Kent County, Michigan

2026 Utility Payment Assistance and Weatherization Report

Kent County
Essential Needs Task Force

Energy Efficiency

Introduction

The Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) Energy Efficiency Committee envisions a system where utilities use renewable energy and address environmental concerns, homes are energy efficient, and all people in Kent County have consistent and affordable utility services to support household wellbeing.

In service of this vision, member agencies that provide utility payment assistance and weatherization services share data with ENTF. Their data is aggregated in this presentation for a comprehensive look at the services provided in 2025.

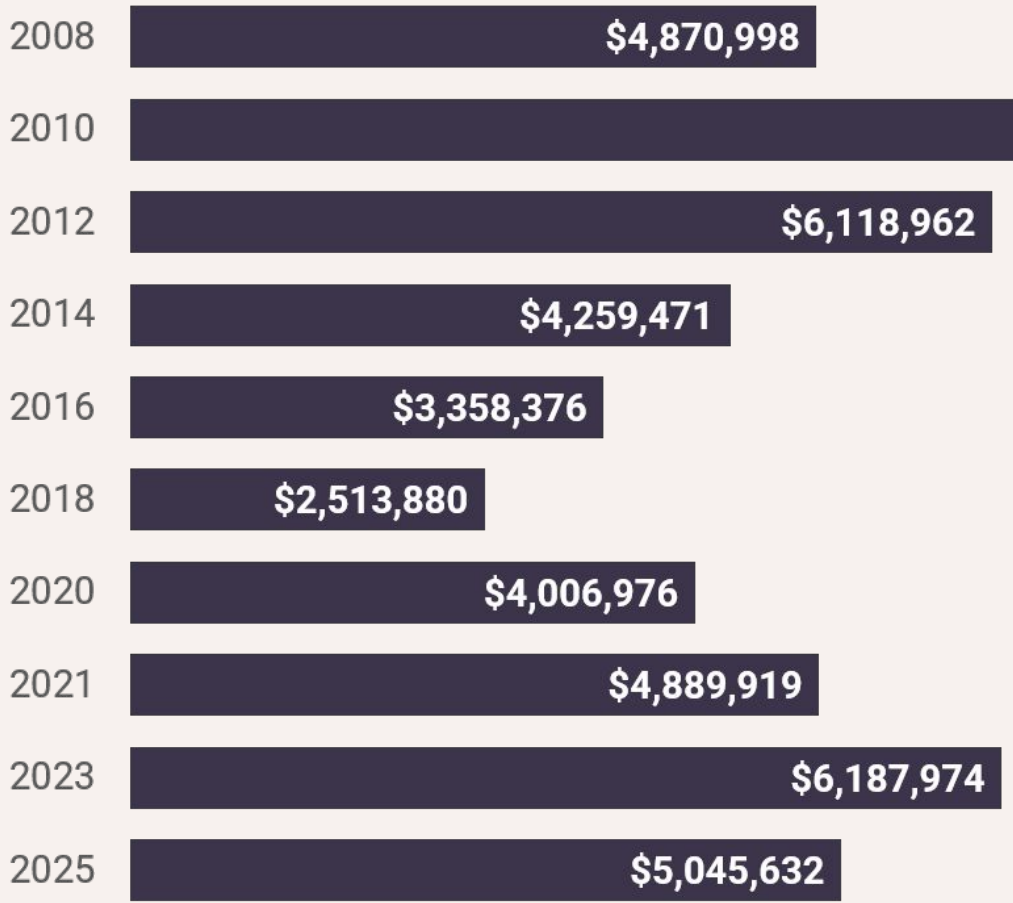


Partner Organizations Providing Data

+ Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
+ The Salvation Army of Kent County
+ Kent County Community Action (KCCA)
+ Senior Neighbors
+ North Kent Connect
+ Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM)
+ Access of West Michigan
+ Heart of West Michigan United Way 2-1-1

