

Greene County Juvenile Office

2022

Child Abuse & Neglect - Annual Statistical Report



Greene County Juvenile Office

417-868-4008

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**April Is
National
Child Abuse
Prevention
Month**



FIND TOOLS, TIPS, AND RESOURCES AT
WWW.CHILDWELFARE.GOV/PREVENTIONMONTH

 Child Welfare
Information Gateway

 Children's
Bureau

Vision Statement

Youth that engage with the Juvenile Office and/or Juvenile Court in Greene County will be empowered, their families will be strengthened, victims will be restored, and the community will be safer.

Mission Statement

The Greene County Juvenile Office will provide best practices, progressive, and trauma-informed care to the youth and families that engage the Juvenile Office and/or Juvenile Court.

- In the state of Missouri, only a Physician, Law enforcement officer, or Deputy Juvenile Officer can take protective custody of a child. The **Juvenile Office receives referrals** from the Missouri Children's Division requesting protective custody of a child that is in immediate risk of abuse or neglect by a direct caregiver. If protective custody is taken, **a formal petition** is filed with the court, and a Judge will review and sign a Notice of Custody to continue temporary protective custody until a hearing can occur with all the parties involved within 72 hours.
- Child Abuse and Neglect court proceedings are guided by the *Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997*.

The following report contains information relating to cases during the **2022 calendar year, in addition, to six year trends.**

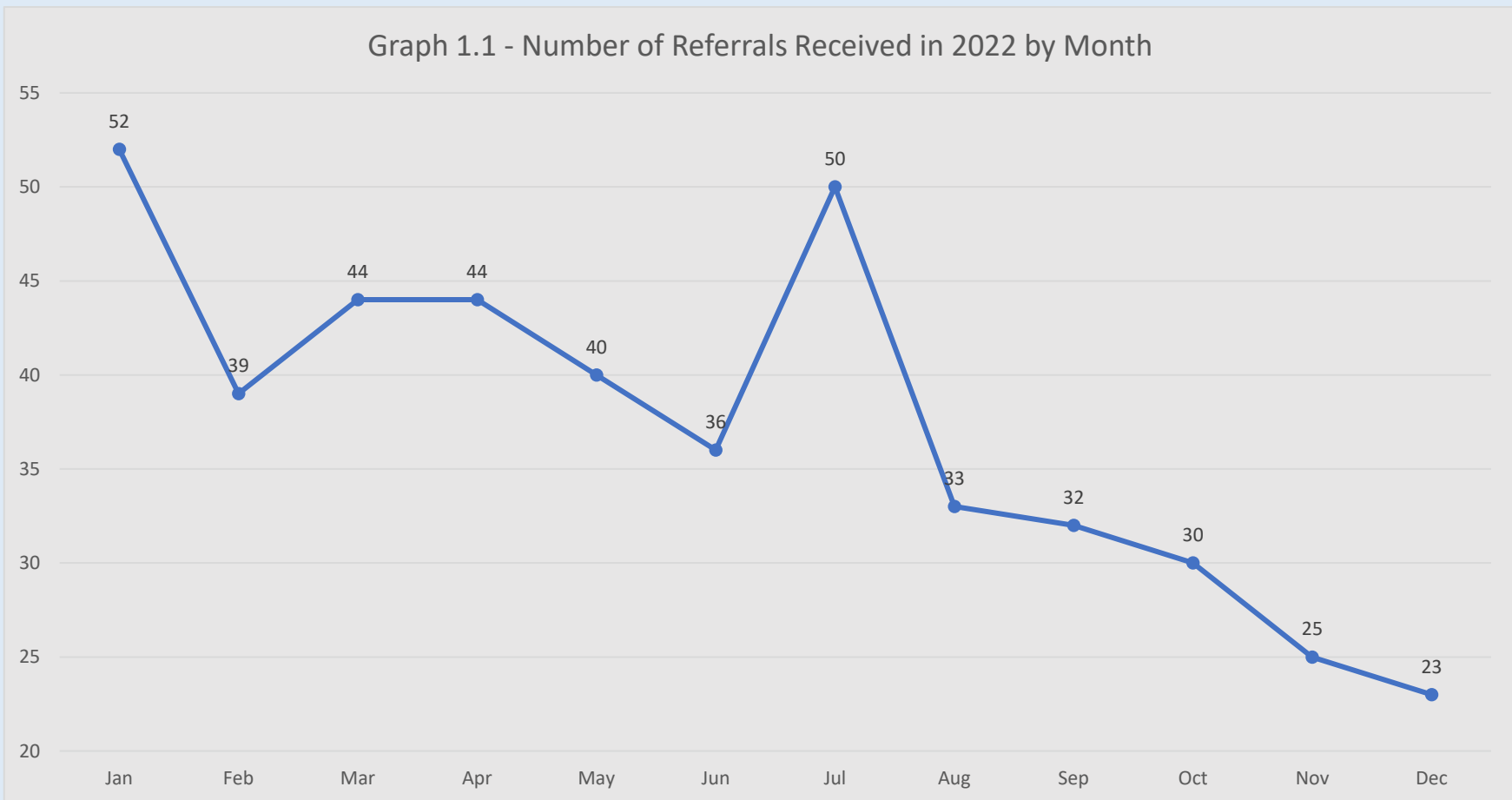
This report contains the following information:

- **Referrals Received** – when a report is received from the community requesting protective custody
- **Petitions Filed** – when legal paperwork is filed with the court expressing why a child needs protective custody
- **Permanency Outcomes** – how a case is closed with the court.
- **Median Time to Case Closure**
- **Re-Entry into Foster Care**



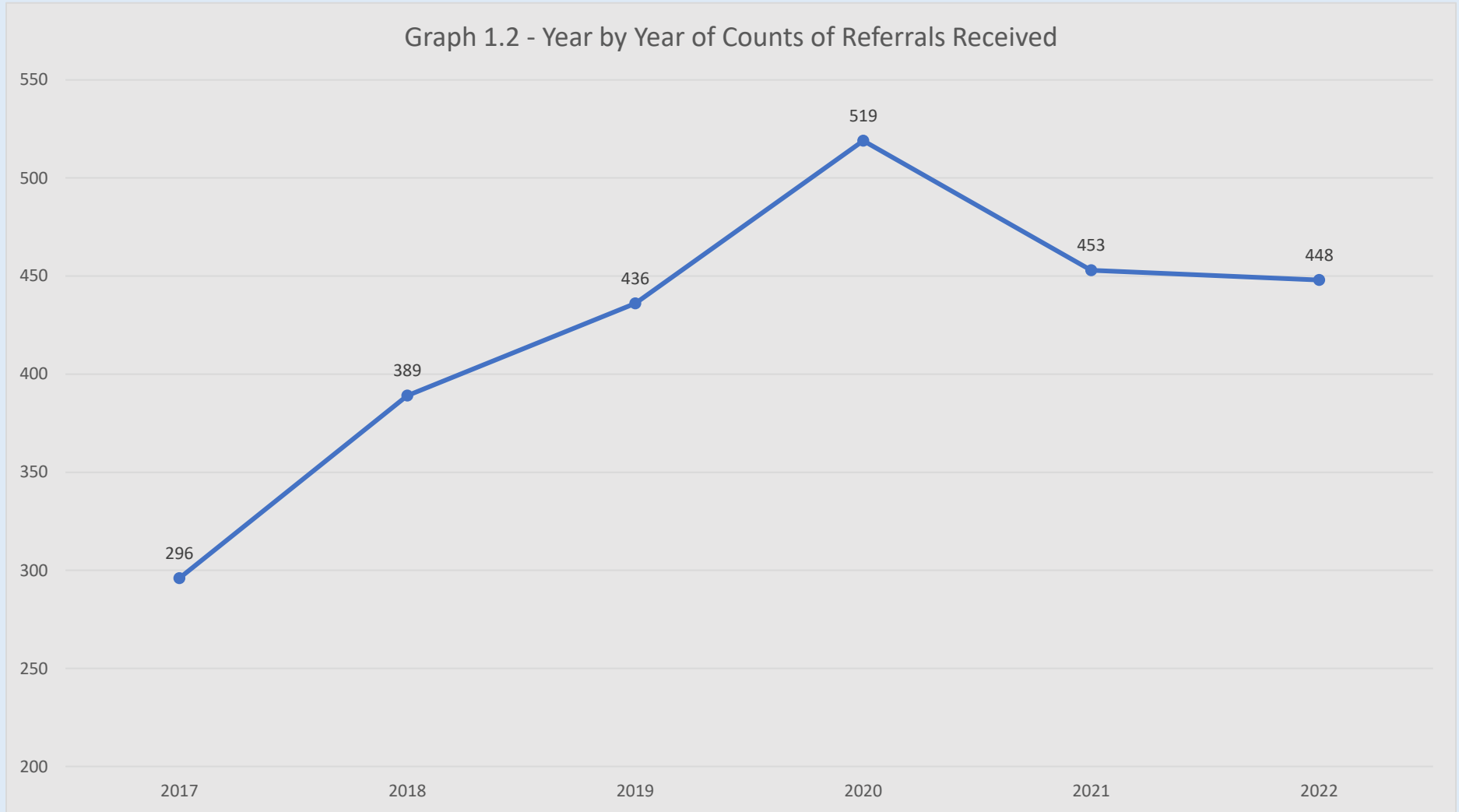
2022 - Referrals Received – Month by Month

