



COUNCIL MINUTES

February 23, 2023

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower-level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on February 23, 2023, at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Francisco Heredia
Jennifer Duff
Mark Freeman
Alicia Goforth
Scott Somers
Julie Spilsbury

COUNCIL ABSENT

John Giles

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Holly Moseley
Jim Smith

Vice Mayor Heredia conducted a roll call.

Vice Mayor Heredia excused Mayor Giles from the entire meeting.

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the February 27, 2023, Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None.

Items removed from the consent agenda: None.

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers regarding Item 9-a, **(Public hearing prior to the release of the petition for signatures for the proposed annexation case ANX22-00922, located south of East Elliot Road on the west side of South Sossaman Road (272± acres). This request has been initiated by the applicant, Sean Lake, Pew & Lake, PLC, for the owners, B & K Land & Investment Company, L.L.P. (District 6))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, City Attorney Jim Smith clarified that the proposed annexation case pertains to the release of petitions for annexation only and is not the actual annexation. He stated when the annexation is brought back to Council for consideration, a rezoning case will accompany it and a Development Agreement that can be revised. He noted following the release of petitions, a one-year period is provided for returning to Council.

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers, Planning Director Mary Kopaskie-Brown affirmed she is working on the Development Agreement with the applicant.

Councilmember Somers emphasized there is a good opportunity to create jobs envisioned for the Gateway area.

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Freeman regarding Item 4-a, **(New Well Drilling Projects (District 6))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Water Resources Department Director Christopher Hassert replied that the full scope of a well drilling project can take two to three years per well. He explained the drilling process and the intent to discharge water into the reservoir at the Signal Butte Treatment Plant, and then blend that water out into the distribution systems. He commented that the quality of the well water is good.

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers, Mr. Hassert stated the City will begin a three-year program, required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to test wells and points in the distribution system. He mentioned the City is conducting research on well-head treatment that may be implemented in the future and affirmed the drinking water is safe.

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Spilsbury regarding Item 4-j, **(Use of a Cooperative Contract for the Purchase of a Mobile Library (Addition) for the Library Services Department. (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Library Director Polly Bonnett provided an update on the mobile library and its intent.

In response to a request for review from Councilmember Duff regarding Item 5-c, **(Approving and authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Membership Agreement with the Arizona Board of Regents, on behalf of Arizona State University, to join the Southwest Pavement Technology Consortium. The Consortium is expected to create pavement designs that utilize materials found in the area with a focus on reducing water usage, carbon dioxide emissions, hauling expenses, and the cost of Mesa's lifecycle rehabilitation pavement program at an annual membership price of \$50,000. (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Transportation Department Director RJ Zeder stated that the Membership Agreement is a joint effort headquartered at Arizona State University (ASU). He stated the City will partner with ASU and others to develop new pavement technologies that can be used around the City for the purpose of extending the lifespan of pavements. He explained the process used to mill pavement and reported Mesa will be the first city to join the Consortium, along with a dozen businesses already participating.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia regarding Item 5-d, **(Approving and authorizing the City Manager to enter into an Agreement with the City of Tempe and Valley Metro Rail, Inc. for the Rio East/Dobson Streetcar Extension Locally Preferred Alternatives Study. The total study cost is \$2,000,000. The City's contribution for the study shall not exceed \$800,000 (District 3))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Transit Services Director Jodi Sorrell replied that the Tempe Mesa Streetcar project has been renamed to Rio East Dobson Streetcar in order to align with Valley Metro's extension names. She explained the study and outlined the boundary areas. She advised one of the recommendations from the study on extending streetcars through the Fiesta District was to implement a circulator type service to generate ridership in that corridor, and in October the Fiesta Buzz was launched.

2-a. Hear a program update, discuss and provide direction on the City's Housing Path to Recovery, the strategy pursued by Mesa to address and respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness, locally and regionally.

Community Engagement Administrator Lindsey Balinkie introduced Human Services Coordinator Deana Lopez and Mesa Police Officer Aaron Raine and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Balinkie reviewed the strategies for addressing homelessness and the housing path to recovery. She mentioned in the last two years, 79% of their federal funding allocation has been used to provide homeless and crisis services, which totaled approximately \$11.3 million and served 81,000 individuals. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Balinkie discussed the many roles that the City plays in addressing homelessness. She provided an update on the City's data collection, as well as how the City continues to be an advocate for the collection of more data from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and other sources. (See Pages 3 through 5 of Attachment 1)

Officer Raine described the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and the multiple sources from which data is obtained. He reported the highest level of homelessness occurred during the summer of 2022. He stated in the last two years, there has been a 51% increase in the number of individuals experiencing first-time homelessness. He indicated he is working with the MAG to develop a quarterly screenshot with Mesa's data in order to determine how regional results align with the City of Mesa (COM) and make adjustments to improve the programming. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Duff, Officer Raine replied that the data is entered monthly by outreach workers, or anyone with access to the HMIS system, and it represents only those that are seeking services.

City Manager Christopher Brady clarified those seeking services are not necessarily Mesa residents, but rather those seeking assistance in Mesa.

Officer Raine provided an overview of Census data comparisons, demonstrating the City is successful in connecting the homeless population with services. He reported the City's Off The Streets Program exit rate by race, showing the City of Mesa (COM) is meeting the needs of the community of a diverse population. He advised the data allows the COM to determine where programing needs to be adjusted to meet the needs of the community. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions posed by Vice Mayor Heredia, Officer Raine clarified the breakdown of demographics and said the data can be adjusted to make improvements. He explained that the slides in today's presentation only include a snapshot; however, on the live page, services are broken down according to ethnicity, and the Hispanic population is represented in the data set.

Officer Raine reviewed the demographics by gender and commented Mesa has a significant overrepresentation of female homelessness. He said the data in real time helps the City make adjustments in other programs where women are involved. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Spilsbury, Officer Raine answered that the City is seeking to increase the number of shelters for women only to meet the demand. He commented currently, domestic violence shelters and some other shelters are available for women.

Officer Raine discussed the demographics of homelessness by age and determined that age is not a factor. He reported that the younger population and older population are largely represented, and the median age is increasing. He mentioned the data was provided by HMIS from individuals who were seeking services. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Councilmember Somers, Officer Raine advised that the homeless population data includes all individuals seeking services through the continuum of care and logged into HMIS. He indicated Mesa's homeless population included in the data is composed of those on the verge of homelessness, those who are homeless, those who are chronically homeless, and those who are experiencing first-time homelessness. He explained that the purpose of the Point-in-Time count is to count the shelter population separately from the outside population, and the data includes both the shelter population and those living on the streets.

Officer Raine reviewed the data for Mesa's veterans receiving homelessness-related services and commented that the veteran community has a very robust homelessness reduction program. He mentioned a few veteran programs work toward developing a functional zero system, in which the number of veterans entering homelessness is equal to the number of veterans exiting homelessness successfully. He stated the City reviews the results of veteran-specific programs and applies them to the general population programs. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

In response to multiple questions from Councilmember Somers, Officer Raine discussed the Community Court process. He remarked the City tracks the return to homelessness rate, and the City's rate is lower than the regional rate. He responded that the courts have reduced the recidivism rate for Mesa's chronically homeless population by layering in additional services and assisting them in transition. He explained not everyone is willing to engage, and the leverage of the Community Court is beneficial.

