



**Monroe County
Department of Human Services**

**2024 Annual Report of
Housing and Homeless Services**



**MONROE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Mission

The Department of Human Services delivers strengths-based, comprehensive, responsive, and coordinated services guided by measurable results.

Vision

The Department of Human Services empowers residents to achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency and independence and promotes safety, and physical and emotional well-being.

Requested by:	Denise Read and Rebecca Miglioratti
To Support:	MCDHS Housing Unit
Prepared by:	Martin Williams, Senior Human Services Planner
Data Sources:	Housing database reports
Data as of:	March 2025 for 2024

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Services Overview

The Housing Unit was established to meet the emergency needs of individuals who are homeless or who are imminently approaching homelessness and is responsible for:

Preventing Homelessness

- Operates a “Landlord Hotline” (585-753-6034) to answer questions and resolve concerns quickly so, in many instances, evictions can be prevented and additional services are unnecessary
- Provides emergency payments to financially eligible homeowners to prevent tax or mortgage foreclosures or to assist with necessary repairs that prevent homelessness

Performing Intake and Screening

- Acts as the central point of entry for placement into temporary housing for DHS-contracted shelter beds
- Operates an after-hours placement line (585-442-1742) to assist individuals who face housing emergencies outside of regular business hours
- Screens all homeless individuals and families to determine eligibility for Temporary Housing Assistance (THA) placements
- When appropriate, helps with applications for personal needs allowances and assistance with first month’s rent

Promoting Safety

- Conducts inspections as required by New York State Department of Shelter Oversight and Compliance of facilities used by THA program participants to ensure that these individuals and families are provided safe and sanitary housing
- Oversees the Rent Withholding Program, which works to ensure that buildings with open health and safety violations occupied by residents who receive Temporary Assistance benefits are brought up to code or rental payments are withheld until major violations are corrected

Linking Participants’ Needs to Services

- Works with contracted shelter providers to assist residents in securing financial assistance, locating housing, providing relocation services such as moving, utility turn-on, and acquiring essential furniture and appliances
- Provides unhoused individuals and families with housing assistance and linkages to other County-provided services, including adult protective, child protective, financial assistance, and mental health programs as well as to a variety of community-based agencies

2024 Highlights

Housing Options and Services Increased: Monroe County announced three new pilot initiatives as part of a \$7.8 million plan to increase affordable housing opportunities.

- **Housing Search Navigator and Aftercare Program:** Housing search navigators and aftercare case managers connect low- and moderate-income clients or voucher holders with quality and affordable housing. Case managers provide support for landlords and tenants if issues arise during tenancy.
- **Landlord Incentive Program:** This program encourages landlords and property owners to open additional housing units to low-income tenants and voucher holders by offering incentives such as leasing bonuses, limited warranties against unpaid rent or damages, and referral payments.
- **Landlord/Tenant Mediation Program:** This program provides funding to train additional certified mediators, with the goal of preventing evictions by reconciling conflicts between tenants and landlords at the earliest stage possible to preserve housing stability.

New Family Shelter Opened: The Moving Forward Family Shelter, operated by Volunteers of America and leased by the Monroe County Department of Human Services, opened in July 2024. The shelter accommodates up to 58 families at full capacity, which doubled the size of the existing space available for families. Room sizes accommodate family sizes from two to eight. The Moving Forward Family Shelter offers on-site case management, activities for children and their families, meals, and interim transportation to school and medical appointments.

Outreach Efforts Made to Serve Chronically Homeless Populations: Outreach began to shelters that serve higher-need and chronically homeless populations with the goals of supporting these clients through successful completion of the Temporary Assistance eligibility process and securing permanent housing.

Multidisciplinary Street Outreach Conducted: DHS and Office of Mental Health staff continued to join representatives from community-based outreach organizations, the faith community, various shelter provider agencies, the City of Rochester, and Regional Transit Service for weekly discussions about local homelessness issues. Topics generally include new encampments or known encampments that need attention due to health or safety concerns. In addition, group members often discuss the needs of unhoused individuals that can be addressed through next-day outreach.

Partnership with NYS Department of Transportation Continued: DHS maintained partnerships with the Chronically Homeless Work Group (CHWG) and the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to provide more humane and supportive efforts when homeless individuals are found on NYSDOT properties.

Code Blue Services Expanded: Several changes were announced in the 2024 Monroe County Code Blue plan, which provides warming centers for unhoused individuals when temperatures dip below 32 degrees. These updates include more robust community outreach and the availability of bus passes for individuals who require RTS transportation to a participating shelter or warming center. Two warming center sites have also been added to the Code Blue initiative and are operated by Saving Grace Ministries in Rochester and Oak Orchard Health in Brockport. This marks the first time a warming center has been located in Brockport. A new partnership with Bethlehem Family Ministries provides overnight accommodations for unhoused couples.

Point-in-Time Count Completed: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that local programs for the homeless conduct annual counts of people experiencing homelessness. Monroe County's Housing Unit staff, along with many other housing partners, participated in the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. This is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. Monroe County's count was performed on January 25, 2024 and revealed 1,056 individuals (+32% from 2023) in 764 households (+41% from 2023) were without a permanent place to stay; 136 of these households contained children (+25% from 2023).¹

¹ https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_CoC_NY-500-2023_NY_2023.pdf and https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_CoC_NY-500-2024_NY_2024.pdf

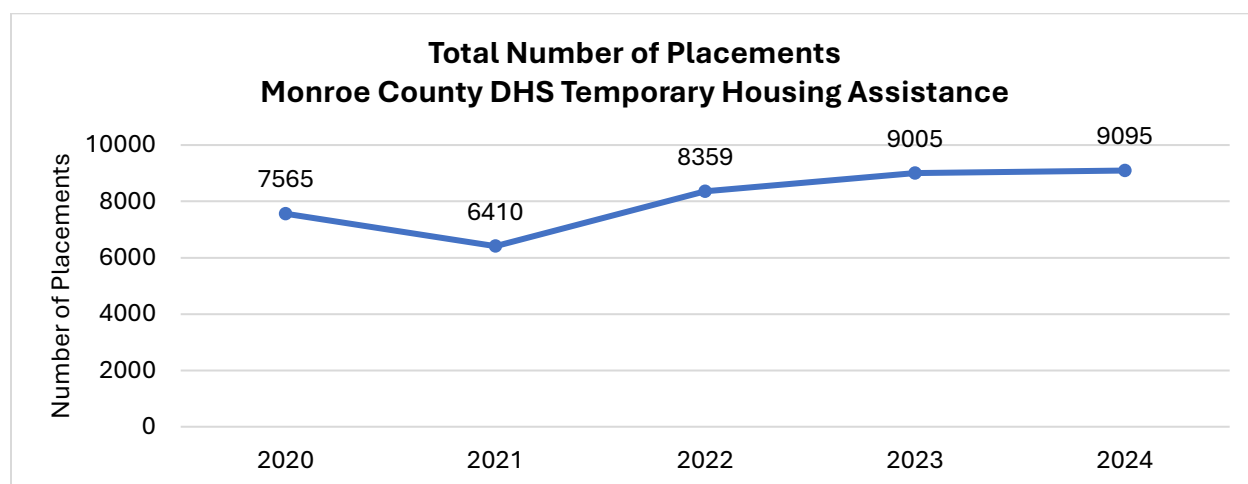
2024 Statistics

Temporary Housing Assistance Placements

The Housing Unit made a total of 9,095 Temporary Housing Assistance (THA) placements in 2024, a slight increase over 2023. This number represents only placements, not the actual number of people served. One placement may contain only one adult (an “individual” placement) or two adults and any number of children (a “family” placement). The largest family served in 2024 contained two adults and eight children.

