

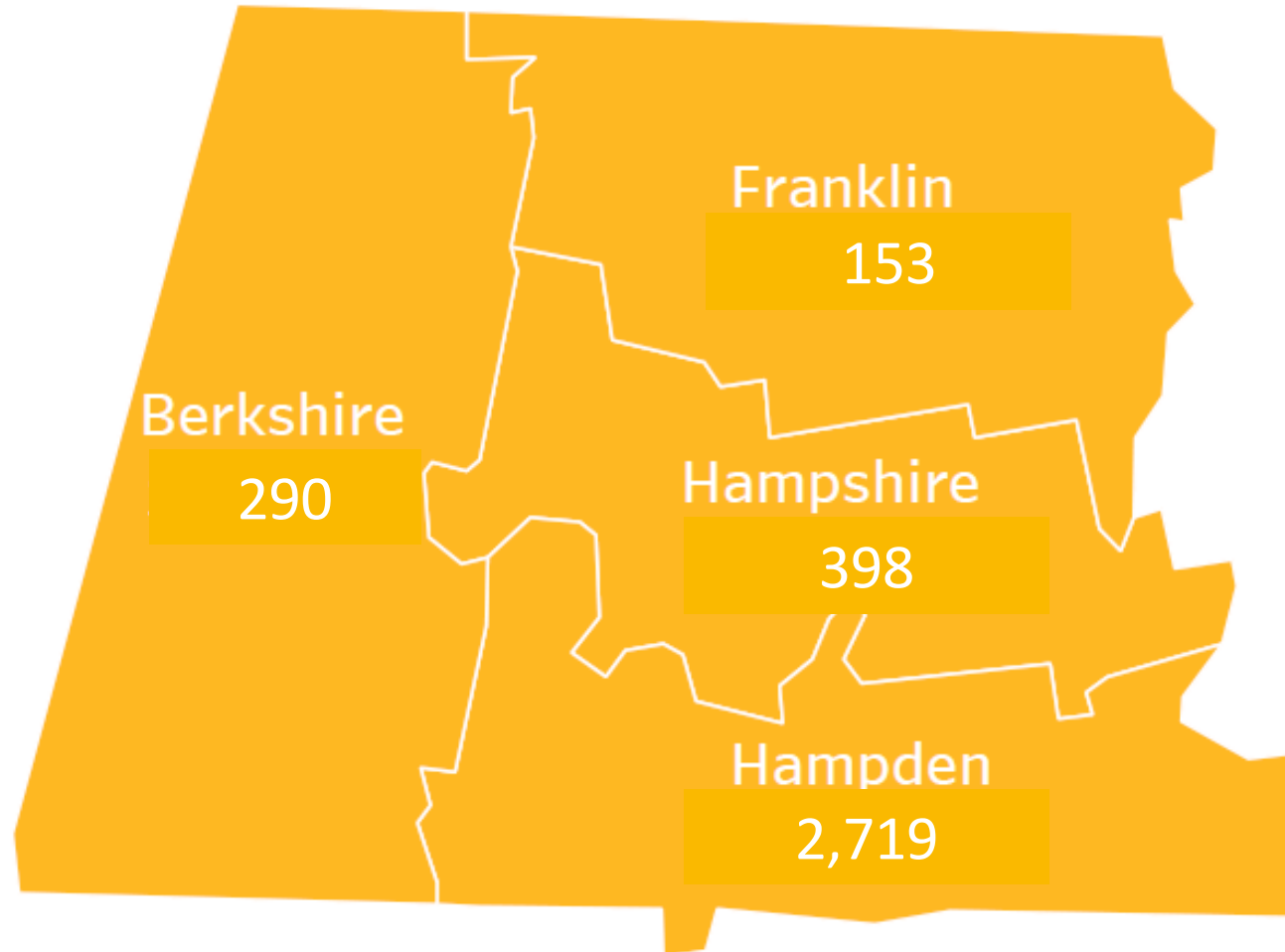
Bold Leadership In Uncertain Times

Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness
9th Annual Regional Gathering
Holyoke Community College
May 30, 2025

