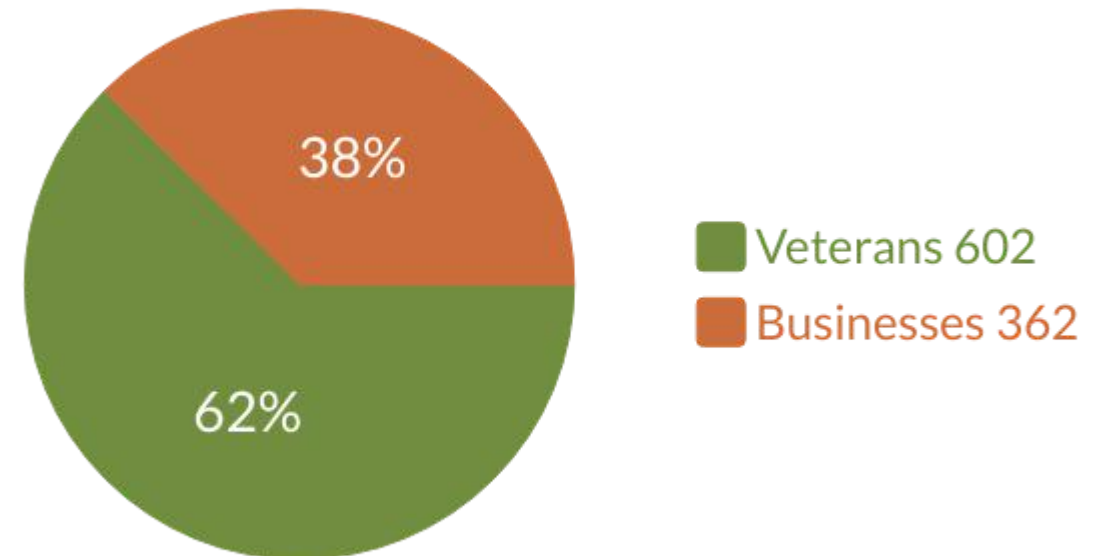
Honor Rewards

Honor Rewards is a nationally recognized program that allows veterans to receive discounts at participating area businesses by showing their Honor Rewards ID card. To obtain a card, Ottawa County Veterans can fill out an application and file their military discharge paperwork with our office.

New in 2023



Total Since 2015



2023 Veteran's Day

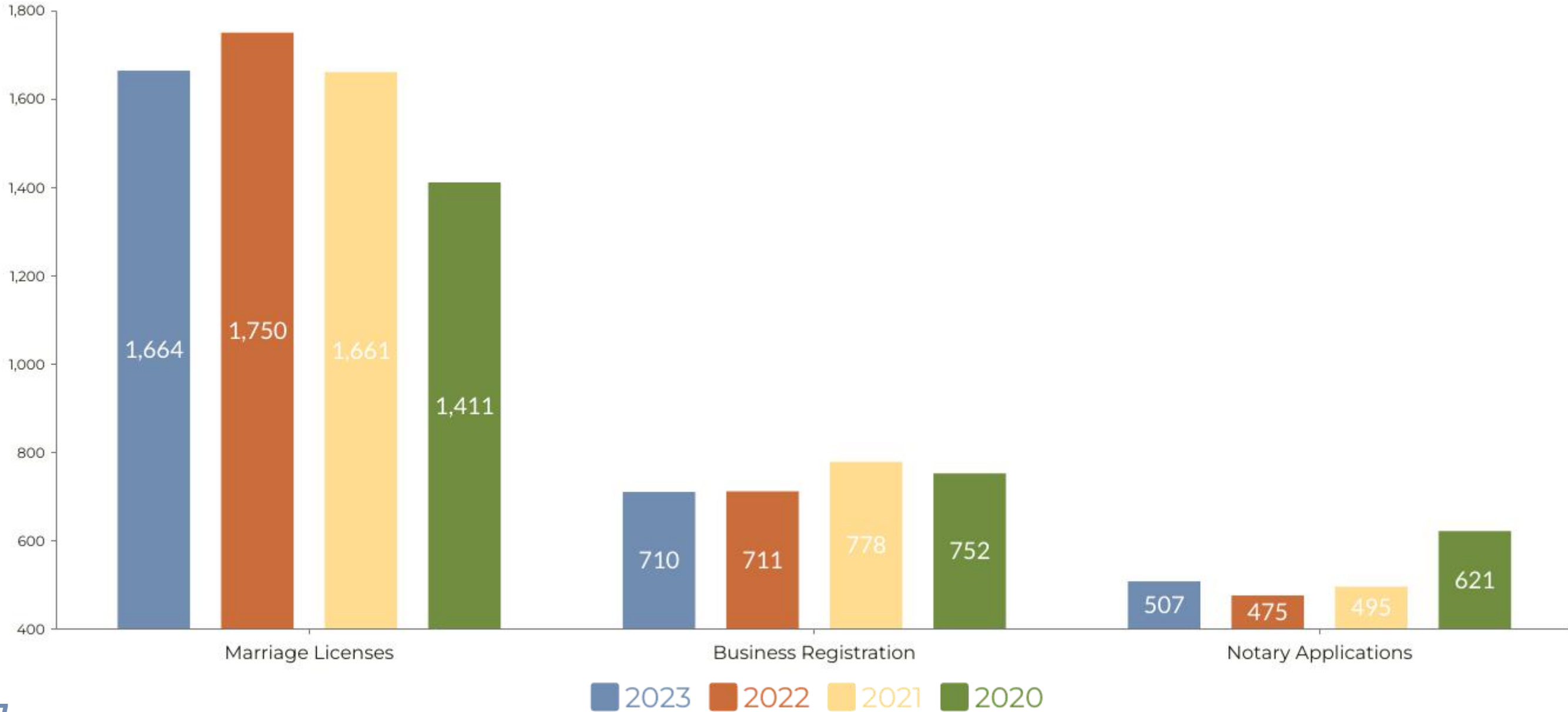
For Veteran's Day our team was able to connect with our local veterans through a variety of community events!

We were able to participate in Allendale Township's annual Veteran's Day Breakfast, where we had the opportunity to enjoy time with our local veteran's and their families. We also were invited to set up a table at Holland High School's Veteran's Day celebration to sign veteran's up for Honor Rewards.