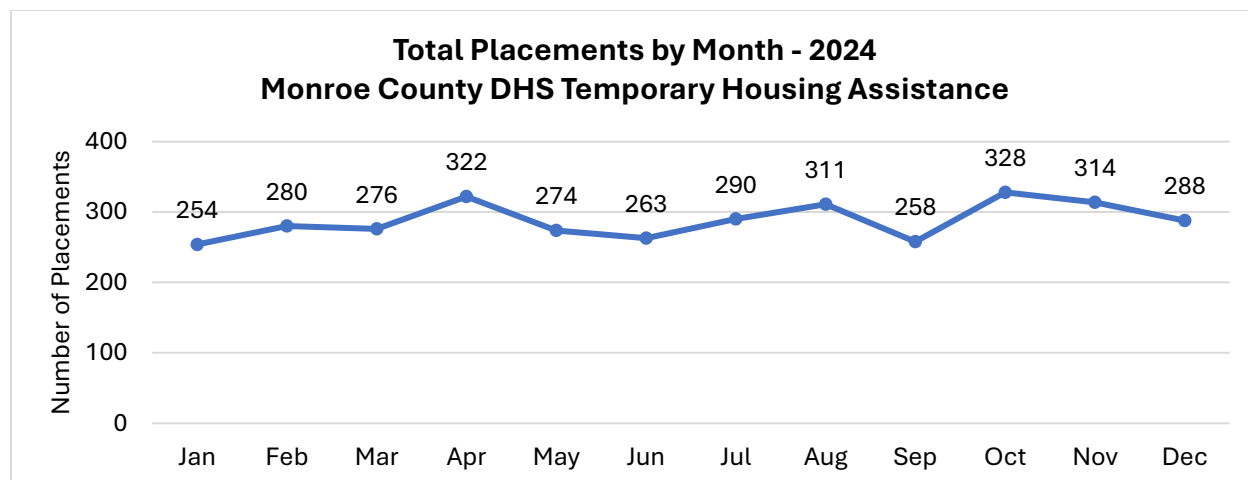
Placements have rebounded since the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and although the last three years have shown increases in placements, levels have not reached the highs of the pre-COVID years of 2018 (11,186) and 2019 (10,104).

Figure 1. Five-year trend: Total THA placements



While housing assistance is generally thought to be a need that happens mostly in the colder months of the year, this is not the case. The demand for temporary housing assistance is fairly steady year-round. A monthly breakdown of placements is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Total placements by month, 2024



Cost

The cost of THA placements has increased by 97% since 2020, partly due to an increase in the number of individuals and families placed and partly due to an increase in the rates charged by providers. The total cost of THA placements in 2024 was \$11.51 million and the average cost per placement was \$1,266.

Figure 3. Five-year trend: Total cost of THA placements

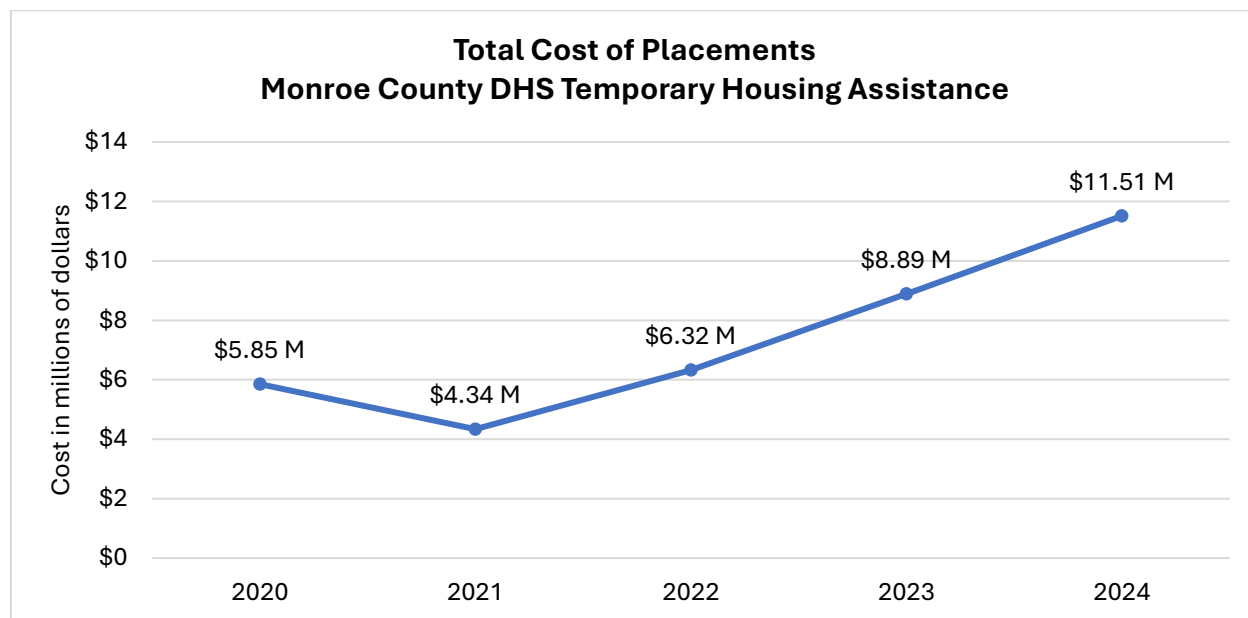
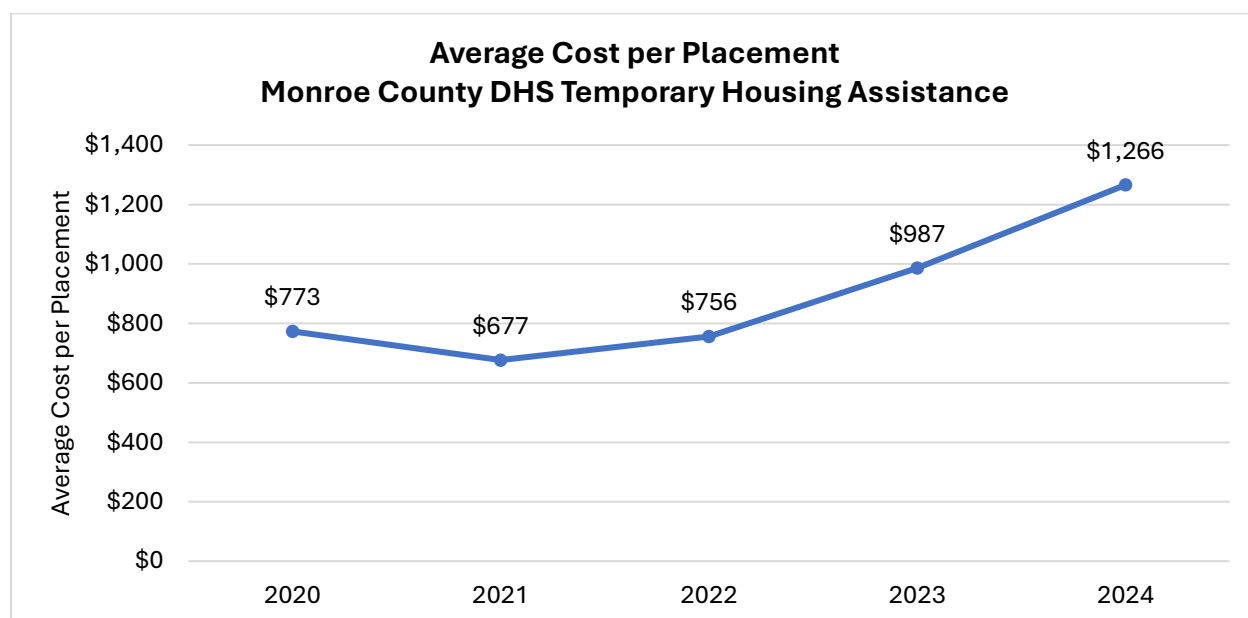