Utility Assistance Funding





$ Utility Assistance Funding 2008-2025

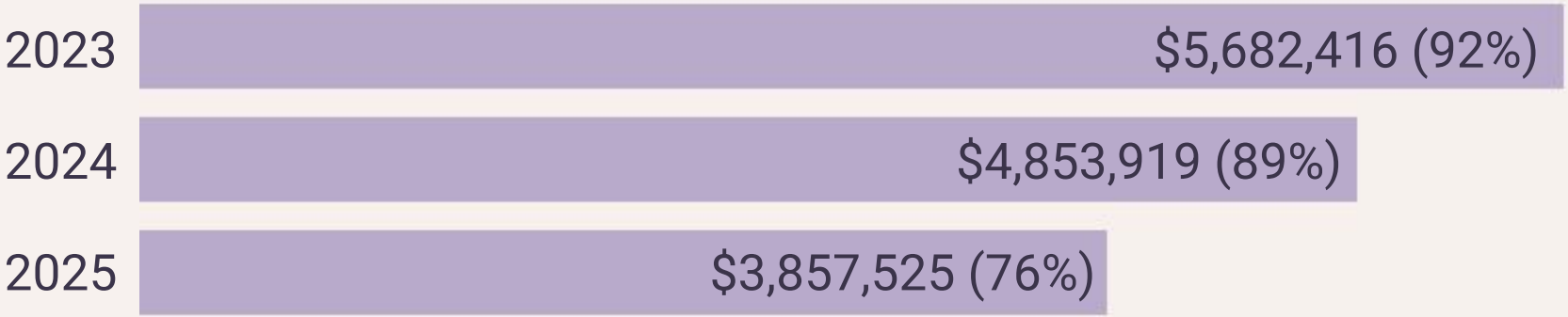
$ Utility Assistance Funding

Funding for utility assistance in Kent County decreased by over $1.1 million since 2023 but is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.



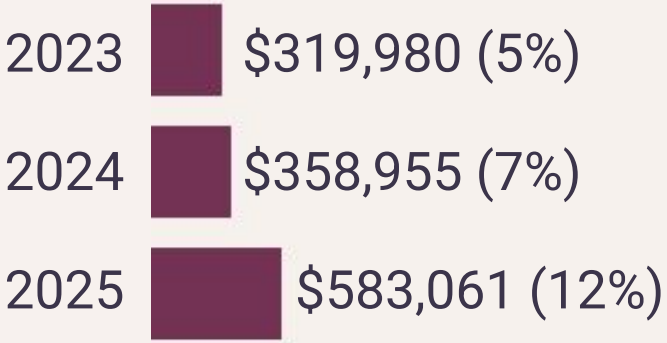
$ State Emergency Relief (SER) Funding

SER funding decreased by over $1.8 million and decreased as a percent of overall utility assistance funding.



$ MI Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) Funding

MEAP funding increased by over $260,000 and increased as a percent of overall utility assistance funding.



Amount of Utility Assistance Payments



$ Electric Assistance Payments

Spending on electric assistance decreased by over $600,000 but remains consistent as a percent of overall utility assistance.



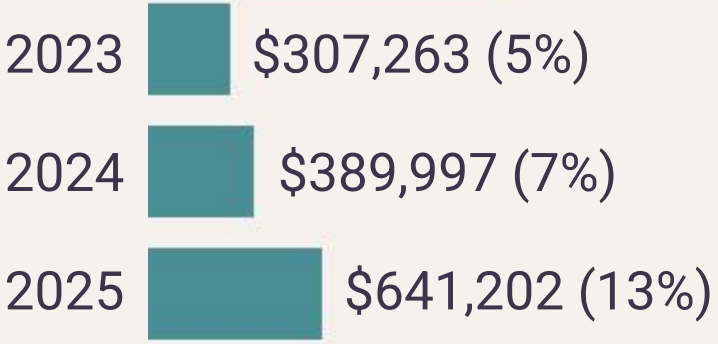
$ Gas and Heating Fuel Assistance Payments

Spending on gas and heating fuel assistance decreased by over $800,000 and decreased as a percent of overall utility assistance.



$ Water Assistance Payments

Spending on water assistance increased by over $300,000 and increased as a percent of overall utility assistance.

