



# *Safe at Home*

*Minnesota's Address Confidentiality Services*

# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE JANUARY 2025

Reporting Period: January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024



Office of the Minnesota  
Secretary of State  
Steve Simon

## Cost of Report Preparation

The total cost for the Office of the Secretary of State to prepare this report was approximately \$4,389.13. Most of these costs involved staff time to analyze data and prepare the written report. Incidental costs include paper, copying, and other office supplies.

Estimated costs are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2016, Section 3.197, requiring the cost for preparing a report to be provided at the beginning of a report to the legislature.

## Safe at Home Overview

Safe at Home is the address confidentiality services division of the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. It began September 1, 2007, and is open to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and those who otherwise fear for their safety, including law enforcement and judicial personnel. The most common reason for enrollment is domestic violence.

Participants in Safe at Home are assigned a designated address (a PO Box in Saint Paul) that can legally be used for all interactions with others. The designated address allows the participant to go about their daily life without disclosing their actual home, employment, or school address. All private and public entities in the state of Minnesota must accept the Safe at Home address as a participant's actual address per Minn. Stat. § 5B.05(a).

Safe at Home receives participants' mail, forwards their First-Class Mail to them, helps them understand the use of their Safe at Home address, and assists them with their interactions with third parties should problems arise when giving the Safe at Home address to others. Staff also work with third-party stakeholders, such as county offices, utility companies, banks, and schools, to ensure legal compliance and to make sure their business practices accommodate the safety needs of Safe at Home participants.

# Participation and Total Served

## Participation Numbers

Safe at Home participation continues to experience an annual net growth. Since its inception in 2007, a net growth of individuals and households enrolled has occurred every year. Enrollment continues to climb.

Table 1: Individuals and Households Enrolled

Number of Individual Participants as of December 31, 2024	4,652
Number of Participant Households as of December 31, 2024	2,170

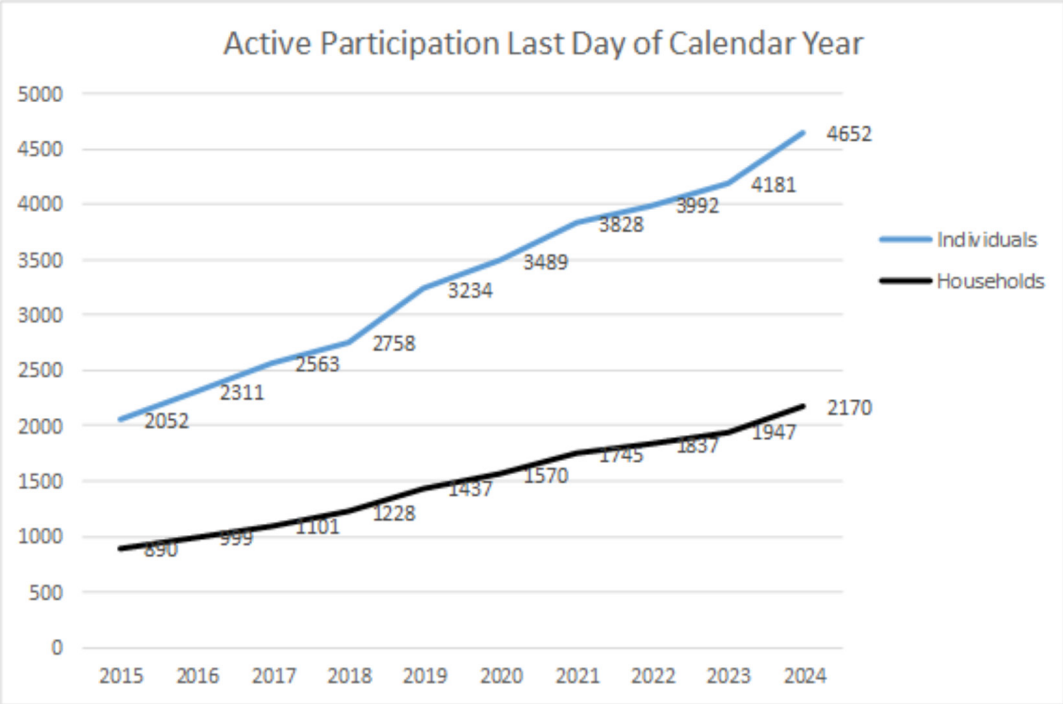
## Demographic Makeup

Historically, the demographic breakdown of Safe at Home participants has remained consistent.