Officer Raine provided a graph illustrating the responses of the Police Department's proactive outreach program for the homeless population and described the program. He compared the results for the homeless population solutions that resulted in a greater number of people accepting services, as opposed to being arrested. He explained that when an activity or behavior is egregious, a judicial solution is suggested, which leads to Community Court where the individuals will be engaged in services to improve their behavior. He pointed out that 10% of the contacts made by the Police Department are related to homelessness. (See Pages 13 and 14 of Attachment 1)

Officer Raine summarized the proactive contacts performed by the parks and park rangers and explained the process. He reported most citations issued to the homeless populations in the park are for violations of City code, which are not criminal offenses. He reviewed a breakdown of Mesa parks where park rangers encountered homeless related contacts. He advised Kleinman Park and Pioneer Park have the most homeless-related contacts by park rangers. (See Pages 15 and 16 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Heredia, Police Commander Michael Beaton responded that parks are a priority and discussed the strategies and multi-faceted approaches to addressing the homeless population in Mesa's parks.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Goforth, Mr. Brady replied that the cameras in parks are to assist residents in feeling more secure since a park ranger is not available all the time and allows the City to enhance its ability to respond to illegal activity if it occurs.

Discussion ensued relative to cameras, ordinances, homelessness, and safety measures in parks.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff, Officer Raine replied that not all individuals in shelters are required to leave during the day. He noted that most of the criminal activity cited in parks is routed through Community Court where over 300 arrests have been made and significantly more fentanyl-related cases have been reported since its reopening after the pandemic.

Officer Raine provided an overview of the data for the Off the Streets program and reported the program is outperforming the region in several areas. He said based on the Department of Housing and Urban Development report, the average positive exit rate was 39.9% compared to 74% for the COM. He added the COM has been able to provide assistance to many disabled residents. (See Page 18 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Heredia, Officer Raine stated the City needs more transitional housing since its capacity has been reached and made suggestions for improvements.

In response to a question from Councilmember Spilsbury, Officer Raine declared housing solutions for the homeless are less expensive than keeping them on the street.

Ms. Balinkie provided an update on the enhanced resources and the collaboration of the Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) with other navigators to ensure residents have accessibility to them. (See Page 19 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Lopez discussed the Mesa Homeless Resource Line, which provides assistance to those experiencing homelessness in Mesa. She described the details of the dedicated phone line, and shared that the contact information is available on the City of Mesa's website. She mentioned the phone calls are tracked to determine the needs of the community. (See Page 19 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Balinkie clarified that the Mesa Homeless Resource Line is paired with the Off the Street's phone line for immediate assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Ms. Balinkie reviewed the additional solutions for programming to serve the homeless population. (See Page 20 of Attachment 1)

Councilmember Freeman thanked all the partners, teams, and City staff that support homeless outreach and for working collaboratively to leverage the system to resolve the cycle of homelessness.

In response to a question from Councilmember Goforth, Officer Raine explained that the City utilizes navigators through contracts with Copa Health and Community Bridges, Inc. He elaborated that many navigators were formerly homeless and are able to connect with the homeless population and build a rapport, which can be difficult for a typical clinician or a police officer.

Vice Mayor Heredia thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Vice Mayor and Councilmembers highlighted the events, meetings and conferences recently attended.

4. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Monday, February 27, 2023, 4:45 p.m. – Study Session

Monday, February 27, 2023, 5:45 p.m. – Regular meeting

5. Convene an Executive Session.

It was moved by Councilmember Spilsbury, seconded by Councilmember Somers, that the Council adjourn the Study Session at 9:27 a.m. and enter into an Executive Session.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Heredia-Duff-Freeman-Goforth-Somers-Spilsbury

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Giles

Vice Mayor Heredia declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

5-a. Discussion or consultation for legal advice with the City Attorney. (A.R.S. §38-431.03A (3))
Discussion or consultation with the City Attorney in order to consider the City's position and instruct the City Attorney regarding the City's position regarding pending or contemplated litigation or in settlement discussions conducted in order to avoid or resolve litigation. (A.R.S. §38-431.03A (4))

1. *Christine Close v. City of Mesa*
Maricopa County Superior Court, Case No. CV2022-052927

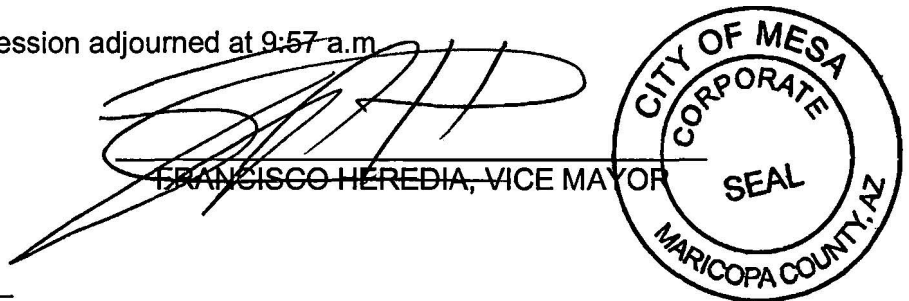
6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

ATTEST:



HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK



I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of February 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK



Addressing Homelessness for Community Health and Safety

Lindsey Balinkie, Community Services Deputy Director

Aaron Raine, Mesa Police Department Detective

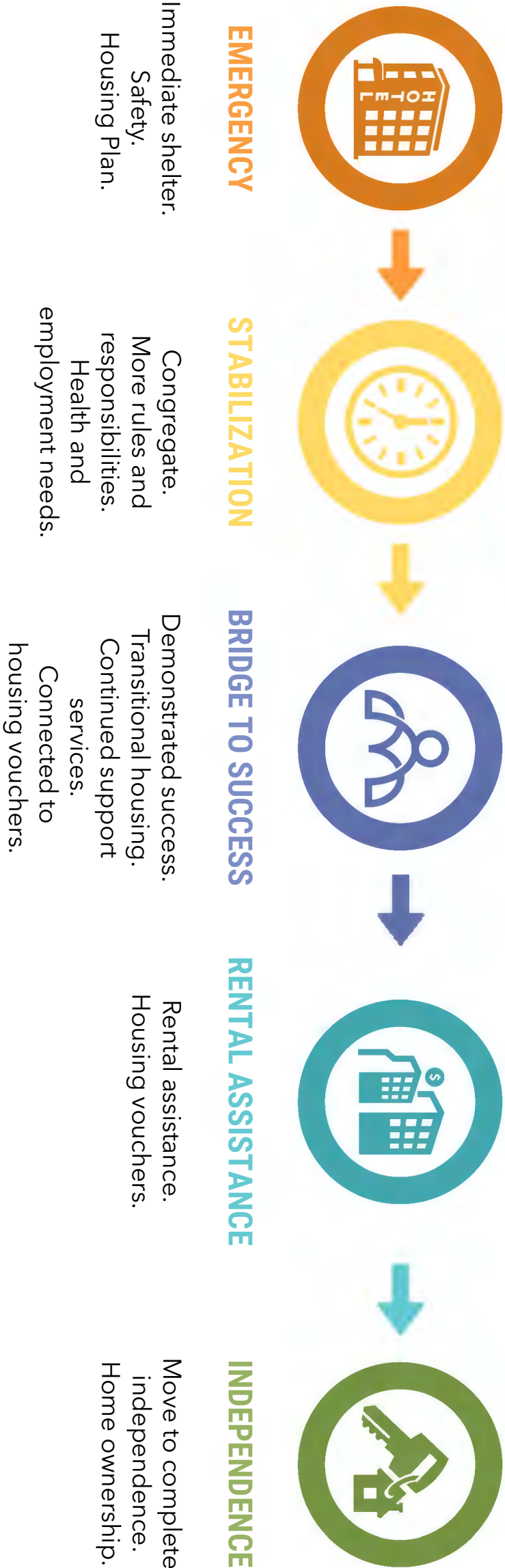
Deana Lopez, Human Services Coordinator

City Council Study Session

February 23, 2023

Our Strategy for Addressing Homelessness

Housing Path to Recovery



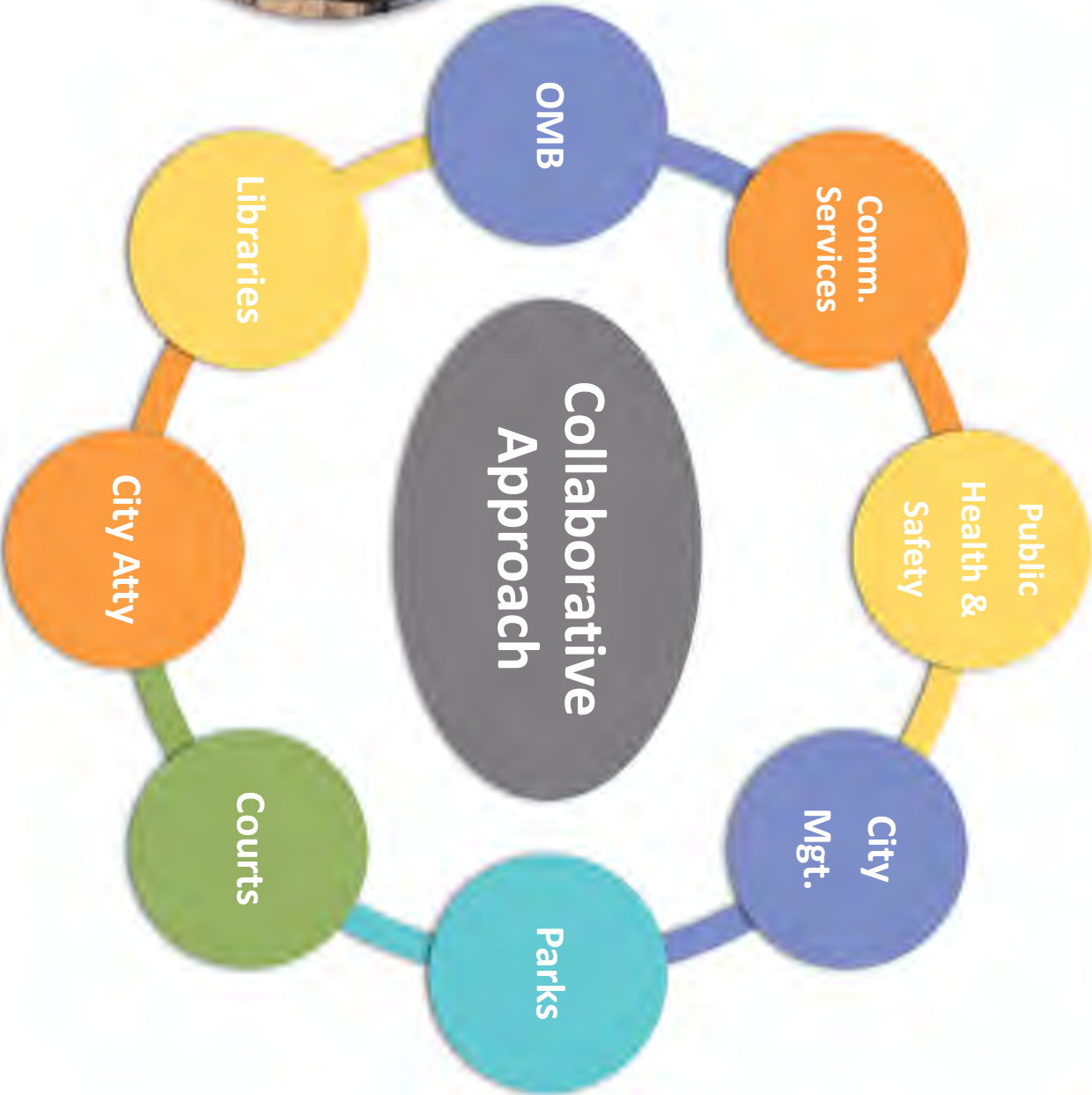
Addressing Homelessness



The city's many roles
with one purpose.



Interdepartmental Team



Regional Data

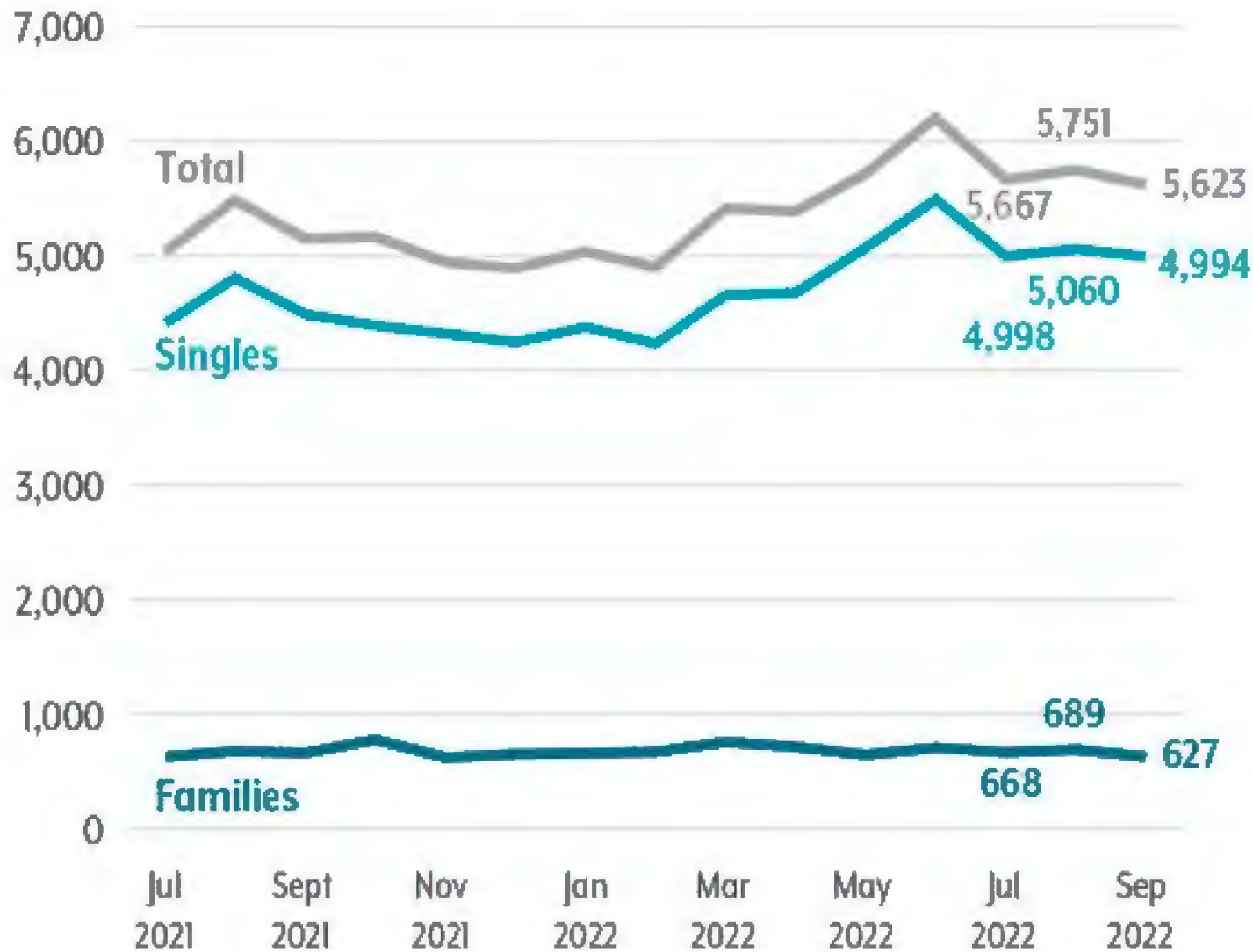
Maricopa Association of Govts. (MAG)

