



2021 Annual Report

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INTRODUCTION

MENTAL HEALTH and YOUTH

13%

OF CHILDREN
ages 8-15 experience a
mental health
condition

13-20%

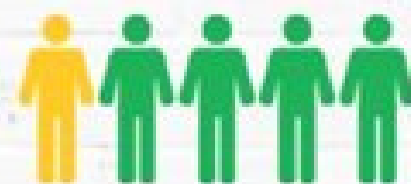
OF CHILDREN
living in the U.S.

17%

OF HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS
seriously consider
suicide

50%

OF CHILDREN
ages 8-15 experiencing a
mental health condition
don't receive treatment



(1 out of 5 children)
experience a mental
health condition in
a given year

1/2

OF ALL LIFETIME CASES
of mental illness begin
by age

14

Despite effective treatments there are long delays—sometimes decades—between onset of symptoms and treatment

The Heart Leaf Center (THLC) was built on the principles of empowering children and families through mental health care and support in order to reach their fullest potential. We know life can be challenging — and raising children, though rewarding, is hard work.

Children: We want to give children the opportunities to learn about themselves and to develop the resiliency and problem solving skills that will help them navigate the obstacles that life throws at them.

Parents: We want to give parents the tools they need to help raise strong socially/emotionally healthy children. We strengthen relationships so they can continue to support each other as they learn, and grow together.

Improving access to high quality play therapy mental health services for children and families through low-cost services and professional education.



**Sheri Mitschelen,
LCSW, RPT-S**

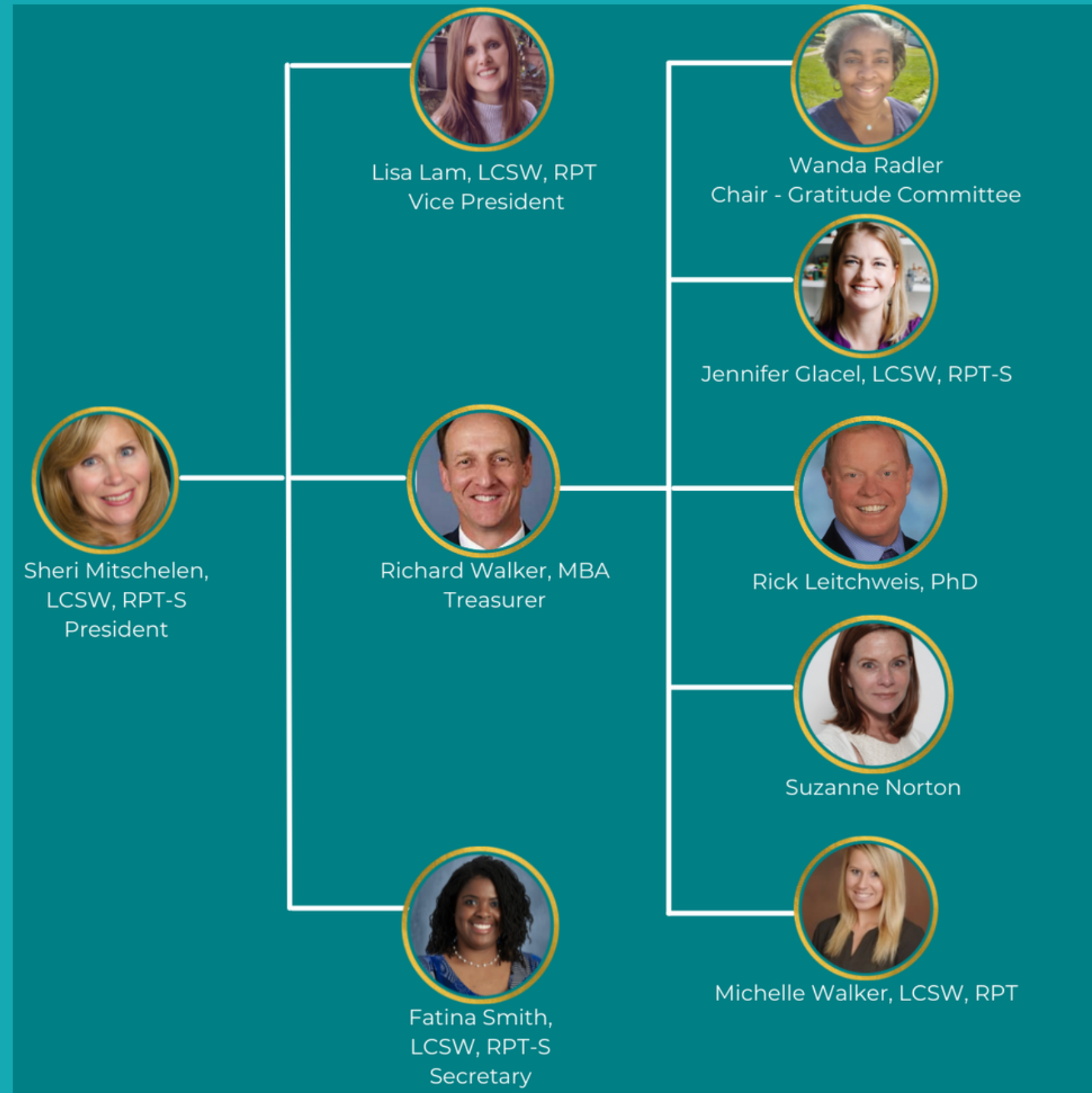
As a practicing Licensed Clinical Social Worker, I had a dream of starting a non-profit in 2019, because I saw the increase in mental health issues with children and adolescents. I heard stories of parents who could not afford to get mental health counseling for their children or who could not find a child and adolescent provider that accepted their insurance.

