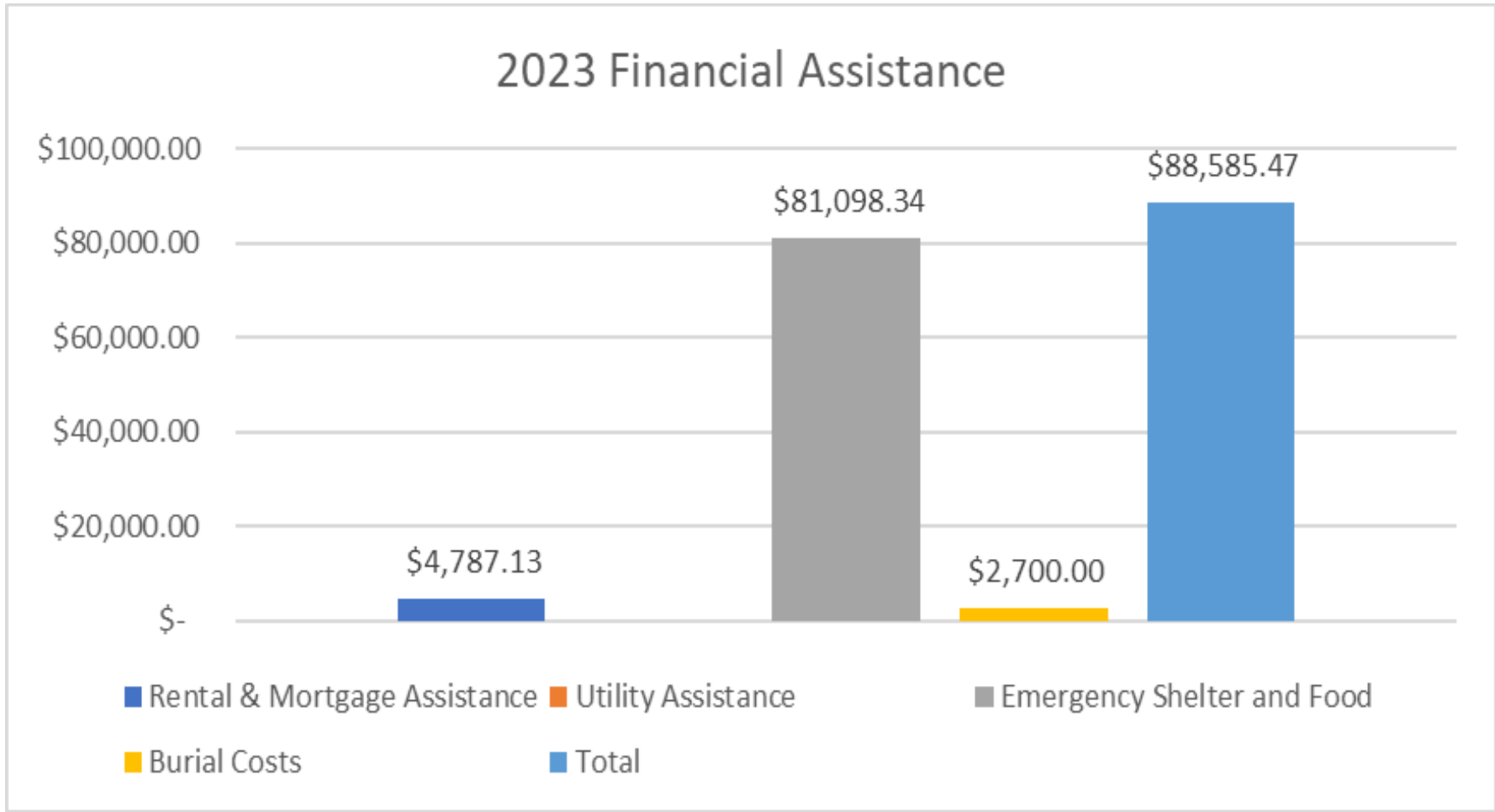




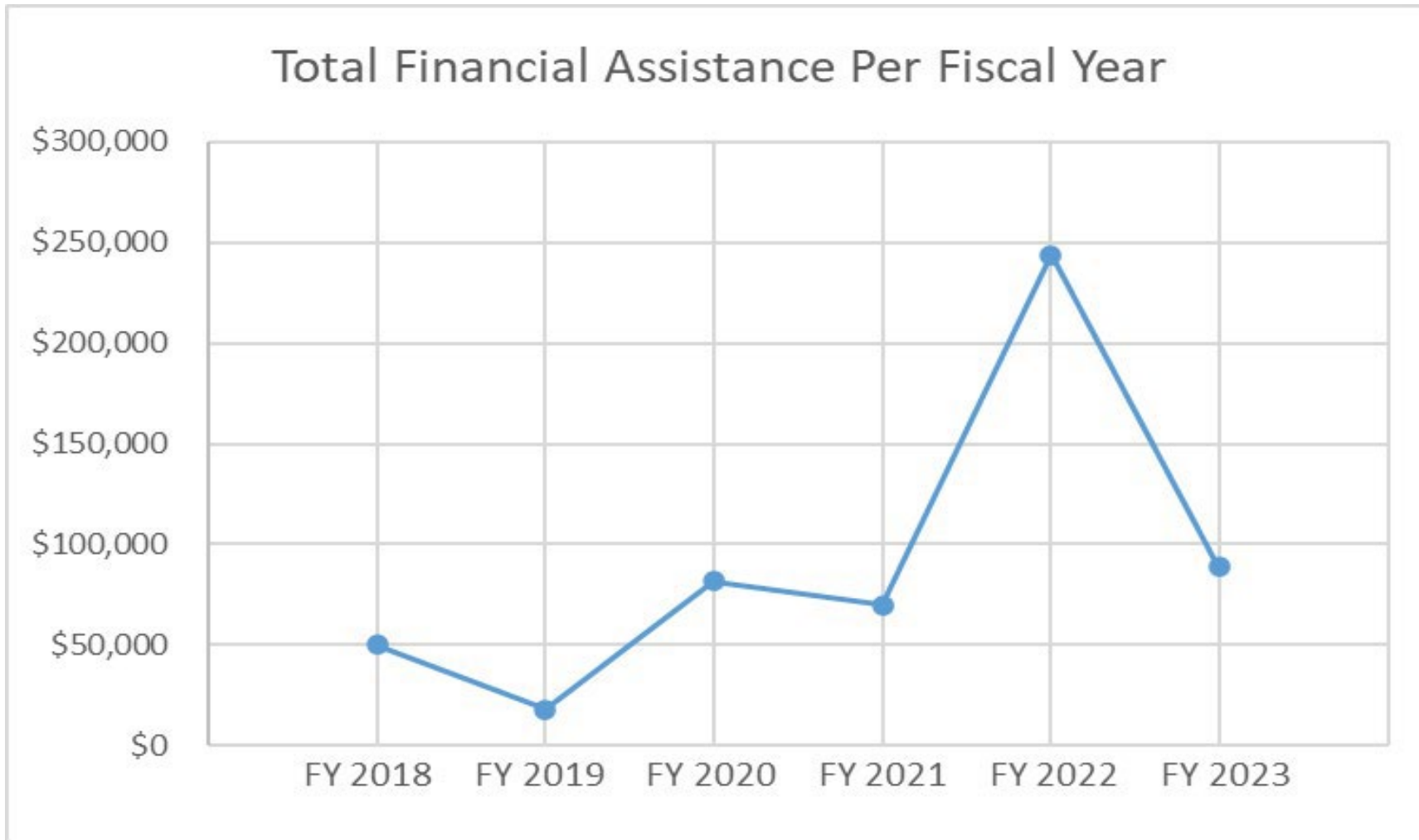
# **Veteran's Assistance Commission**

## **Annual Update**

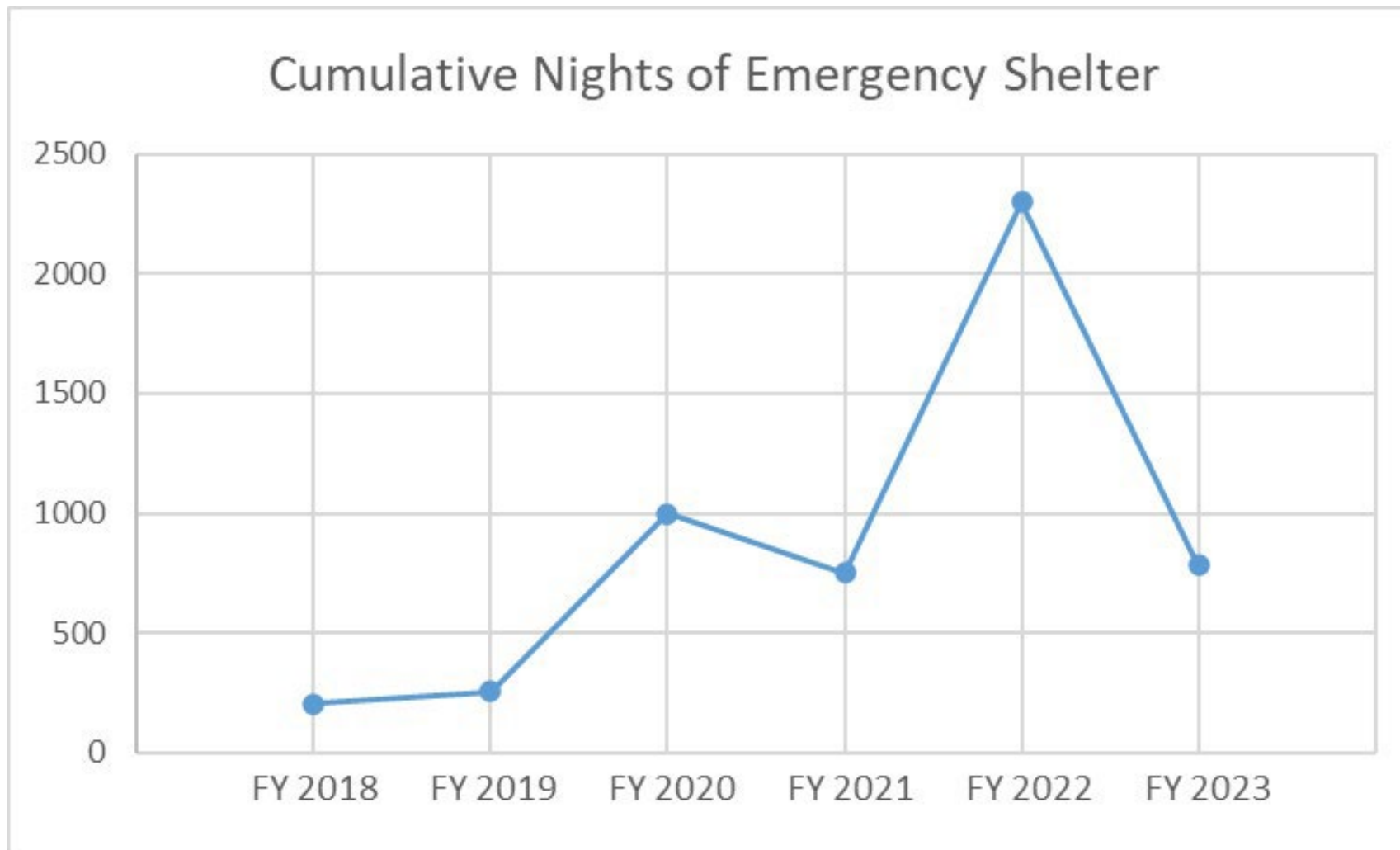
**June 4, 2024**



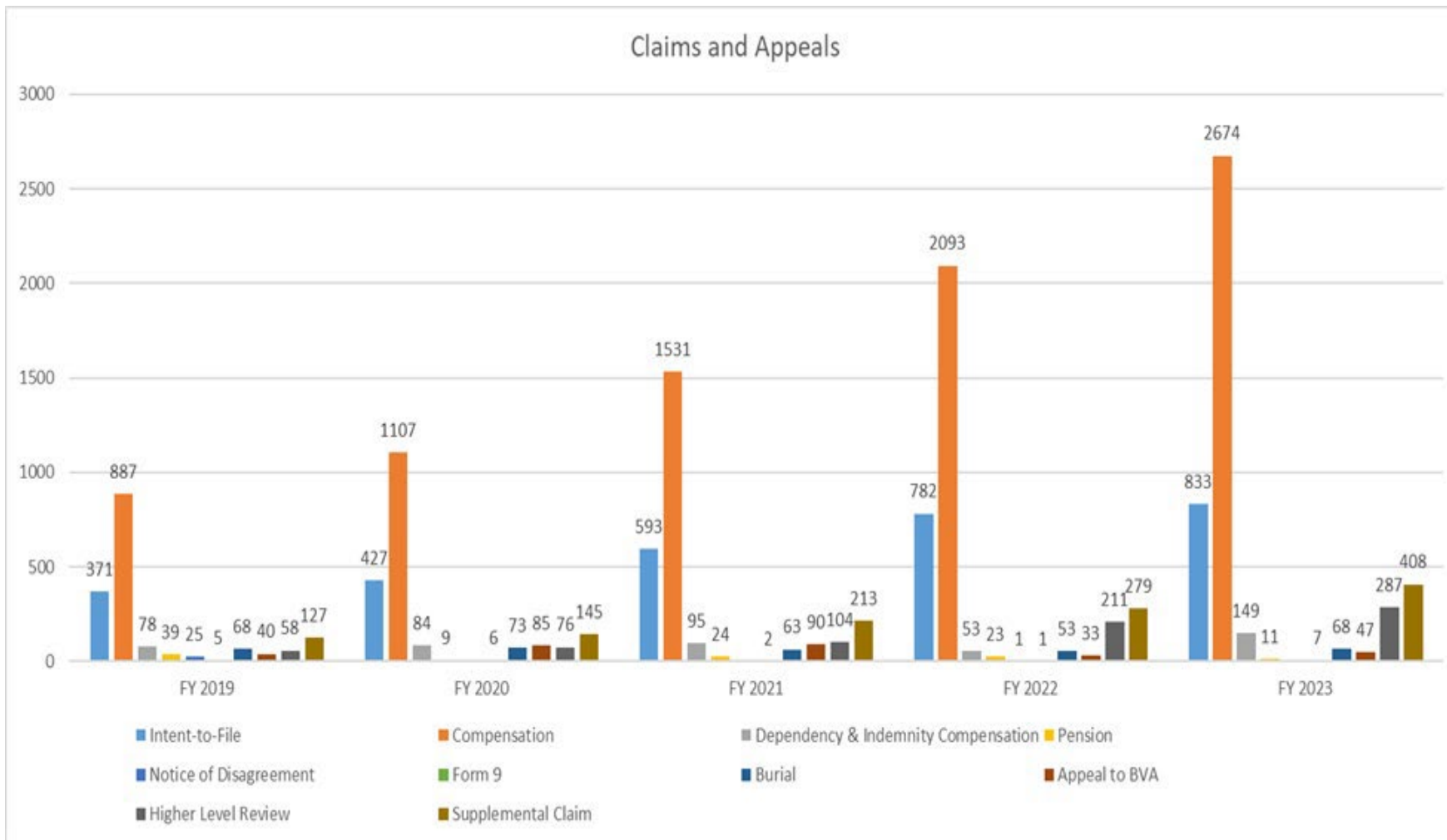
The Commission provided \$88,585.47 in financial assistance, representing: \$4,787.13 in rental and mortgage assistance; \$81,098.34 in emergency shelter and meals to indigent Veterans and their families, representing just over 780 cumulative nights of hotel stays; and \$2,700 in burial costs for indigent Veterans



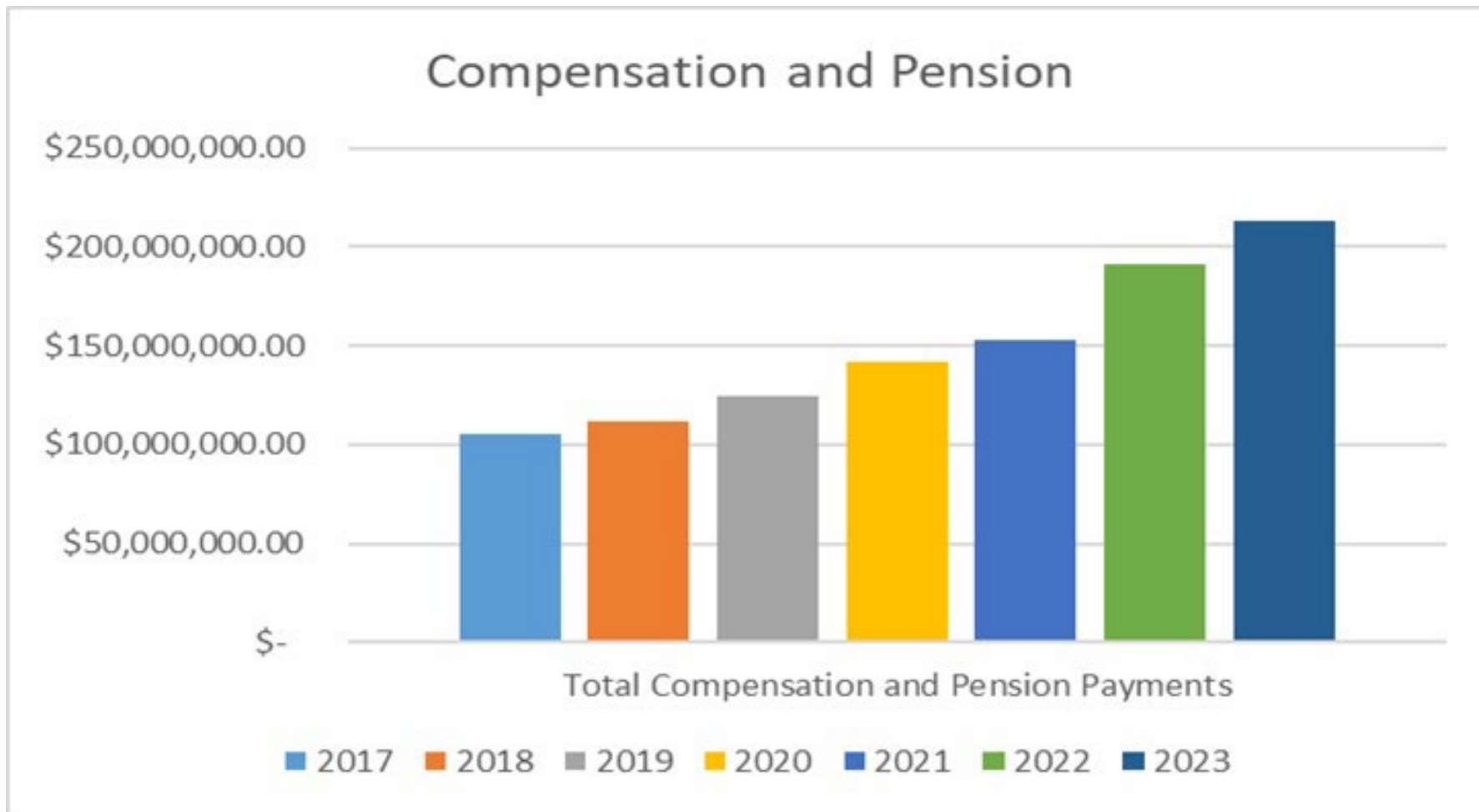