Data source: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)



Countywide Homeless Trends

Total Number of Actively Homeless Households





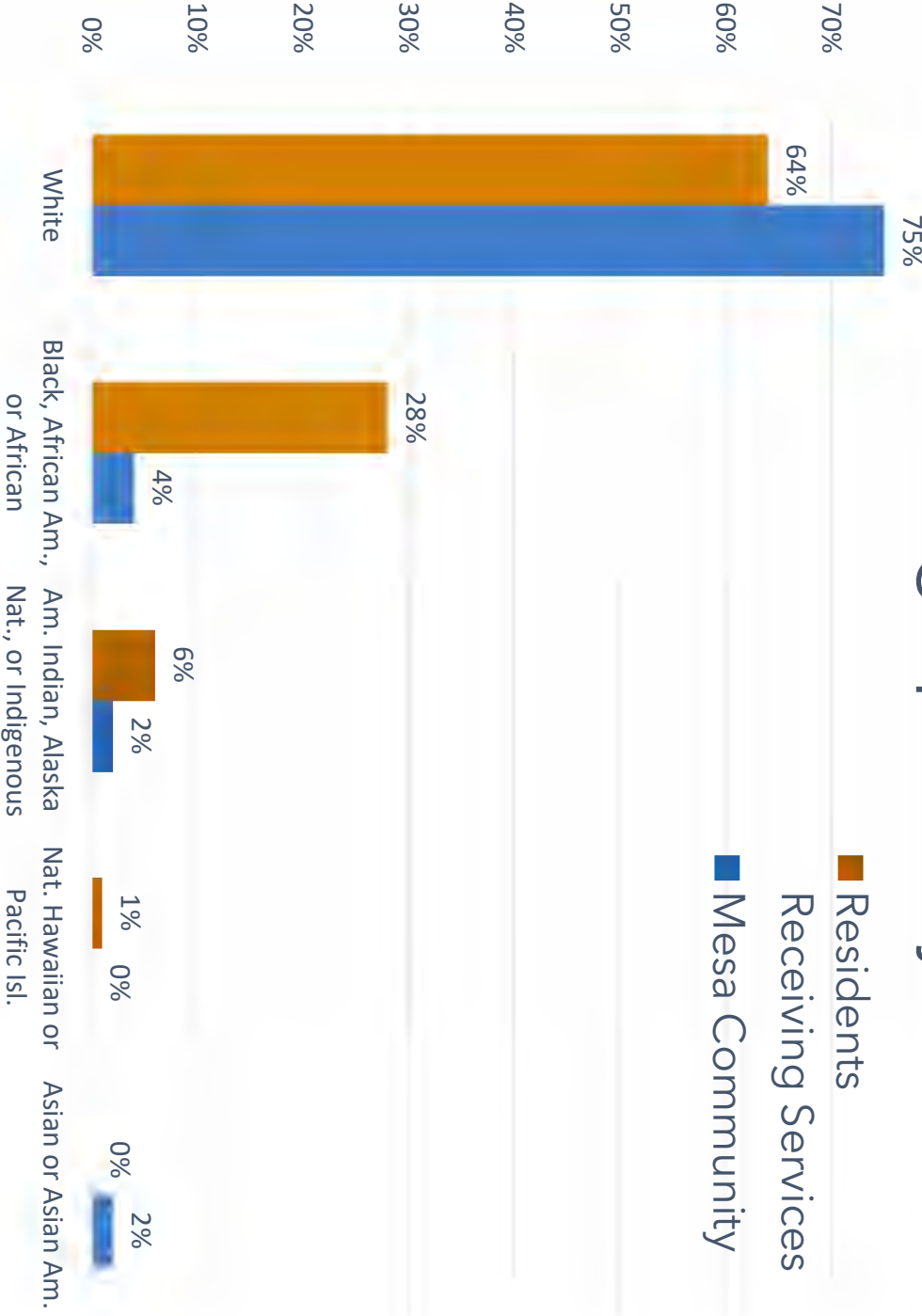
Mesa-Based Data

Demographics

Data source: Regional HMIS and US Census



Demographics by Race

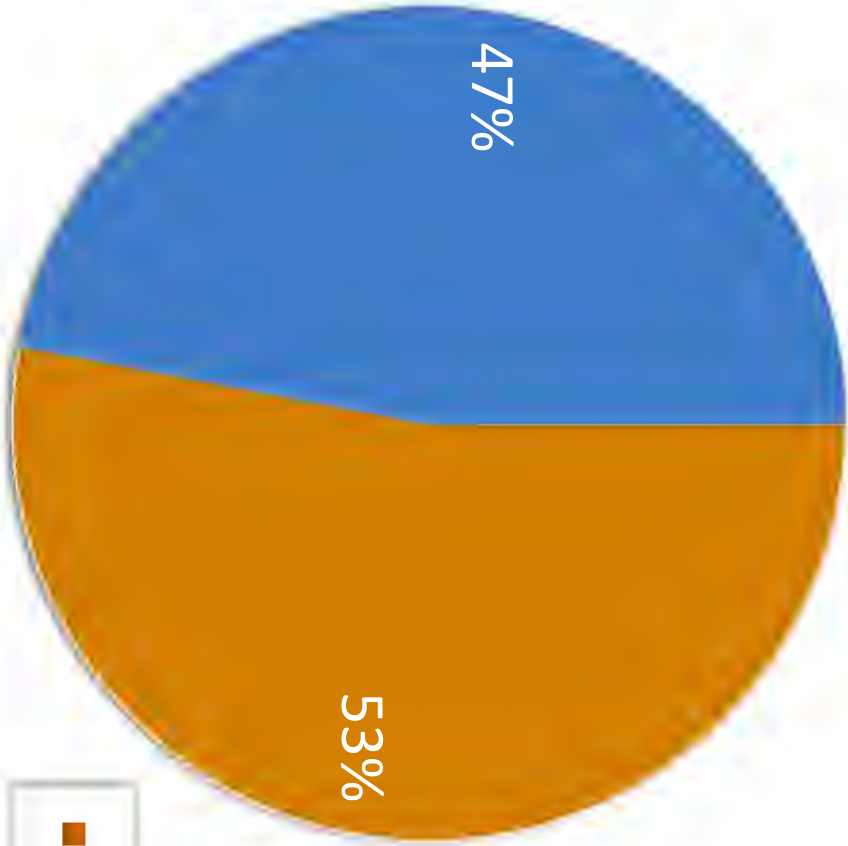


Key Takeaway:
Looking at demographics informs us of who is seeking services in Mesa, and how we need to provide solutions.