We have alarming levels
of homelessness and
housing instability

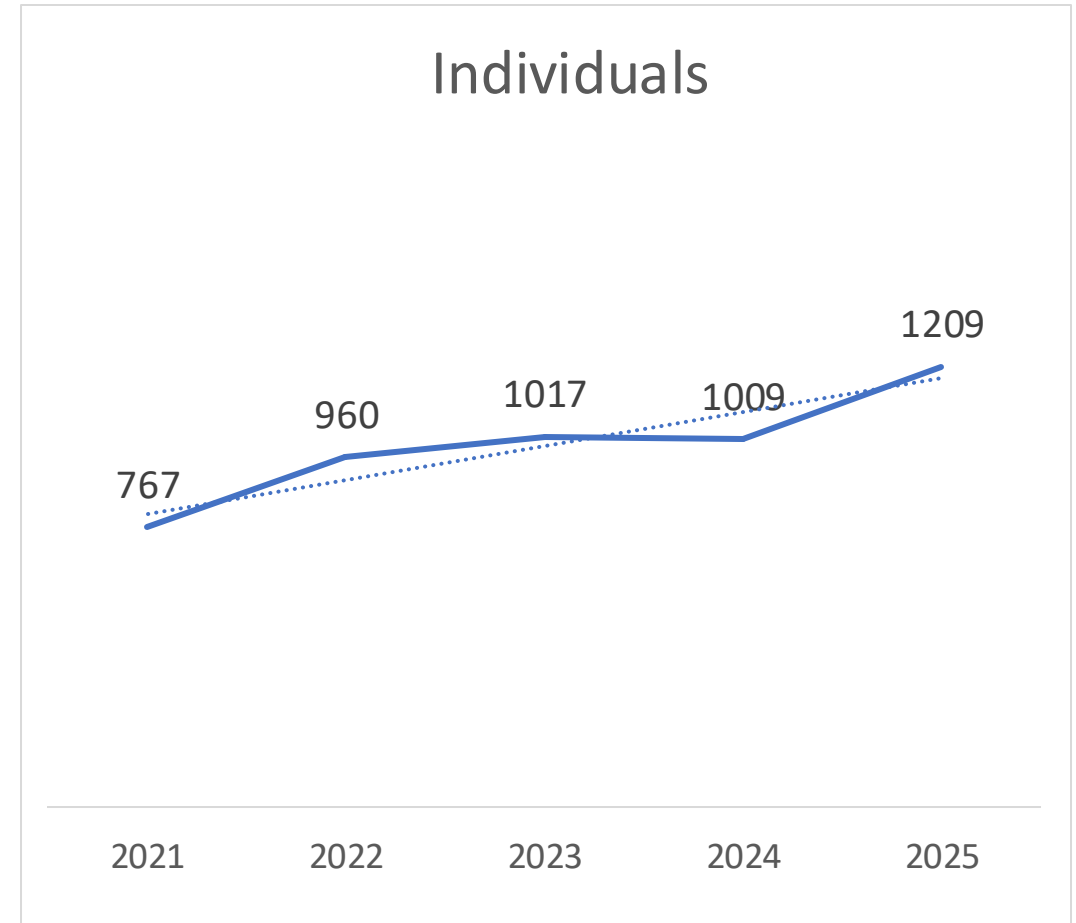
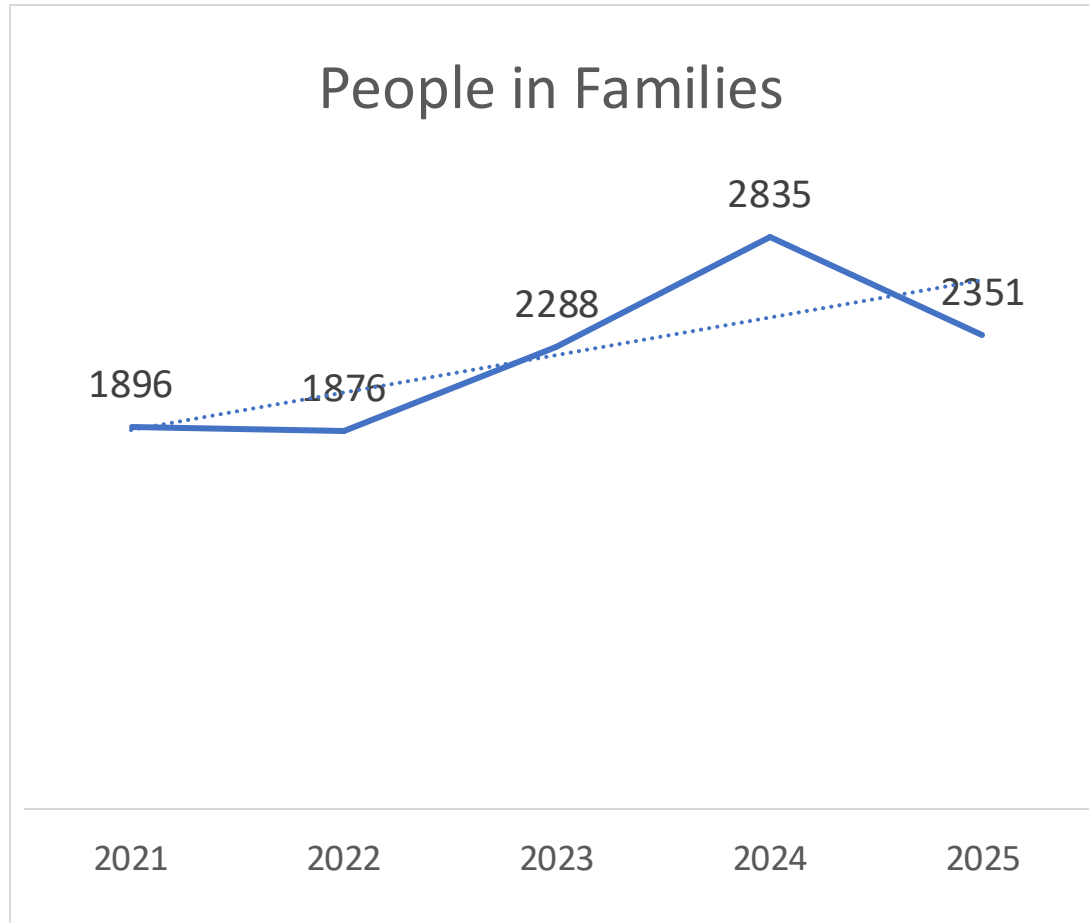
3,560 People Homeless as of January 29, 2025