Table 2: Demographic Breakdown

Female Adult	Male Adult	Unknown Gender Adult	Children
43%	7%	1%	49%

Figure 1: Participants on the Last Day of the Calendar Year

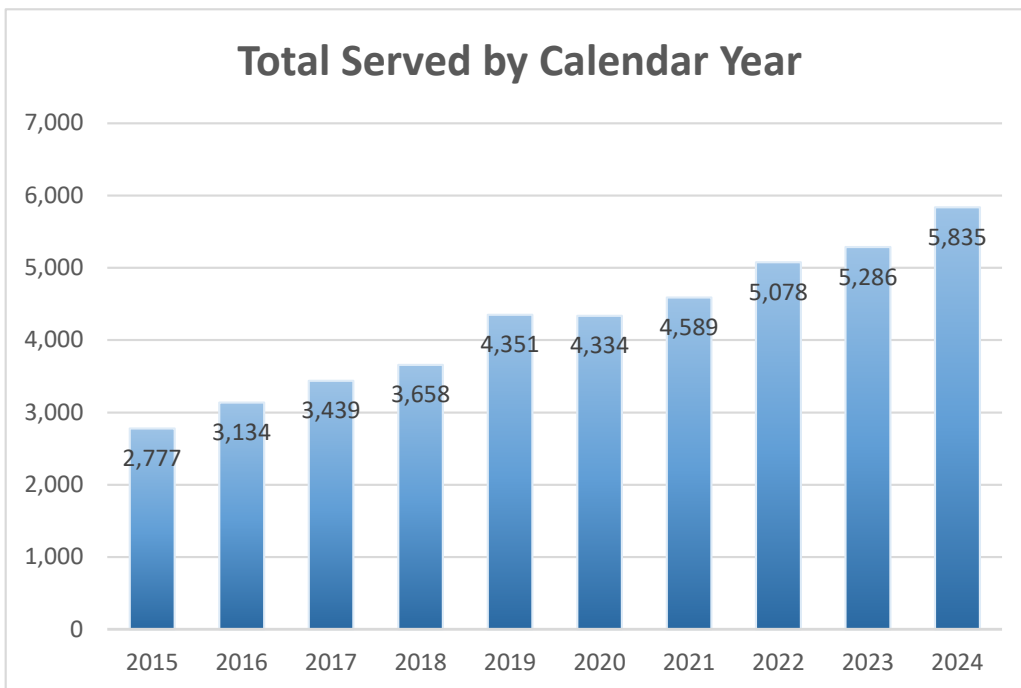


## Participants and Applicants Served Annually

Most of the people Safe at Home serves are considered to have the state’s most serious public safety threat or experience. Sometimes referred to as “the worst of the worst” situations, many applicants apply to Safe at Home as a last resort after exhausting other safety tactics that proved to be unsuccessful.

Since Safe at Home began in September of 2007, nearly 7,000 separate Minnesota households have applied to utilize Safe at Home services to augment their safety efforts. On average, a household consists of 2.17 individuals. Many households have enrolled, been cancelled or withdrew, and then re-enrolled due to subsequent safety concerns. The number of Minnesotans served by Safe at Home has steadily increased each year. A person “served” is defined as someone who was either an active participant at some time during the calendar year or someone who applied for enrollment but failed to respond to subsequent requests for additional information required to certify their application. “Total Served” does not include other services Safe at Home provides to the public on a daily basis, such as in-depth discussions with victims who ultimately choose not to apply for enrollment, assistance provided to current Safe at Home participants, and discussions with third party stakeholders who need a better understanding of Safe at Home laws and how they should develop safe procedures for participants. Therefore, “Total Served” has a limited scope. In any given calendar year, the true number of individuals served broadly by all Safe at Home services greatly surpasses the “Total Served” number reported. 5,835 participants and applicants were served in 2024.