Of nearly 5,000 Mesa residents that received homeless services in 2022, African American and Indigenous/American Indian residents are disproportionately represented compared to the Census data for Mesa.



Demographics by Gender



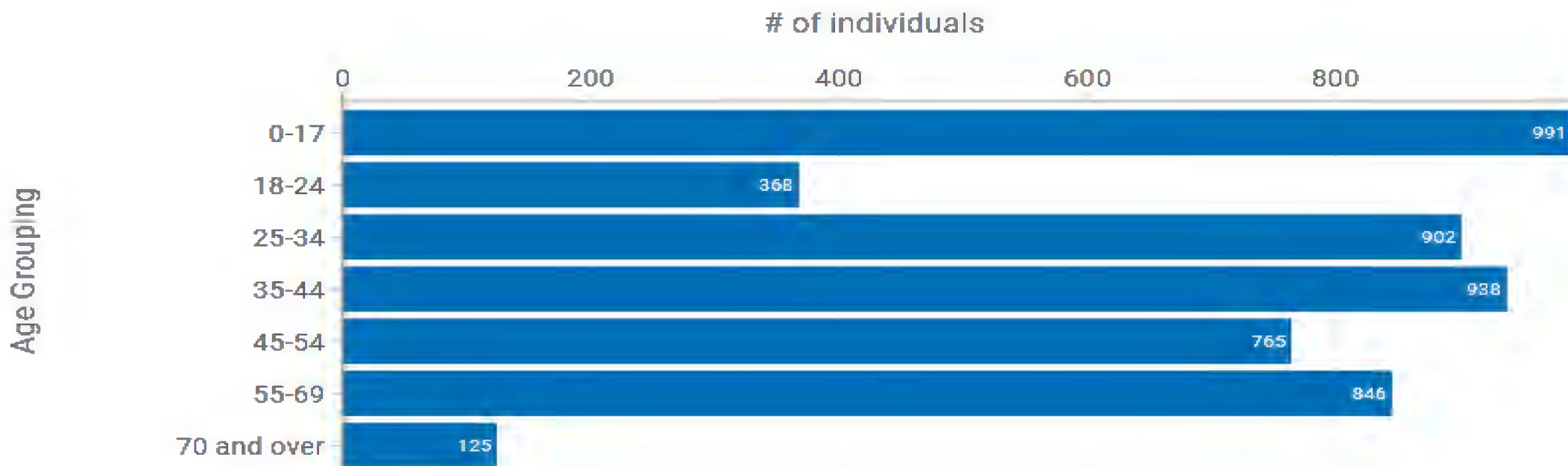
■ Male ■ Female

Key Takeaways:
47% of Mesa residents receiving homeless-related services are female, much higher than the national average.

Demographics by Age

Key Takeaways:

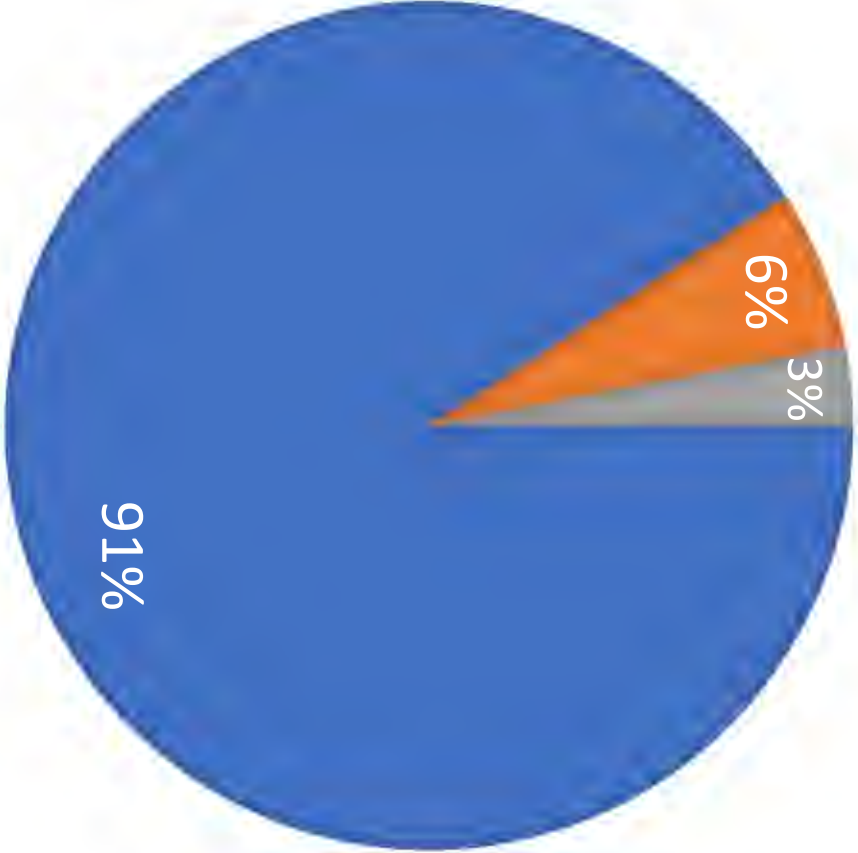
Children make up 20% of our homeless population, those over 55 make up an additional 20%. Highest percentage of adults are aged 35-44.