The Greene County Juvenile Office received a total of 448 referrals in 2022. As noted in Graph 1.1, there was a peak of referrals in July over the summer. Referrals can be declined for a variety of reasons including the Children’s Division withdrew a referral, the allegation occurred in a different county resulting in jurisdiction issues, or if the allegations in the referral did not legally meet the definition of abuse or neglect. If the children listed in the referral are in immediate risk of harm, a petition is filed with the court. The children are then taken into custody; if necessary, a warrant or order to take will be issued. *The rate of petitions filed from all the referrals received was 87.3% in the calendar year.*



Referrals Received – Year by Year – 6 Year Trend

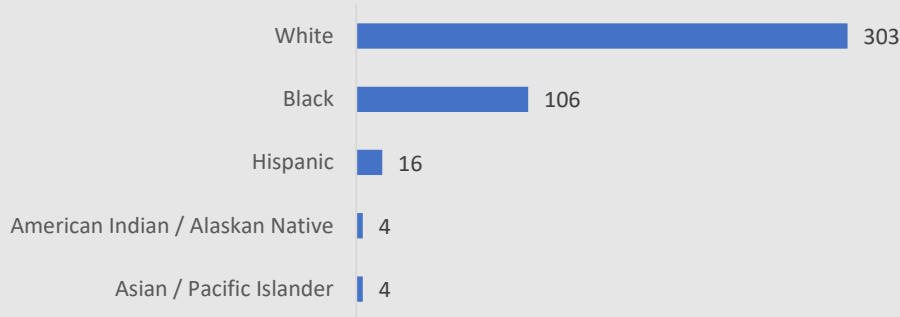
Since 2017, Greene County saw higher numbers of abuse and neglect referrals year by year with a peak in 2020. The growth rate between 2017 and 2020 was 42.97% indicating a nearly doubling of referrals received. The counts in 2021 declined, and then remained steady in 2022 at approximately 450 referrals a year.



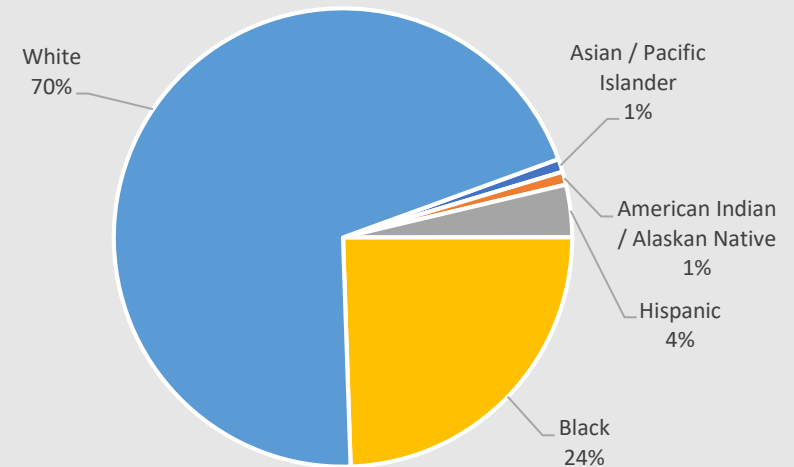
2022 - Referrals Received – Demographic Information

A total of 433 referrals were received when unduplicated by youth. Of this total, 303 (69.98%) of the children referred were identified as White. Another 106 (24.48%) children were identified as Black or African American, and 16 (3.70%) children were identified as Hispanic. Only 4 (0.92%) children were identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, and another 4 (0.92%) were identified as American Indian / Native Alaskan. The 2020 census of youth aged 0 to 17 years was 83.35% of Greene County's population, additionally, the census reported that Black / African American children consisted of 6.72% of Greene County's population. The proportion of abuse and neglect referrals for Black / African American youth (24.48%) is disproportionate to Greene County's population of Black / African American children (6.72%).

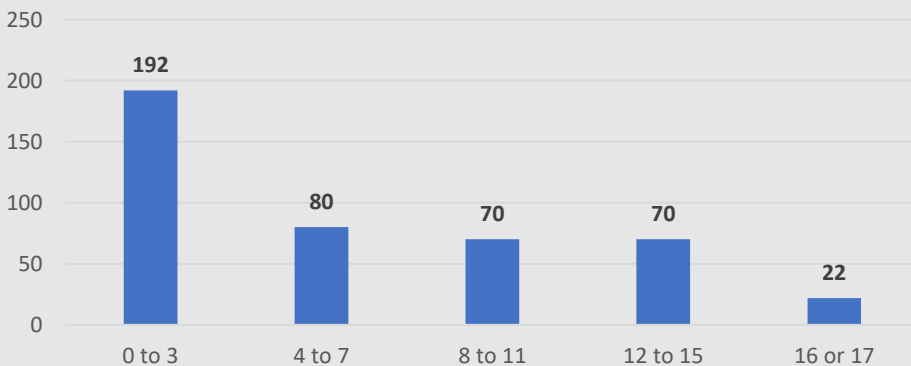
Graph 2.1 - Counts of Referrals by Race / Ethnicity



Graph 2.2 - Proportion of Youth by Race



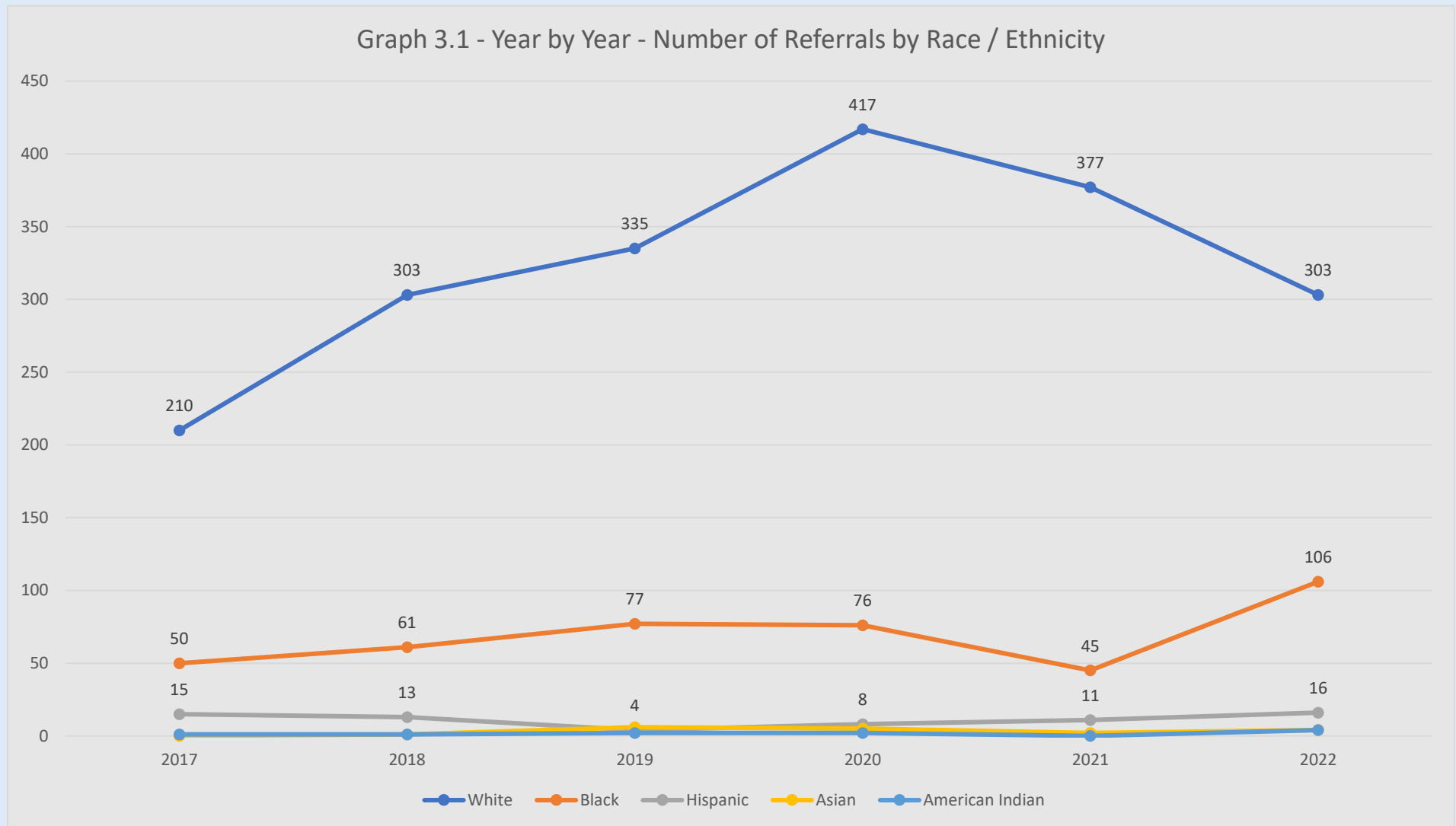
Graph 2.3 - Age Range of Children Referred



The majority of children referred to the Greene County Juvenile Office are within the 0 to 3 age range (44.34%). This means that nearly 1 in every 2 children referred for abuse and neglect concerns are under the age of four. The vulnerability of a child reduces with age, and so the immediate and eminent risk to safety also reduces with age.