Annual Point-in-Time Count



Source: Continuum of Care Point-in-Time Count, January 29, 2025

Homelessness in Western MA: Trend 2021–2025

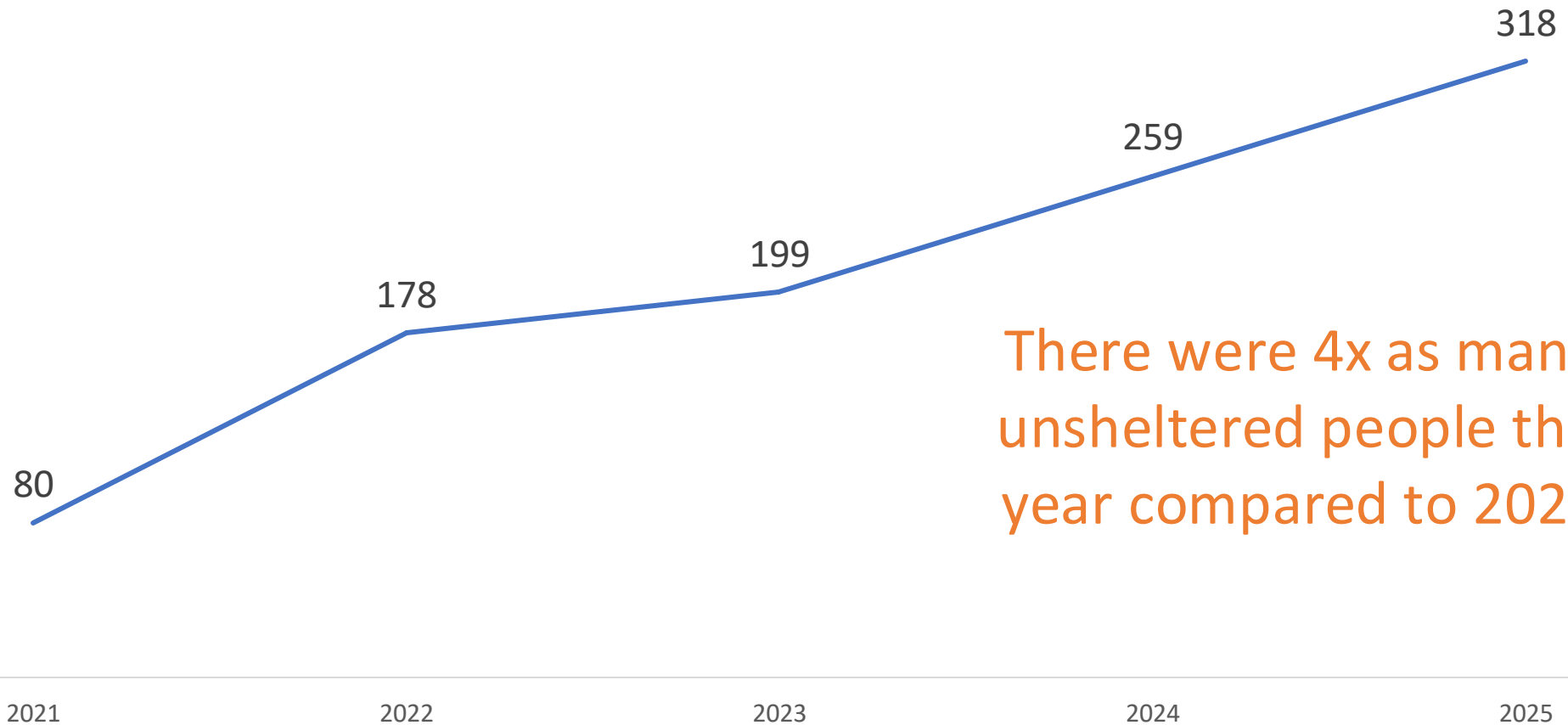