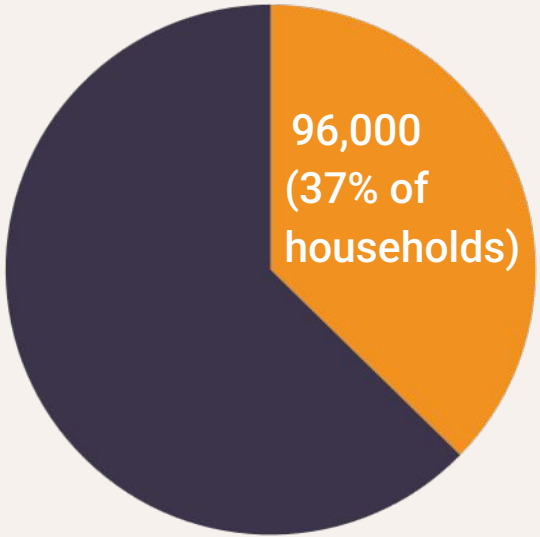


Number of Utility Assistance Payments



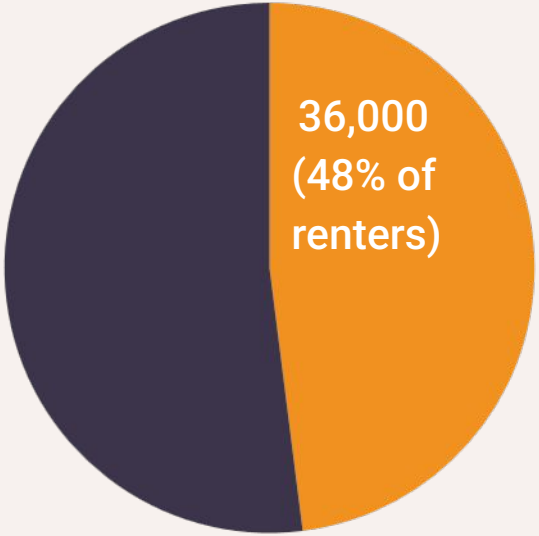
ALICE* Threshold

In Kent County, 96,000 households live below the ALICE Threshold.



Cost Burdened Renters

In Kent County, 36,000 renters are cost burdened (spend more than 30% of their income on housing).



*Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (ALICE)

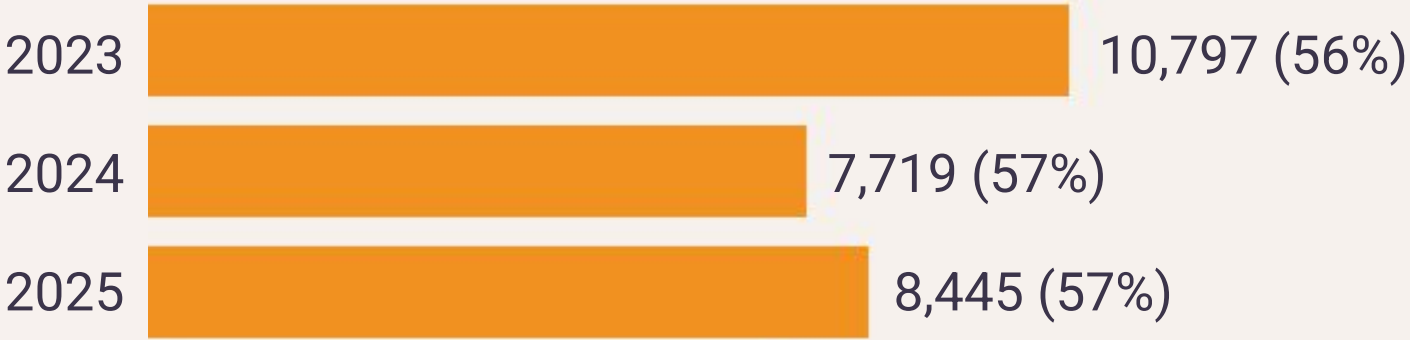
Utility Assistance Payments 2023-2025

Payments for utility assistance decreased in number, with a dip in 2024 when SER was unavailable from June 15 to September 30.



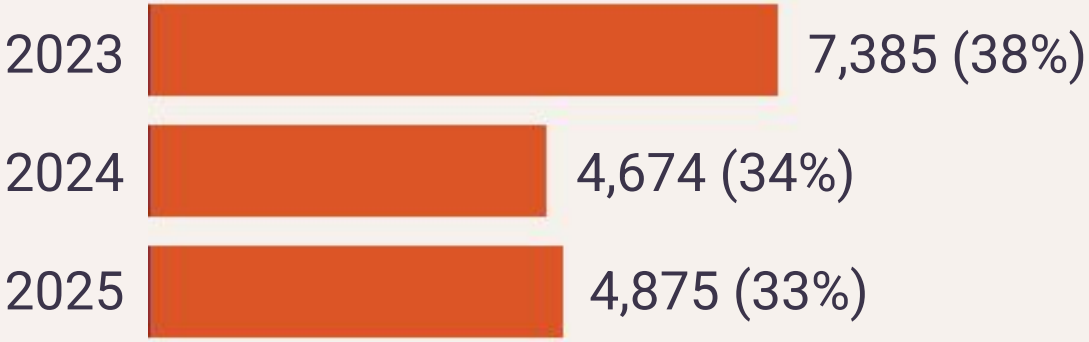
Electric Assistance Payments

Payments for electric assistance decreased in number but remain consistent as a percent of overall utility payments.