Figure 4. Five-year trend: Average cost per THA placement



Selected Demographics

Figure 5. Individuals and families, 2024

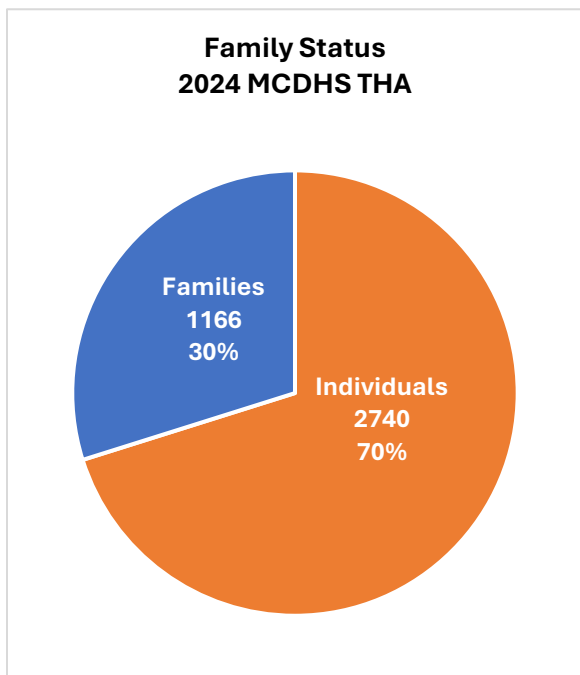


Figure 6. Males and females, 2024

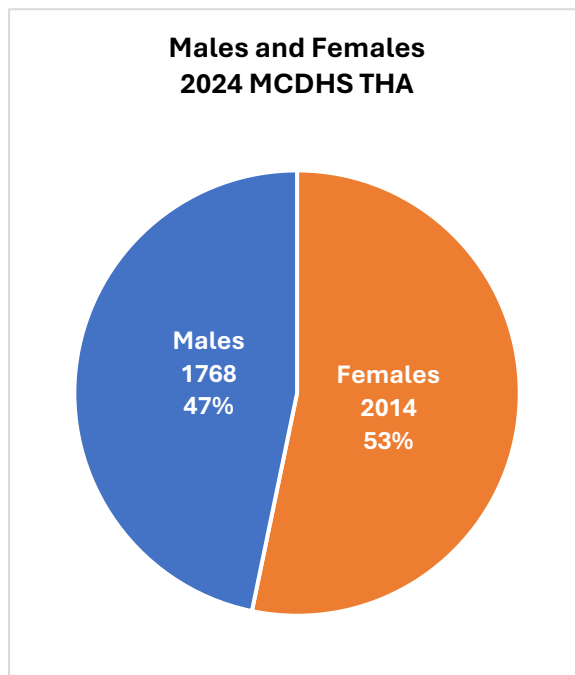


Figure 7. Number of children in families with children, 2024

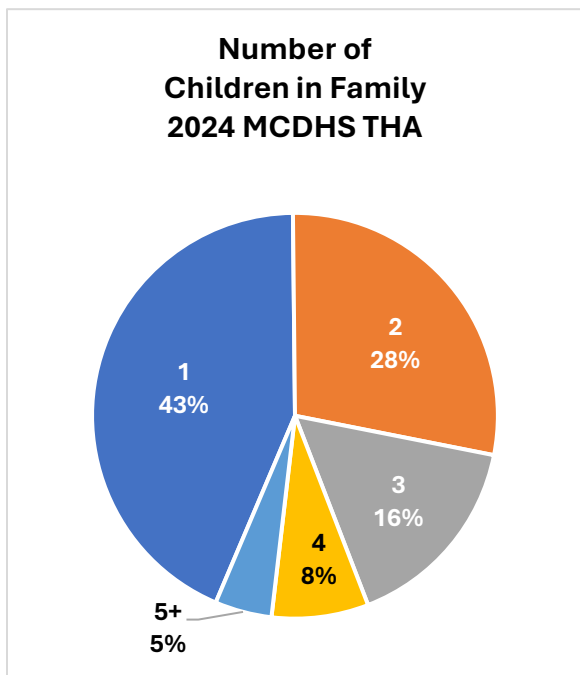
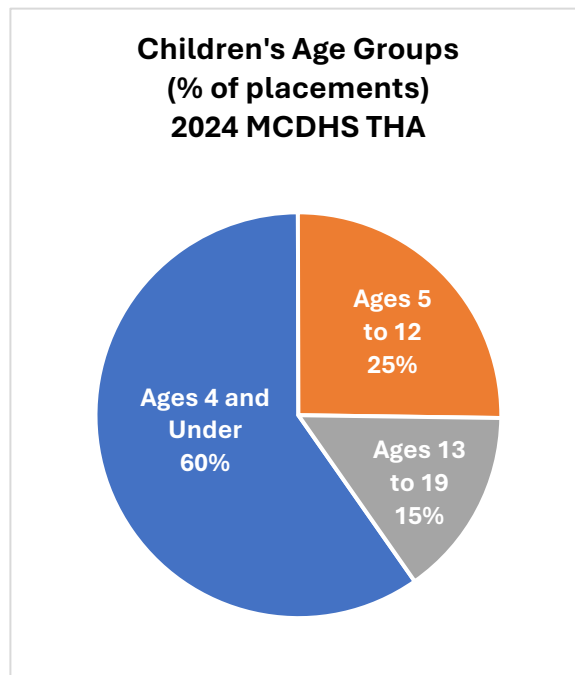


Figure 8. Age groups represented in placements with children, 2024



Individuals and Families Served

An unduplicated count is counting one person one time for any given service, regardless of the number of times they received that service. An individual who spends one night in a shelter and never returns and an individual who requires multiple placements at multiple times throughout the year are both counted once.