Figure 2: Total Served by Calendar Year



## Applications Received

### All Applications Received

There are four types of Safe at Home applications. The first type is a new application from someone who has never previously applied. The second type is a reinstatement from a former Safe at Home participant whose status became inactive because either they withdrew voluntarily or they were cancelled, and they wish to re-enroll. The third type is a renewal application from a current active Safe at Home participant who wishes to re-certify their participation for another four years. The fourth application type is called a Certificate Continuance. This is received from an 18-year-old who still resides with the parent or guardian who enrolled them and by submitting the Certificate Continuance Application they indicate they still reside with that person, still want to remain in Safe at Home, and indicate they understand it is now their legal responsibility, as the subject of their data, to communicate with the Safe at Home office directly and submit their own changes of information (address or otherwise).

### Number of Applications by Type

Table 3 shows the number of each type of application received in 2024. An application is for a household. It often contains multiple people in a household who are requesting enrollment.

Table 3: Number of Applications by Type

New Applications	<b>619</b>
Reinstatement Applications	<b>280</b>
Renewal Applications	<b>152</b>
Certificate Continuance Applications	<b>66</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,117</b>

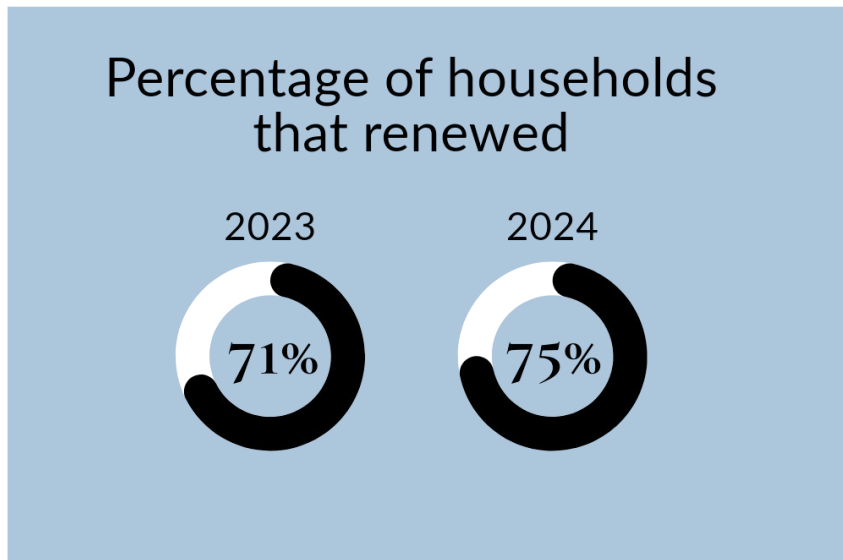
## Renewals and Reinstatements

Safe at Home enrollment is valid for four years. At the end of four years, the participant is given the opportunity to renew their participation. The participant is sent a Renewal Application form that they complete and return to the Safe at Home office if they desire to continue their household's participation. There is no limit to how many times a household can renew its participation if eligibility criteria are met. There are people that have been enrolled in Safe at Home for more than a decade.

In 2024, 405 households reached the end of their four-year certification and were eligible to renew. 69% of those households submitted a Renewal Application before their certification expired. 22 households that did not submit a Renewal Application in time and were consequently cancelled, promptly submitted a Reinstatement Application thereby choosing to continue their Safe at Home participation.

Because participation in Safe at Home is completely voluntary, a participant may choose to withdraw at any time. Under certain circumstances, a person's Safe at Home participation may be involuntarily cancelled. The most common reason for cancellation is the participant's failure to update Safe at Home by providing their new physical address. In any case, a former participant may choose to re-apply if they meet eligibility criteria. This type of re-enrollment is called a "reinstatement."