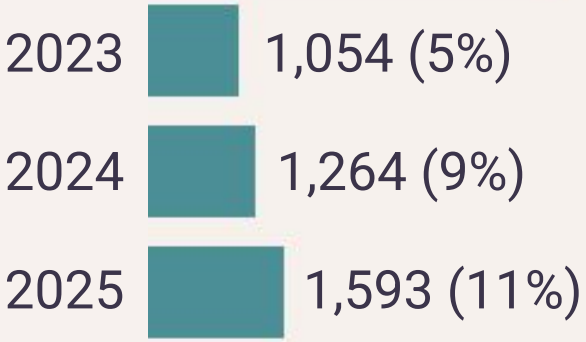
Gas and Heating Fuel Assistance Payments

Payments for gas and heating fuel assistance decreased in number and as a percent of overall utility payments.



Water Assistance Payments

Payments for water assistance increased in number and as a percent of overall utility payments.



Average Amount of Utility Assistance Payments



$ Average Electric Assistance

The average electric assistance payment ranged from $340-$414.



$ Average Gas and Heating Fuel Assistance

The average gas and heating fuel assistance payment ranged from $279-$397.



$ Average Water Assistance

The average water assistance payment increased from $292-$403.

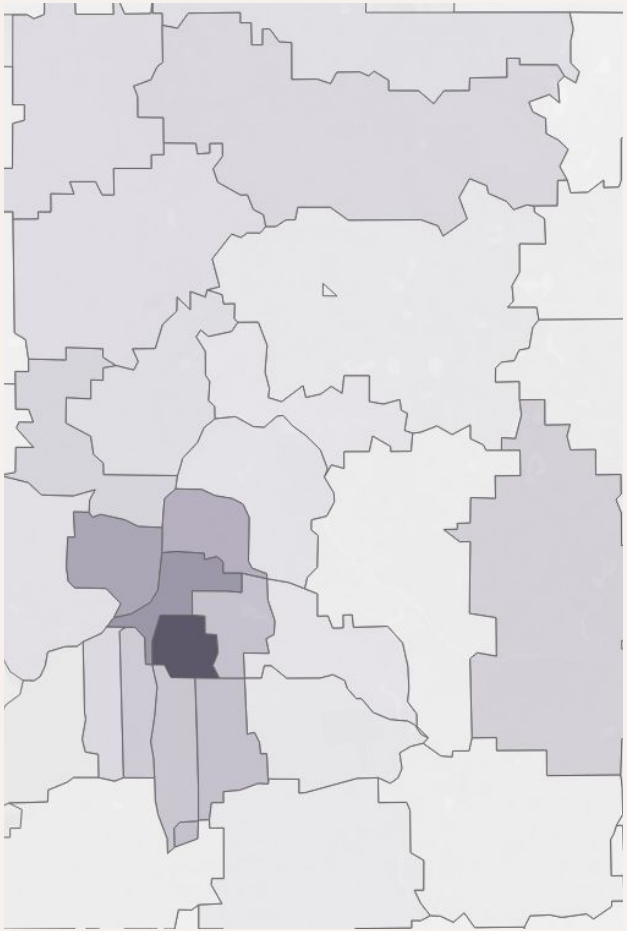


Zip Codes and Federal Poverty Level