Figure 9. Five-year trend: Individual placements

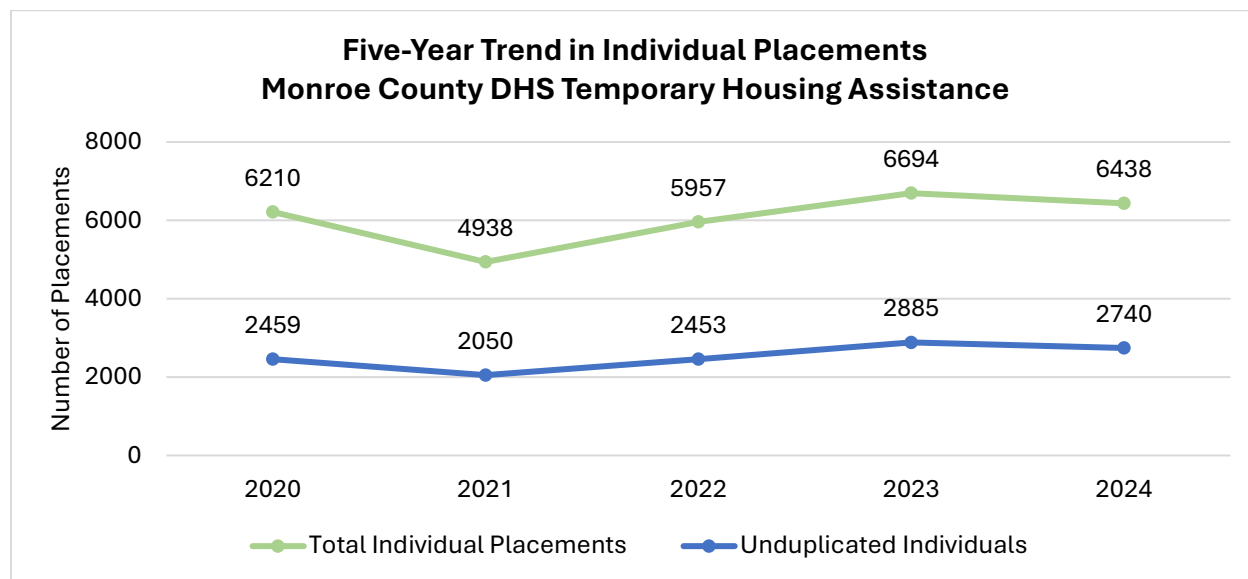
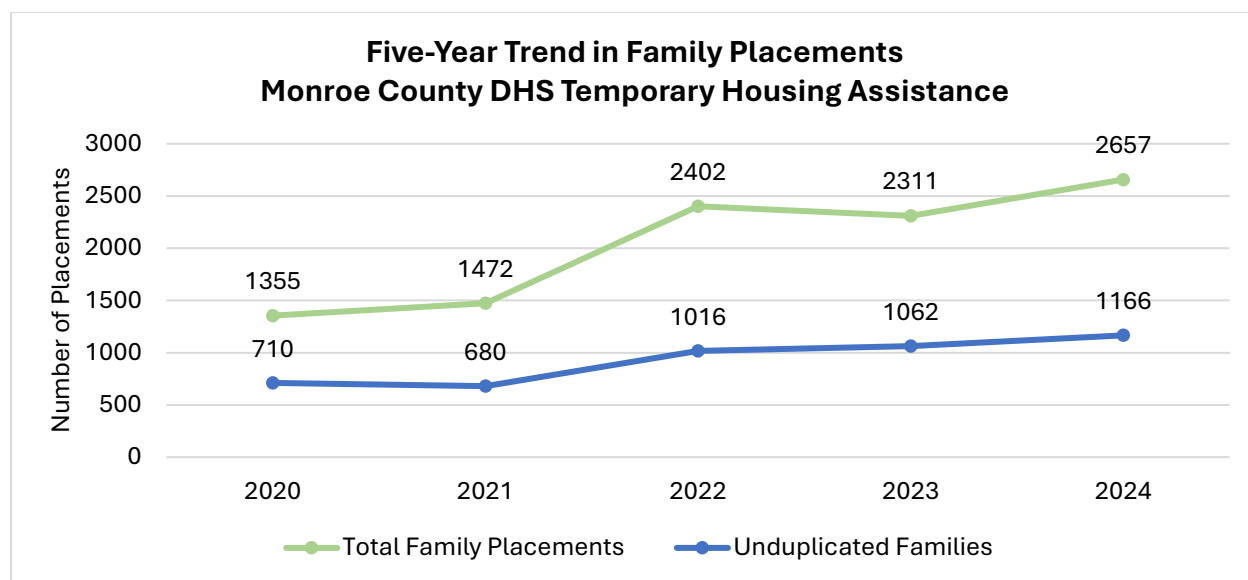


Figure 10. Five-year trend: Family placements

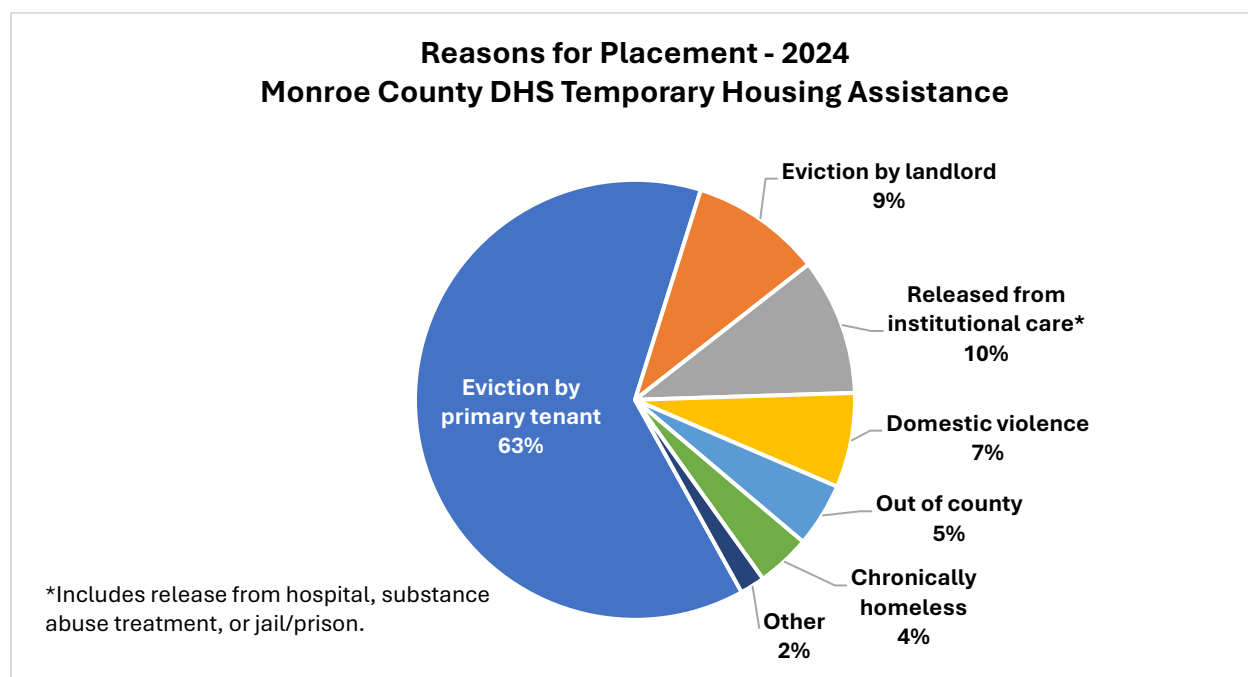


Placement Reasons

The most common cause of homelessness that the Housing Unit sees is eviction by primary tenant – when individuals and families who reside with friends and relatives are often asked to leave due to overcrowded conditions, substance use, domestic disputes, family breakups, and failed relationships. Eviction by primary tenant was the cause of 5,692 (63%) of THA placements in 2024, a similar percentage to previous years.

The second most common cause of requesting temporary housing assistance is Released from Institutional Care, a combined grouping of releases from hospitals, substance abuse treatment facilities, and jails or prisons. This is followed closely by Eviction by Landlord. These reasons are discussed in more detail in the next section – Changes in Placement Reasons over Time – due to some noteworthy variations in these categories during the past five years.