Referrals Received – 6 Year Trend – Race / Ethnicity Demographics

Over the past six years, the number of white children has been increasing year by year until 2020. In 2022, the number of black children referred more than doubled from 2021 counts. The proportion of minority youth that came into care in 2022 was approximately 30%, or nearly 1 in every 3 children referred.

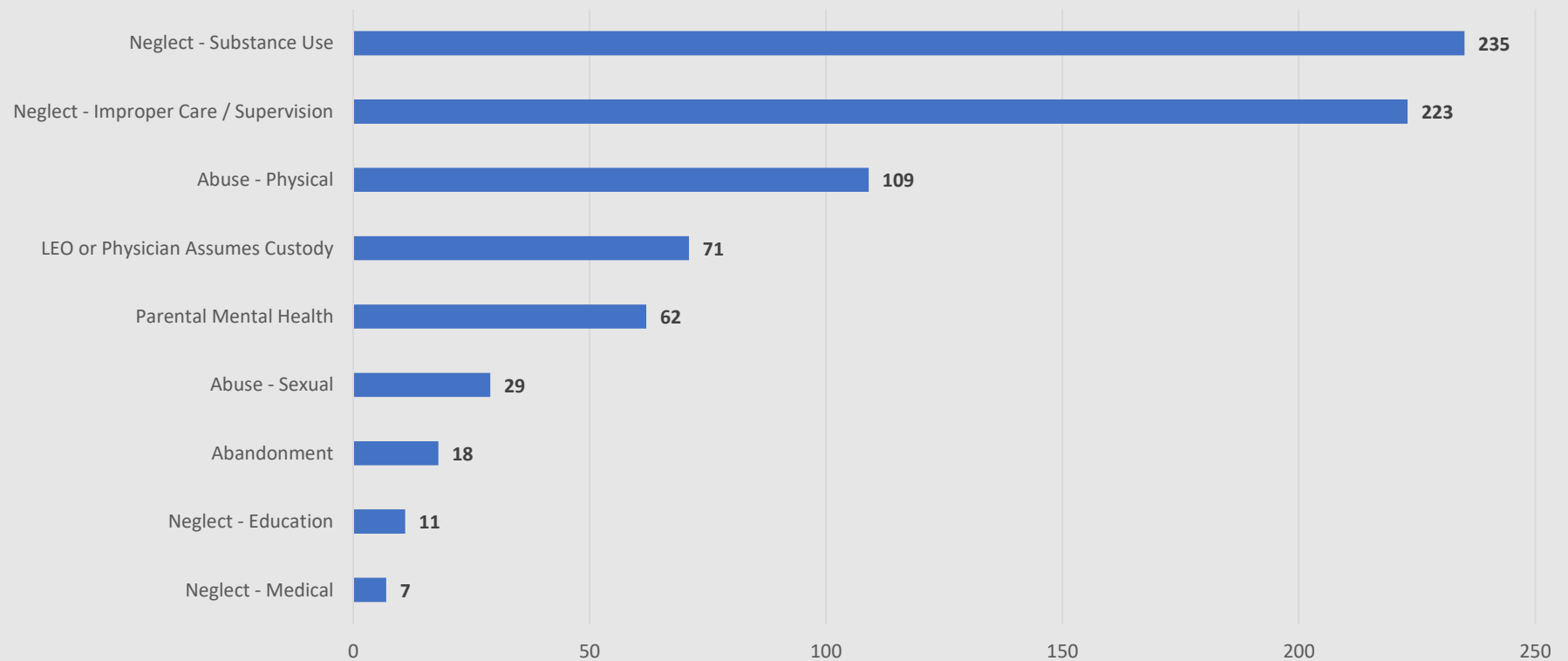


2022 - Abuse & Neglect Charges Identified

In 2022, a total of **765 charges** were identified from all the referrals received. Referrals can have one or more charges identified and documented. Neglect as a result of *parental substance use and/or improper care and supervision is the most prevalent reason for an abuse and neglect case filing. These two charge types combined resulted in 59.87%* of the charges documented in the referrals received. This is followed up by children being taken into protective custody by a law officer in the community or a physician. When compared to the federal data collected in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) for data published in June 2022, the top four charges of the US population were 1.) general neglect, 2.) parental substance use, 3.) caregiver inability to cope, and 4.) physical abuse.

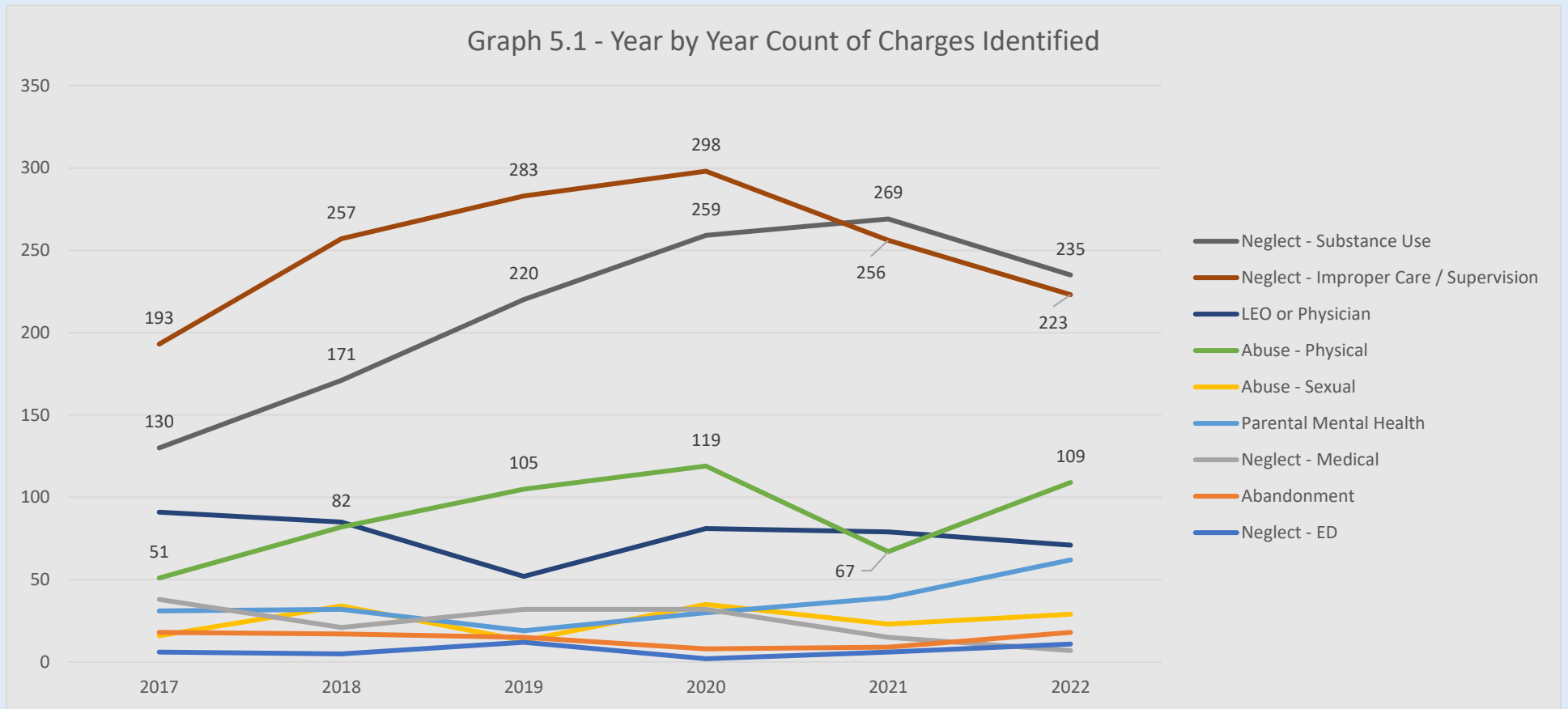
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-29.pdf>