In 2020, the need for mental health counseling continued to rise because of the COVID-19 pandemic with many mental health practices in our area having waiting lists. Children and adolescents have been especially impacted with an increase in anxiety, depression and isolation. Per the CDC, 1 in 4 children now have significant mental health issues. Also, the shortage of mental health providers who specialize in working with children and teens, has become more severe.

Lisa Lam, LCSW and I joined forces in 2021 to create The Heart Leaf Center, a mental health counseling program in the Northern VA area specializing in working with children, adolescents and families. We wanted to target families who could not find mental health services due to barriers such as financial, language, culture and lack of specialized providers. In Northern VA the military represents a large part of our community. We have made efforts to work with military families which have unique challenges due to relocations and spousal deployments as well as a lack of specialized child therapists who accept Tricare insurance.

Part of our mission is to train mental health therapists in the community to work with children and adolescents using play therapy as a treatment modality. Play is a child's form of communication and we can learn about a child's state of mind through their play and can help them address their internal emotional struggles and alter their behaviors. With teens we use art, sand tray and games to help them express themselves and find a way to learn new coping skills. Play Therapy may sound simple but it is grounded in theory and years of research and is a mode of practicing which takes training.

I am extremely proud of what we have achieved in year 1, thanks to the hard work of the board members and volunteers. We have learned a lot as we have grown quickly to meet the high demand for mental health counseling in our area. I feel fortunate to have a great team of clinicians that have joined our mission and who have dedicated themselves to working with children, teens and families. It does take a team to make the dream work.





ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Timeline



March

May

September

October

November

**501 (c) 3 Status
Approved**

**Started Seeing
Clients**

Play Therapy Toy Drive

Opened New Office

Giving Tuesday Fundraiser



We did a toy drive to gather play therapy toys for our new offices.