Source: Continuum of Care Annual Point-in-Time Counts, 2021–2025



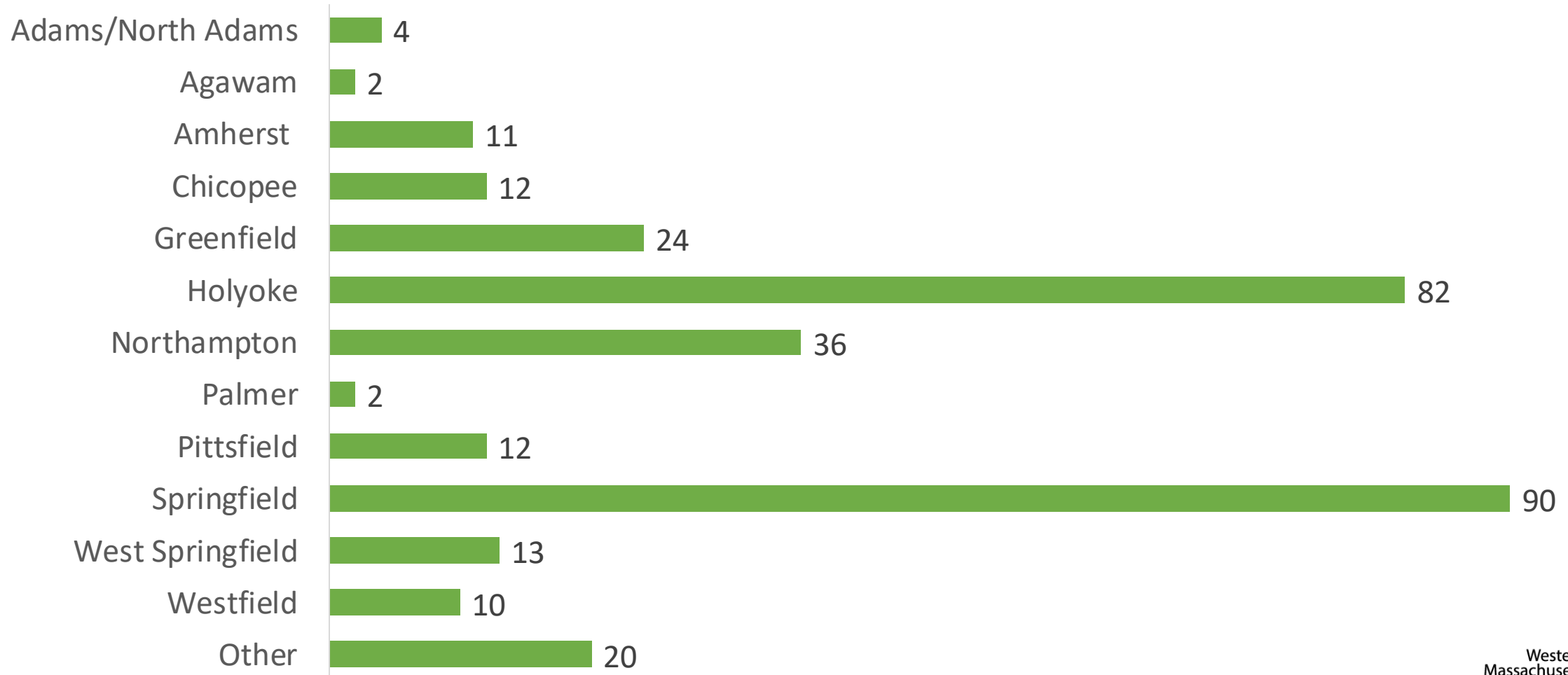
Unsheltered Homeless at Point-in-Time Count

