

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**Department: Social Services**

**HB Section(s): 11.175**

**Program Name: Blind Pension**

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

### 1a. What strategic priority does this program address?

Secure and sustain healthy and safe lives for individuals

### 1b. What does this program do?

The Department of Social Services (DSS), Family Support Division (FSD) determines eligibility and administers this program to help blind Missourians by providing monthly cash benefits.

The Blind Pension Program is cash assistance for blind persons who do not qualify under the supplemental aid to the blind law and who are not eligible for Supplemental Security Income benefits. The Supplemental Aid to the Blind Program is cash assistance for blind persons who meet certain requirements with reasonable subsistence in accordance with standards developed by the Family Support Division. In addition to the cash grant, individuals in both programs are provided with medical coverage from MO HealthNet's budget.

HB 2171 (2018) was implemented to ensure that only eligible blind Missourians are receiving benefits.

Each person eligible for Blind Pension receives a monthly cash grant and medical coverage funded by MO HealthNet, depending on eligibility. The grant is \$750. Eligibility requirements of the Blind Pension program:

- Must be 18 years of age or older;
- Missouri resident;
- United States citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- Has not given away, sold, or transferred real or personal property in order to be eligible for Blind Pension;
- Single, or married and living with spouse, and does not own real or personal property (excluding their residence) worth \$30,000 or more, with the first \$100,000 in an individual's Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account excluded;
- Determined to be totally blind as defined by law (vision cannot be corrected to better than 5/200 in the better eye or visual field of less than or equal to 5 degrees in the better eye for at least 12 months);
- Willing to have a medical treatment or an operation to cure their blindness unless they are 75 years old or older;
- Is not a resident of a public, private, or endowed institution except a public medical institution;
- Shall not obtain, maintain, or renew a driver license, or operate a motor vehicle with or without a valid driver's license;
- Has not pleaded guilty or been found to have violated provisions of Sections 209.010 to 209.160, RSMo.; and
- A sighted spouse may not have an annual income that is equal to or greater than 500% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

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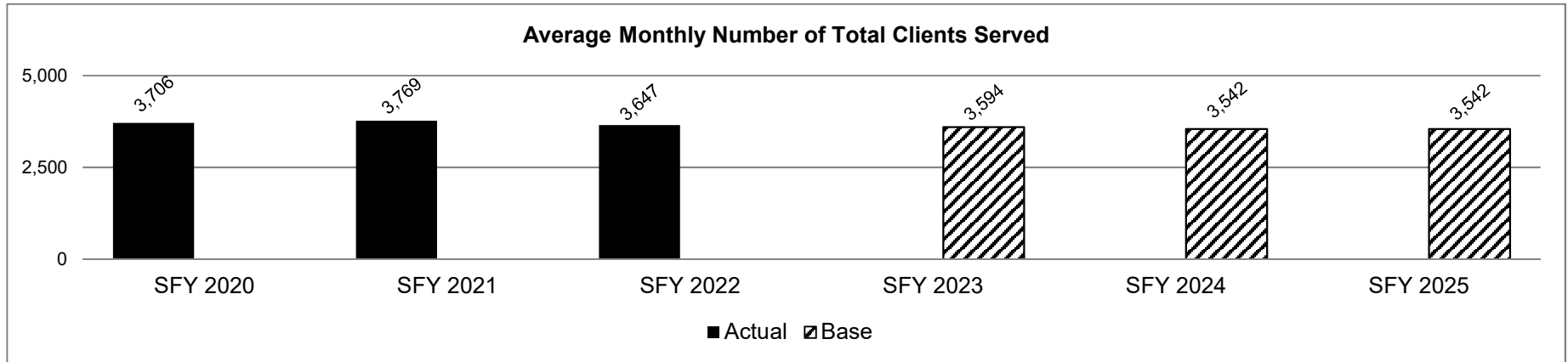
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Supplemental Aid to the Blind (SAB) is operated in Missouri in conjunction with a totally state-supported blind pension program. Eligible individuals receive a monthly cash grant and Title XIX MO HealthNet benefits. The grant is the difference between the maximum grant (\$750) and the SSI payment that the individual receives. Eligibility requirements for the SAB program:

- Must be 18 years of age or older;
- Missouri resident;
- Single and does not own real or personal property (excluding their residence) worth more than \$5,301.85 or, if married and living with spouse, does not own real or personal property worth more than \$10,603.70 individually or jointly;
- Determined to be totally blind as defined by law (vision cannot be corrected to better than 5/200 in the better eye or visual field of less than or equal to 5 degrees in the better eye for at least 12 months);
- Is not a resident of a public, private or endowed institution except a public medical institution; and
- Has applied for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

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



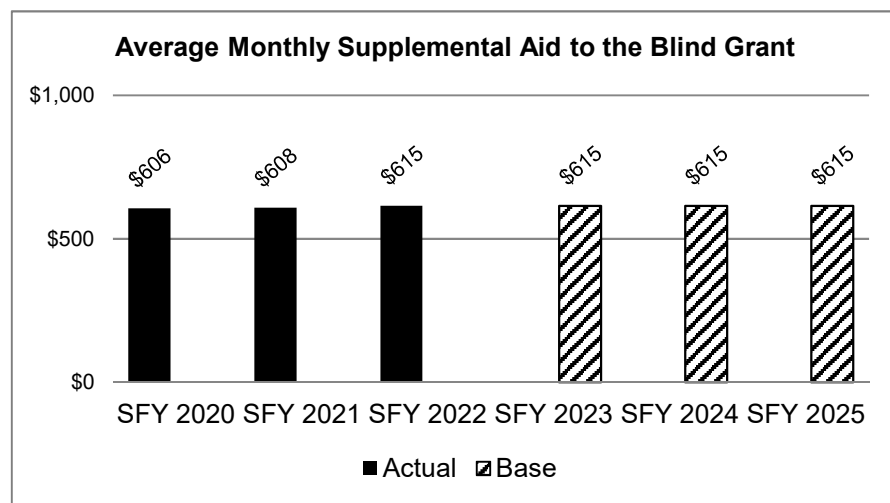
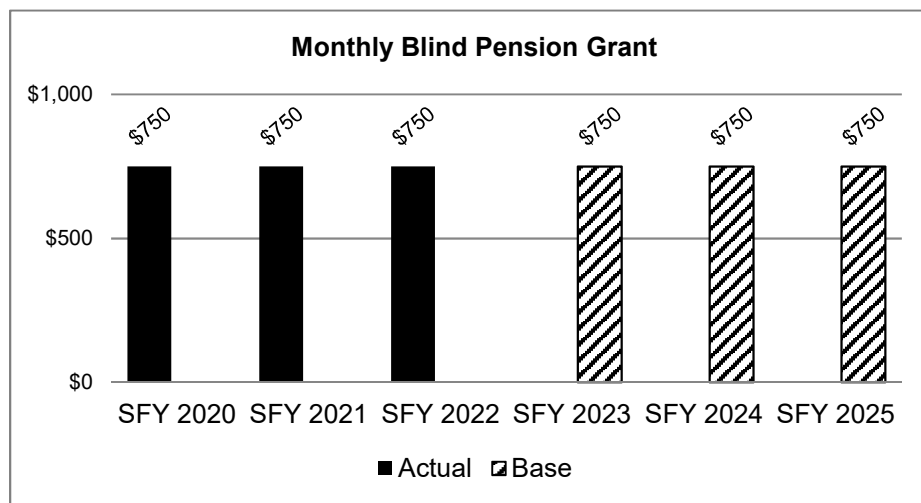
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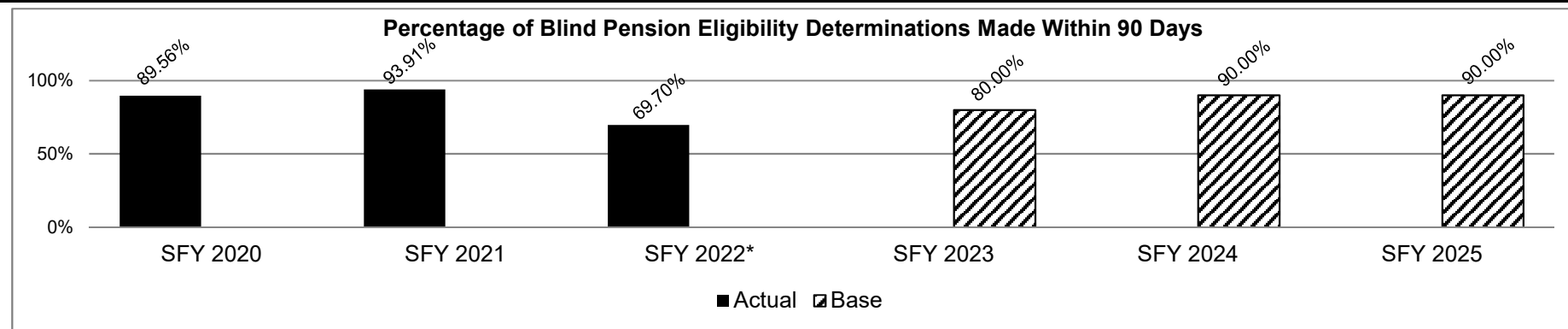
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### 2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.