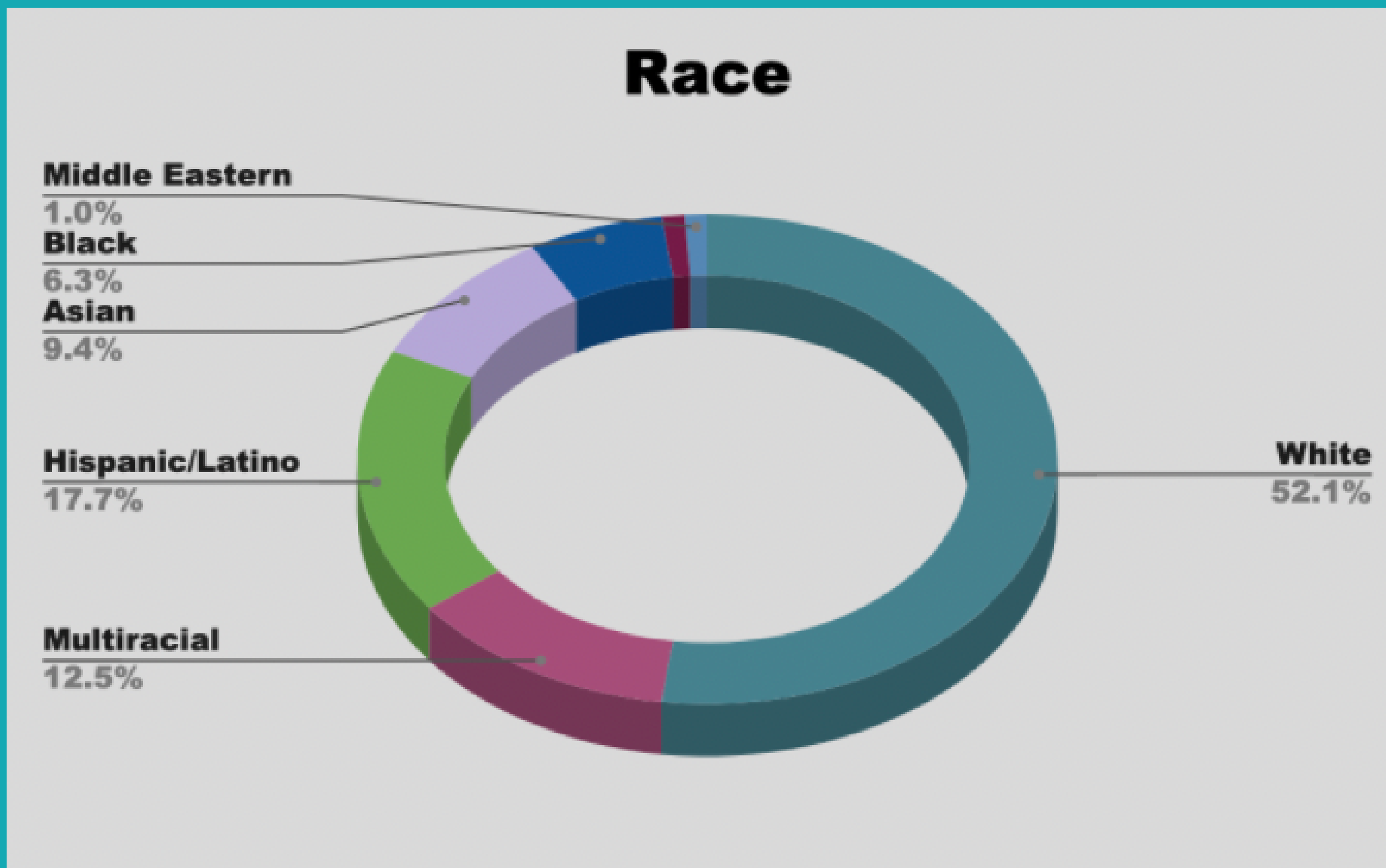


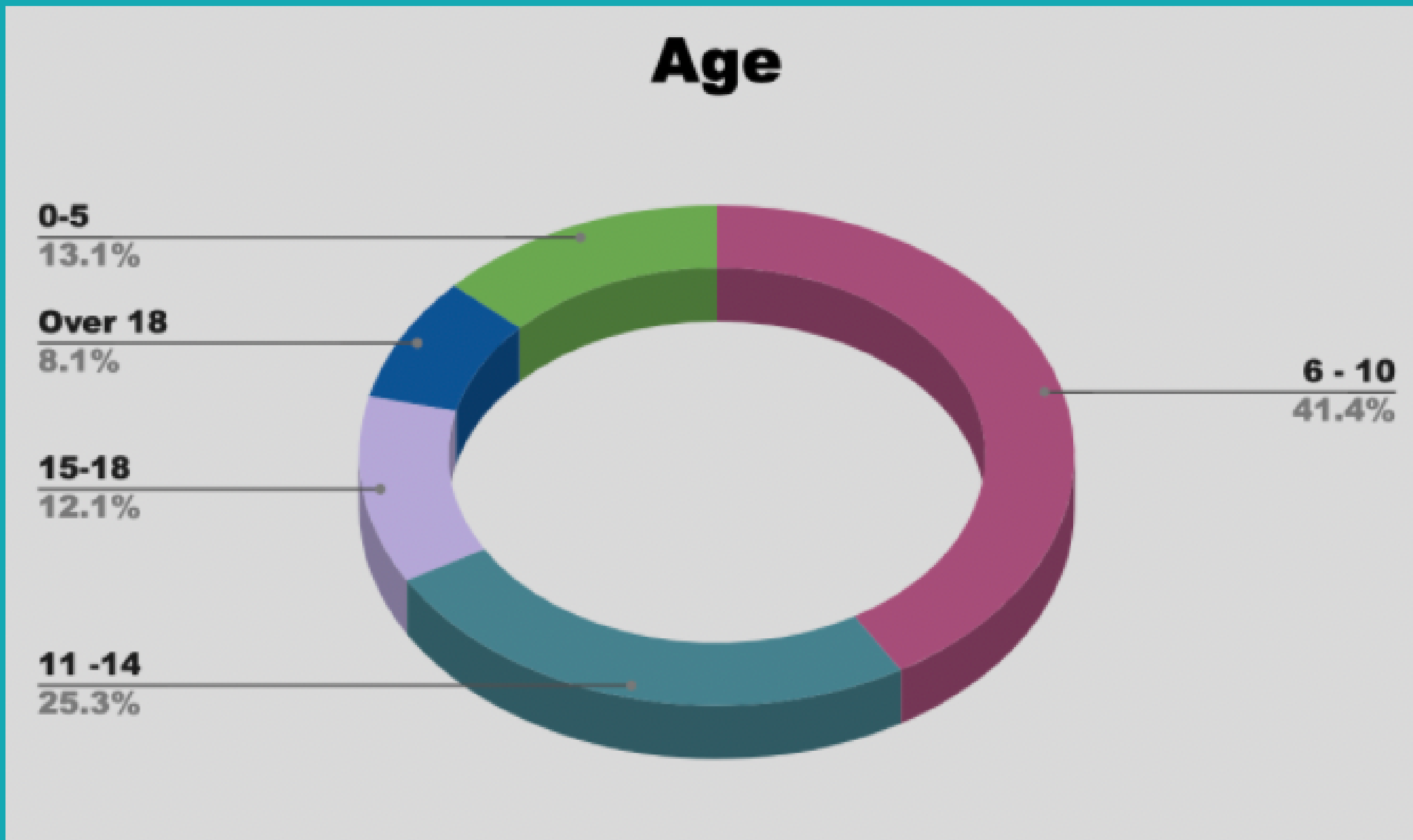
CLIENTS SERVED

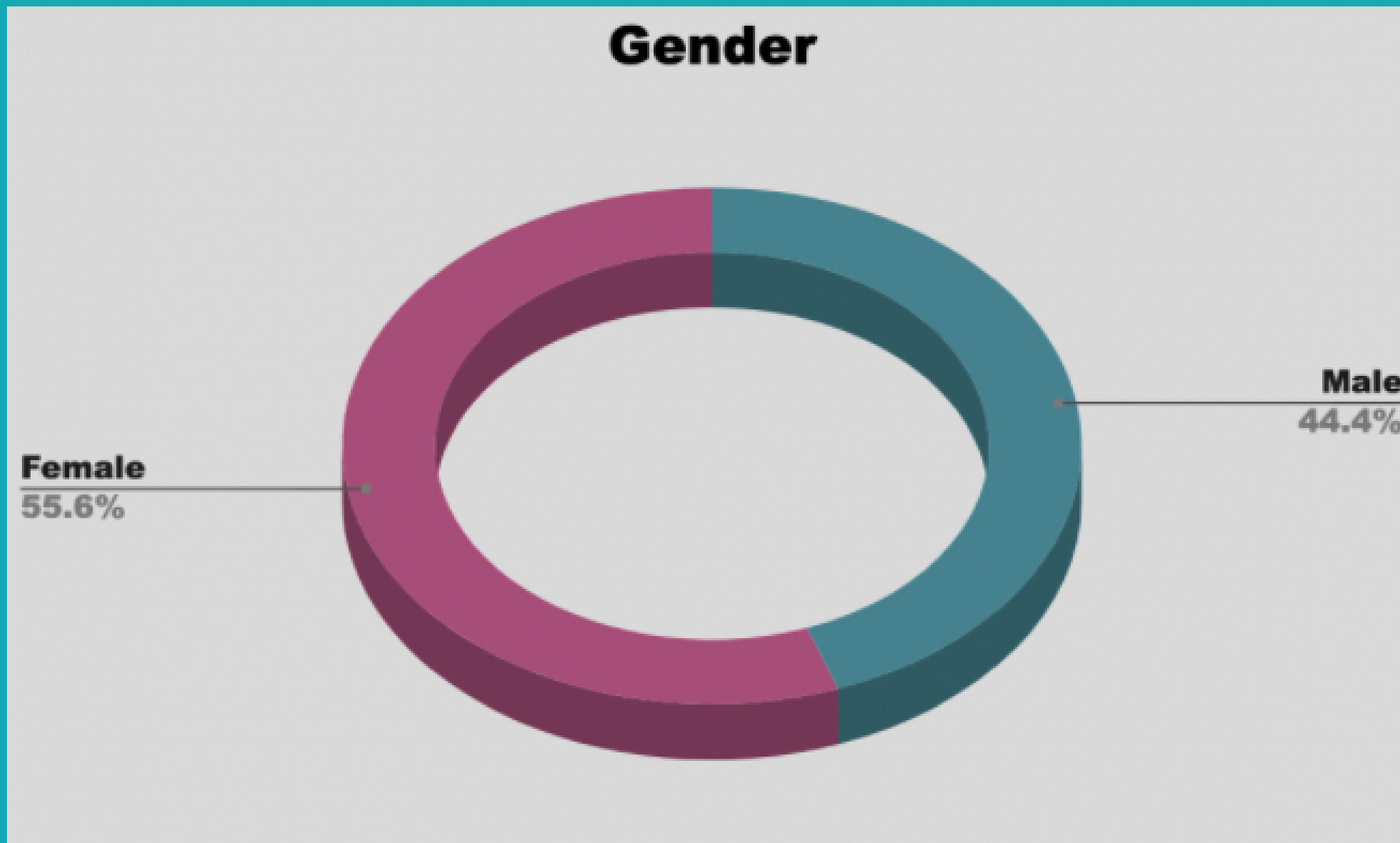
Clients Served

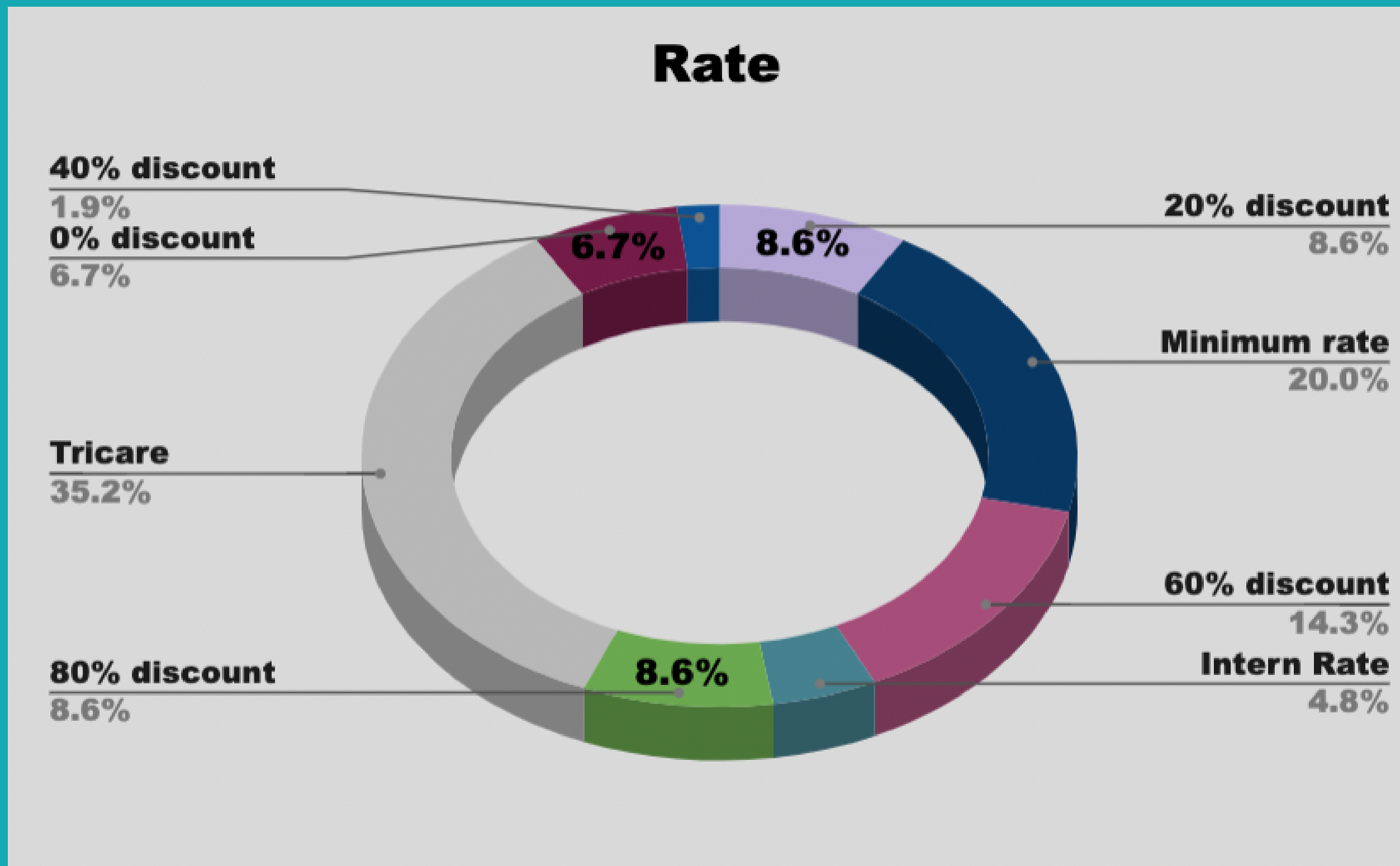
	May 21	June 21	July 21	Aug 21	Sept 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
Active Clients	5	11	25	34	47	57	74	84
New Clients	5	6	14	9	18	14	14	10
*Pending Referrals			11	12	15	4	7	16