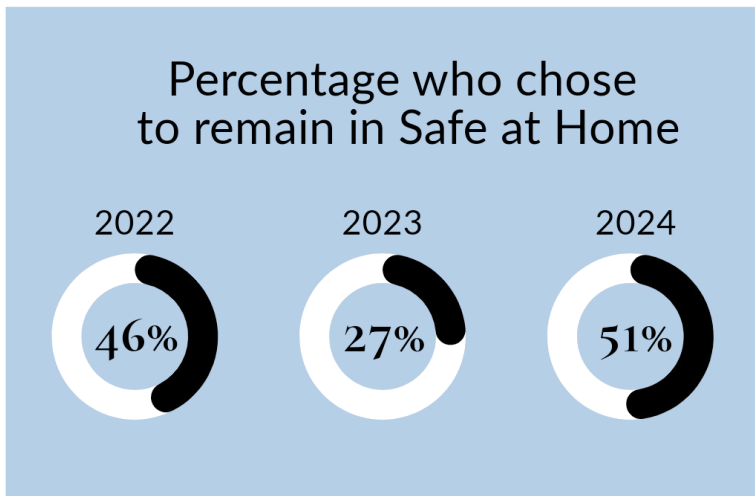
Figure 3: Renewals



## Certification Continuance Application

When an active participant reaches majority age (18 years-old), they are required to formally indicate their desire to remain in Safe at Home. A form entitled Certification Continuance is mailed to them. If the young adult continues to reside with the parent who enrolled them as a minor, the Safe at Home office must receive the completed form within 30 days of their 18th birthday in order to avoid cancellation.

Figure 4 shows percentages, over the last three years, of 18-year-olds who chose to remain in Safe at Home.



If the young adult has moved out of their parent's home and the young adult desires to maintain their Safe at Home participation, they are required to meet with a Safe at Home Application Assistant to complete an initial application and participate in individualized safety planning with the victim advocate. This requirement is in the best interest of the participant's personal safety and is mandated per Minnesota Rules, part 8290.0600, subpart 3. These occurrences are rare. Most young adults who continue their participation still reside with the parent who enrolled them. Therefore, they simply return the completed Certification Continuance form to the Safe at Home office.

## Safe at Home Application Assistants

Safe at Home is a successful private sector–government partnership that utilizes limited state resources to recruit, train, and monitor the application work of application assistants. Application assistants are victim advocates who are employed by community-based organizations throughout Minnesota. As of December 31, 2024, Safe at Home had partnerships with 98 different community-based organizations and 384 individual application assistants.

The role of the application assistant is vital. The Safe at Home Application Assistant meets one-on-one with a potential applicant to discuss their situation and help them determine whether applying to Safe at Home is an appropriate safety step for them to take. During this process, the application assistant helps them understand Safe at Home basics, performs individualized safety planning, and guides the application process.

To ensure enough application assistants are always available throughout the state, Safe at Home provides initial trainings to advocates several times a year. Continuing education is provided on an as-needed basis to teach application assistants about legislative changes, to train victim advocates about the unique safety needs of Safe at Home participants, and to keep application skills up to date. Beyond this training and ongoing support, the community-based organizations and individual staff are not compensated by Safe at Home. In 2024, the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State provided training to 174 victim advocates in order to maintain an adequate number available to assist eligible Minnesotans.

Table 4, Safe at Home Application Assistant Activity 2024, shows the number of application assistants accredited to assist with the Safe at Home application process as of December 31, 2024, as well as the number of victim advocates who were either initially trained to be partners or who were provided with continuing education during the 2024 calendar year.

