

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Department Office of Administration

HB Section(s):

Program Name Office of Child Advocate

Program is found in the following core budget(s):

1a. What strategic priority does this program address?

Improve child welfare outcomes.

1b. What does this program do?

The Office of Child Advocate provides families and citizens an avenue through which they can obtain an independent and impartial review of the decisions and/or actions made by the Department of Social Services, Children's Division.

The Office of Child Advocate offers eight primary functions to concerned citizens:

- Foster care case management review
- Unsubstantiated hotline investigation review
- Mediation between parents and schools regarding abuse allegations
- Review child fatalities when there is a history of child abuse and neglect concerns or involvement with the Children's Division
- Intervene on behalf of a child during judicial proceedings
- Review policy and procedures of Children's Division, the Juvenile Office, and guardian ad litem within a county
- Increase knowledge of professionals and the general public regarding child welfare
- Provide information and referrals for families needing resources

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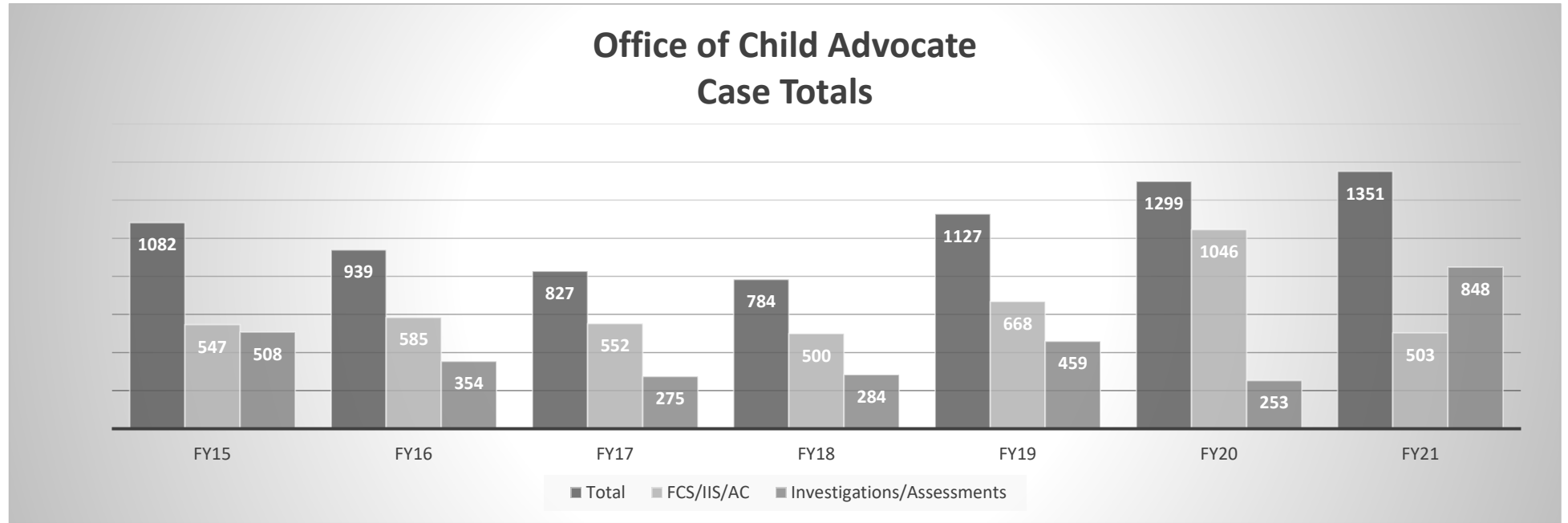
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2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.