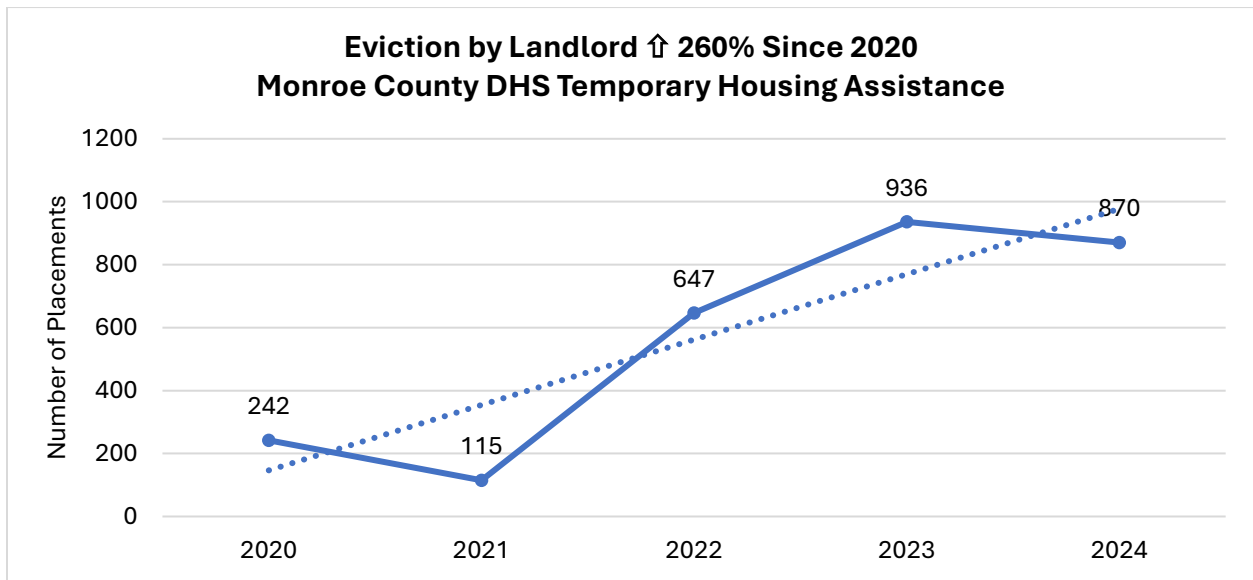
Figure 11. Reasons for placement, 2024



Changes in Placement Reasons over Time

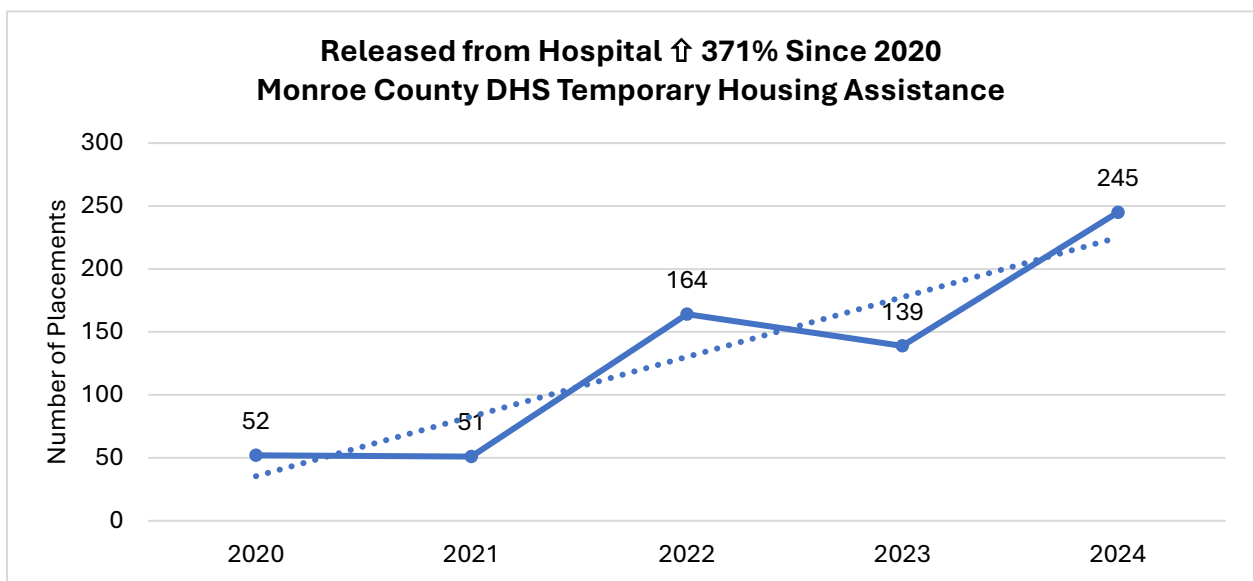
While many Housing Unit statistics remain fairly constant over time, some of the reasons for placement have seen major changes over the past five years, especially in the percentages of people who find themselves using THA services due to being evicted by their landlords or being released from the hospital. Figure 12 clearly shows the impact of the COVID-related eviction moratorium in effect from March 2020 to January 2022. Eviction by landlord numbers returned to their pre-COVID levels in 2022 but are well above those levels in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 12. Five-year trend: Eviction by landlord



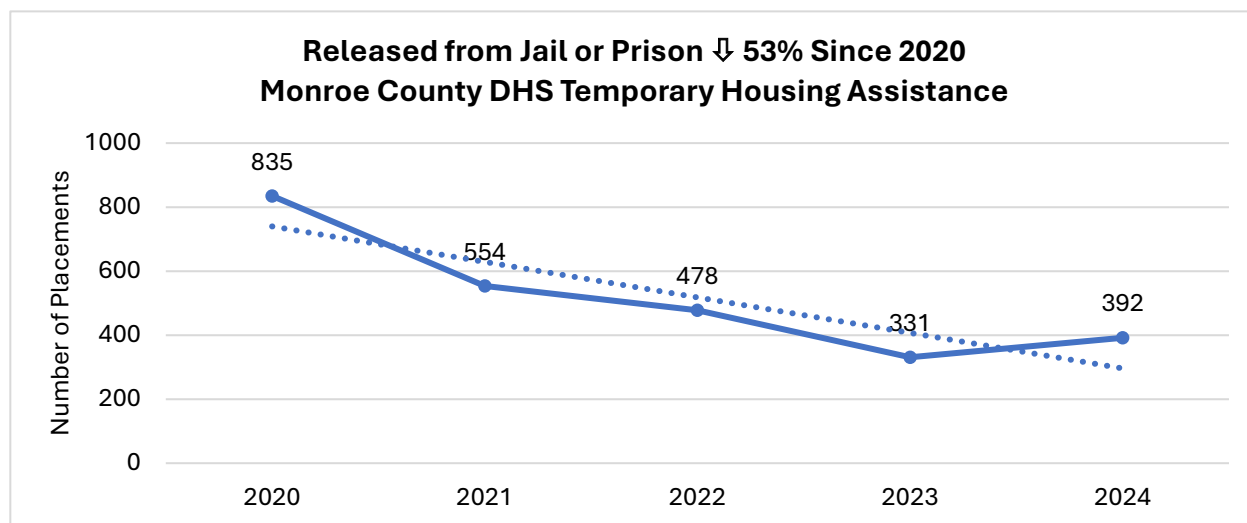
One area of concern is hospital discharges to shelters, shown in Figure 13. These patients are generally older and may have more complex medical needs than are sometimes thought to be suitable for THA settings. While these residents' lengths of stay are generally shorter than average, their intakes and placements can be more challenging due to special accommodations required to make their stays safe. Housing Unit and shelter staff sometimes question the appropriateness of these individuals' discharges to shelters, especially because shelters offer no hands-on assistance with personal care services such as toileting, dressing, and bathing.

Figure 13. Five-year trend: Released from hospital



Another placement reason that has changed considerably over the last five years is Released from Jail or Prison. In 2024, only 392 individuals required THA services upon their releases from jail or prison, up slightly from 2023 but lower than many years prior, especially from a high of close to 1,000 in 2018 and 2019.