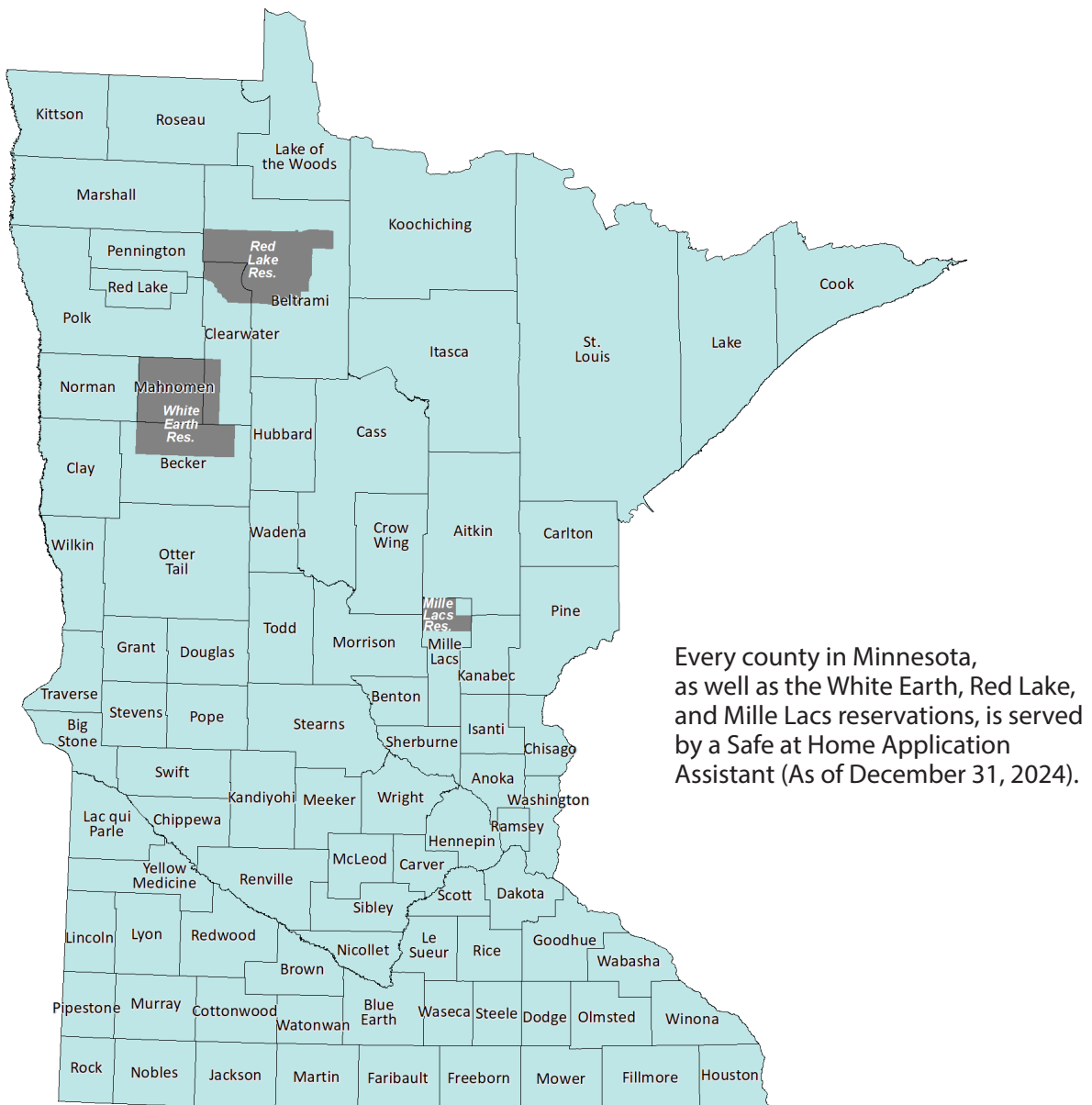
Safe at Home Application Assistant Activity 2024	
Number of Application Assistants as of December 31, 2024 Note: Application assistants are employees of community-based organizations.	384
Number of Application Assistants Who Were Provided Initial Training or Continued Education January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024	174



## Geographical Areas Served by Minnesota Safe at Home

The map shows the geographical coverage of counties and tribal governments served by community-based organizations where application assistants were able to assist victims with the application process as of December 31, 2024, comprehensive state coverage continued. Every county and three tribal nations in Minnesota were served by at least one partnering community-based organization.

The map below shows the geographical coverage of counties and tribal governments.