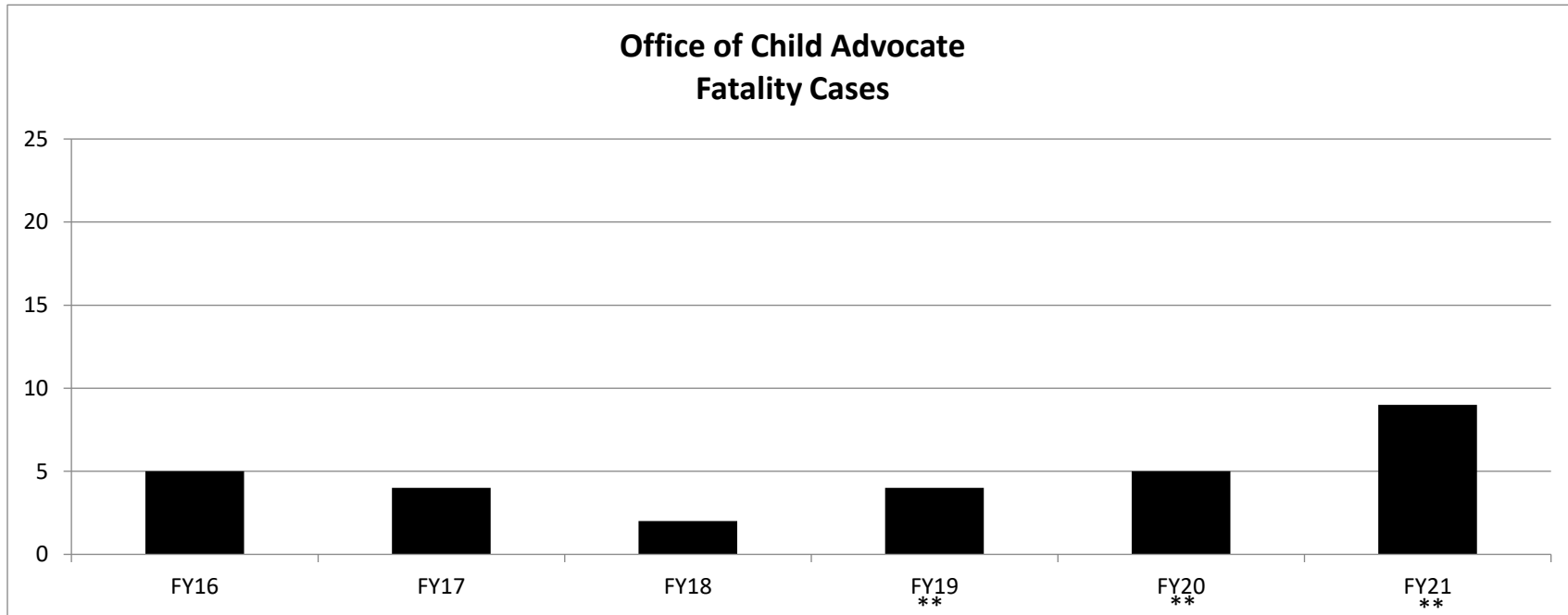
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**This number does not include the additional cases reviewed as part of the Child Fatality Review Panel sub-committee on child/neglect fatalities as these cases were not treated as individual reviews. In FY21, there were 61 additional cases reviewed.

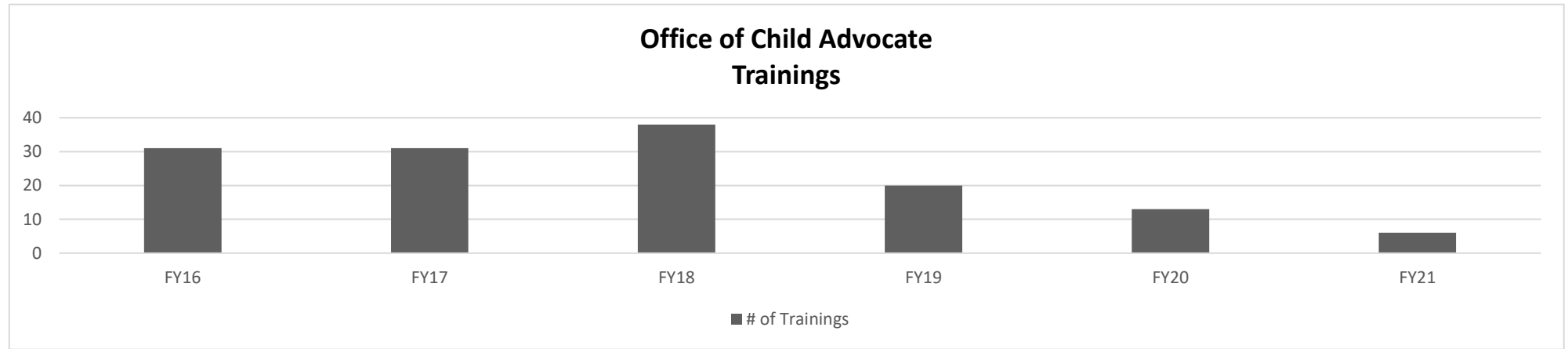
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2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.

Callers to OCA often believe that they are the customer. However, the children of the cases we review are our customers and the children's best interest may run counter to our caller's interest. We are unable to determine the children's satisfaction.

OCA trains citizens and professionals on Stewards of Children's prevention of sexual abuse. Customers of the training are asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of 1-5 at the completion of training.