Households by Zip Code*

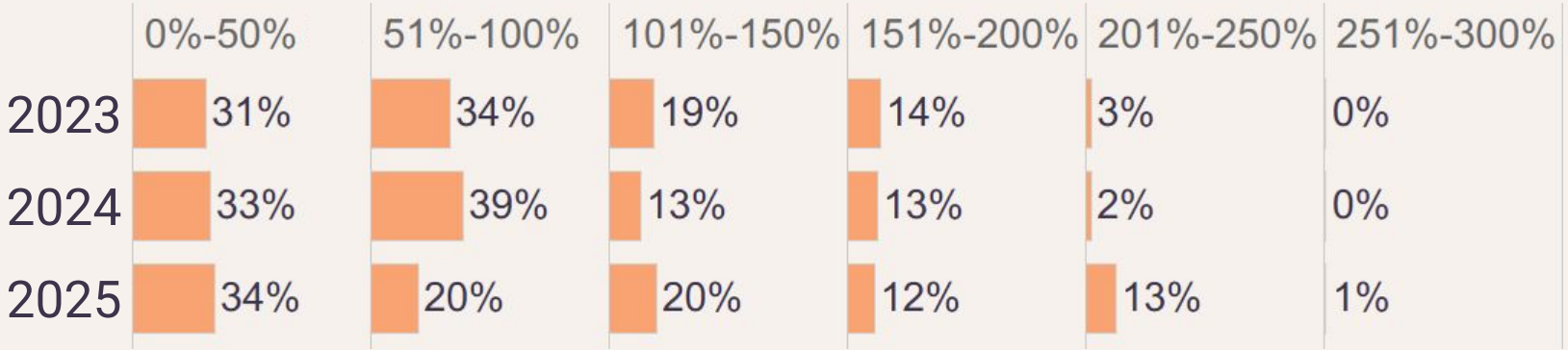
Zip	%HH
49507	1.7%
49503	0.9%
49504	0.7%
49505	0.6%
49506, 49508, 49548	0.4%
49509, 49331	0.3%
All Others	Less



*Data provided for only 2,448 households.

Households Served by Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

In 2023-2024, all households served had incomes of 250% FPL or less, and 97%-98% had incomes at or below 200% FPL.

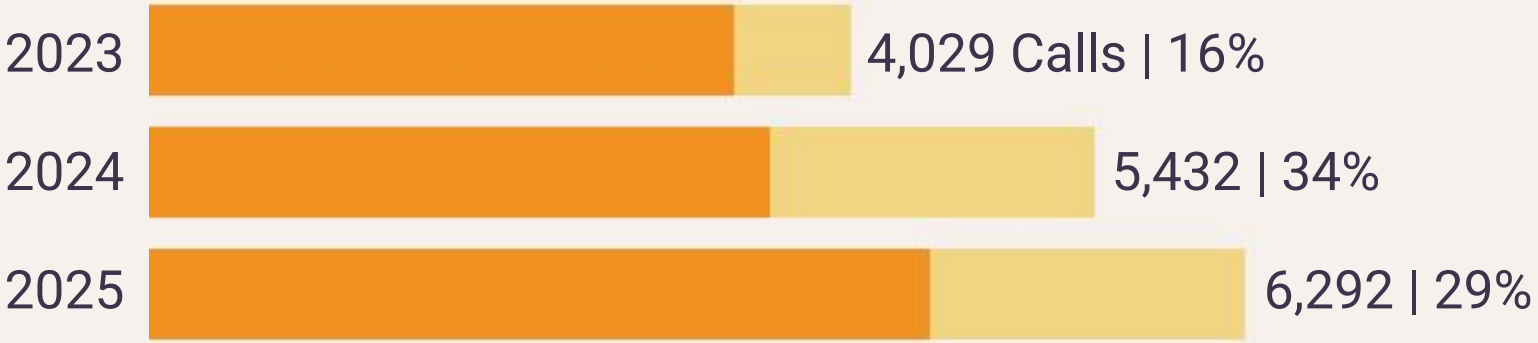


*Data provided for only 1,446 households in 2023, 1,174 in 2024, and 1,567 in 2025.

211 Calls and Unmet Needs

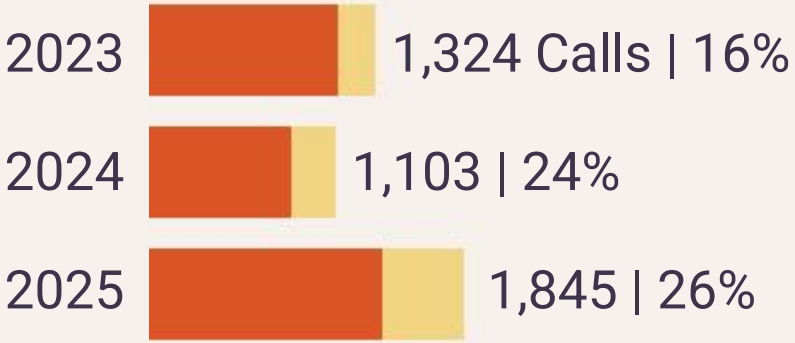
211 Calls for Electric Assistance

The number of calls for electric assistance increased, along with the percent of calls classified as unmet needs.