\*SFY 2022 decrease can be attributed to an influx of applications for the Adult Expansion Group (AEG). This is projected to increase as the AEG population stabilizes and the number of applications decrease.

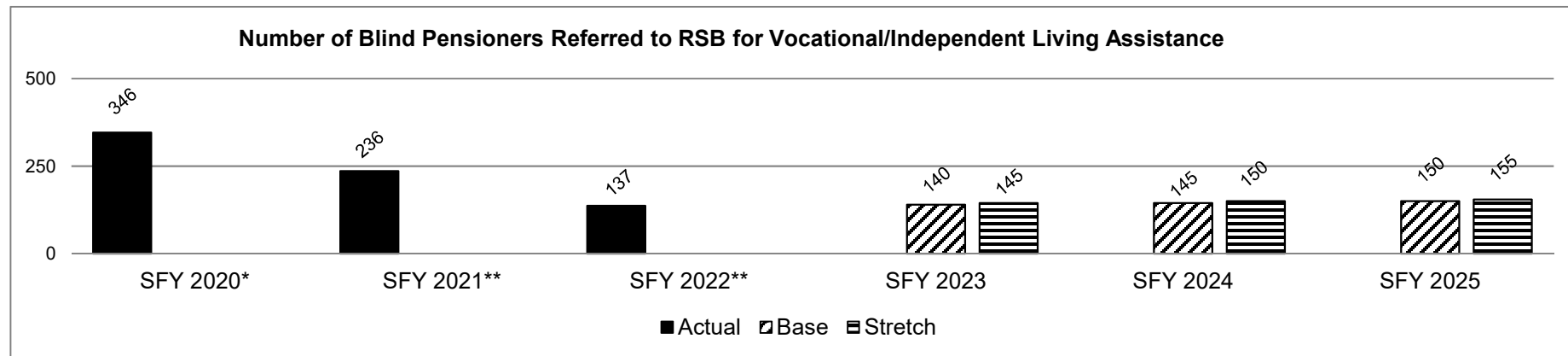
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**2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.**