Average Number of Appointments	Average Length of Treatment
10.71	60.33 days











**OUTCOME
MEASURES**

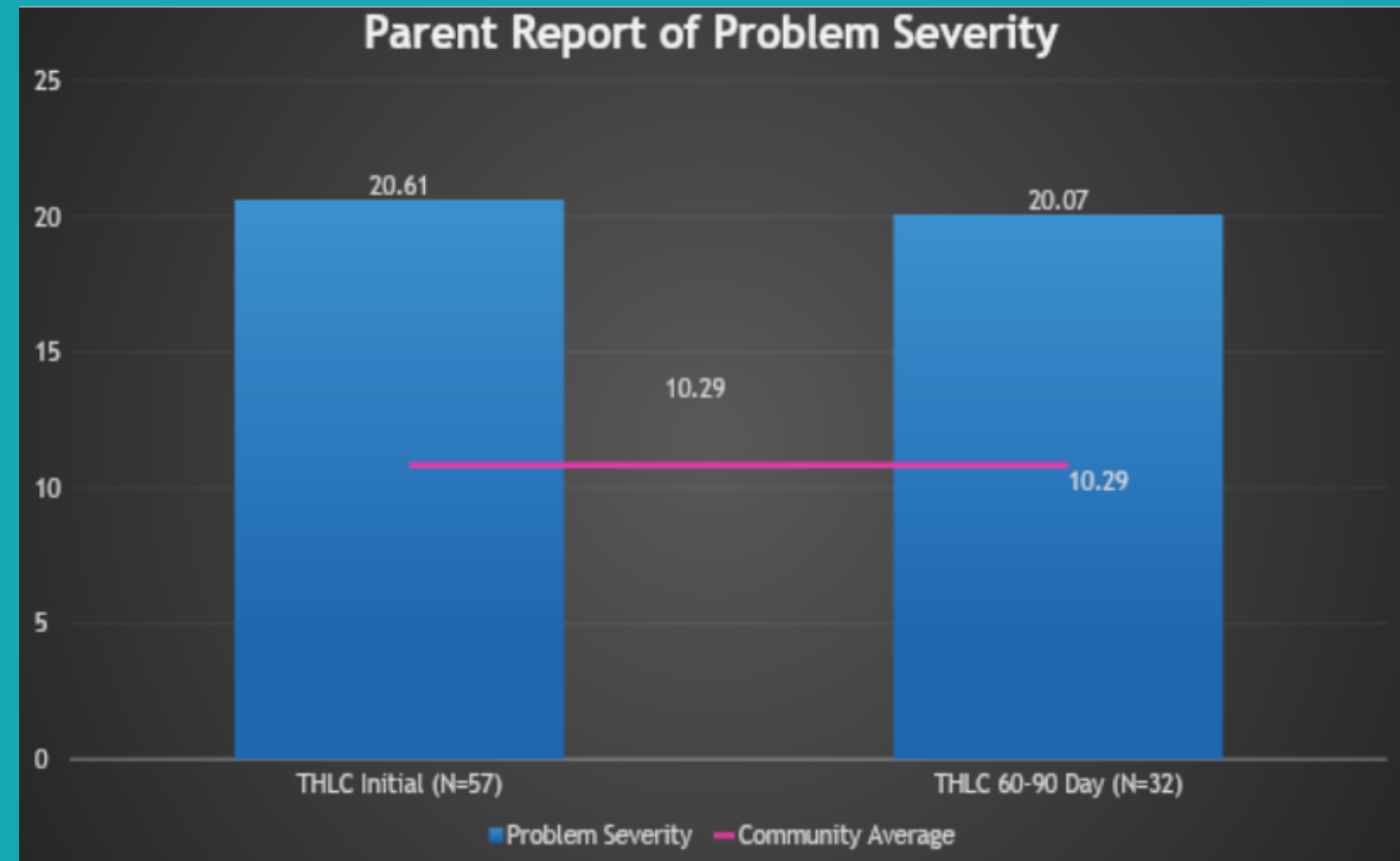
We use the Ohio Youth Problems, Functioning, and Satisfaction Scales (short version)

- Designed for ages 5-18
- Parent, Youth, and Agency Worker (therapist) forms available
- 48 items on the parent short form covering Problem Severity, Functioning, Hopefulness, and Satisfaction
- Reference sample provides Clinical and Community means for comparison