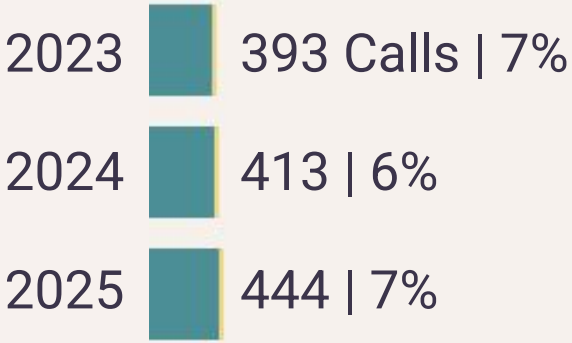
211 Calls for Gas and Heating Fuel Assistance

The number of calls for gas and heating fuel assistance increased, along with the percent of calls classified as unmet needs.



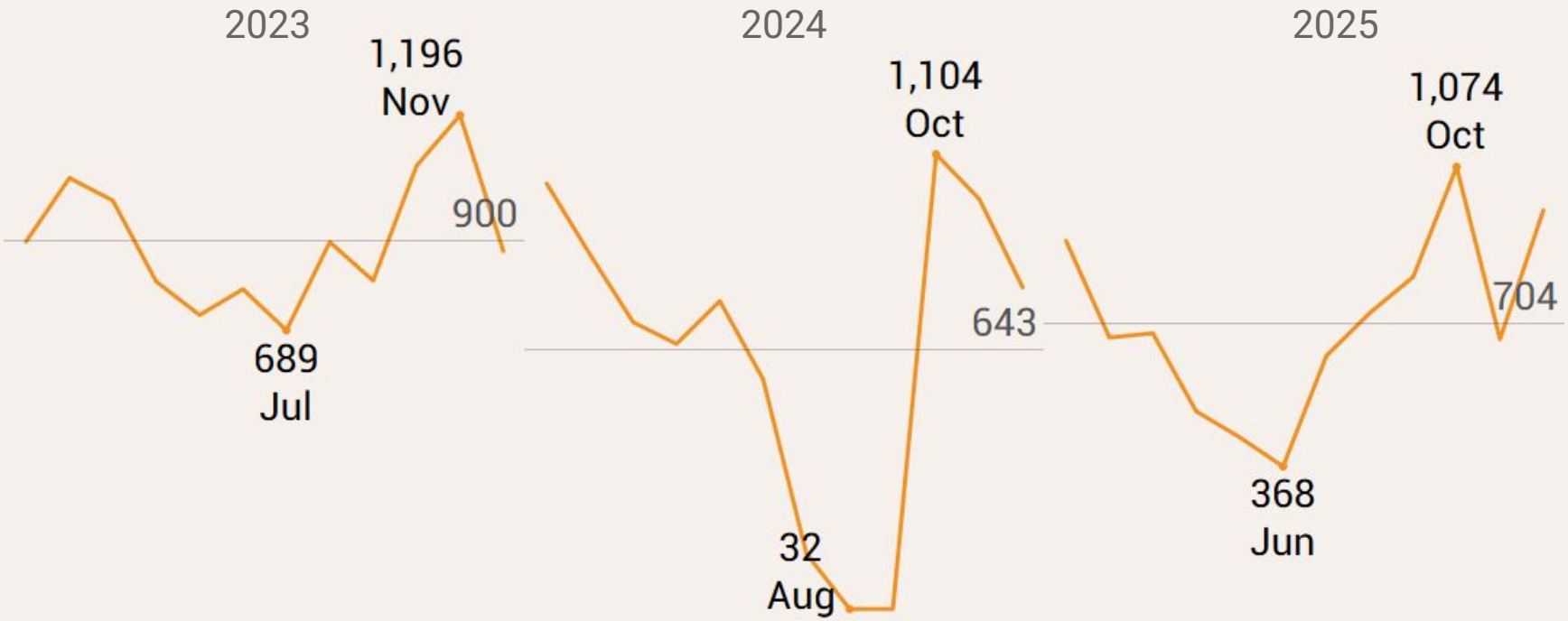
211 Calls for Water Assistance

The number of calls for water assistance was fairly consistent, along with the percent of calls classified as unmet needs.