Trend 2021–2025

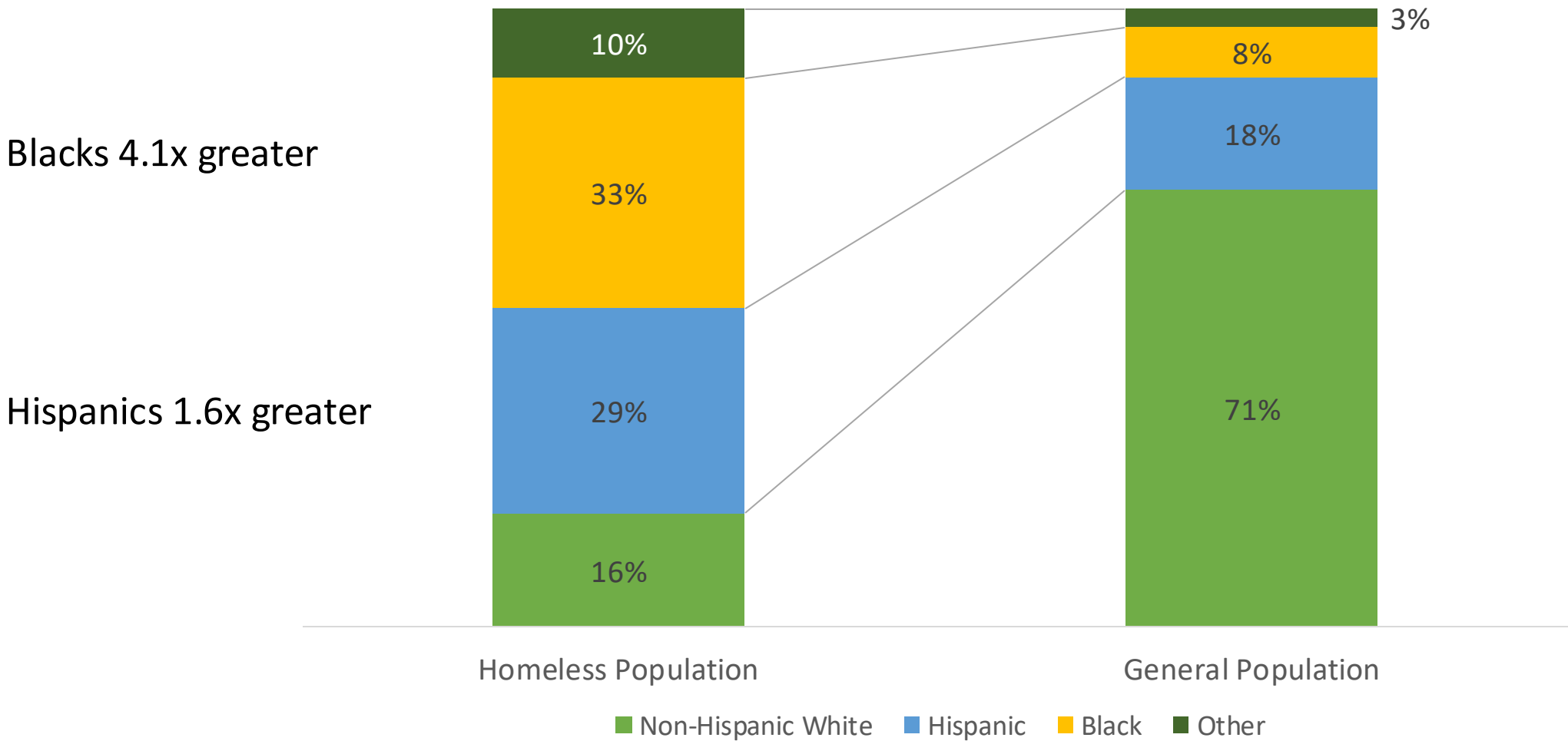


There were 4x as many unsheltered people this year compared to 2021

Location of Unsheltered Homeless as of January 29, 2025



People of Color are Overrepresented in the Homeless Population



Sources: Continuum of Care 2025 Point-in-Time