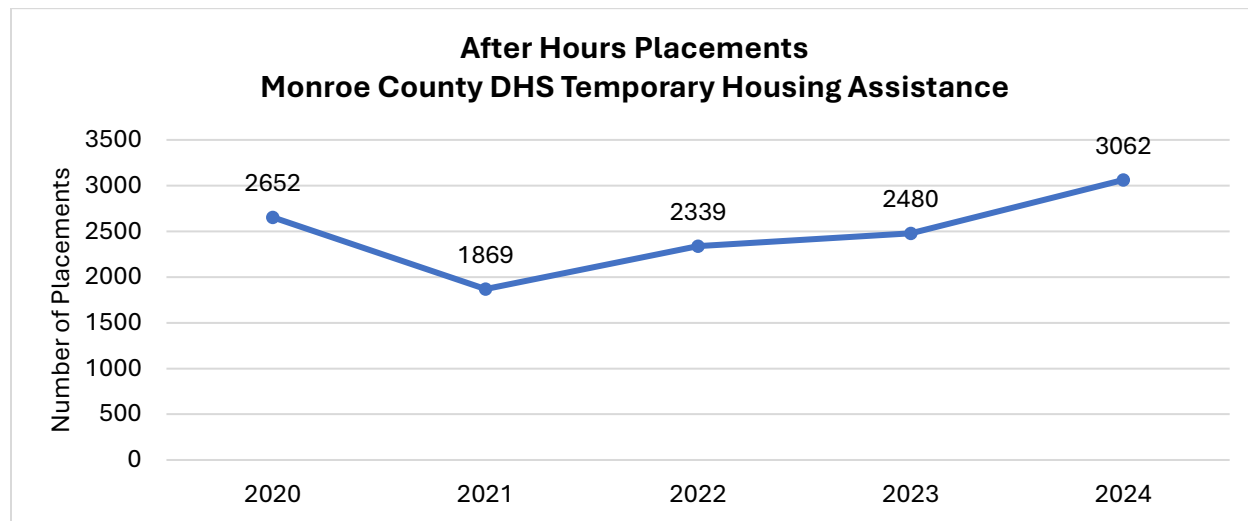
Figure 14. Five-year trend: Released from jail or prison



After Hours Placements

Requests for THA services occur 24 hours a day. Placements made outside of regular business hours are coded as “after hours.” Although the number of these placements has increased 64% since 2021, there were fewer after hours requests than in 2018 and 2019, when staff made 3,819 and 4,902 after hours placements, respectively. The percentage of after hours placements fluctuates from year to year, but generally falls between 40% and 55% of all placements.

Figure 15. Five-year trend: After hours placements

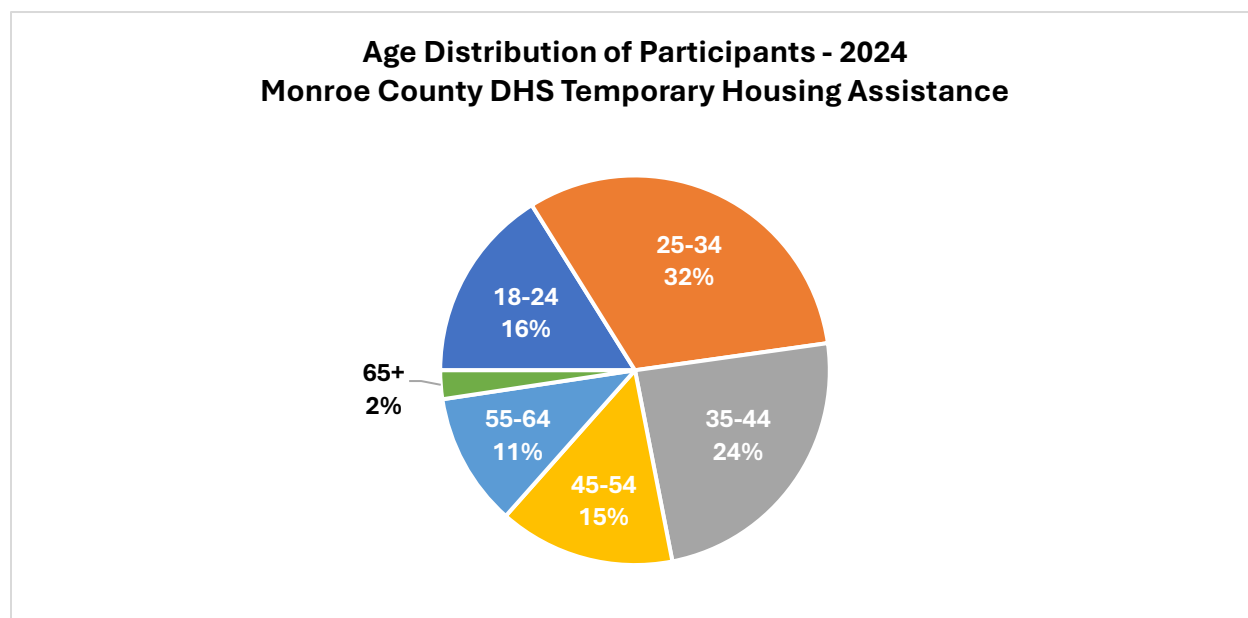


Because individuals and families requesting after hours placements are only screened over the phone, they are advised they must come into the agency the next business day to participate in a full interview to determine their eligibility for continued THA services. In 2024, only 32% of these appointments were kept, the lowest percentage since 2015. Those who do not attend their next-day appointments are ineligible for continued THA services.

Placements by Age Group

Age distribution in the categories shown in Figure 16 has remained fairly steady over the past five years with some minor annual fluctuations.

Figure 16. Participant age distribution, 2024

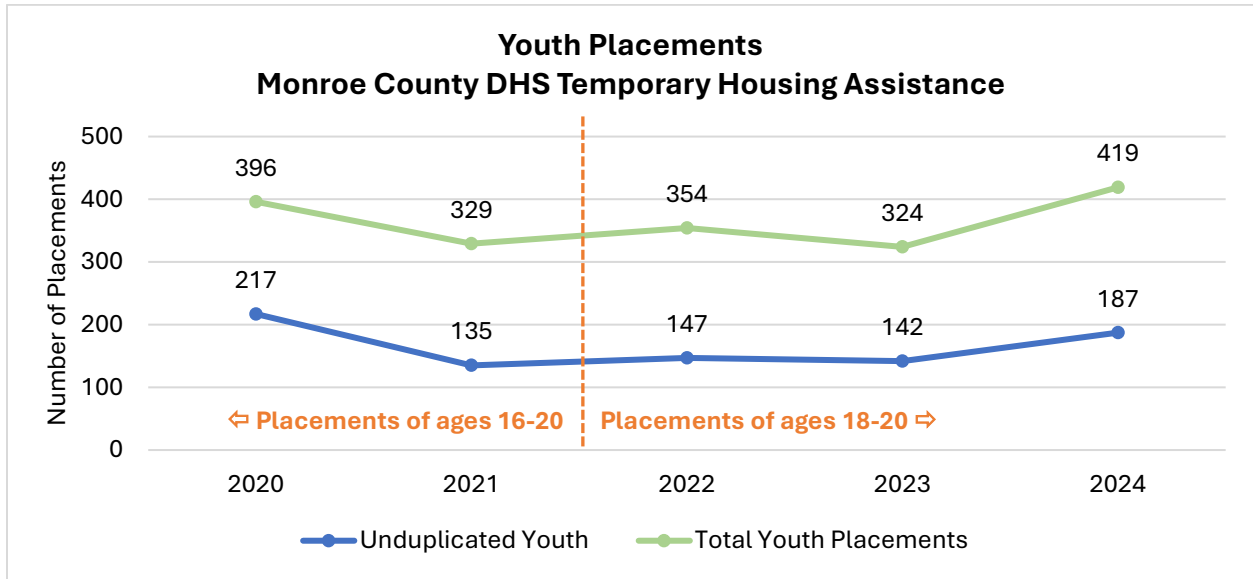


Youth Placements

Monroe County's THA program currently assists individuals 18 and older unless those younger than this are part of a family. Until Genesis House, a placement option for youth aged 16 to 20, closed in November 2021, Monroe County's THA program accepted individuals who were ages 16 and 17. The vertical line in Figure 17 indicates the closure. Center for Youth is still in operation for youth aged 12-17, and although it does not rely on DHS funding, it is a valued community partner that regularly works closely with DHS for youth placements.