Mesa Veterans receiving homelessness-related services

2022 Calendar year Yes = veteran receiving services; No = non-veteran receiving services.



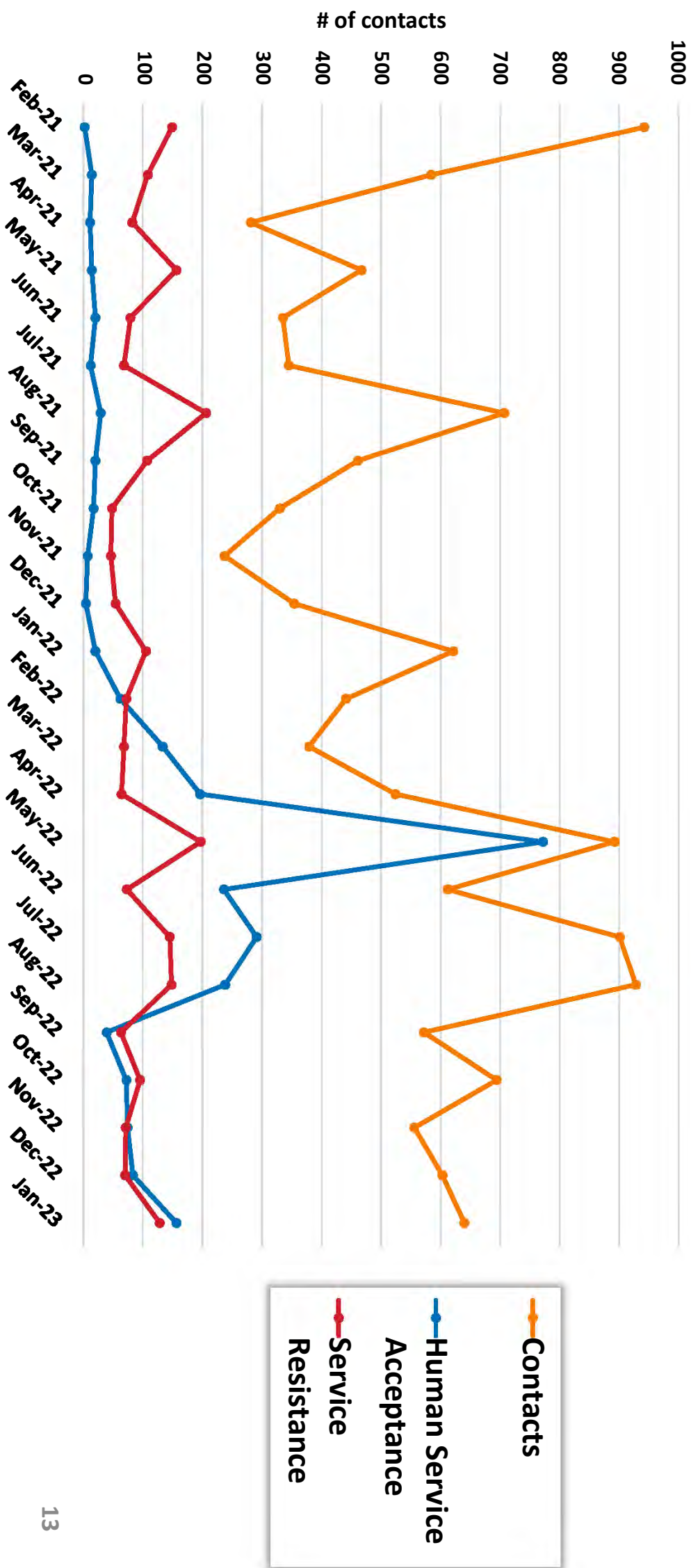
Key Takeaways:
Veterans experiencing homelessness are similar to community demographics. Vets make up 6% of Mesa individuals seeking homeless services.