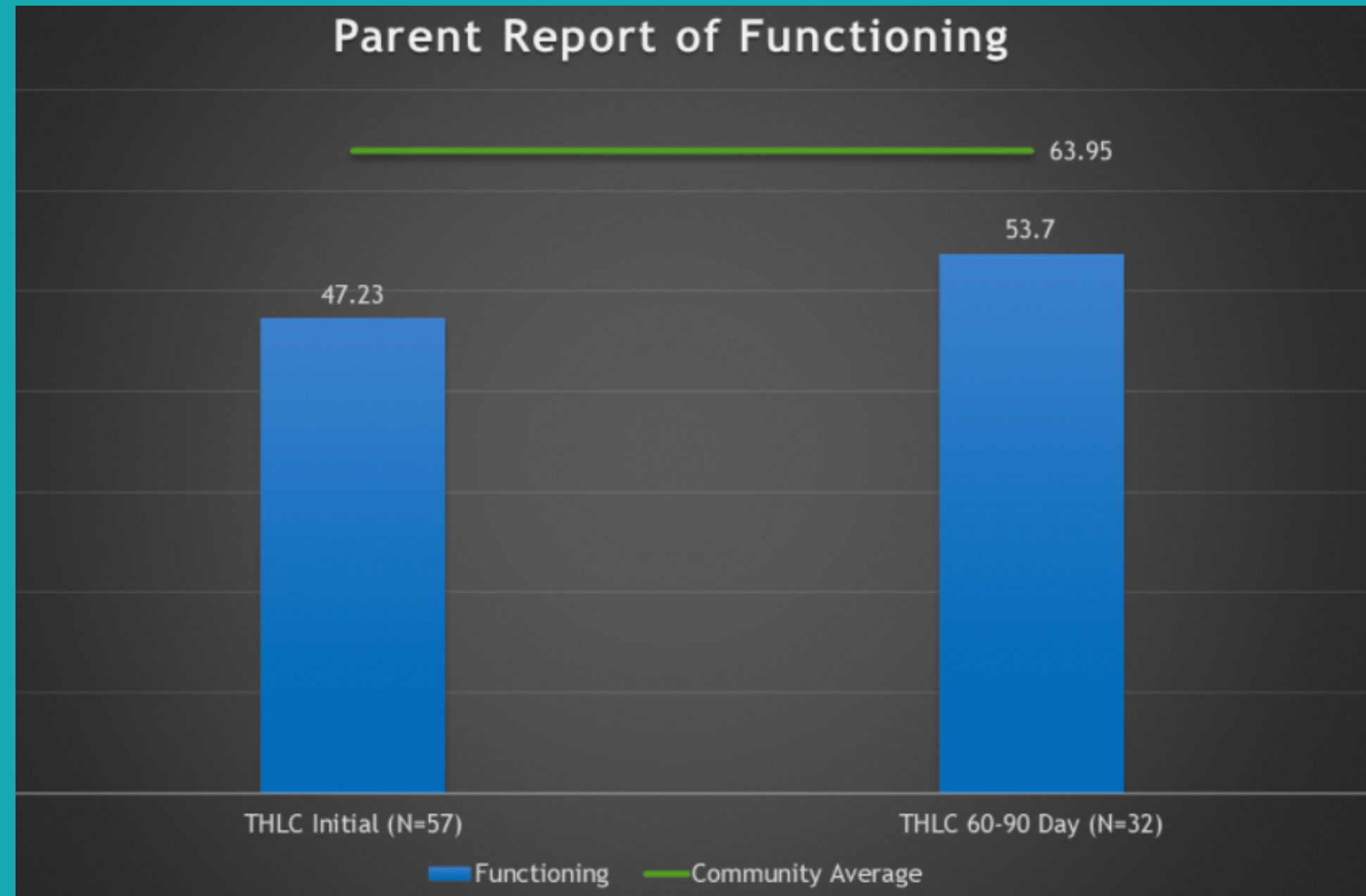
- Began collection of initial scales, August 2021
- Attempted digital collection, but had few responses
- Employed therapists to collect paper versions and increased response
- As of December 31, 2021, Ohio Scales response rate:
 - 57.58% of families have provided an initial rating scale
 - 32.32% of families have completed a 60-90 day follow up rating scale



- Parents are asked to rate the severity of their child’s problems using 20 items at initial screening and then at 60/90 day follow up.
- Each item is rated on a 6-point scale for frequency of problems during the past 30 days (not at all, once or twice, several times, often, most of the time, or all of the time) with a lower score showing improvement.
- A reference sample provides a community average (10.29) for comparison
- Parents report a slight improvement in problem severity at 60-90 day follow up though still above the community



- Parents are asked to rate their child’s current level of functioning on 20 item at initial screening and 60-90 day follow up.
- Each item is rated on a 5-point scale extreme troubles (quite a few troubles, some troubles, OK, or doing very well) with higher scores indicating better functioning
- A reference sample provides a community average (63.95) for comparison
- Parents report a somewhat better functioning at 60-90 day follow up though still below the community average.





**PARENT
TESTIMONIALS**



"I had reached a point where I knew my children needed therapy to cope with events that occurred in their lives. I reached out to their guidance counselor, searched their Medicaid website and every place that I called had long waitlists.

I understood that especially with COVID a lot of mental health issues were more prevalent. It was definitely tricky to find services beyond what their guidance counselor was able to do at school. I was lucky enough to be referred to The Heart Leaf Center by my one of my sister's friends."

"I looked up different kinds of therapy and read about play therapy so I had some knowledge of it, but wasn't sure how it worked. I initially found another therapy company who referred me to The Heart Leaf Center because they worked with families needing financial assistance for mental health services.

My son is one of 4 children, so access to affordable mental health services is very important to me. Most therapy companies don't accept insurance and even the ones that do accept it, still have high out-of-pocket costs.

Working with THLC has been such a blessing for my son and our family. He has a great bond with his therapist and looks forward to going to his sessions each week!"