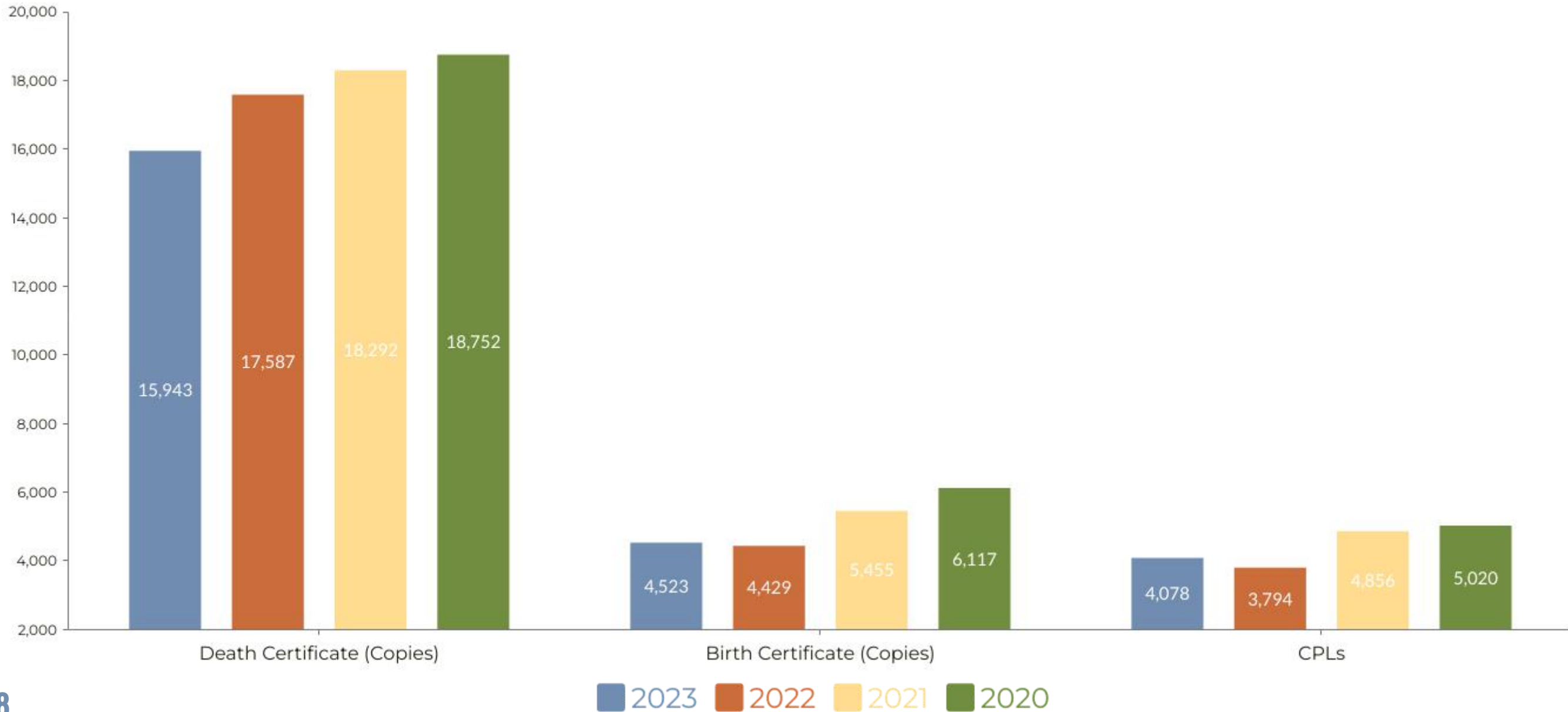


We are looking forward to growing our Honor Rewards program in 2024. Stay tuned to our social media and website at www.miOttawa.org/HonorRewards, for event updates!

Trends Over Time



Trends Over Time





Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds division is the keeper of the public record for all land documents.

Register of Deeds Budget



\$3,304,608

Revenue

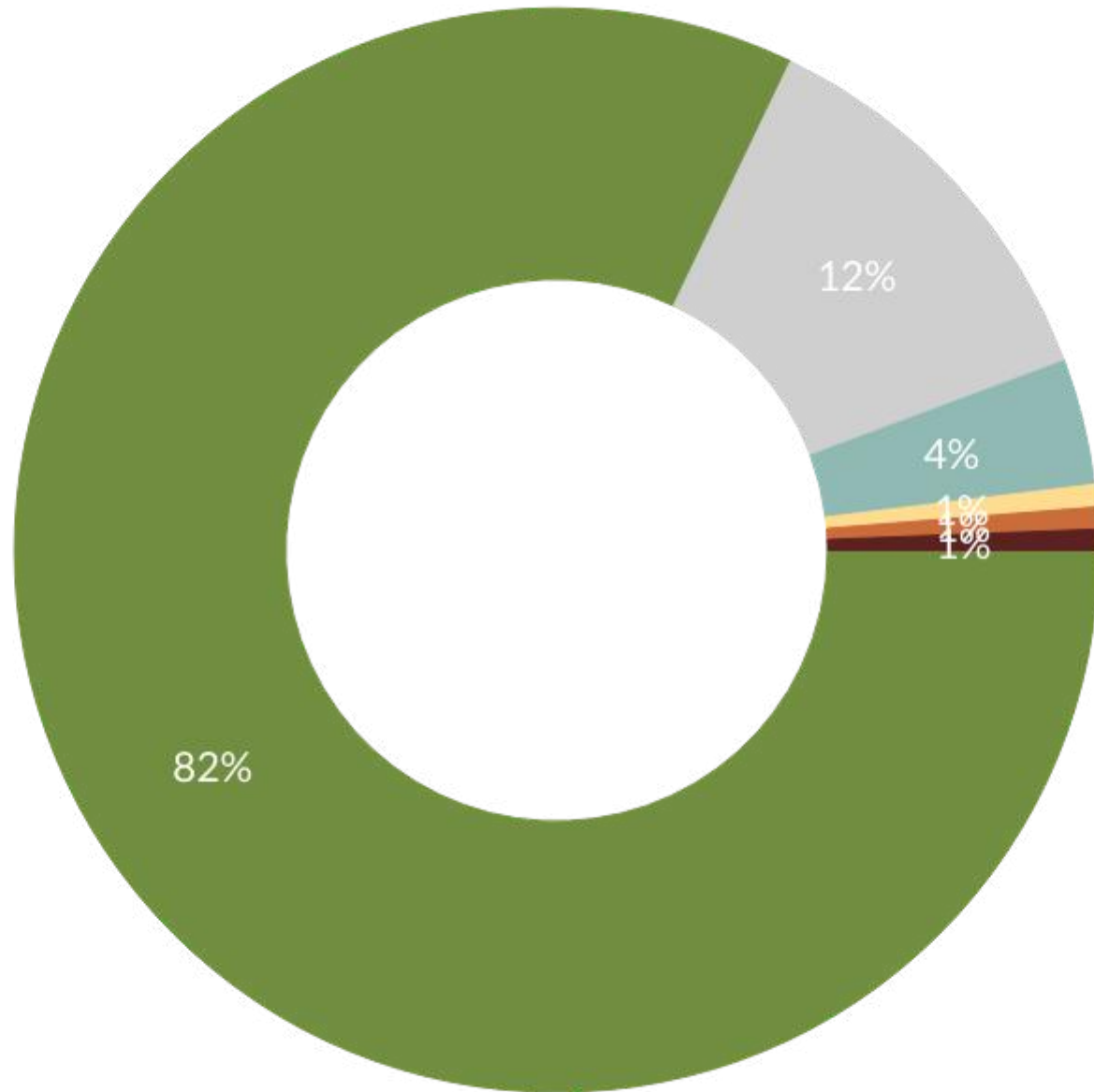


\$766,199

Expenditures



Funds Received



- State Transfer Tax: \$ 15,375,079
- County Transfer Tax: \$ 2,286,797
- Recording Fees: \$ 701,413
- Remonumentation: \$ 125,138
- Copy Sales: \$ 122,380
- Bulk Images: \$ 114,799

Free Online Record Search



12,353

documents were
purchased through
this service



\$37,629

Revenue
generated in the
General Fund



1%

decrease in
revenue from
2022

Document Recording



24,936

documents were
recorded
electronically



33,060

total documents
recorded

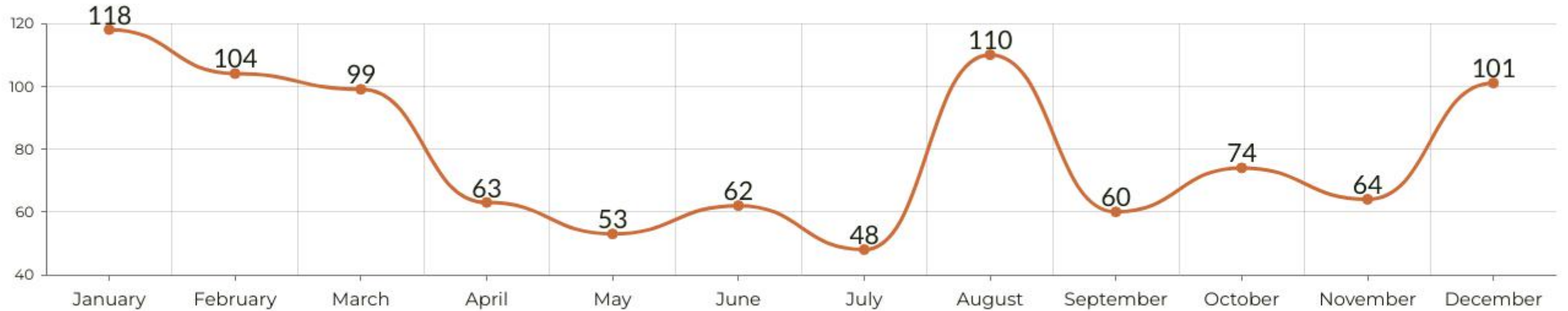


75%

of documents were
recorded
electronically

Passports

Our office processed 956 passport applications in 2023.