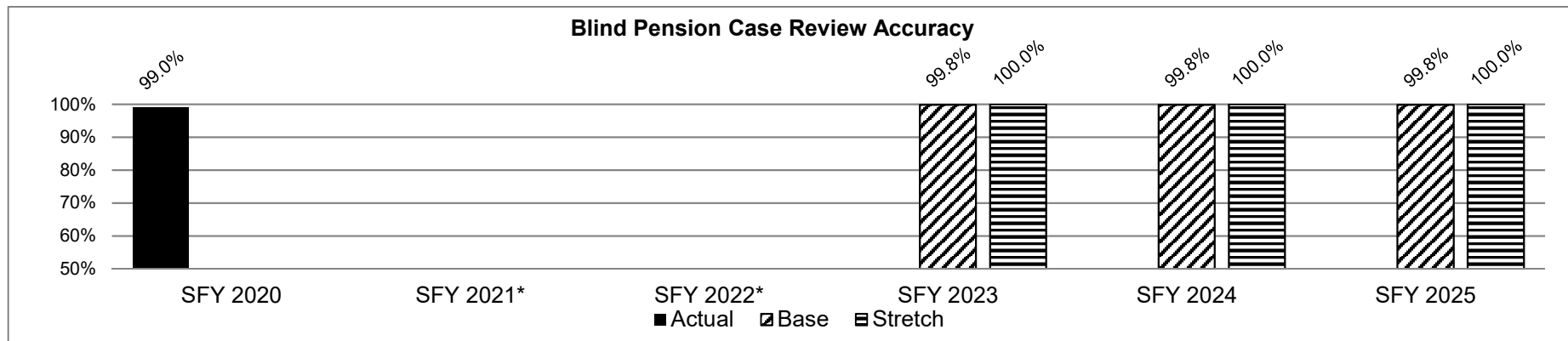


\*SFY 2020 Actual updated to reflect more accurate data.

The Family Support Division began referring newly approved Blind Pension recipients and current recipients, upon request, to Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in SFY 2019. Participation in RSB services is not required for individuals to receive Blind Pension.

\*\*SFY 2021 and SFY 2022 data reflects a decrease that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



\*In SFY 2021 and SFY 2022 there is no data to report as COVID-19 Public Health Emergency guidelines suspended the requirement of case reviews.

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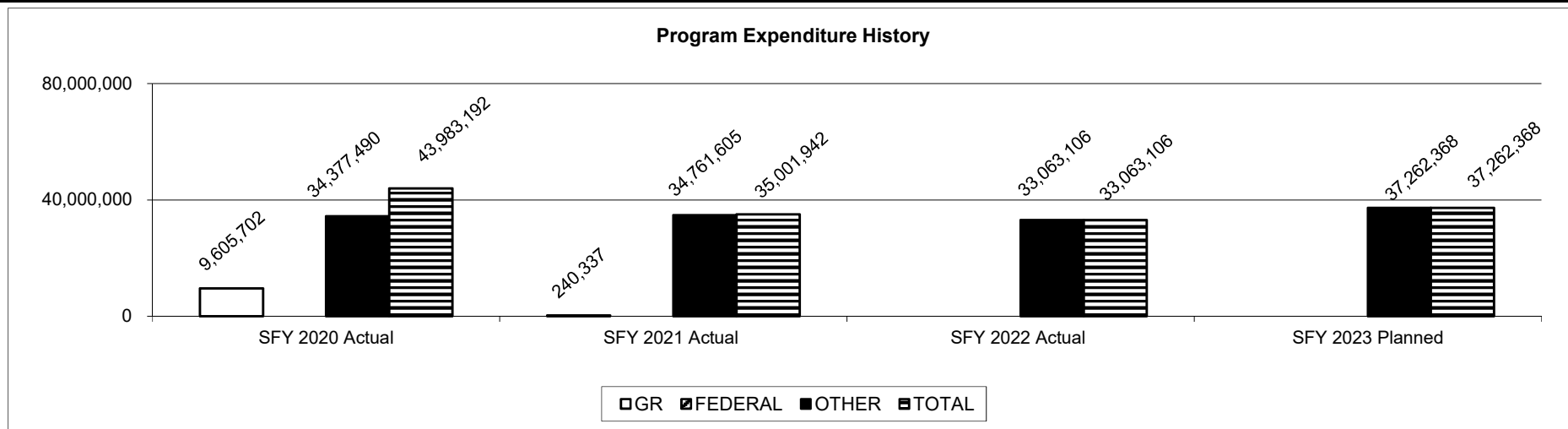
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**3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)**



**4. What are the sources of the "Other " funds?**

Blind Pension Fund (0621)

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

State statute: Chapter 209 and Sections 208.020 and 208.030 RSMo., Missouri Constitution, Article III, Section 38 (b).

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

No.

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

Blind Pension is not federally mandated because it is a fully state-funded program. SAB is mandated through the receipt of federal funds. Federal law mandates that once a state exercises their option to operate a program, such as SAB, it may not be terminated without losing all federal medical assistance.