The impact of this change is difficult to see in Figure 17 because COVID again played a significant role in a reduction of both 2020 and 2021 clients and placements. Prior to COVID, between 2015 and 2019, there were nearly 300 to over 500 youth who used THA services annually with a total placement count of 700 to just over 1,000 each year.

Figure 17. Five-year trend: Youth placements



Facilities

Three types of facilities are utilized in the THA program: shelters, hotels, and leased houses. Placement decisions are based on the situations present in each individual case, but in most circumstances, shelters are utilized first, leased houses are reserved for families, and hotels are used when space at a shelter or leased house is not available. Shelters and leased houses also provide case management services – assistance to residents with determining barriers to stable, permanent housing; addressing and meeting other needs; reducing the current length of stay in the shelter system; and decreasing the likelihood of additional THA stays in the future.

Figure 18. Placements by facility type, 2024

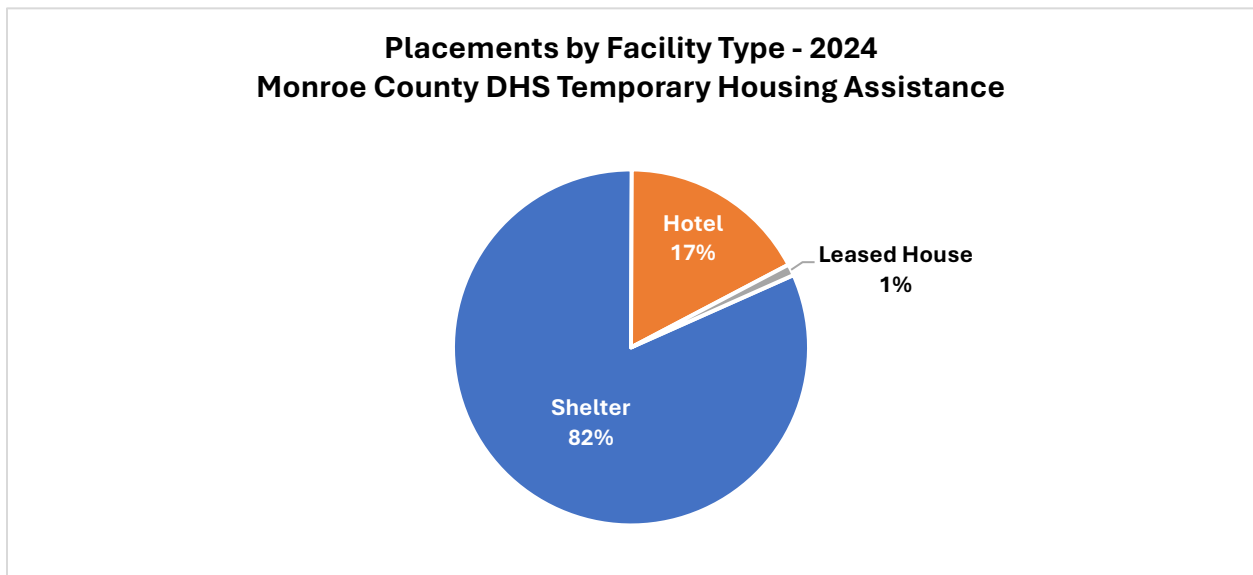
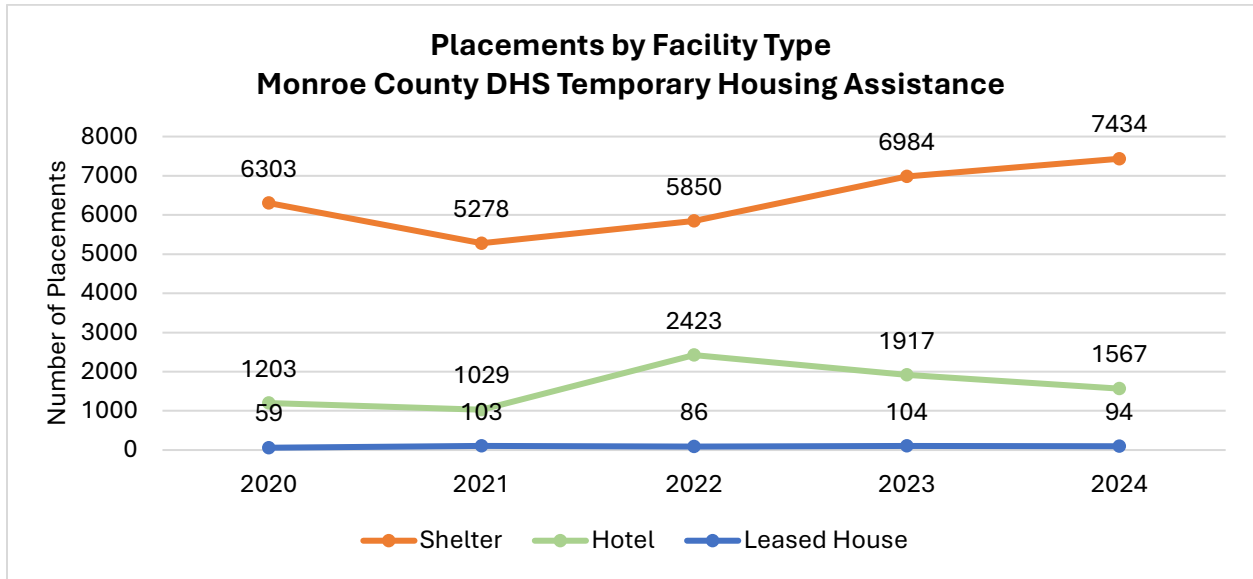