\$33,460

Total revenue from passports



\$8,915

Total revenue from
passport photos

CPL Fingerprinting



1,542

fingerprints taken



**January -
December
2023**



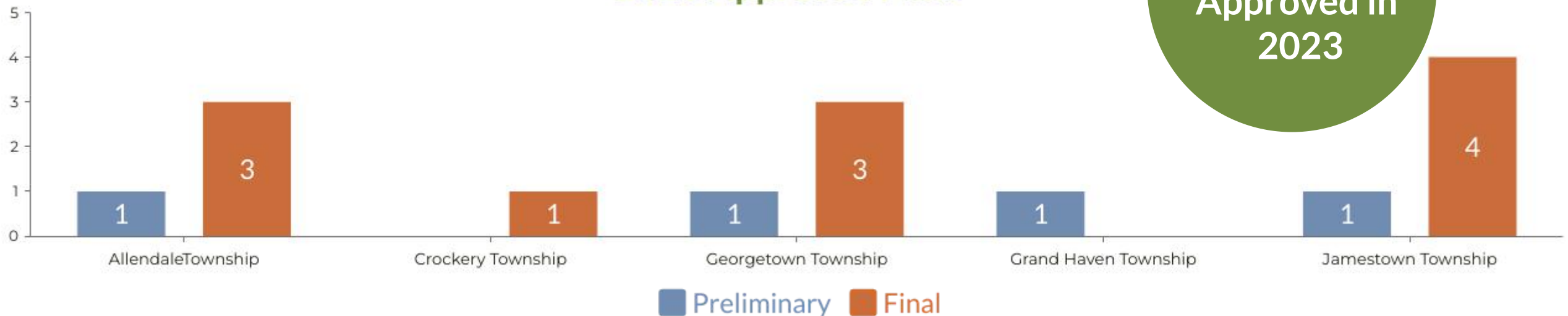
\$23,175

Revenue from CPL
fingerprinting

Plat Board

The Ottawa County Plat Board consists of three members including the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, the County Treasurer, and the County Clerk | Register of Deeds. The County Clerk | Register of Deeds is the secretary to the Plat Board and therefore responsible for accepting the plats to be reviewed by the board. The board reviews and approves plats to ensure the dimensions of the proposed plat are compliant with the provisions of the Subdivision Control Act of 1967.