Graph 4.1 - Total Charges Associated to Referrals Received (n=765 total charges)



Abuse & Neglect Charges Identified – Year by Year

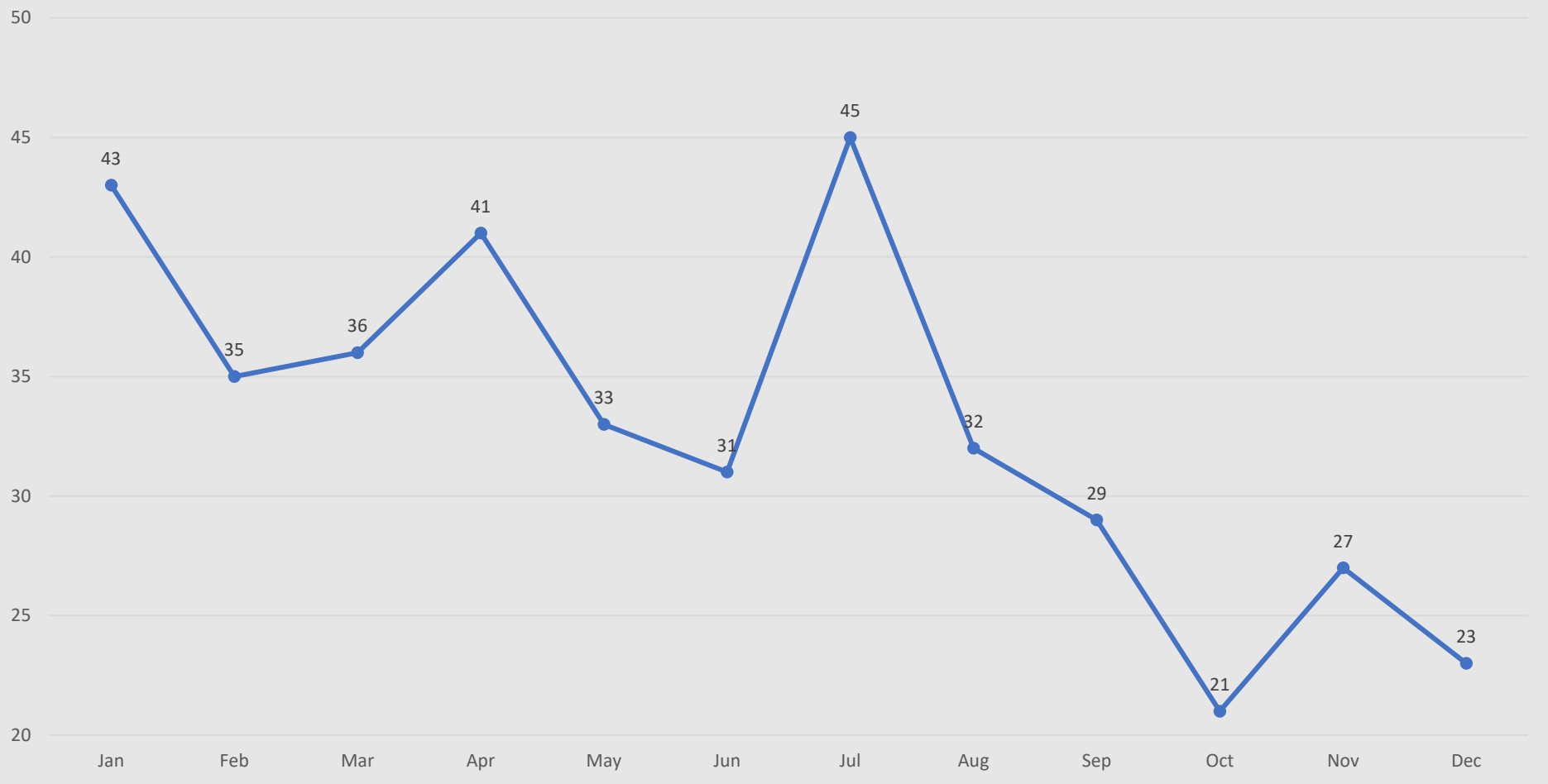
Over the past six years, general neglect, parental substance use, and physical abuse have increased year by year until 2021 when they all began to decline. Neglect due to parental substance use increased year by year from 2017, and peaked in 2021. One finding is that the number of parental substance use charges surpassed the improper care / supervision charge count in 2021 and 2022. Additionally, physical abuse has been increasing year by year until 2021 when the count dropped significantly, but then rose again in 2022. Approximately 74.12% of all charges reported are either general neglect, parental substance use, or physical abuse.



2022 Petition Filings

In 2022, a total of 396 petitions were filed in Greene County for abuse and neglect related issues. There were three peaks during the year; the first peak occurring in January, then in April, and then again in July. An average of 33 petitions are filed in a month during 2022. The same number of petitions were filed in 2021.