Count; General Population – U.S. Census 2024 ACS 5 year

Renters are struggling to
keep up with steep rent
increases

Rents spiked post-COVID



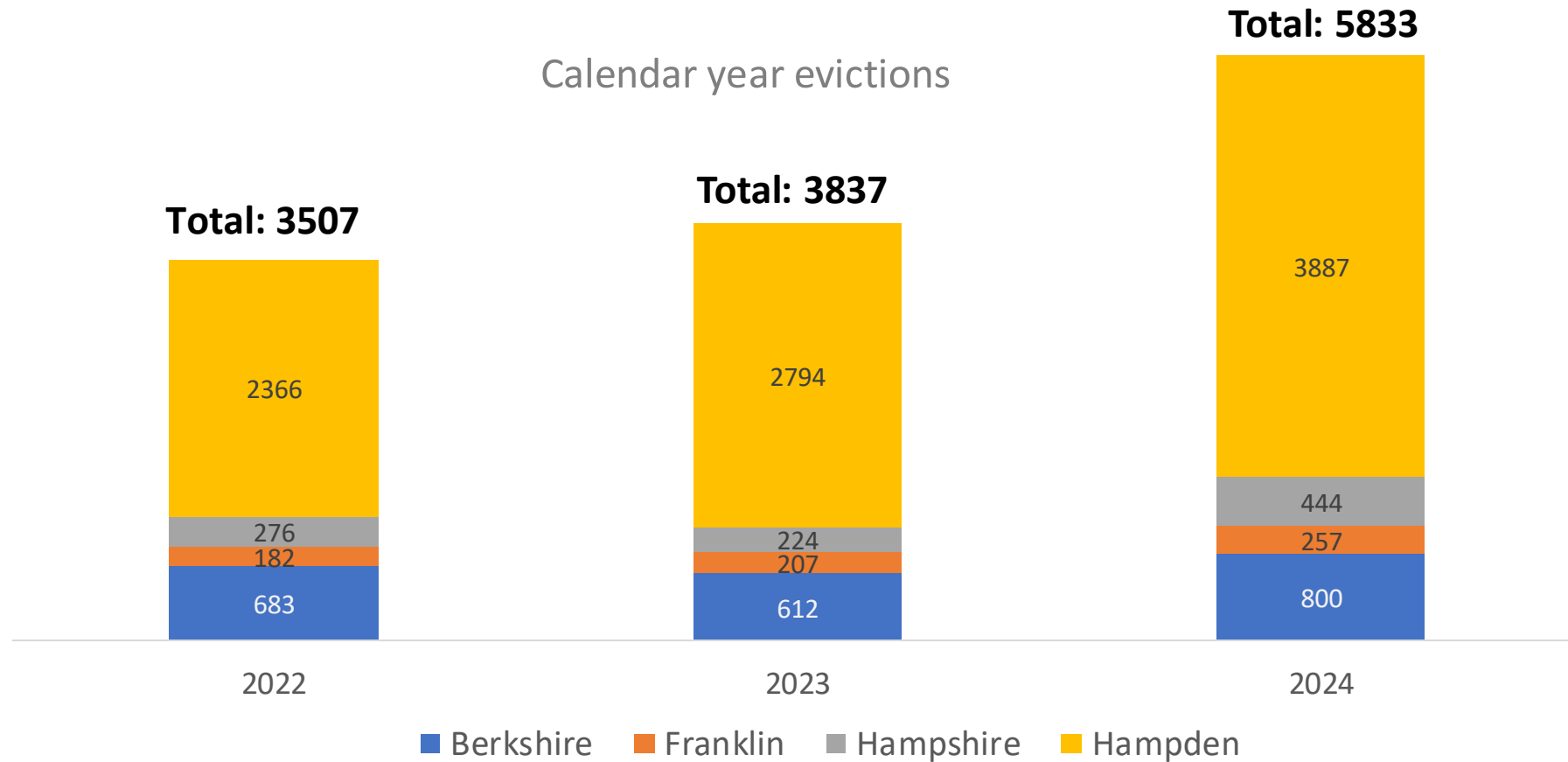
- Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin Counties: up 32.5% since 2021
- Berkshire County: up 39.7% since 2021