2023 Approved Plats

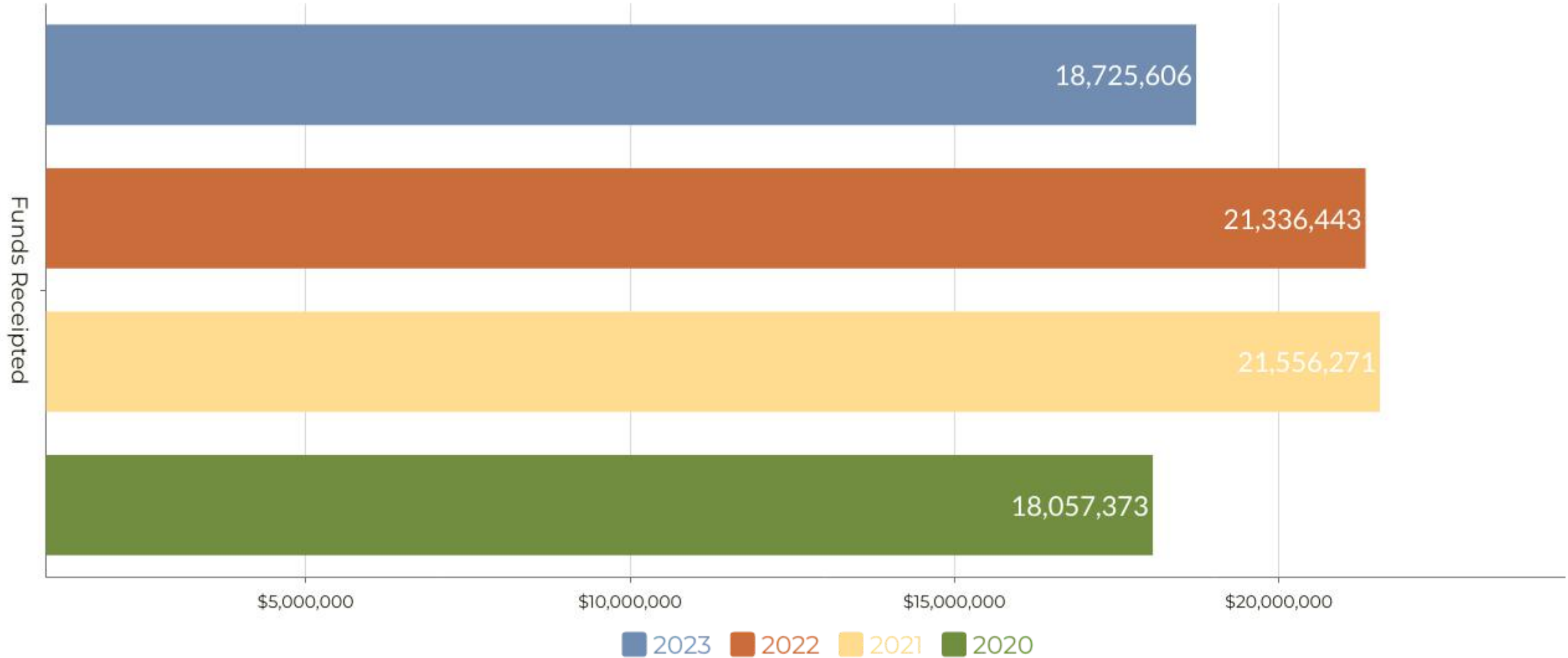


11 Final Plats
Approved in
2023

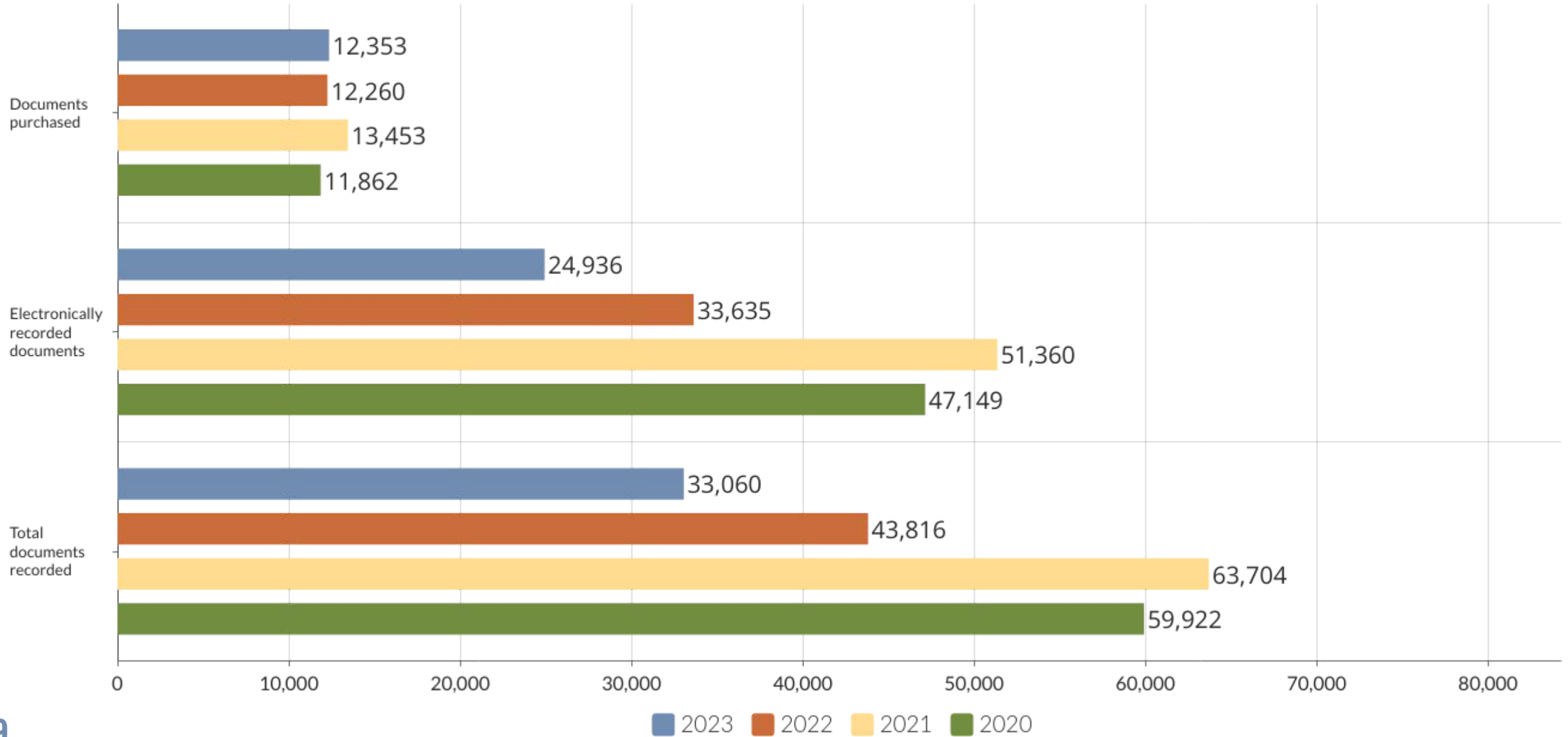
Postage Savings from Electronic Return of Land Documents



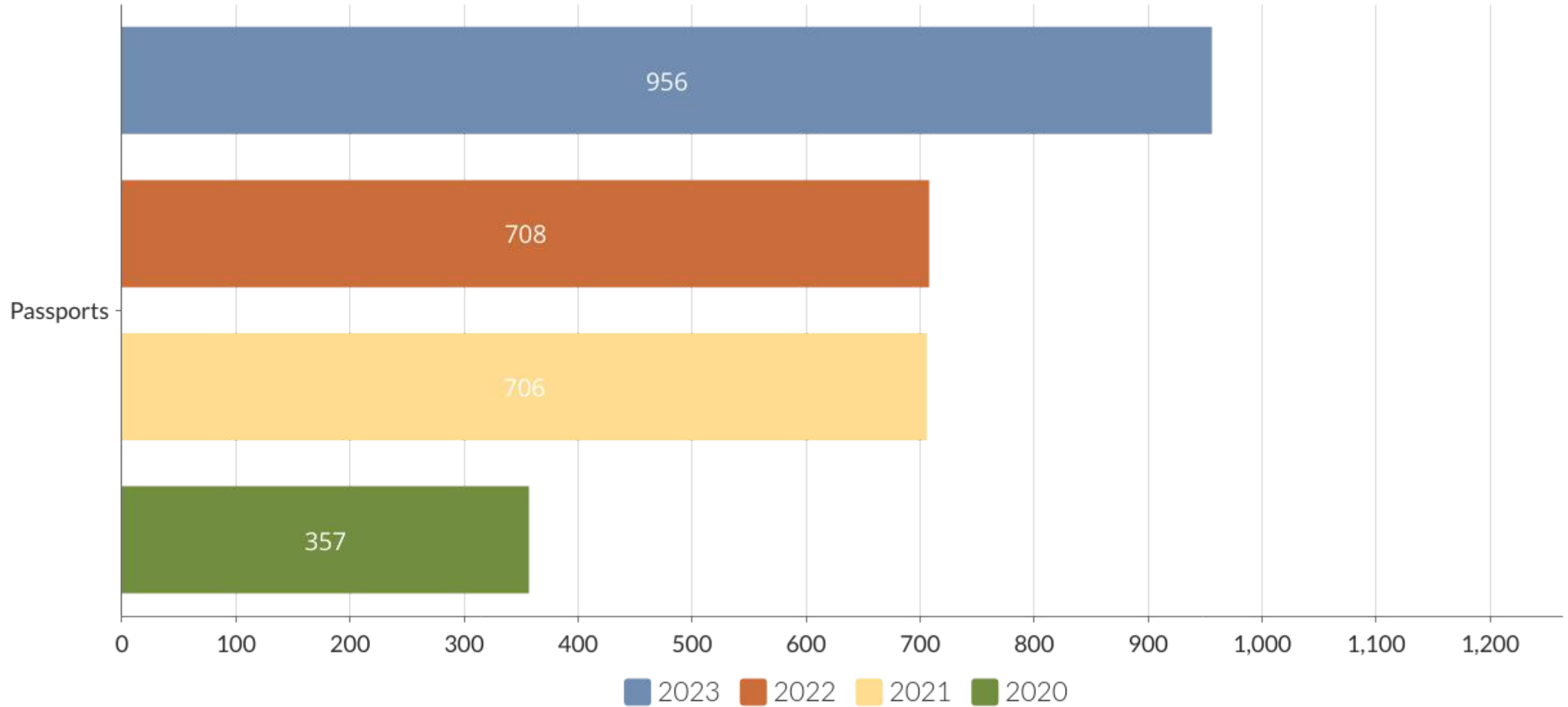
Trends Over Time



Trends Over Time



Trends Over Time





Circuit Court Records

The Circuit Court Records Division is the keeper of the 20th Circuit Court's records for all Civil, Criminal, Domestic, and Family Division cases.