Number of Assistance Payments and Unmet Needs by Month

Electric Payments by Month



Unmet Need for Electric Assistance



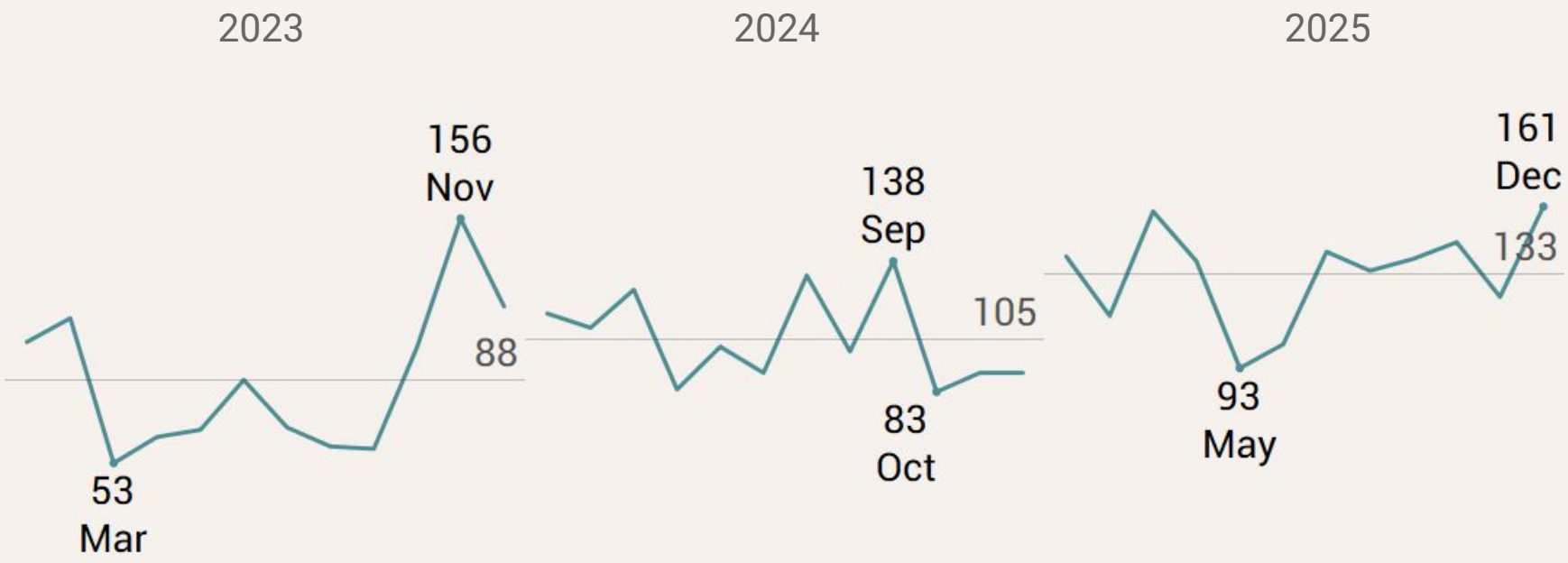
Gas and Heating Fuel Payments by Month



Unmet Needs for Gas and Heating Fuel Assistance



Water Payments by Month



Weatherization



Weatherization

Spending on weatherization increased temporarily in 2024 by over $300,000 then dropped by over $250,000 in 2025.



$ Average Weatherization

The average amount spent on weatherization per household ranged from $2,754-$3,753.