The Commission worked tirelessly with the Captain James A. Lovell FHCC Homeless Program and other community partners to address many of the issues identified in last years report, and is excited to announce that the programs which started this fiscal year with these partners appear to have had a positive effect on veteran homelessness once again in Lake County as less veterans needed emergency services than previous fiscal years.



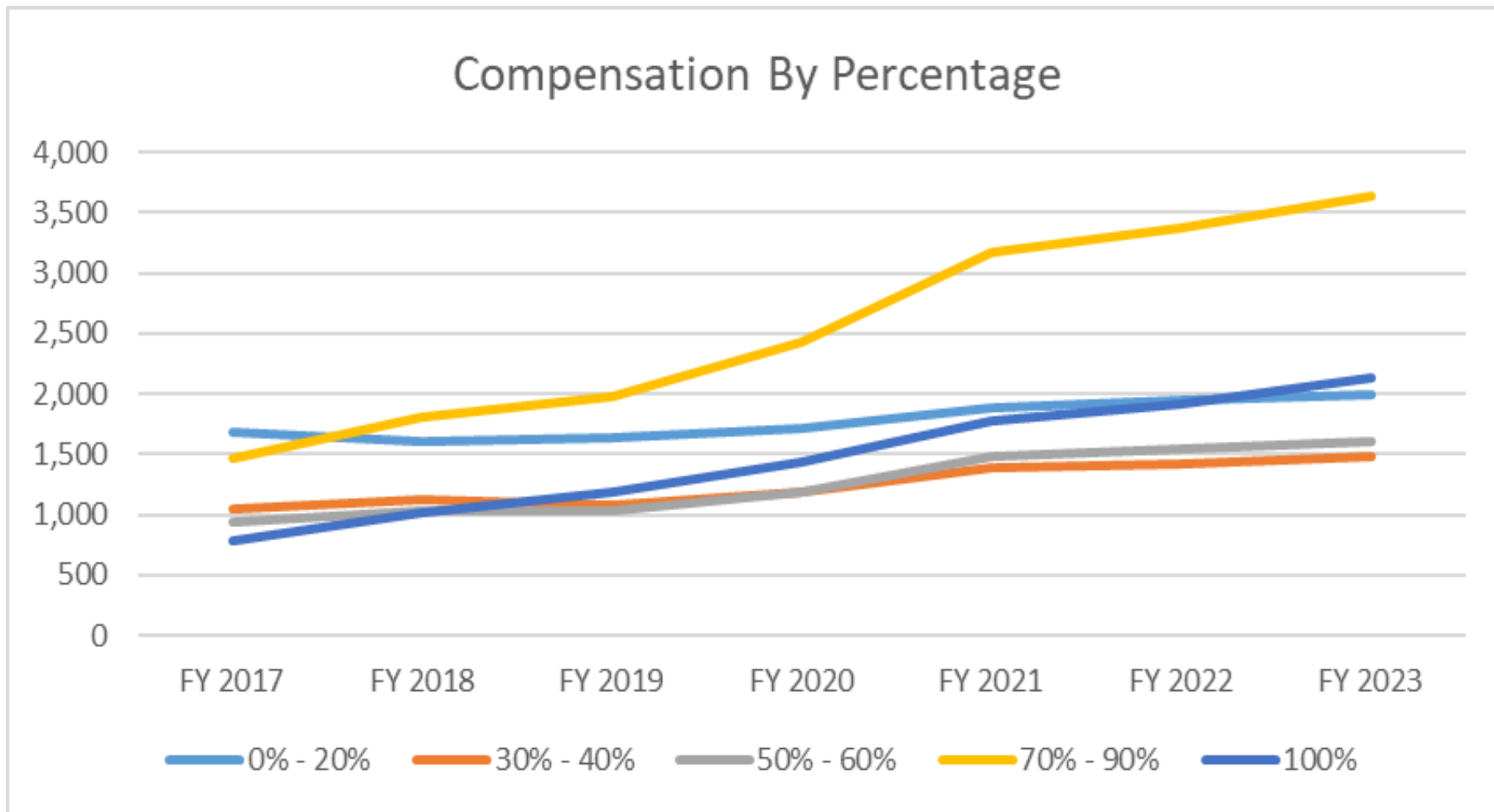
Most importantly, less veterans are requiring to be placed in emergency shelter, which shows a positive trend. Moreover, the Commission believes that