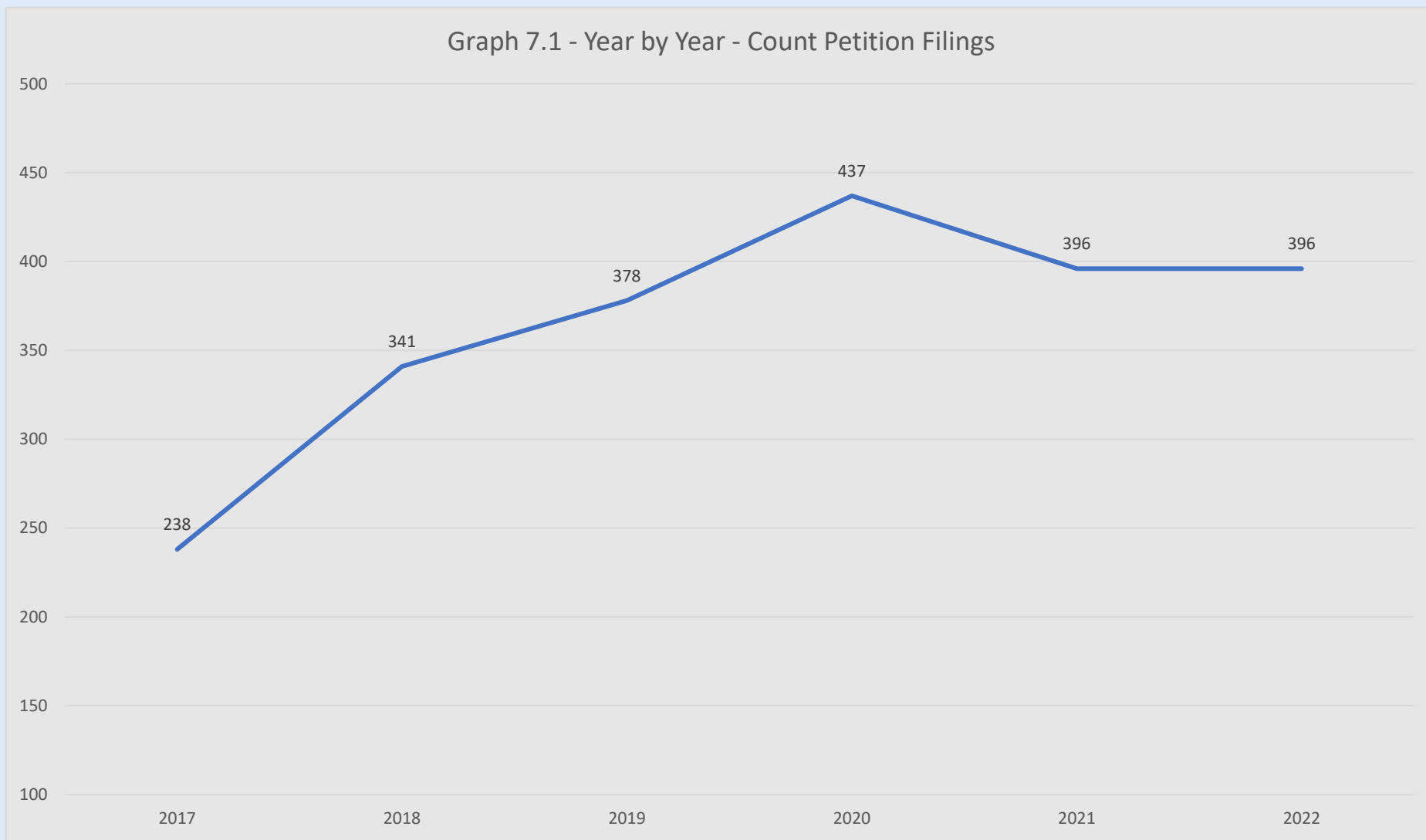
Graph 6.1 - Petition Filings by Month



Petition Filings – Year by Year – 6 Year Trend

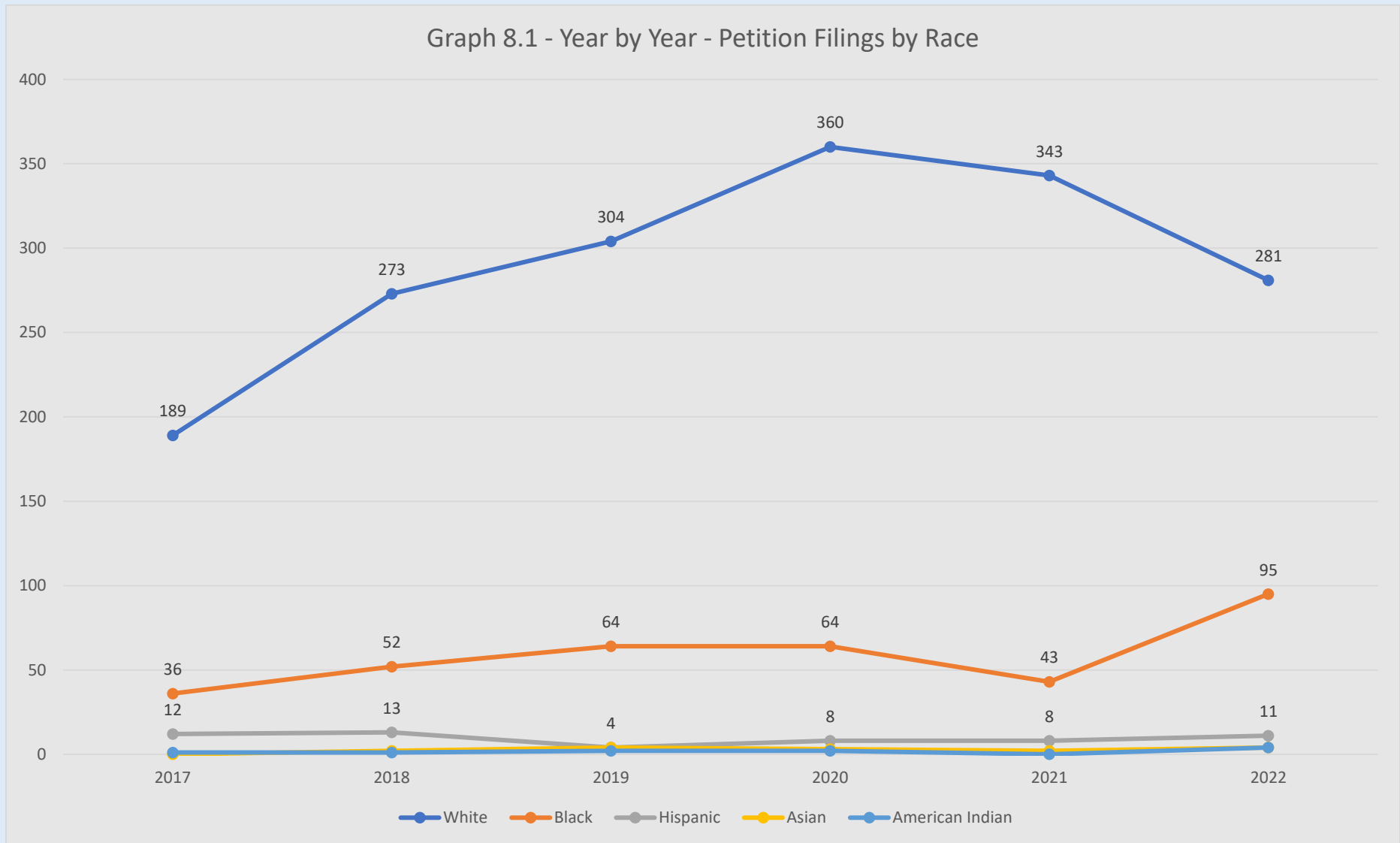
Over the past six years, the trend of petition filings has mirrored the number of referrals received year by year.

Petition filings also peaked in 2020 after steadily increasing.



Petition Filings – Year by Year – 6 Year Trend – Race/Ethnicity

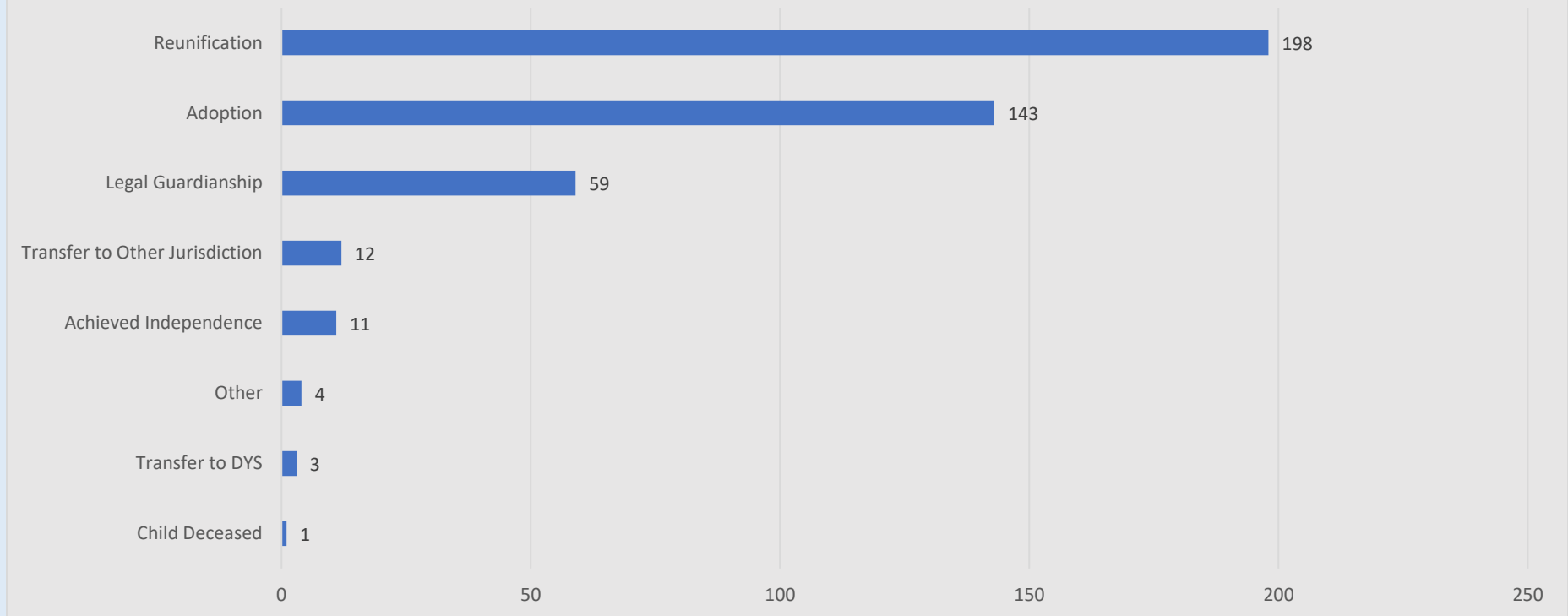
Over the past six years, the counts of White youth with a petition filed peaked in 2020, and has been declining. The count of Black youth has remained steady over the past six years, but there has been a spike in 2022.