"Having play therapy has allowed my son to be himself. My son enjoys that he doesn't have to worry about doing or saying anything that's "wrong." He's able to feel comfortable and that has allowed him to slowly open up more while also learning to explore his feelings and work on coping skills, which has been hard for him to do.

He's able to be as loud, silly or imaginary as he feels and there's little limitations. This technique has had positive effects on him. Little by little as his therapist earned his trust, my son felt comfortable opening up more at ease. I enjoy the fact that I can have feedback sessions with his therapist, which allows me to understand what they work on and what's being observed."

"Scheduling has been great and all of the staff I have met have been amazing. Would and have recommended this place to friends already."

"I can't say enough good things about the opportunity we had working with this company. I'm looking forward to continuing our sessions and I'm very hopeful for more positive changes in my son's future."





**PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATION**

The Heart Leaf Center partnered with Crossroads Family Counseling Center to provide play therapy education.

30 hours of education provided in 2021:

- Symbols and Meaning in Sand Play Therapy - Jennifer Glacel, LCSW, RPT-S
- Back to Basics: Child Centered Play Therapy - Maggie Parker, PhD, LPC, RPT-S
- Adolescents Can Play Too! - Sheri Mitschelen, LCSW, RPT-S
- Setting Boundaries in the Play Room to help with Emotional Regulation - Lisa Dion, LPC, RPT-S
- Meaningful Moments in Play Therapy - Rosie Newman, LMHC, RPT-S

(Sponsored by Seven Corners Psychotherapy)

- Increasing Cultural Competence in Play Therapy with BIPOC Communities **(4 part series)**
 - Play-Based Strategies to Address Racial Trauma in Black Youth - April Duncan, Phd, RPT-S
 - Play-Based Strategies to Address Racial Trauma in Latinx - Yuvi Rattigan, LCSW, RPT
 - Identifying Implicit Bias working with BIPOC Communities - April Duncan, Phd, RPT-S
 - Using Play to Address Suicidality in Minority Youth - April Duncan, Phd, RPT-S

"Loved all the resources and the engaging presentation - thanks!"

"Excellent training and very thought provoking."

"One of the best workshops I have taken and I have lots of ideas to work with in my playroom..Thank you great job!!!!"

"I really appreciated this content and the way it was presented; I wish it would have been longer!"



**DONOR
SPOTLIGHT**

The Heart Leaf Center offers a big thank you to all organizations and individuals that donated to our agency in 2021. Here is a list of major organizational donors:

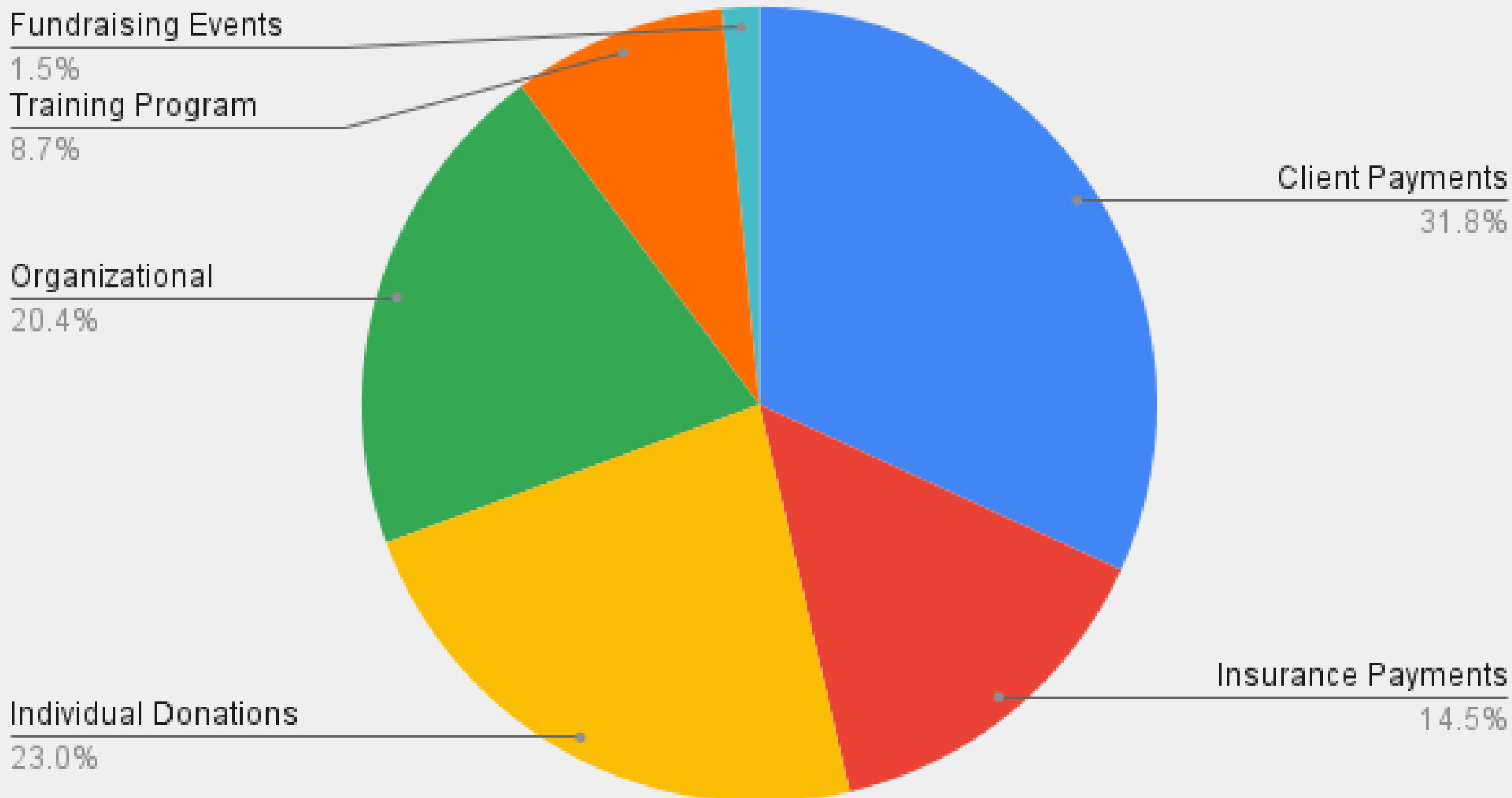
Crossroads Family Counseling Center
Seven Corners Psychotherapy
Trinity Presbyterian Church in Arlington
Meanix Robustelli Wealth Management Group
Questor Realty
Verizon
100 Women who Care
Walmart
Ourisman Toyota
United Bank