Throughout Western MA, 54% of renters are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of income for rent while 32% of renters pay more than 50% of income for rent

Rent increases calculation based on HUD-published Fair Market rents, comparing FY21 to FY25
Cost burden data: Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/arh-2024-cost-burden-share>

Eviction Filings are High and Rising

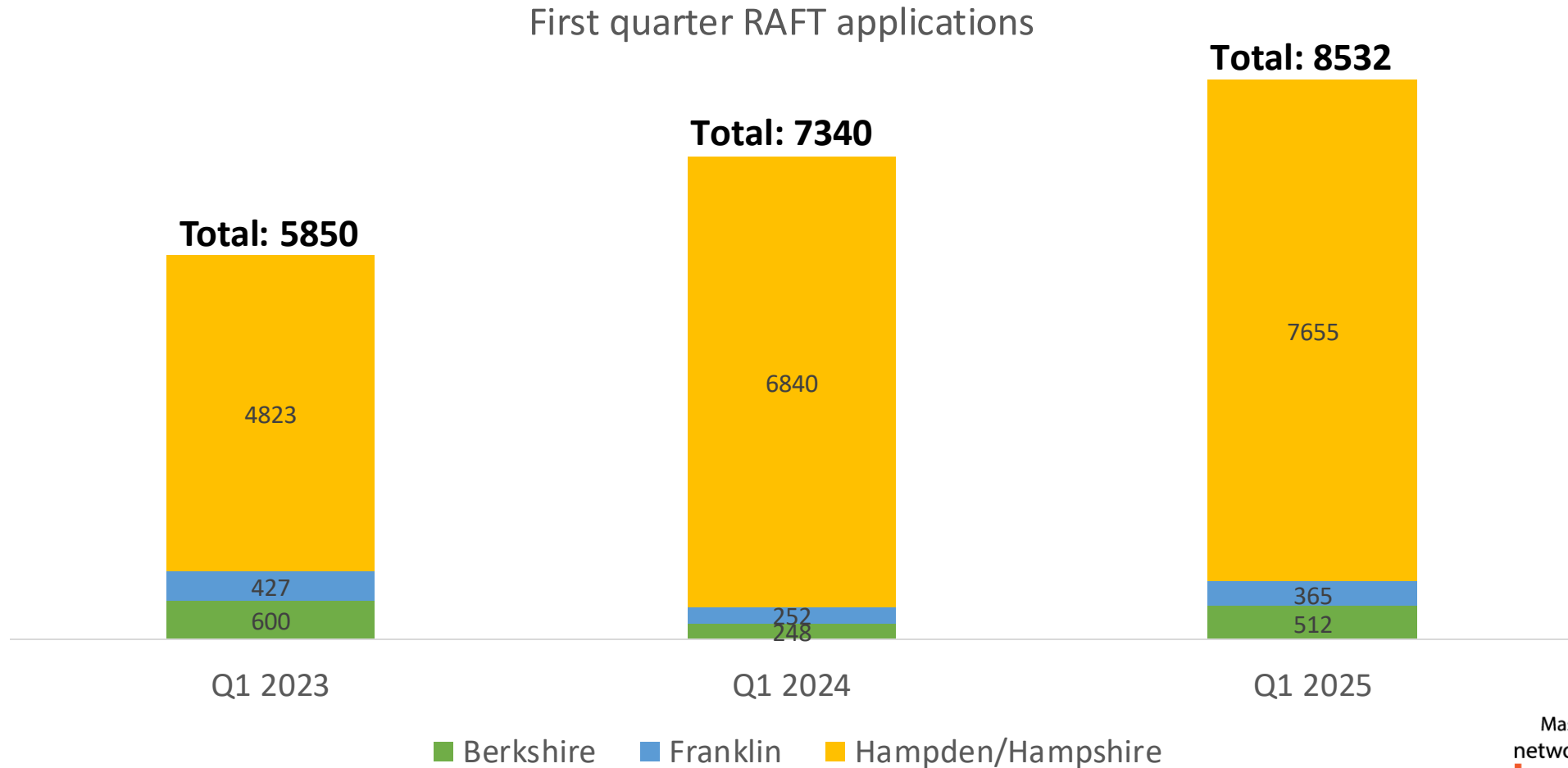
The number of evictions increased 66% from 2022 to 2024