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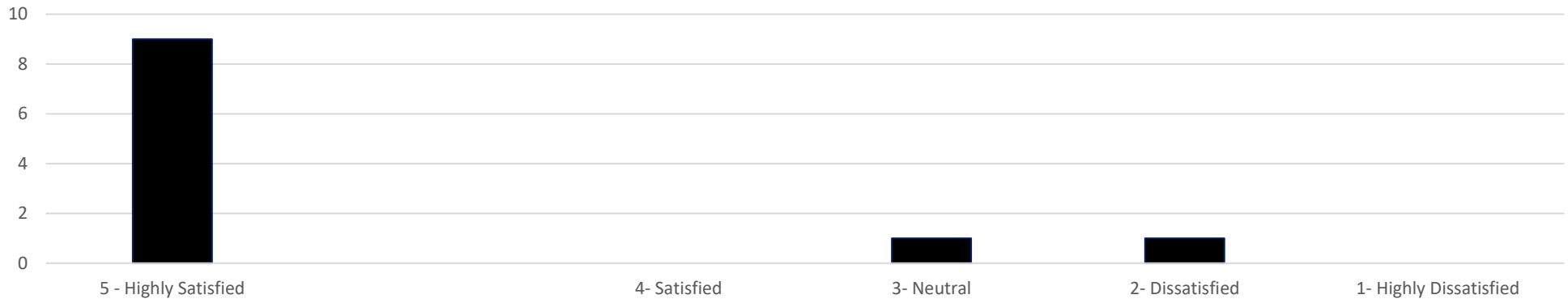
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FY 21 Customer Satisfaction



2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.

OCA increases the knowledge of the professionals and the general public regarding child welfare in three primary ways:

- OCA has served on the following Task Forces and Work Groups to improve child welfare practice and raise awareness:
 - Task Force on Human Trafficking
 - Governor's Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children
 - Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice
 - Child Fatality Review Program, state panel
 - Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board
 - Missouri State Juvenile Justice Advisory Board
 - Missouri Alliance for Children and Families Specialized Case Management Advisory Board
 - Child Support Guidelines Review Subcommittee of the Family Court Committee
- OCA trains citizens and professionals on Stewards of Children. This training empowers adults to identify and prevent child abuse. Those being trained take a pre-test indicating their knowledge on the subject and then a post-test to signify how much they have learned. The charts below indicate the percentage of increased knowledge.

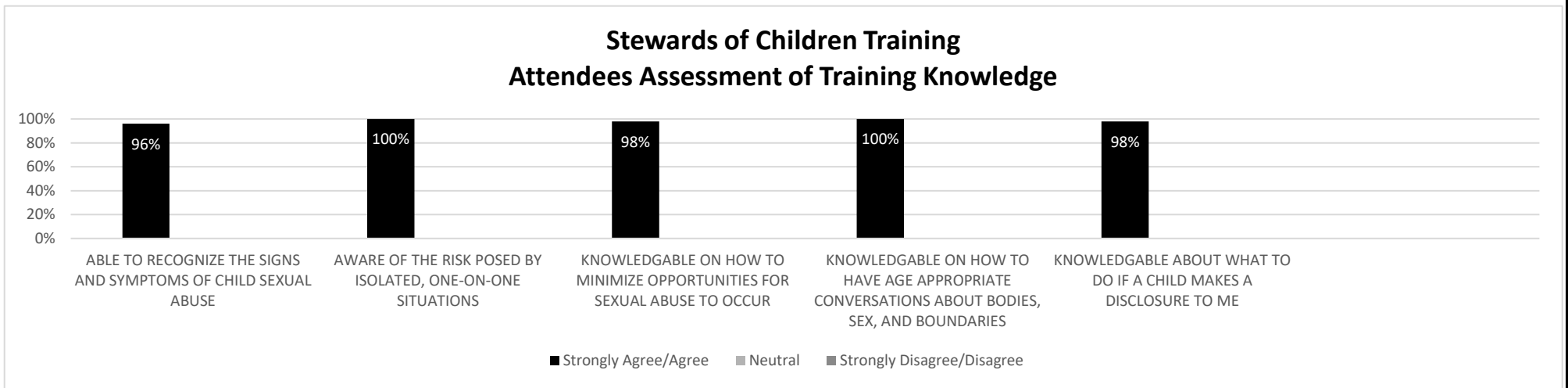
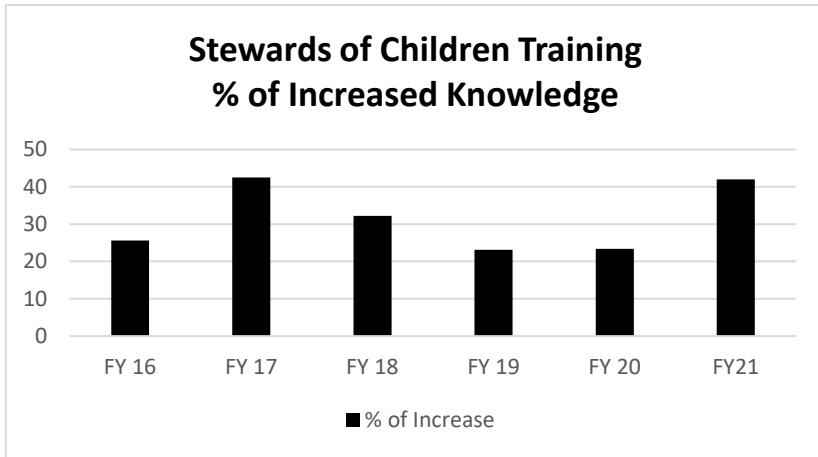
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3. Additional activities to increase the knowledge of families and citizens:

- Event displays at state conferences
- OCA website
- Speaking engagements to various groups and organizations
- Report distribution

COVID-19 dramatically reduced the number of events and speaking engagements. OCA plans to resume the number of events and speaking engagements based on guidance from local public health officials in FY22.

2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.

1. Percent of complainants contacted within three business days after complaint received. Case files will be initially reviewed and complainants will be notified of a determination if a full review will be opened.

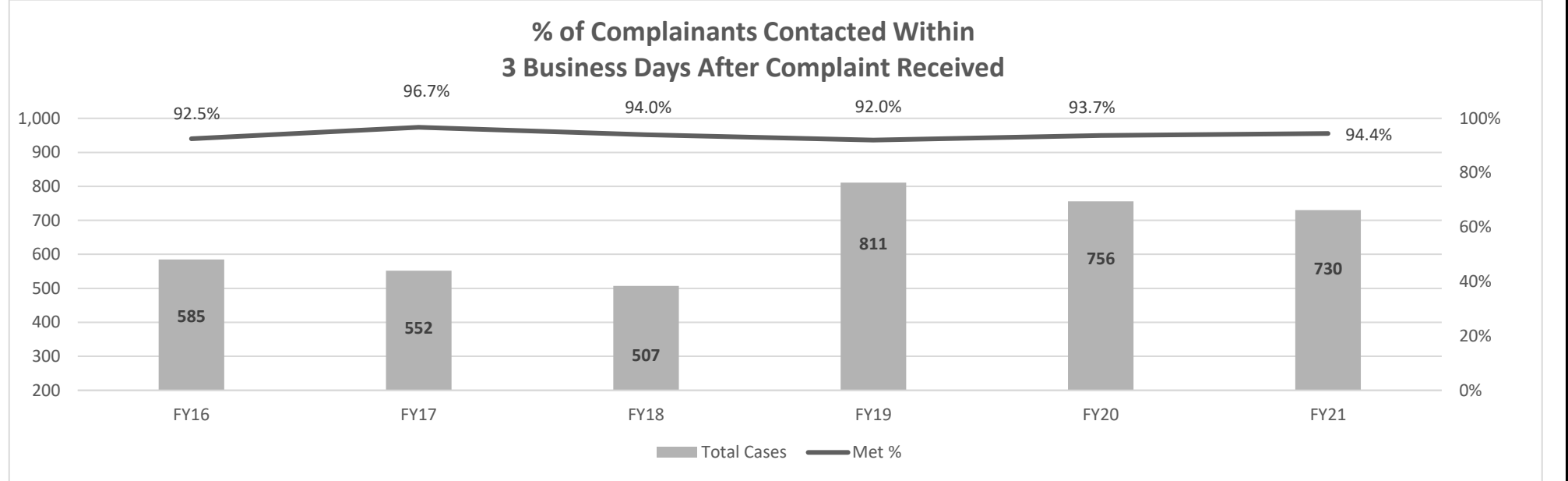
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2. Percent of all cases reviews completed within 45 business days of receiving complaint.