Weatherization Makes Homes More Energy Efficient

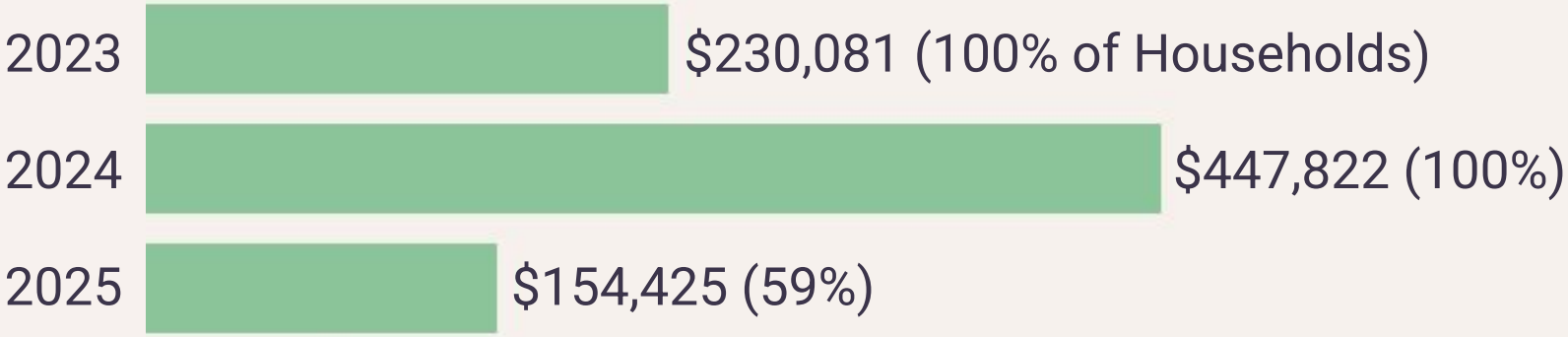
Weatherization is divided into four categories:

- **building shell measures (e.g. insulation, windows),**
- **electric and water measures (e.g. light bulbs, water filter),***
- **health and safety measures (e.g. air purifier), and**
- **mechanical measures (e.g. furnace, water heater).**

*From 2023-2025, no spending was reported for electric and water measures.

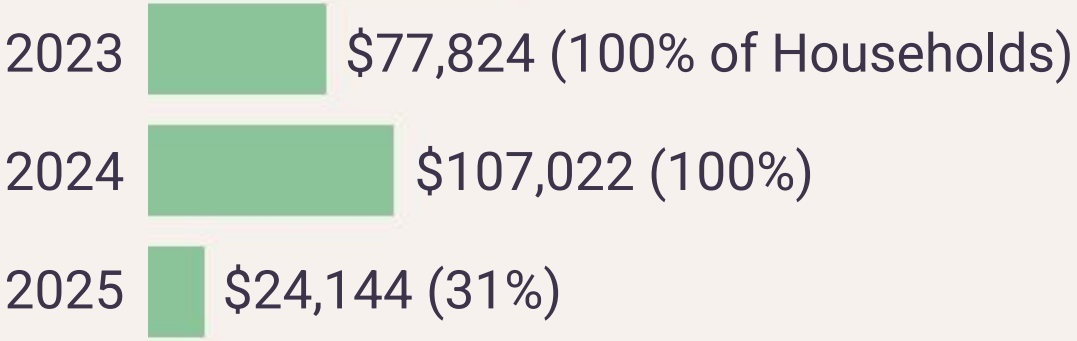
Building Shell Measures

In 2025, only 59% of households received building shell measures compared to 100% in 2023 and 2024.



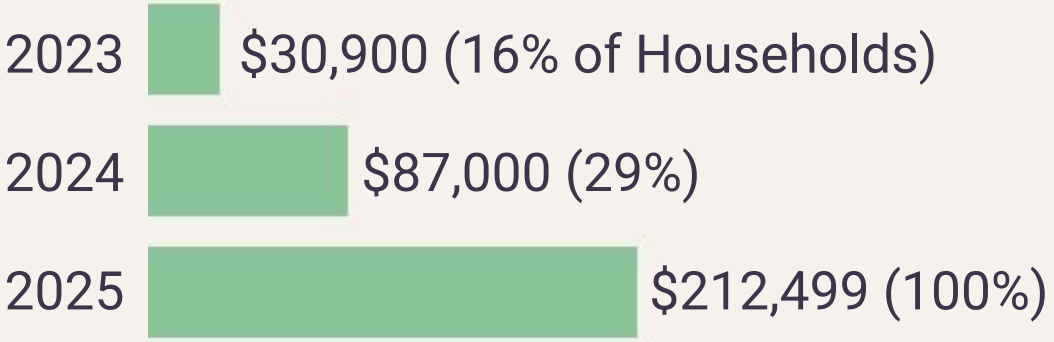
Health and Safety Measures

In 2025, only 31% of household received health and safety measures compared to 100% in 2023 and 2024.



Mechanical Measures

In 2025, 100% of household received mechanical measures compared to 16% in 2023 and 29% in 2024.



MDHHS Non-Discrimination Clause

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy.

Thank you!

If you have any questions about this presentation, reach out to us at entf@hwmuw.org.

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