Source: MassCourts, as compiled by MassLandlords

Demand for RAFT Continues to Rise

First quarter demand has risen 46% since 2023



Housing ends homelessness:
We're building more housing
We need to build more

Progress

- ➔ The Affordable Homes Act passed last year, authorizing \$5.1 billion in spending over the next 5 years and included:
 - Eviction Record Sealing for certain types of cases
 - Flexible Supportive Housing Pool Fund
 - Fair Housing Trust Fund
 - Accessory Dwelling Units by right
- ➔ Over the last year, 2,068 people moved from homelessness into permanent housing
- ➔ Western MA has 1,239 units of affordable housing in the development pipeline including 175 units of supportive housing

Challenges

- ➡ Western MA has a 19,000 unit affordable housing gap
- ➡ Massachusetts has an estimated shortage of 220,000 housing units overall and a gap of 10,000 supportive housing units

Good news: **Western MA Housing Coalition** and **MA Supportive Housing Pipeline Coalition** offer local and statewide vehicles for addressing the gap

We need bold leadership
now more than ever

The Federal Threat

The Trump Administration threatens housing stability nationwide with proposals to:

- **Cut HUD's budget by 44%**, resulting in the loss of housing subsidies for tens of thousands of people
- **Abandon the concept of Housing First**, embracing a punitive, shelter-based strategy instead
- **Eliminate federal leadership**, cutting the US Interagency Council on Homelessness and decimating HUD staff

Right now: The US House passed a budget reconciliation bill with massive cuts to Medicaid and SNAP; Senate action is next

ACTING BOLDLY: What Massachusetts Can Do

Budget Priorities

FY25 Supplemental Budget:

- Fund the Fair Housing Trust Fund at \$1 million

FY26 Budget:

- Fund Access to Counsel at \$3 million
- Adopt RAFT and HomeBASE Policy Review
- Fund Individual Emergency Shelter at \$115 million
- Fund Supportive Housing at \$13 million

ACTING BOLDLY: What Massachusetts Can Do

Legislative Priorities

Give municipalities the option to:

- Stabilize rents and protect tenants (H.2328/S.1447)
- Pass the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (H.1544/S.998)
- Pass a transfer fee for affordable housing (H.3056/S.1937)

Statewide:

- Strengthen access to counsel (H.1952/S.968)
- Stop the criminalization of homelessness (H.274/S.1120)
- Enact the Supportive Housing Finance Board (H.1552/S.991)

See more at <http://westernmasshousingfirst.org>

*Join our 900 subscribers to stay informed
and take action together:*

westernmasshousingfirst.org