Permanency Outcomes - 2022

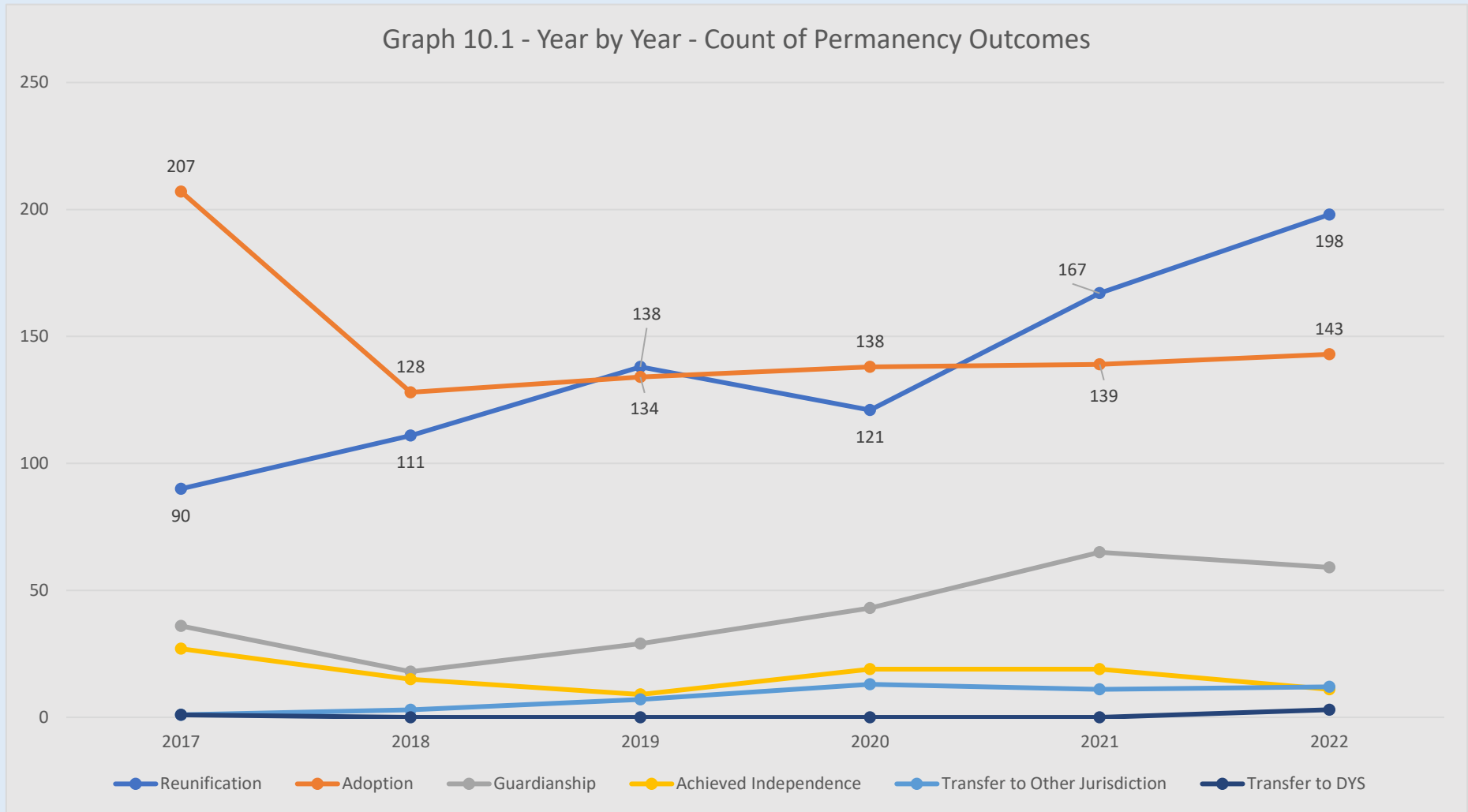
Children achieve permanency once the formal case is closed with the court system. Case workers, Guardian ad Litem, Parent Attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and Deputy Juvenile Officers all make recommendations to the court regarding case outcome. A Judge will then decide how a case should be closed, which can include many outcomes like parental reunification, pursuing adoption, or issuing a guardianship in Family Court to name a few. In 2022, a total of 431 children achieved permanency with a case exit from the court's jurisdiction. A total of 198 children were reunited with their parent / legal guardian, which was the most prevalent outcome. Next, a total of 143 children were adopted in 2022, and a total of 59 youth were placed in guardianships through the Family Court. A total of 11 youth achieved independence by "aging out" of the child welfare system. Twelve cases were transferred to other jurisdictions, and three youth were transferred to the custody of the Division of Youth Services. One child deceased.

Graph 9.1 - 2022 Permanency Outcomes
(n=431)



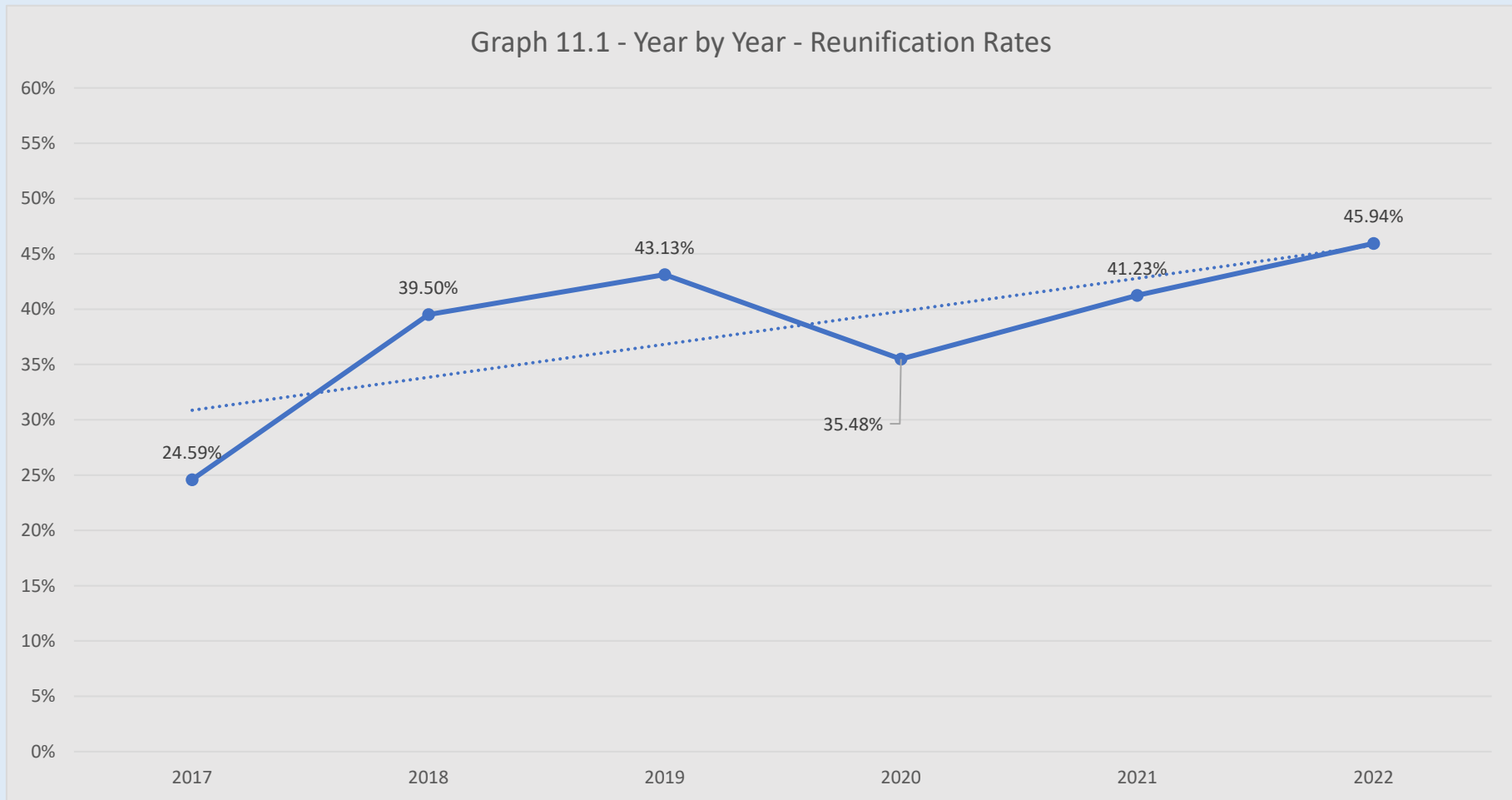
Permanency Outcomes – Year by Year

When comparing the most prevalent permanency outcomes year by year, a couple trends are noted. First, the number of reunifications per child has been increasing steadily since 2017. Secondly, the number of adoptions dropped significantly from 2017 (n=207) to 2018 (n=128), and has remained steady year by year since then. Lastly, the number of outcomes by guardianship has been increasing subtly since 2018.