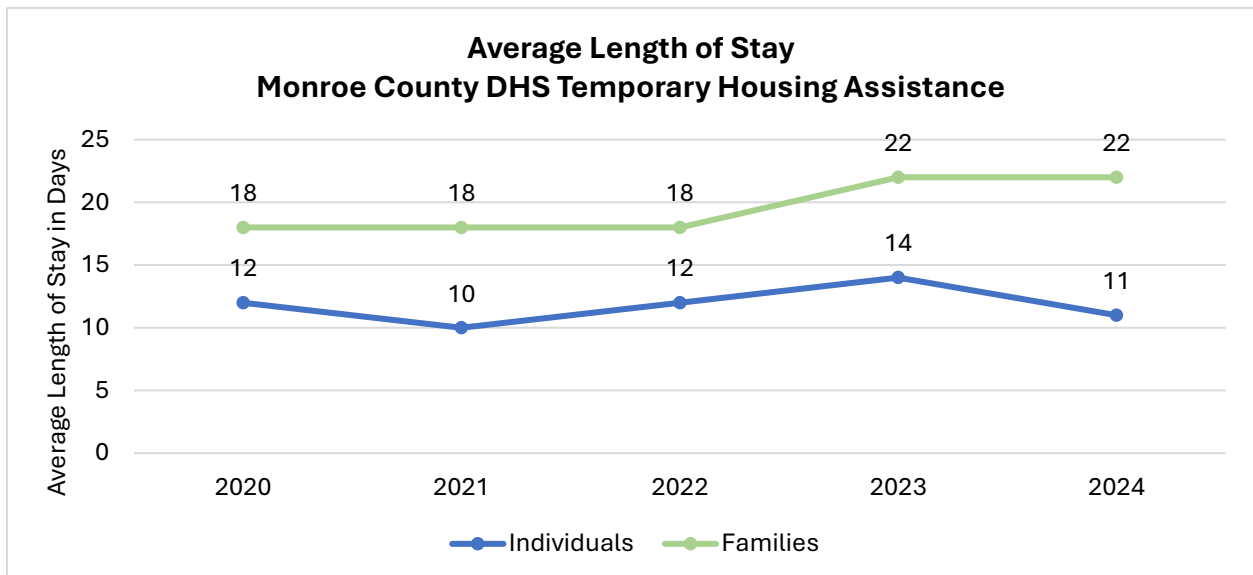
Figure 19. Five-year trend: Placements by facility type



Length of Stay

THA is intended as a short-term stay when no other housing options are available. DHS Housing Unit staff, as well as staff within contracted shelters, assist residents in securing safe, appropriate, permanent housing as quickly as possible. One of the largest drivers of length of stay in the past few years is the increasing unavailability of affordable housing. Rent has increased faster than the cost of living and housing is in short supply. Larger apartments to accommodate families are often too expensive – even for families with members who are employed. Also impacted significantly are older adults who receive Social Security benefits and disabled individuals and family members who receive SSI benefits.

Figure 20. Five-year trend: Average length of stay



Community Involvement

The commitment of Housing Unit staff to homeless services goes well beyond the basic functions of their jobs. Several are also members of community organizations dedicated to serving the homeless population.

Homeless Services Network: The Homeless Services Network (HSN) meets monthly to discuss strategies to assist the homeless in the Rochester, New York region. This group also serves as the community's stakeholder group for the Continuum of Care. The HSN is open to any interested persons who want to see the social issue of homelessness addressed in a compassionate, direct, and competent manner and is currently comprised of more than sixty organizations and individuals who are involved in providing services to the homeless.

Coordinated Entry Workgroup: Coordinated Entry is designed to connect people more effectively to permanent housing to end their homelessness. It includes the following elements:

- Standardized tools and practices with consistent processes to identify appropriate housing interventions
- Streamlined access and referral that is fair and equitable
- Continual improvement with data-informed decision-making
- Community-wide prioritization to identify housing for persons with the highest needs

Partners Ending Homelessness Board of Directors: Partners Ending Homelessness is a non-profit organization that is the primary planning and coordinating body for homeless housing and services in Monroe County, NY. The Rochester/Monroe County Homeless Continuum of Care (RMHCoC), also known as CoC NY-500, includes the total geographic area of Monroe County.

Chronically Homeless Workgroup

- **Direct Care Group:** This committee brings direct-care staff and advocates together to review specific client needs and concerns, discuss new locations, and identify barriers in the system that are hindering homeless individuals and families from accessing housing, treatment, and other services.
- **Stakeholders Group:** This committee convenes local officials, lawmakers, community stakeholders, and others to suggest and implement improvements to facilitate homeless persons' access to services to end their homelessness and prevent future homeless situations.

Landlord Engagement Workgroup: The Landlord Engagement Workgroup is a group of homeless service providers, landlords, and property managers who meet regularly to develop strategies to connect clients with permanent, safe, suitable housing options.

Peace Village Improvement Planning: Housing staff participated in planning efforts to enhance the living conditions at Peace Village, Rochester’s sanctioned homeless encampment, to include the construction of pods that will have heat, community space for service delivery, on-site staff, security, and bathroom facilities.

Next Steps

Monroe County, the Department of Human Services, the Temporary Housing Assistance program, and many community partners brought new ideas to life and made numerous improvements in 2024 to enhance services to individuals and families who face homelessness. These measures will help to increase the number of safe and affordable housing units throughout the County, support both tenants and landlords in maintaining stability in rental housing, and expand services – especially to families – who find themselves without shelter.

Homelessness – particularly chronic homelessness – is a very complex problem that cannot be eliminated with a “one-size-fits-all” approach. By attacking the issue from multiple directions, Monroe County and local housing services providers are determined to assist clients in finding permanent solutions, not just a series of temporary places to stay that ignore underlying issues.

Everyone deserves the dignity of having a place to call home, regardless of their circumstances. By working together and continuing to bring innovative ideas forward, Monroe County and its partners are in a great position to make real impacts on decreasing homelessness and improving the lives of the individuals and families who come to us for assistance.

Program Staffing

as of December 31, 2024

Administration

Thalia Wright

Commissioner, Department of Human Services

Denise Read

Deputy Commissioner, Department of Human Services

Randy Scott

Director of Financial Assistance

Housing Unit

Rebecca Miglioratti

Community Homeless Coordinator

Jennifer Martinez

Supervising Examiner

C. Pero

Senior Examiner

T. Schaller

Senior Examiner

J. Sulimowicz

Senior Examiner

T. Webb

Senior Examiner

A. Barton

Examiner

L. Bernstein

Examiner

M. Brown

Examiner

T. Buntley

Examiner

A. DeJesus

Examiner

M. Drexel

Examiner

D. English

Examiner

J. Lang

Examiner

V. McFarlane

Examiner

D. Miles

Examiner

A. Perez

Per Diem Examiner

P. Quick

Examiner

L. Times

Examiner

C. Palozzi

Emergency Housing
Specialist

R. Dear

Office Clerk II

C. Rose

Contractor

Facilities, Populations Served, and Number of Placements – 2024

Facility Type and Name	Population Served	Number of Placements
Shelters		
Booth Haven (Salvation Army)	Single men	448
Francis Center	Single men	1,348
Freedom House (CCFCS)	Single men	69
Grace House	Men recently released from jail or prison	488
Guest House (VOA)	Singles, couples, and families	323
Hope House (Salvation Army)	Single women, single women with children	785
House of Mercy	Single men and women	1,539
Jennifer House (Spiritus Christi)	Women recently released from jail or prison	10
Liberty Manor (CCFCS)	Single women, single women with children	26
Moving Forward Family Shelter (VOA)	Families	455
Neilson House (Spiritus Christi)	Men recently released from jail or prison	7
Project Haven (REACH Advocacy)	Single men	480
Sanctuary House (CCFCS)	Single women, single women with children	942
Willow Center	Survivors of domestic violence and their children	248
YWCA	Single women, single women with children	205
		7,373
Hotels		
Days Inn		134
Eagle Star Housing		59
Econo Lodge Henrietta		221
Elk Place		368
Extended Stay - Greece		8
Extended Stay - Henrietta		3
Motel 6		2
Motel 6 - Khan Hospitality		129
Quality Inn - Lyell Ave		131
Red Roof Inn		566
Super 8 Henrietta		3
Super 8 Webster		1
		1,625
Leased Houses		
Tempo Development (11 houses)	Households with three to ten family members	92
		92

*This chart shows the number of placements made at each facility. One placement may represent an individual or a family; it is not the number of persons served.