one of the main reasons for this decrease is the passage of the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 (Pub. L. 117-168) (“PACT Act”), which has opened the opportunity for so many additional veterans to receive services and benefits that otherwise would have continued to have been precluded from benefits.



Fiscal year 2023 continued the trend seen over the preceding three fiscal years in drastic increases in request for advocacy assistance over previous fiscal years. Due to the staff’s incredible work throughout previous years, veterans from throughout the County of Lake have seen positive life changes through the assistance and needed services provided to them by the staff of the Commission. The advocacy work in front of the US Department of Veterans Affairs continued to show increases with the Commission increasing claim submissions more than double what was filed in fiscal year 2020. This represents the third fiscal year in a row to nearly double advocacy work done over previous years. Even with the drastic increase in claims, appeals, and other benefit applications filed, the Commission still saw an effective rate of 86 percent.



The Commission was instrumental in securing an estimated \$18,608,800.01 in new benefits paid by the Federal Government to Lake County Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors. Total VA Compensation and Pensions Payments, based on newly released data from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, for fiscal year 2023 for Lake County is expected to be approximately \$213,256,928.31



Lake County veterans and their families continue to receive consistent and effective advocacy services in claims work in front of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Not only are compensation for traditional benefits increasing, but also increases in veterans who are affected by PACT Act have seen a large increase in filings. Further, fiscal year 2023 marked a massive increase in the veteran population of Lake County. Though this has caused our percentage of veterans receiving compensation to decrease from 30 percent as reported last year to 24 percent, Lake County increased its veteran population from roughly 32,000 veterans to nearly 45,000 veterans. Further, Lake County is the only County in the State to have the majority of its veteran population under the age of 60, with approximately 57 percent of Lake County veterans age 59 and younger.



**Questions**