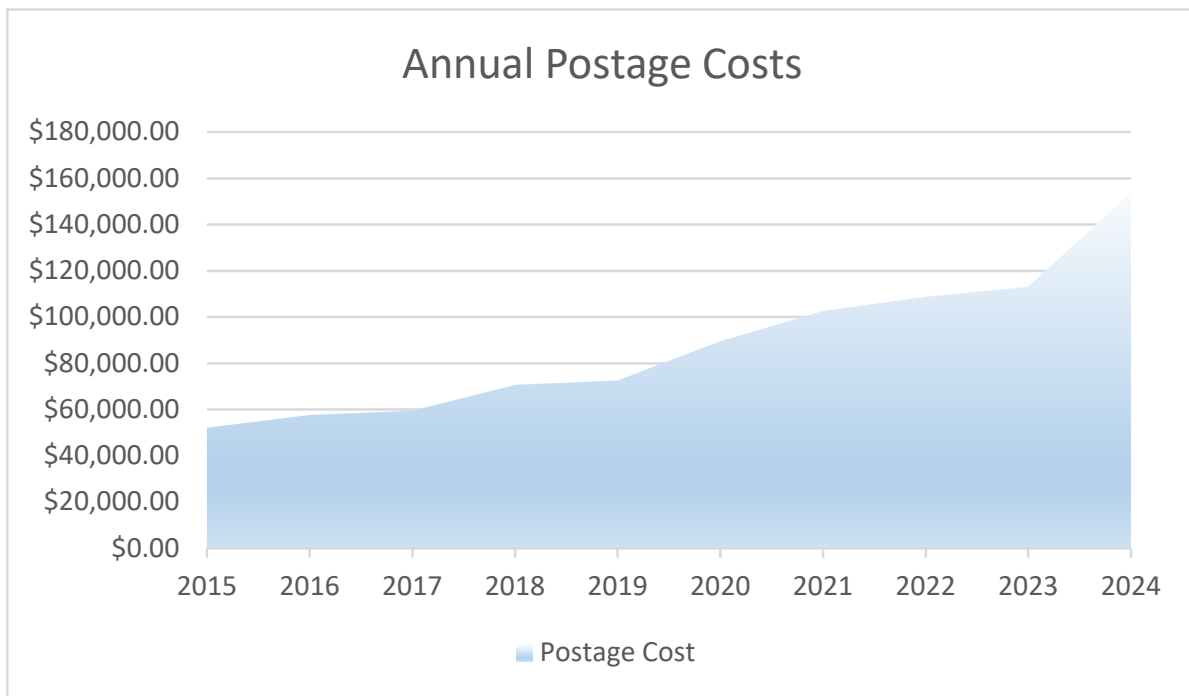


## Postage Costs

In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 5B.05(a), when another party learns that someone is a Safe at Home participant, they are required to mail correspondence to the participant’s Safe at Home address. As the agent to receive mail for all participants, the Office of the Secretary of State pays for and manages the post office box where all Safe at Home mail is sent. Therefore, one of the main functions of the Safe at Home Division is to process all participant mail. The office is required to forward to participants their properly addressed First-Class Mail, identifiable pharmaceuticals, and packages that are sent by a federal, state, or county government agency. Other mail is either refused, returned to sender, or in cases of bulk advertisement or junk mail, shredded or recycled.

Each year, mail volume and postage expense continue to climb. In calendar year 2015, postage costs were \$46,544.52. In calendar year 2024, postage costs totaled \$153,963.67, a 36% increase from 2023. The increase can be attributed to growth, an increase in outreach efforts, and the mailing of absentee voting materials.

Figure 5 shows yearly postage costs over the past decade.



Beginning in 2024, the United States Postal Service (USPS) changed from implementing annual rate increases (with very few exceptions during the last 20 years) to biannual rate increases. The increases are part of the USPS’s Delivering for America 10-year plan. Rate increases now occur in January and July. Some increases are expected to be higher than the average three percent experienced in the past. The exact type of increase is not known until shortly before the rate increase takes effect, which makes planning difficult. USPS rate increases directly impact Safe at Home outgoing mail, including but not limited to, pharmaceuticals (which are sent to a participant by Priority Mail), enrollment materials, absentee ballots and voting materials, and participants’ personal First-Class Mail.

## 2024 Growth

Table 5 shows the overall growth experienced in 2024.

<b>Description</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
Number of active participants as of December 31, 2024	4,181	4,652	11%
Number of participating households as of December 31, 2024	1,947	2,170	12%
Number of participants as applicants served in calendar year	5,286	5,835	10%
Number of applications received in calendar year	906	1,117	23%
Number of households eligible for renewal during calendar year	310	405	31%
Total percentage of households that chose to continue their participation at the end of their four-year certification	71%	75%	4%
Total percentage of 18-year-olds who chose to continue their participation	27%	51%	24%
Postage costs per calendar year	\$113,034	\$153,964	36%

Questions about this report can be directed to:

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