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Income Source	2021
Client Payments	\$ 33,297.14
Insurance Payments	\$ 15,203.12
Individual Donations	\$ 24,077.02
Organizational Donations	\$ 21,373.00
Training Program	\$ 9,111.24
Fundraising Events	\$ 1,584.45
Total	\$ 104,646

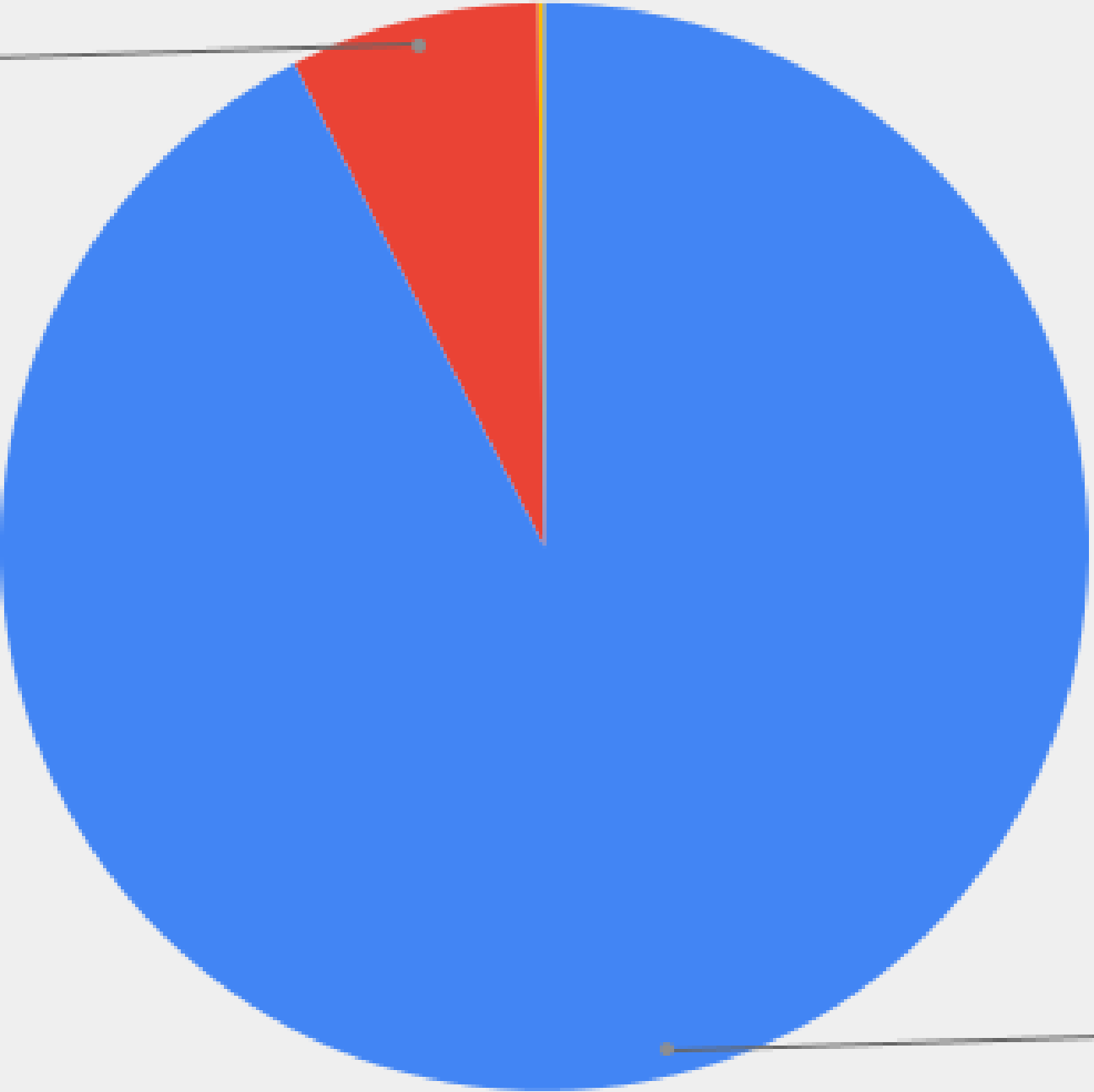
Income Sources - 2021



Expense Source	2021
Program	\$ 61,743.96
Non Program	\$ 4,953.18
Fund Raising	\$ 132.48
Total	\$ 66,830

Expense Sources - 2021

Non Program
7.4%



Program
92.4%

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