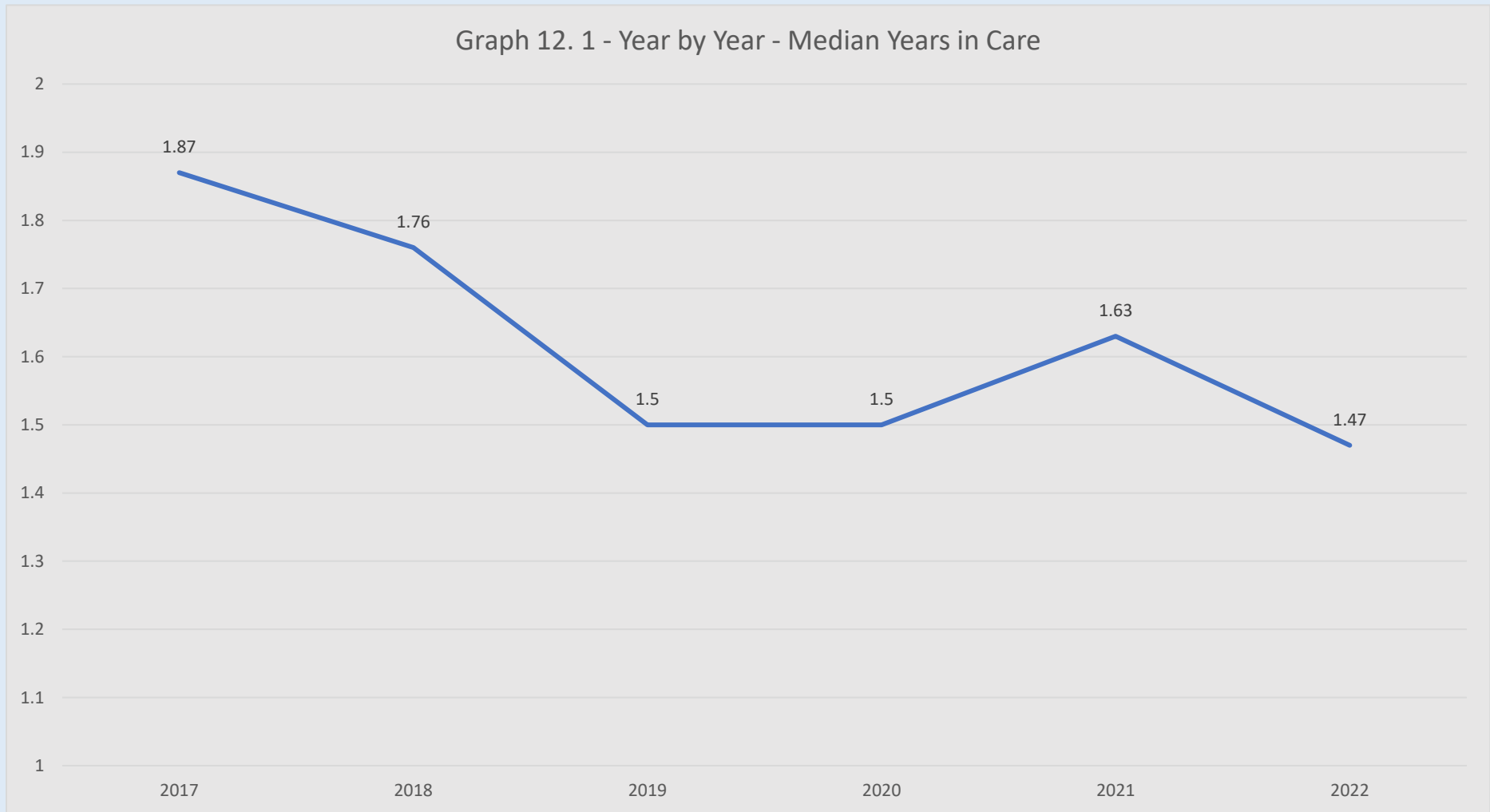
Reunification Rates

In 2022, a total of 198 children reunited with a parent or guardian out of 431 case outcomes, resulting in a reunification rate of 45.94% for the calendar year. Since 2017, the reunification rate has been steadily increasing, with 2022 being the highest rate yet. Reunification is the preferred and optimal outcome for children if they can remain safe. This is because children are able to maintain the bonds and attachments developed with birth parents and maintain their culture and identity.



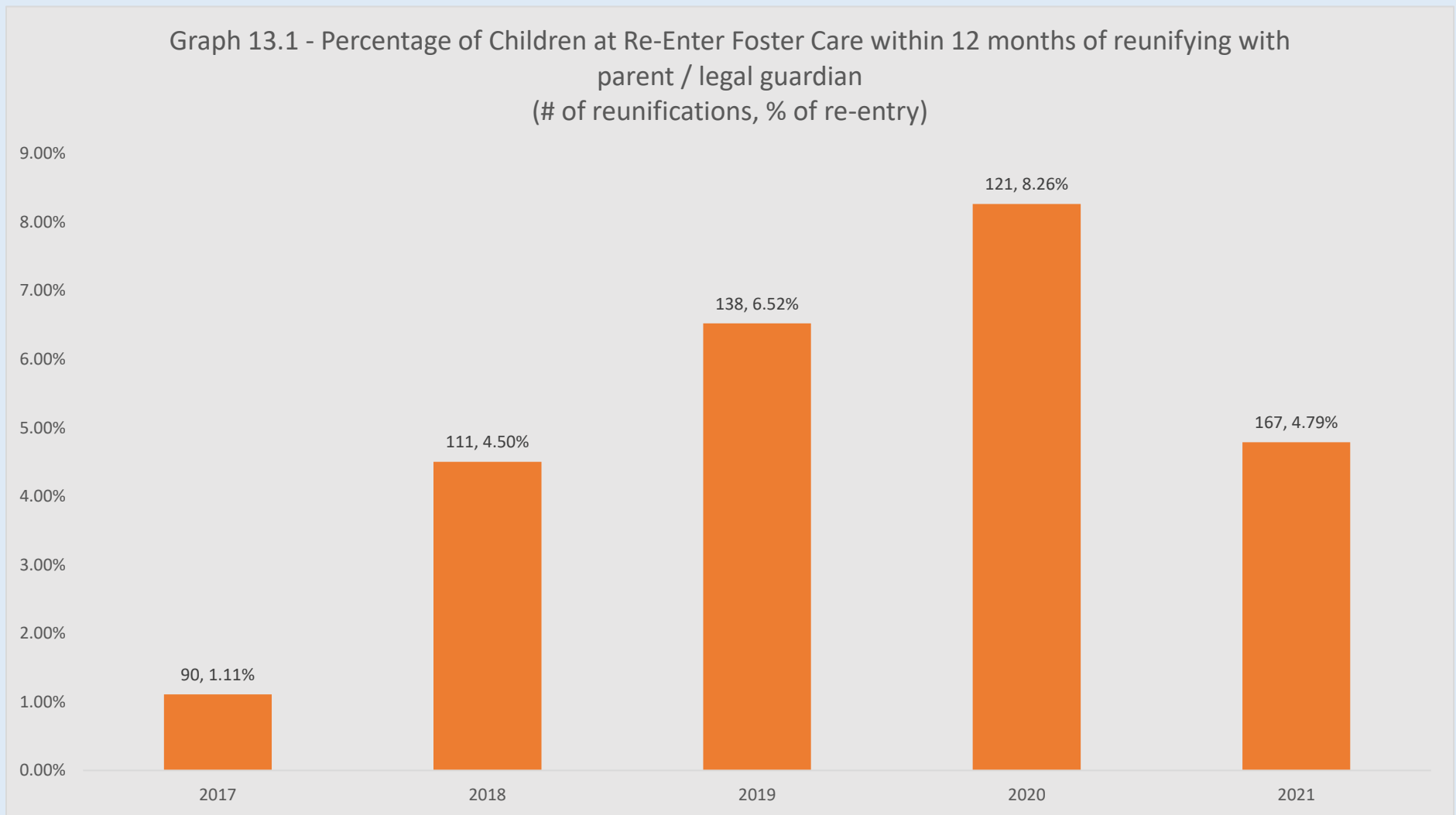
Permanency Outcomes – Median Time in Care

Another way to measure permanency is to figure the typical time it takes for children to achieve permanency, which is calculated by aggregating the median of all children who exited care in 2022. The median is a better indicator than the average, only because there are some cases that are open for a large amount of time causing the average to be artificially higher. The median number of years that a child spent in protective custody was 1.47 years for all case outcome types. Since 2017, the median number of years in care has steadily been declining, resulting in children typically exiting care more quickly.