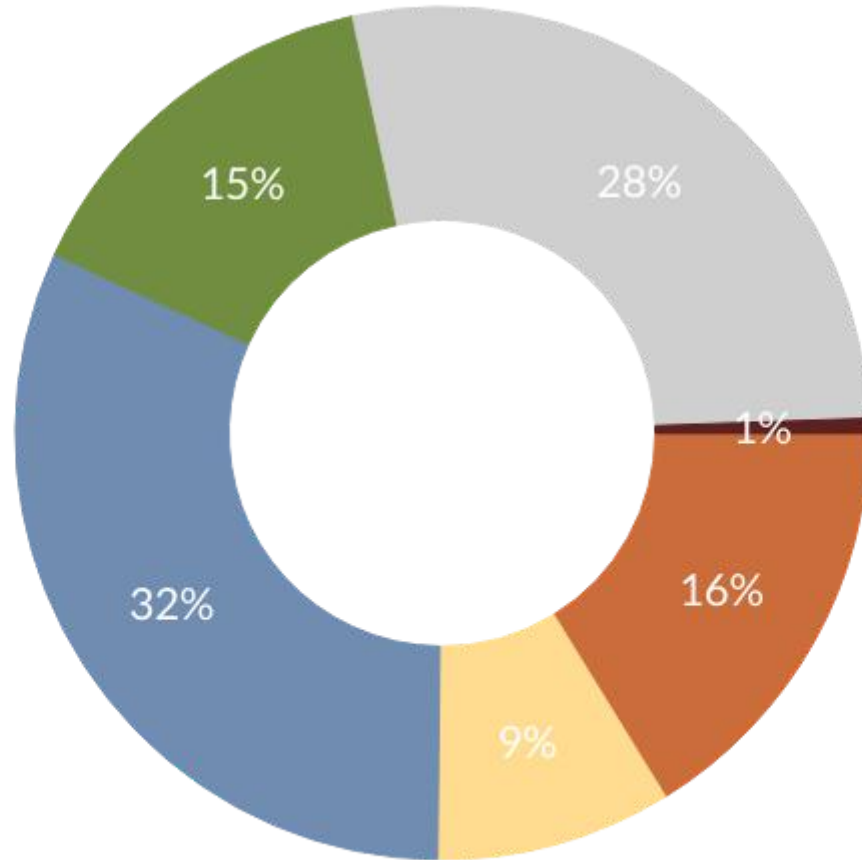
Funds Received

Circuit Court Records receipts all funds for the Circuit Court and the Juvenile Court for items including restitution, state fees, fines and costs, bonds, court orders, filing fees, attorney fees, and several others.

\$3.5
Million



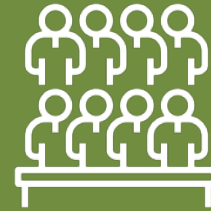
Cases Filed



Criminal 739 **Civil 407** **Domestic 1,444**
PPO 672 **Family 1,266** **Appeal 25**



Jury Trials



2,107

Jurors were called to serve



35

Trials commenced as Jury Trials



29%

increase in jurors called to serve

Family Division Adoptions



107

adoption cases
filed



7

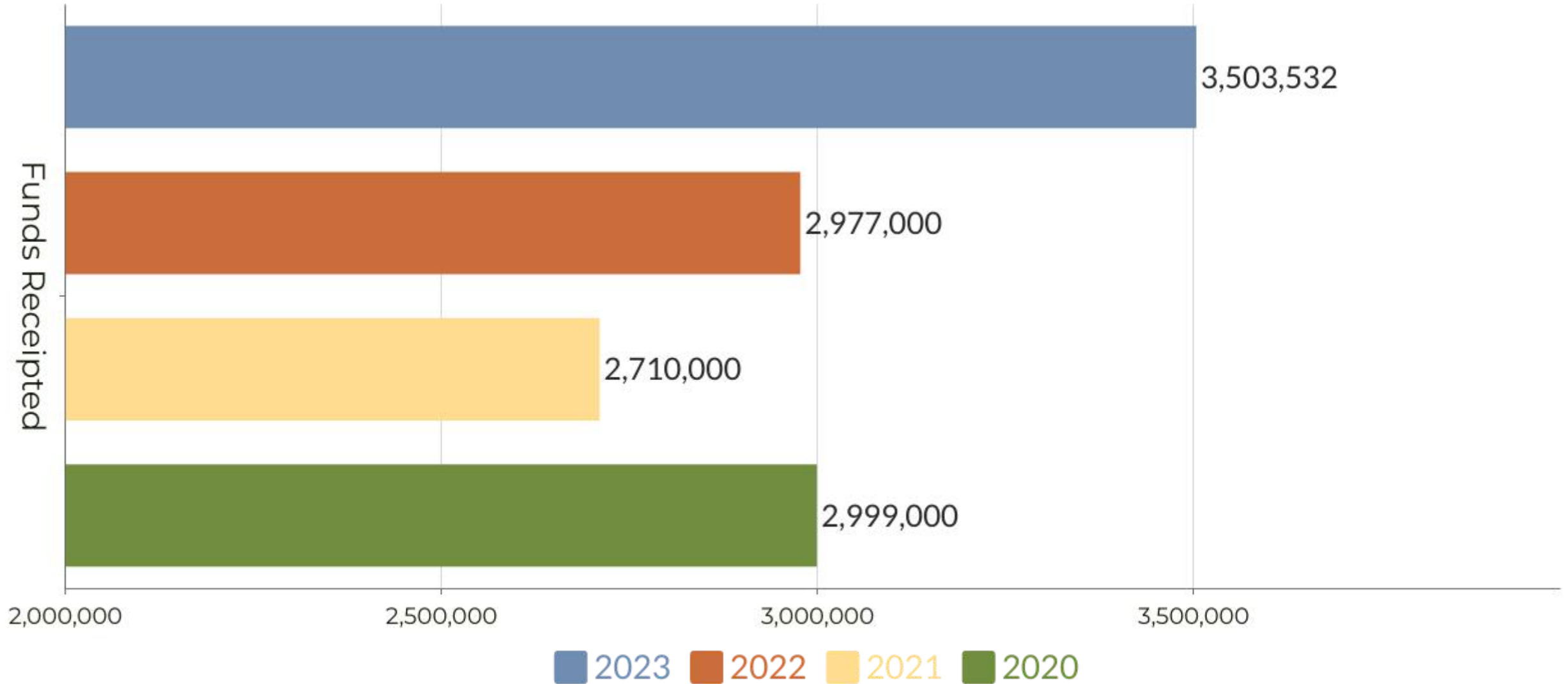
Adoptions finalized
on Michigan
Adoption Day