Mesa-Based Data

Proactive Outreach

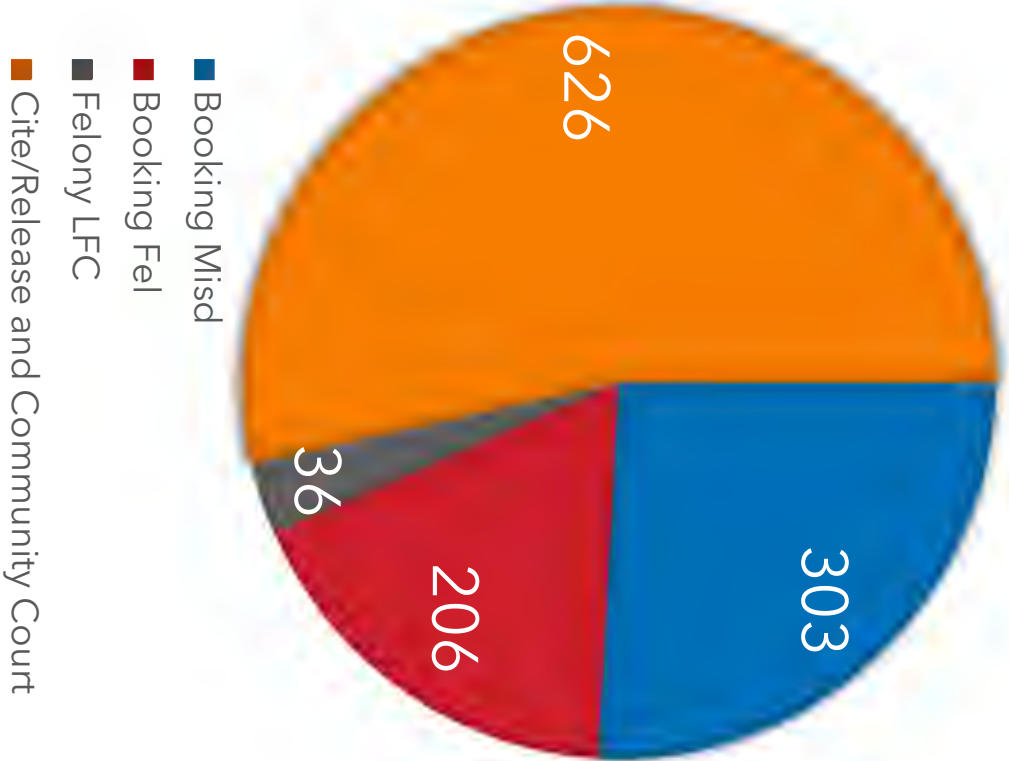
Data source: City of Mesa

Police Proactive Response

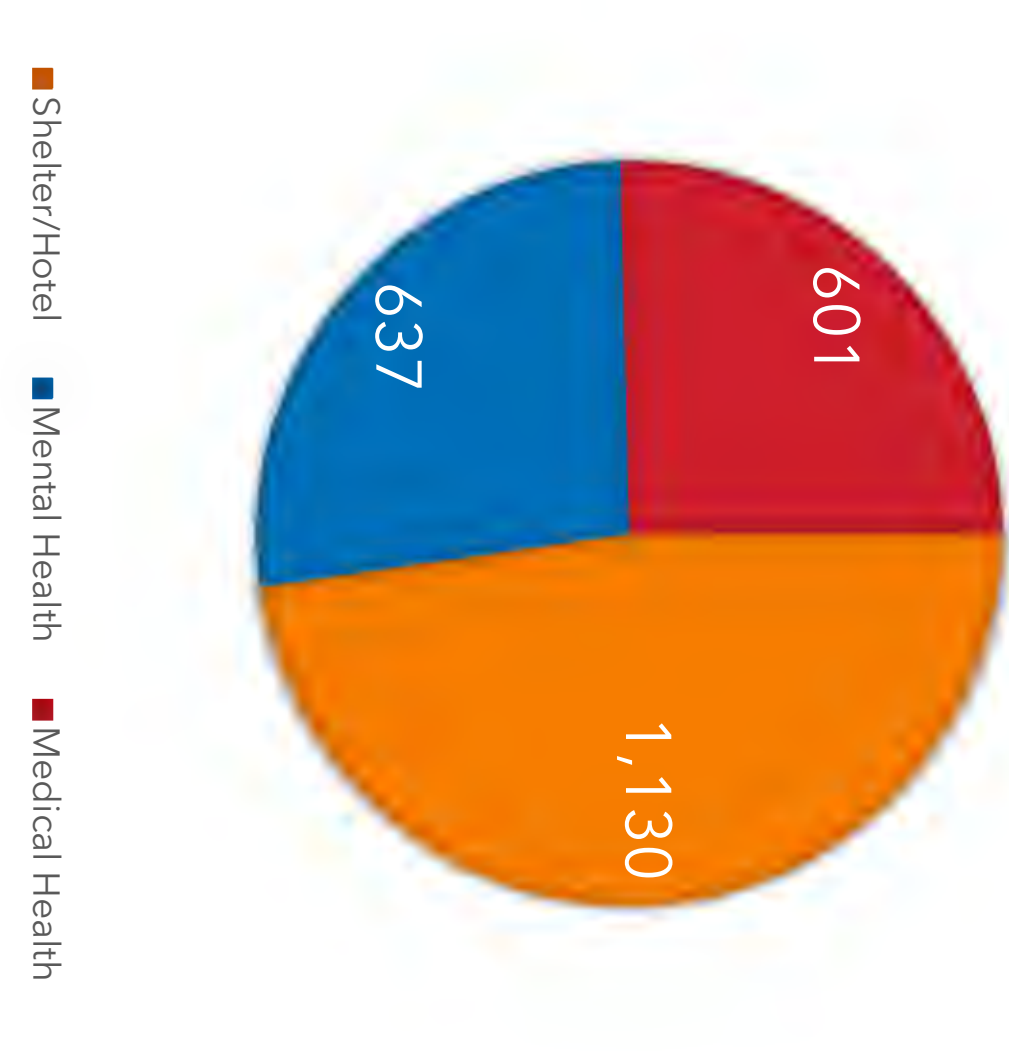


Police Proactive Response

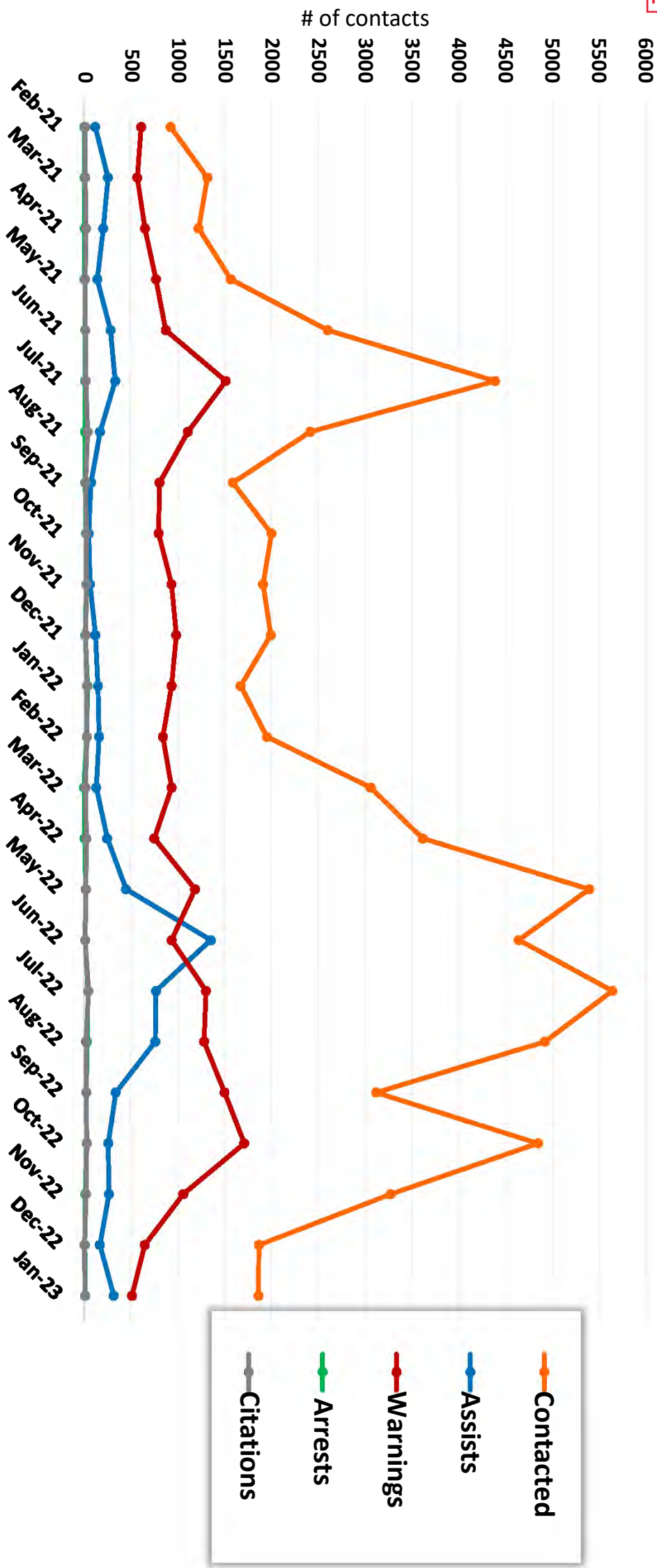
Homeless Outreach Project Arrests



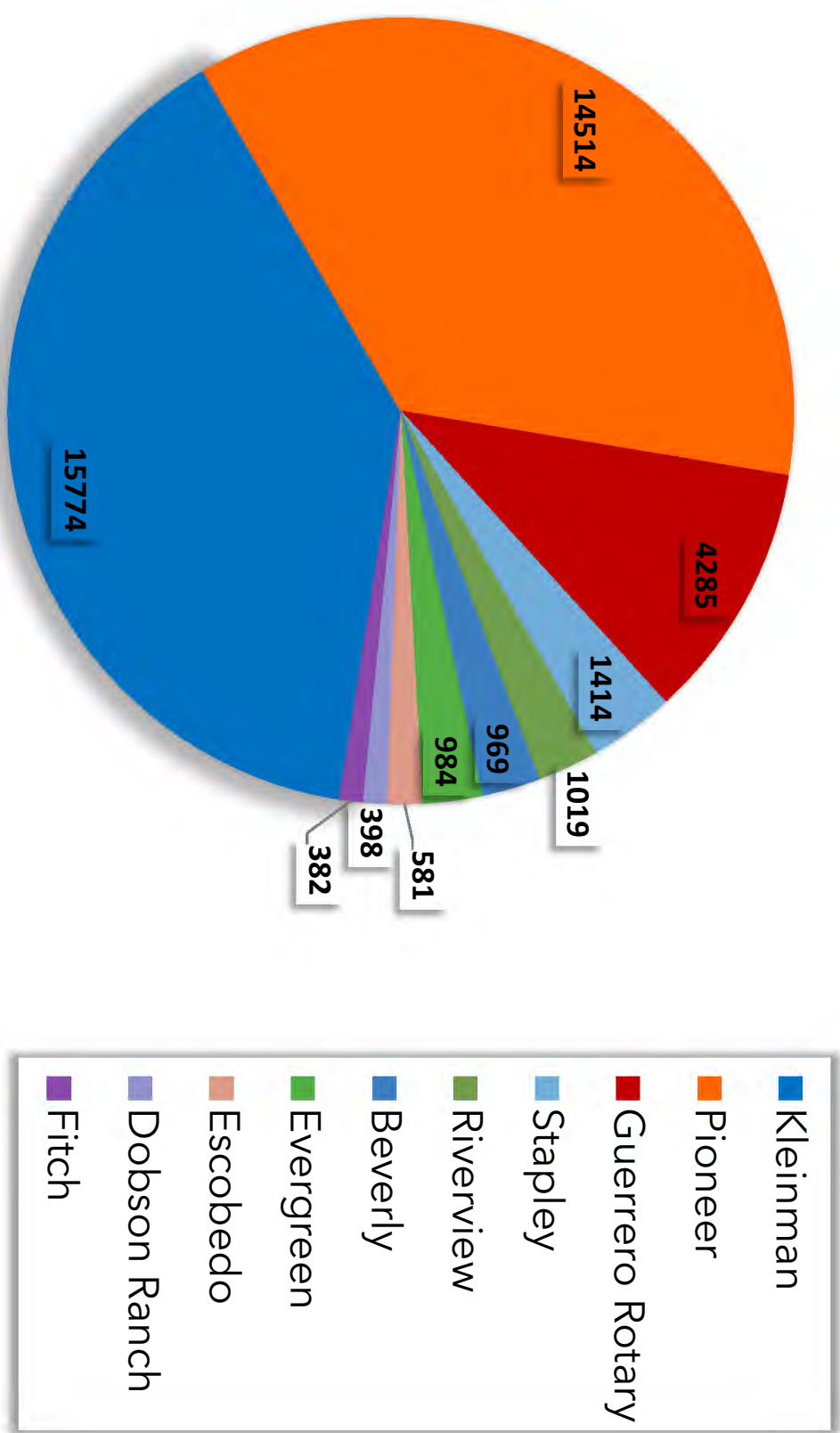
Homeless Outreach Project Services Acceptance