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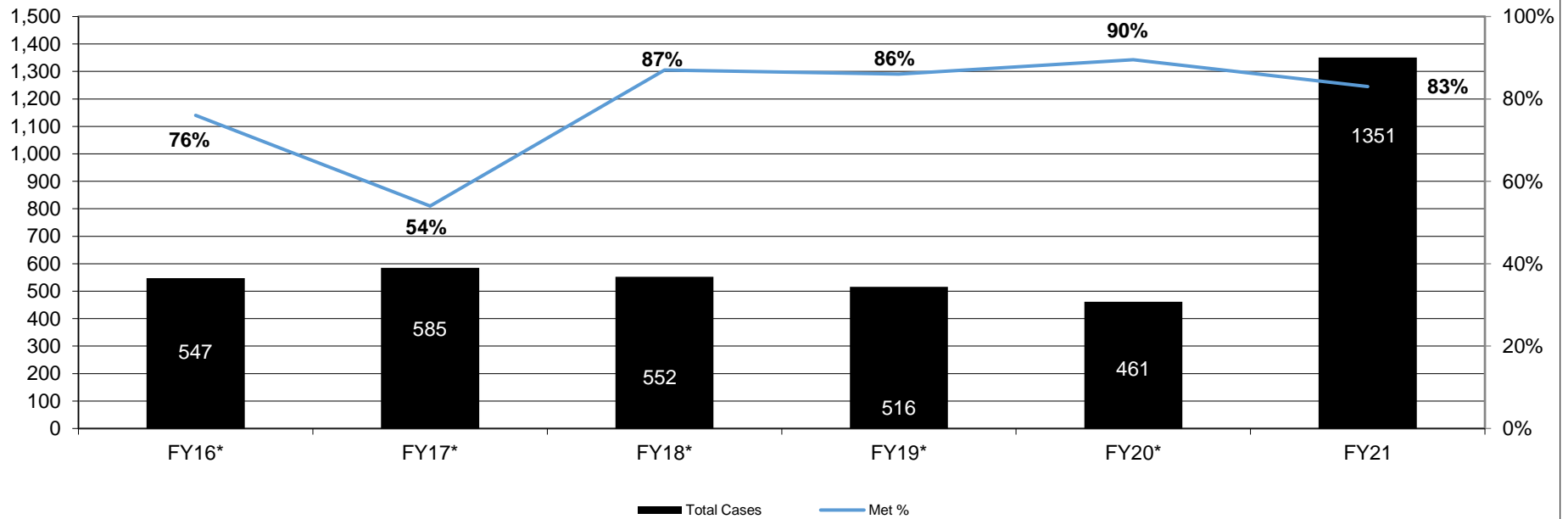
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**% of All Case Reviews Completed Within
45 Business Days After Receiving Complaint**



* FY16 – FY20 represent totals for only one case review category. FY 21 represents cumulative totals for all case review categories.

3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)

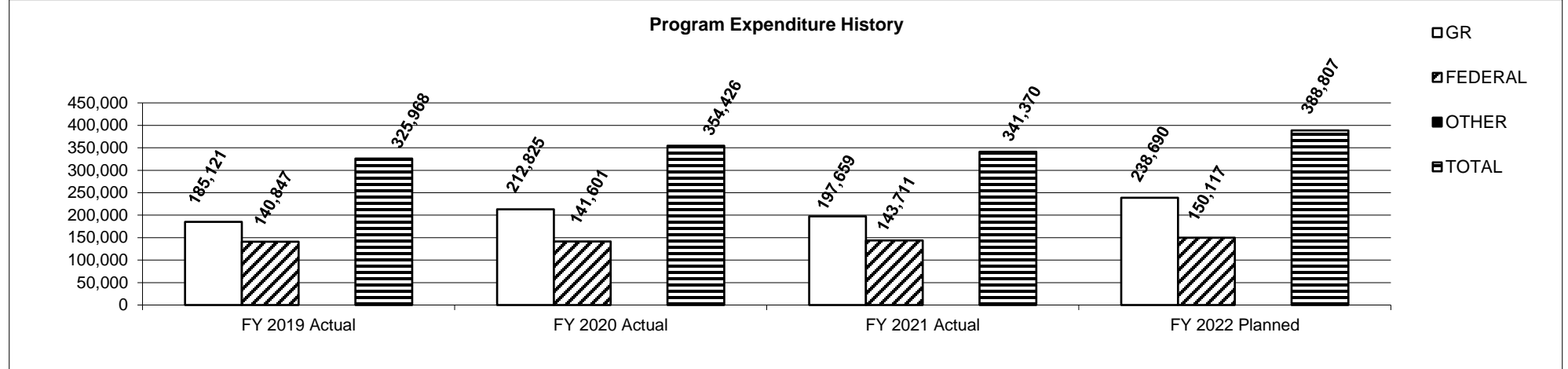
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4. What are the sources of the “Other” funds?

N/A

5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)

Section 37.700-37.730, 160.262, and 210.145 RSMO

6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.

No

7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.

No