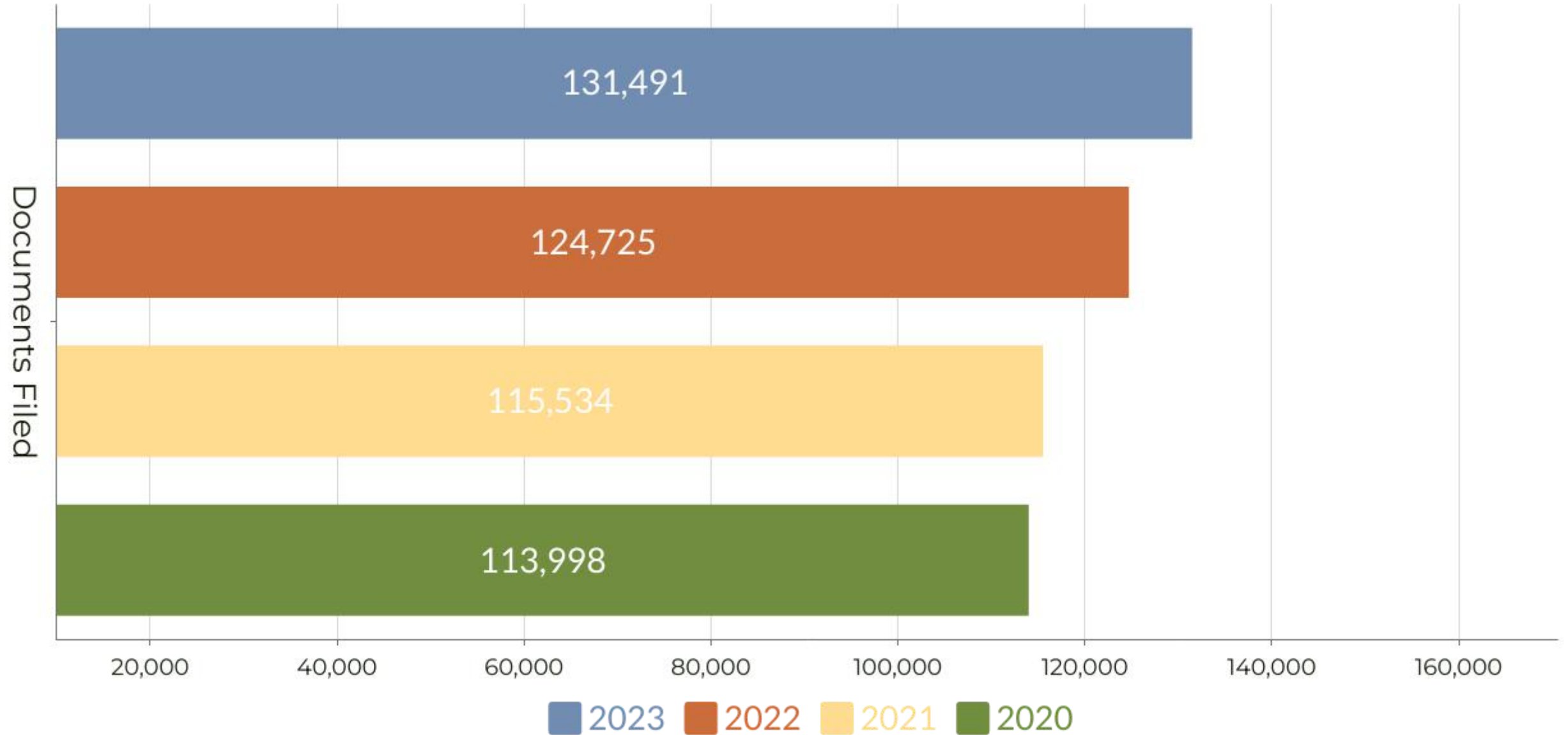
4.9%

increase in
adoption cases

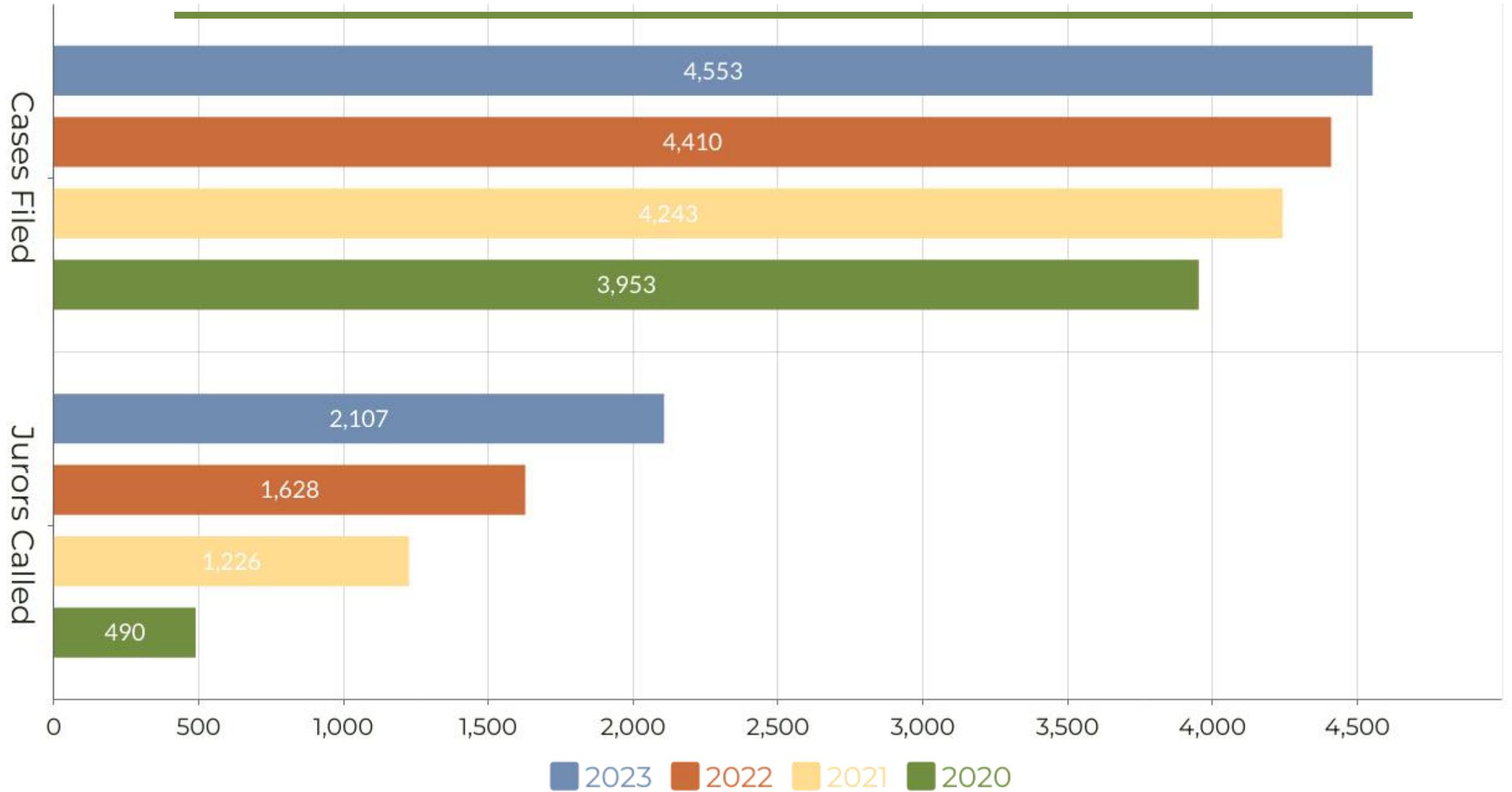
Trends Over Time



Trends Over Time



Trends Over Time

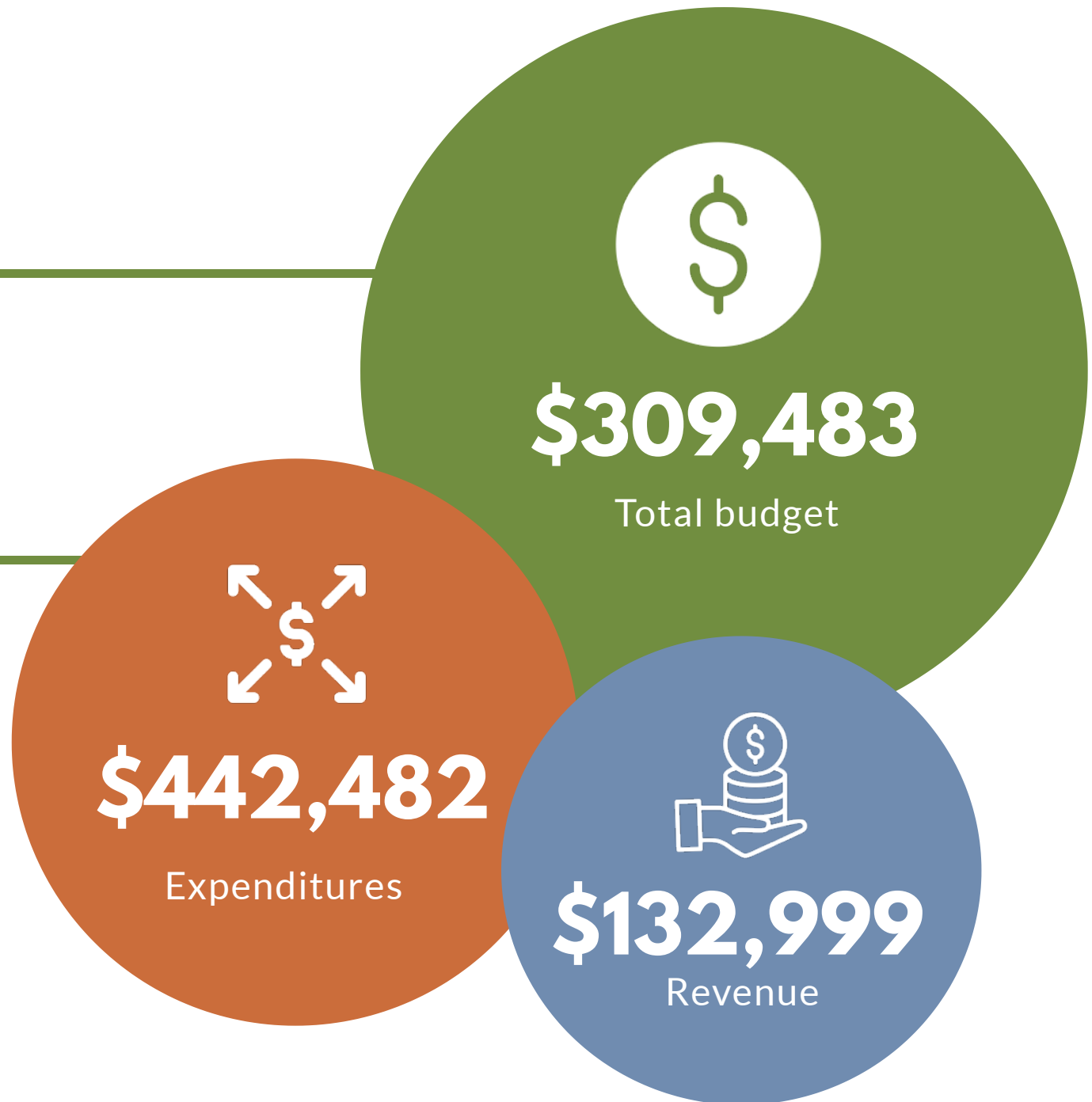




Elections

The Elections division is responsible for administering and overseeing all elections within Ottawa County.

Elections Budget



2023 Elections Rundown



**May 2nd
Special Election**

35,354

Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

▼20%



**August 8th
City Primary Election**

3,645

Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

▼28%



**November 7th
City General Election**

33,988

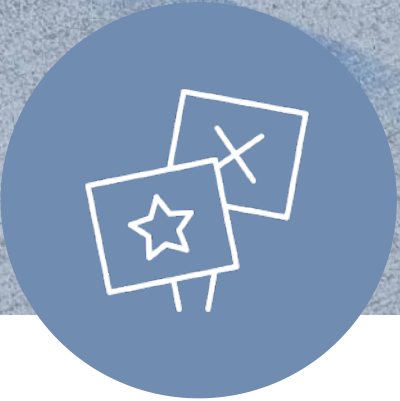
Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

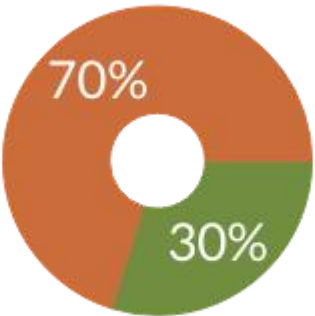
▼27%



2023 Elections: How were Ballots Cast?



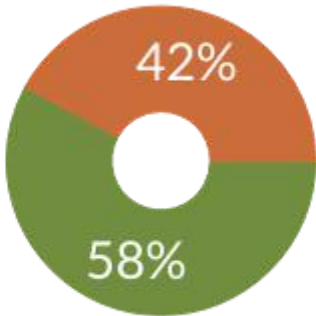
**May 2nd
Special Election**



In-Person 30% Absentee 70%



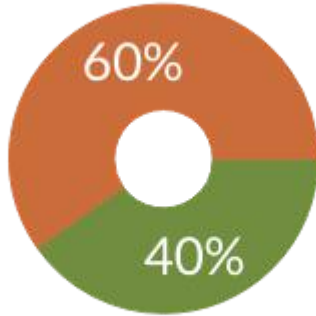
**August 8th
City Primary Election**



In-Person 58% Absentee 42%

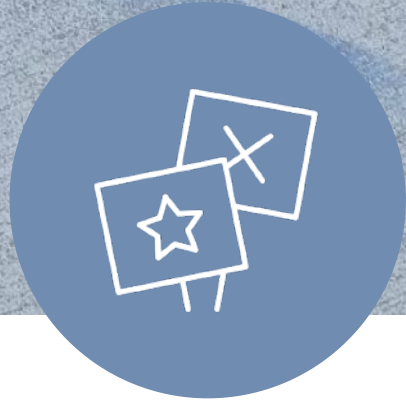


**November 7th
City General Election**



In-Person 40% Absentee 60%

2023 Same Day Voter Registration



**May 2nd
Special Election**

64

Voters registered on
Election Day



**August 8th
City Primary Election**

75

Voters registered on
Election Day



**November 7th
City General Election**

107

Voters registered on
Election Day



Coffee with the Clerk
(held at various Ottawa
County businesses)

Elections in the Community



Herrick District Library
Naturalization event
helping new U.S. citizens to
register to vote.

In order to focus on voter engagement, the Elections team got out and into the community in 2023. The Clerk/Register and the Elections team hosted several educational events and collaborated with other organizations to share information about how the elections process works, answer questions from voters, and assist at voter registration events throughout the community.

Voter Engagement

Our office partnered with several community organizations to share information about the August and November elections!



Loutit District
Library Youth Oreo
Mock Election



GVSU Night Voter
Registration Event



National Voter
Registration Day
event at Grand Valley
State University



Innocademy Election
event

Social Media

This year the team developed a social media campaign title: The ABCs of Elections. Each week a different word or concept was defined and discussed to show how it related to the administration of safe, secure, and transparent elections.