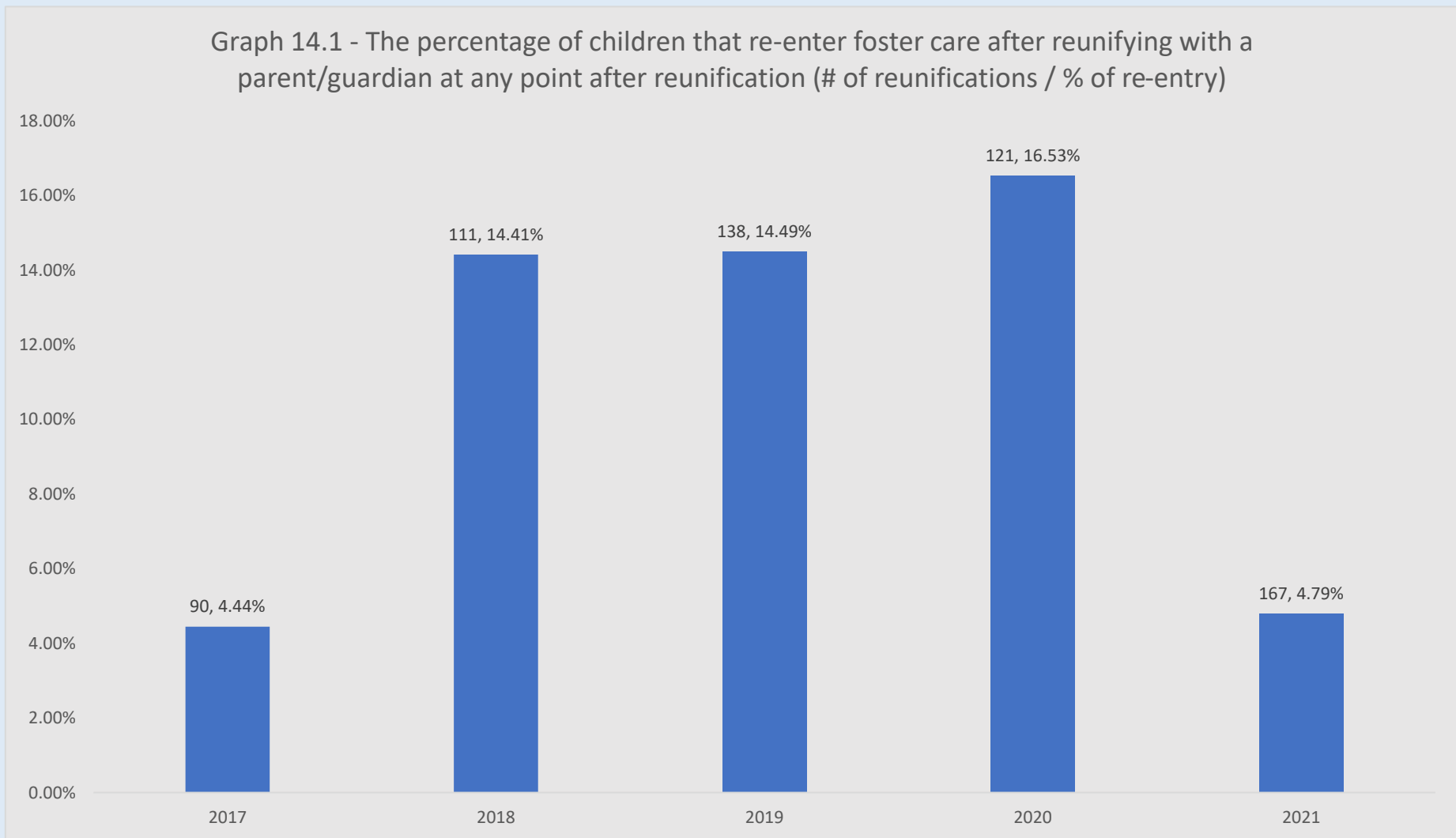
Re-entry into Foster Care – 12 Months after Reunification

Since 2017, the percentage of children re-entering foster care after reunifying with a parent / guardian has increased steadily year by year with a drop in 2021. Of the children that exited care in 2020, nearly 1 in 12 children re-entered foster care after reunifying with a parent or guardian within 12 months; whereas in 2021, that changed to nearly 1 in 20 children re-entering foster care 12 months later.



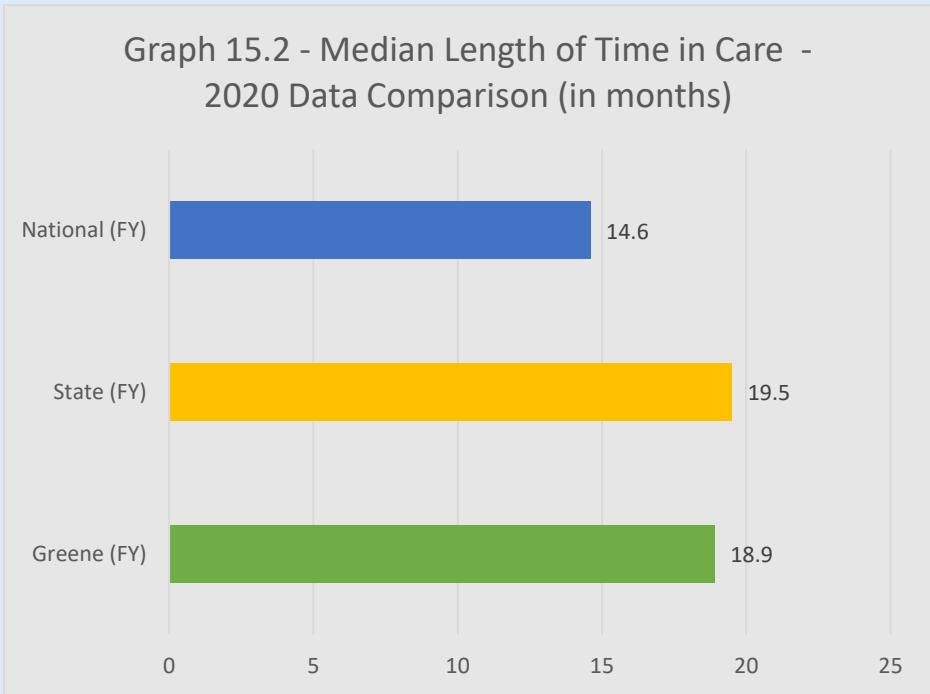
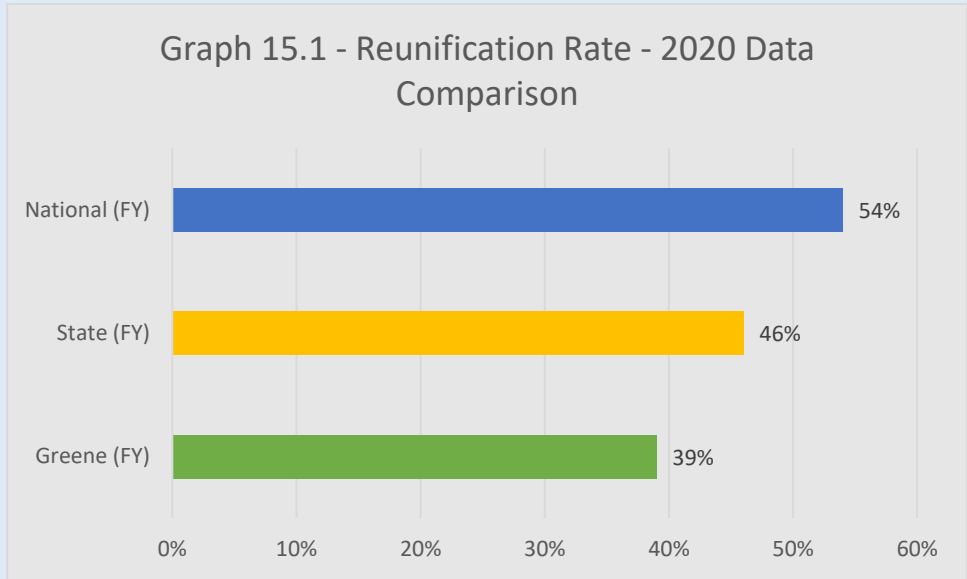
Re-entry into Foster Care – Any time after Reunification

Of the cases that closed by reunification in 2021 (n=167), only 4.79% of cases have resulted in a re-enter, which is approximately 1 in 20 children. This is similar to the proportion of re-enter from the cases that closed in 2017. Of the cases that closed in 2018 through 2020, about 14 to 16% of cases resulted in re-entry year by year.



National, State, & County Comparison Data – 2020 Fiscal Year – October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

Two indicators were compared against state and national measurements. The first measure is the **reunification rate**. In the 2020 fiscal year, approximately 39% of case outcomes resulted in a child reunifying with a parent / legal guardian. The state of Missouri, in the same time period, had a reunification rate of 46%; whereas, the national reunification rate was 54%. Additionally, the **median time in care** was compared with children in Greene County and the State of Missouri typically staying in care closer to one year and half compared to one year and a quarter at the national level.



National Data (Children’s Bureau)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcarsreport27.pdf>

State & County Data: (Fostering Court Improvement)

<https://fosteringcourtimprovement.org/mo/County/Greene/>

Questions?
Please feel free to contact Rachel Hogan, LMSW with the Greene County Juvenile Office - Quality Unit
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