Park Ranger Proactive Response



Homeless Related Contacts by Park





Mesa Program-Specific Data

Data source: City of Mesa and Community Bridges, Inc (HMIS)

Off the Streets Data

Data Current as of: 2/6/2023

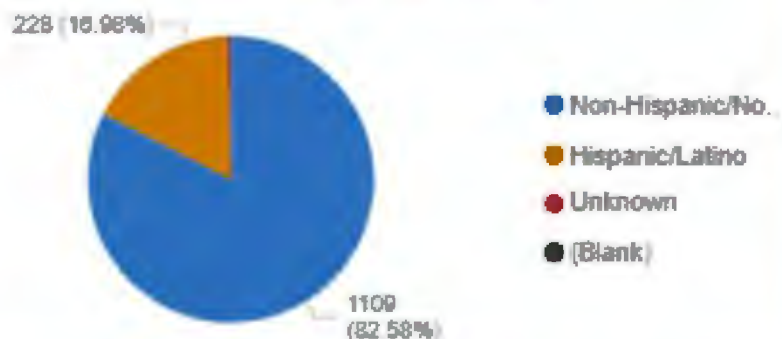
Total Clients Served

1343

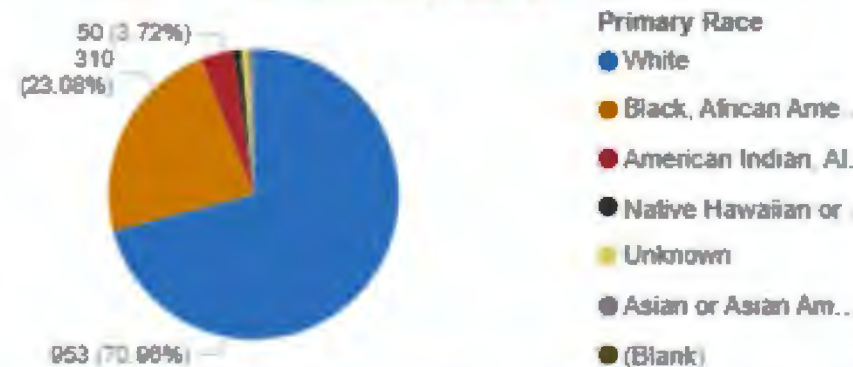
Average Number of Days in the Program



Clients by Ethnicity



Clients by Race



Percentage of Veterans

4.4%

Survivors of Domestic Violence

21.3%

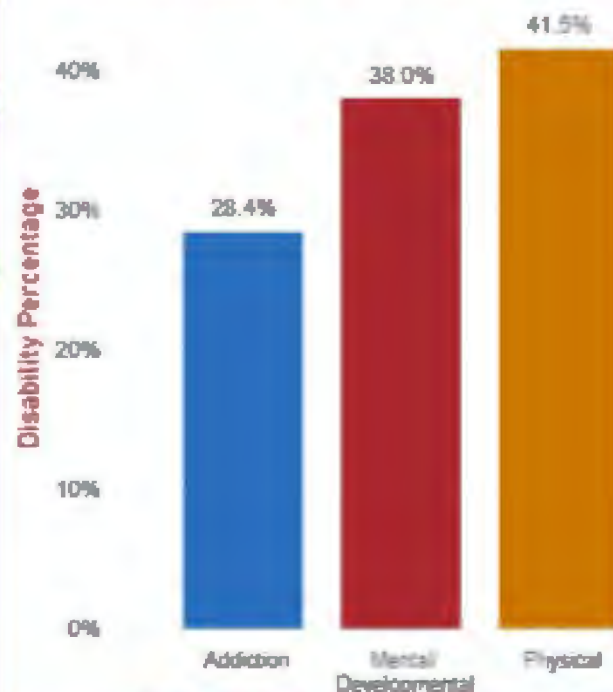
Median Adult Client Age (18+)

45

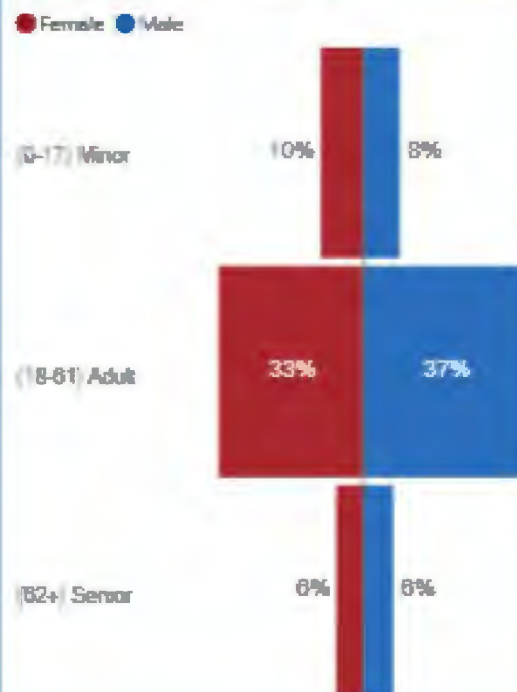
Rate of Positive Exits

74.0%

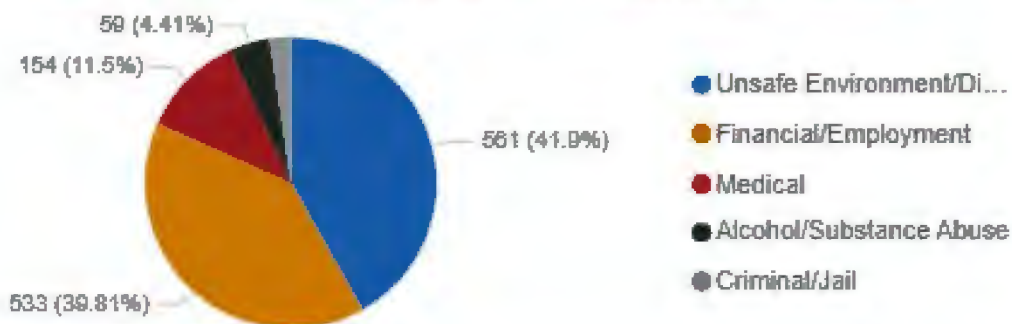
Disabilities Reported by Clients



Clients by Age and Gender



Clients by Primary Reason for Homelessness



Individuals may report more than one disability



Enhanced Resources



Downtown navigators and
business engagement



First Responder
Support

Dedicated line
24/7



Mesa Homeless
Resource Line

480-644-HOPE
(4673)



Additional Solutions in Progress



Summer Heat Relief



Long term sustainability for Off the
Streets Hotel



Feasibility for Transitional Housing
EVMC



Questions?

m.e.s.a.az