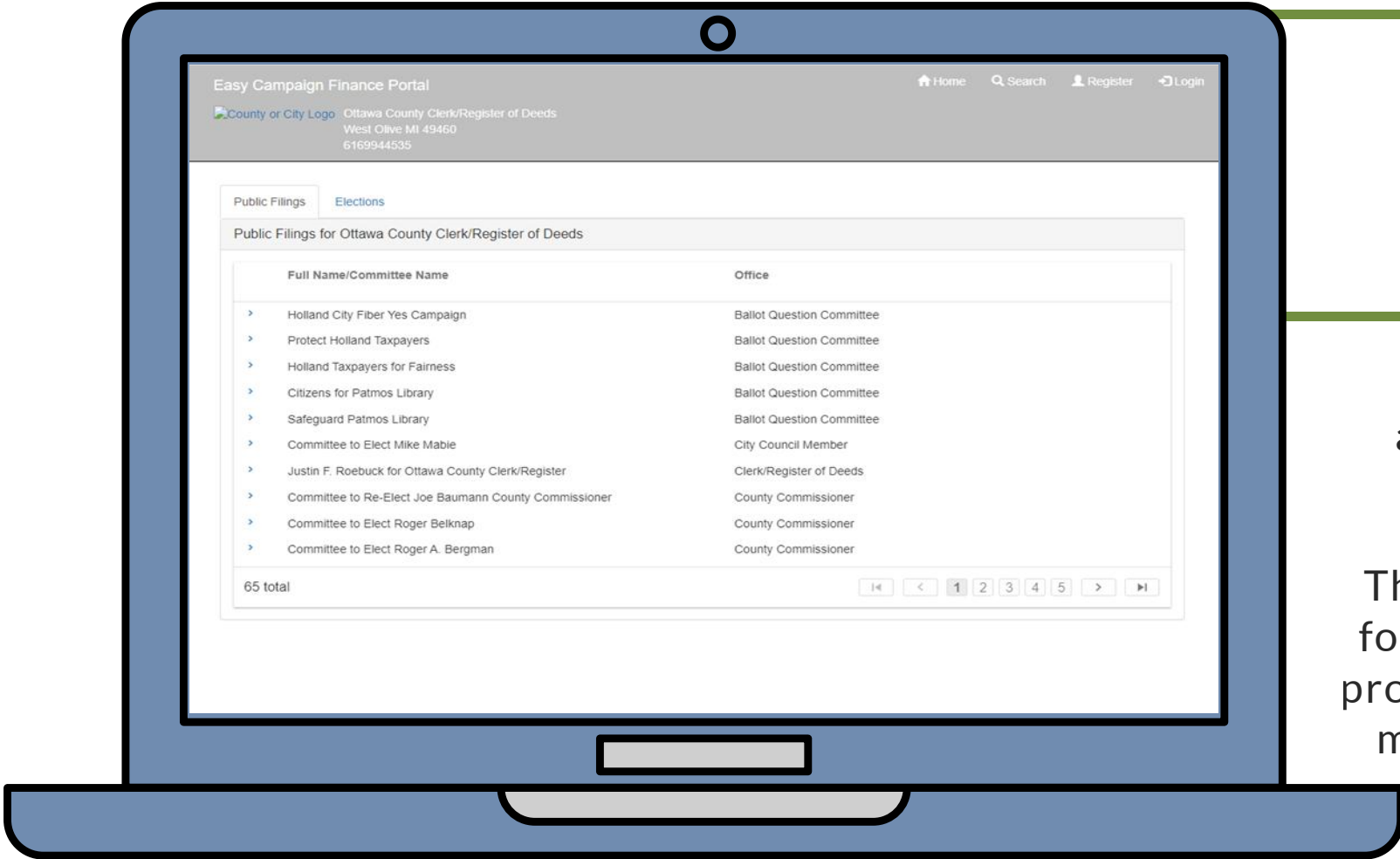


eFiling Campaign Finance System

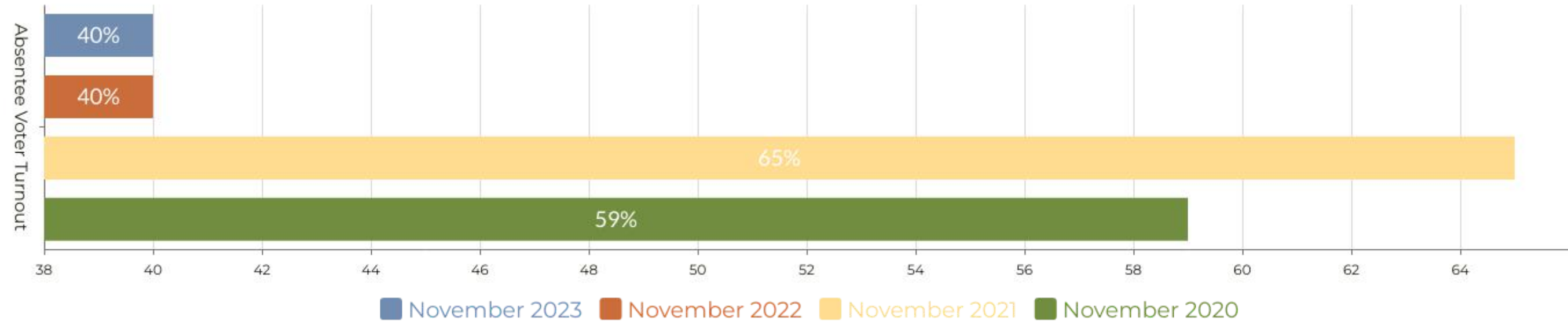
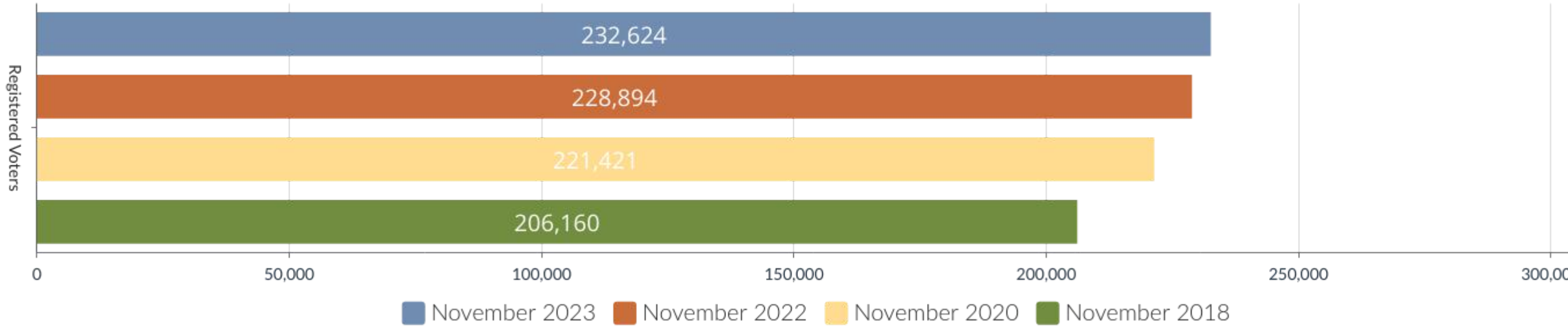
In 2023, the team worked to build out the ability for our committees to file campaign finance statements electronically.

This significantly improved the ease of filing for committees, the ability for the County to provide efficient review and responses, and it made reports more readily available for the public.

The necessity for a robust eFiling system became increasingly apparent as the number of active committees in Ottawa County continues to grow.



Trends Over Time





EARLY VOTING OTTAWA COUNTY

In November 2022, Michigan voters passed Proposal 22-2. This proposal created a right, under the Michigan Constitution, to vote early and in-person for a minimum of 9 days prior to each State or Federal election.

This past year our team worked to build the Early Voting process for Ottawa County residents.

To start the planning process for Early Voting, the Elections Team worked with many different County Departments and local organizations to draft the Early Voting Administrative Services Agreement.

The Agreement would not have been possible without the assistance of the Ottawa County Strategic Impact, Fiscal, and Human Resources departments and Ottawa County Clerks Association (OCCA).

In September of 2023, the Board of Commissioners approved the Early Voting Administrative Services Agreement and Early Voting positions and subsequently it was approved by all 23 jurisdictions.

2024-25 Goals



Early Voting Initiative

The Clerk's Office received funding in 2023, in partnership with our local jurisdictions, to conduct and administer four early voting sites for each federal and state election in 2024. Our goal in 2024 is to conduct early voting in a secure, cost-effective, customer-focused manner. This undertaking will involve the purchase of all early voting equipment and supplies, the hiring and training of all early voting election inspectors, the programming of ballots and election equipment for each federal and state election, the testing of all early voting election equipment before each election, and ensuring public knowledge, trust and transparency in the process.



Property Fraud Alert System Awareness

Property and mortgage fraud is the fastest growing white-collar crime in the U.S. The Register of Deed's Office offers a free alert system to inform all Ottawa County property owners when a document is recorded in our office using their name. Our goal is to significantly increase awareness of this free Property Fraud Alert service in order to protect as many Ottawa County residents as possible.

2024-25 Goals Continued



Implementation of Electronic Roll Call and Agenda Management Software

The Clerk's Office received funding in 2022 to implement new technology that will allow for greater transparency in the online searchability of the minutes and agendas of the Board of Commissioners' meetings. Our goal in 2024 is to get the new system programmed to meet Ottawa County needs, train staff, and start using Granicus by early 2025.



Rollout of Case Management System

Our Circuit Court Records team is excited for the official implementation of a new case management system in 2024. This culmination has been years' of work to accurately transfer decades of court record information to the state run Justice Information System (JIS). The project will streamline our document management and electronic filing processes in the Circuit Court, at the same time including all historical data from our legacy system.



Developing Our Team

In 2024, our office will continue to focus with staff on our Mission, Vision and Values with monthly themes and reflective questions to engage staff with our principles. The Clerk | Register of Deed's office is also excited to move into the Family Justice Center, combining two court records divisions, for the first time, allowing for the families of Ottawa County to be served in a streamlined manner.



Ottawa County

Clerk | Register of Deeds

Justin F. Roebuck

THANK YOU