

# IDAHO GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM EVALUATION 2022



**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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# PROJECT PARTNERS



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**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE



# EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

- 1) *Evaluate the CASA Programs in Idaho regarding their effectiveness in recruiting, training, and retaining volunteer advocates*
- 2) *Examine whether Idaho CASA Programs align with national best practices for child advocacy*
- 3) *Assess the effectiveness of Idaho's GAL Programs in achieving best practices for child advocacy and in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 16-1632-33 as well as Idaho Juvenile Court Rule 35*

# DATA for ANALYSIS

**Odyssey (2015-2021)**

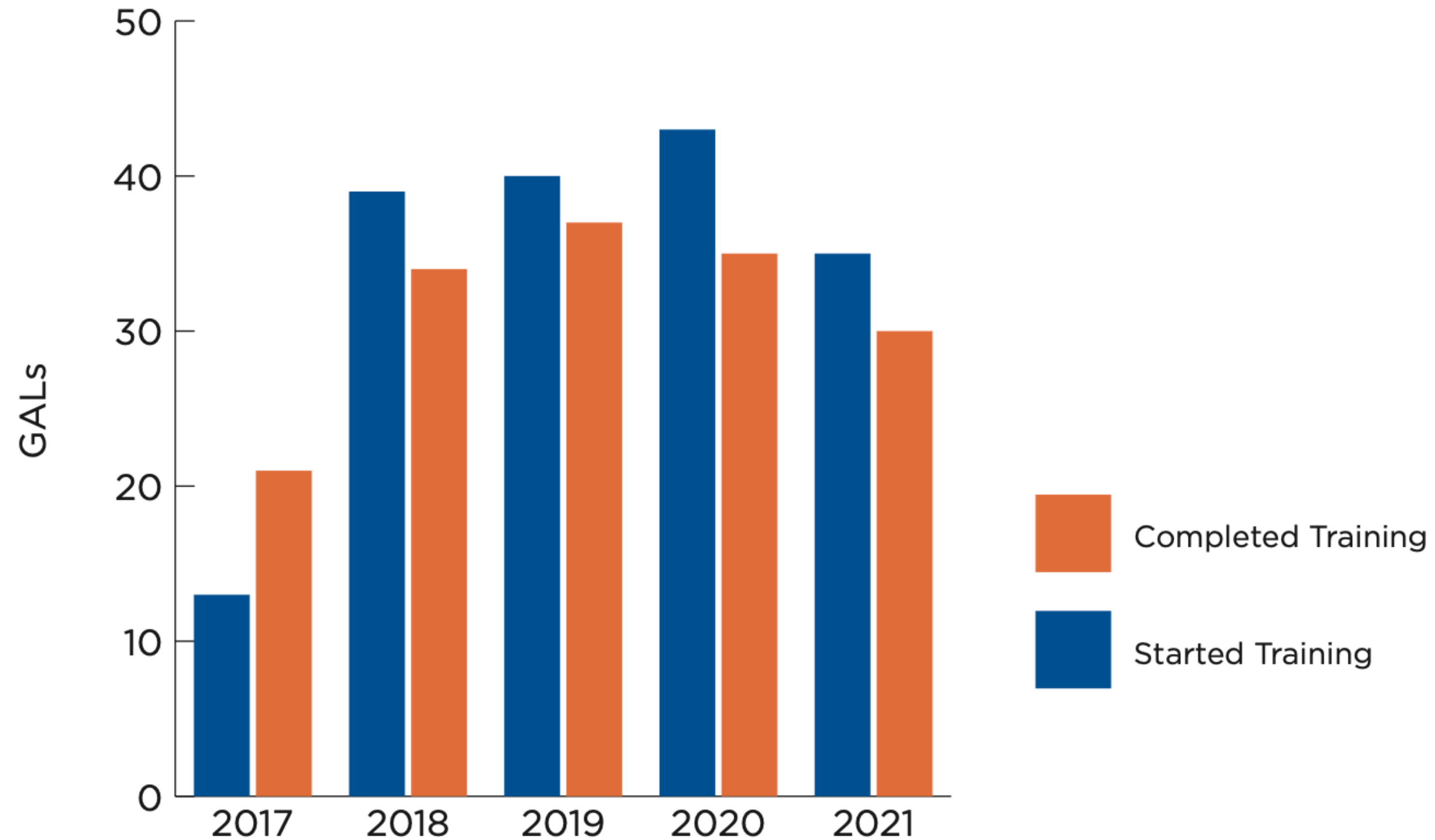
**CASA Manager/Optima (2016-2021)**

**Document Analysis (2021)**

**Surveys (2021)**

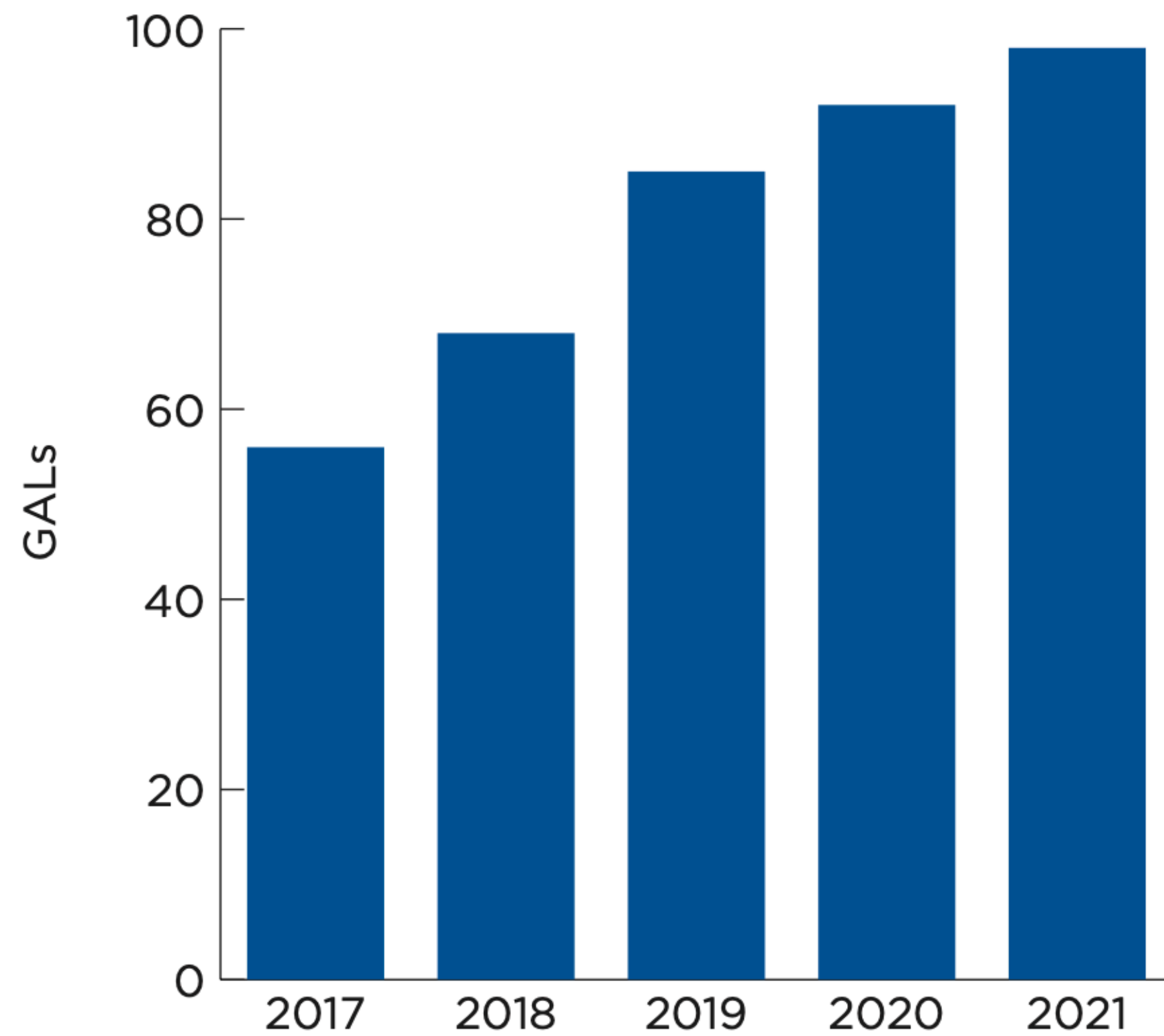


# GAL RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

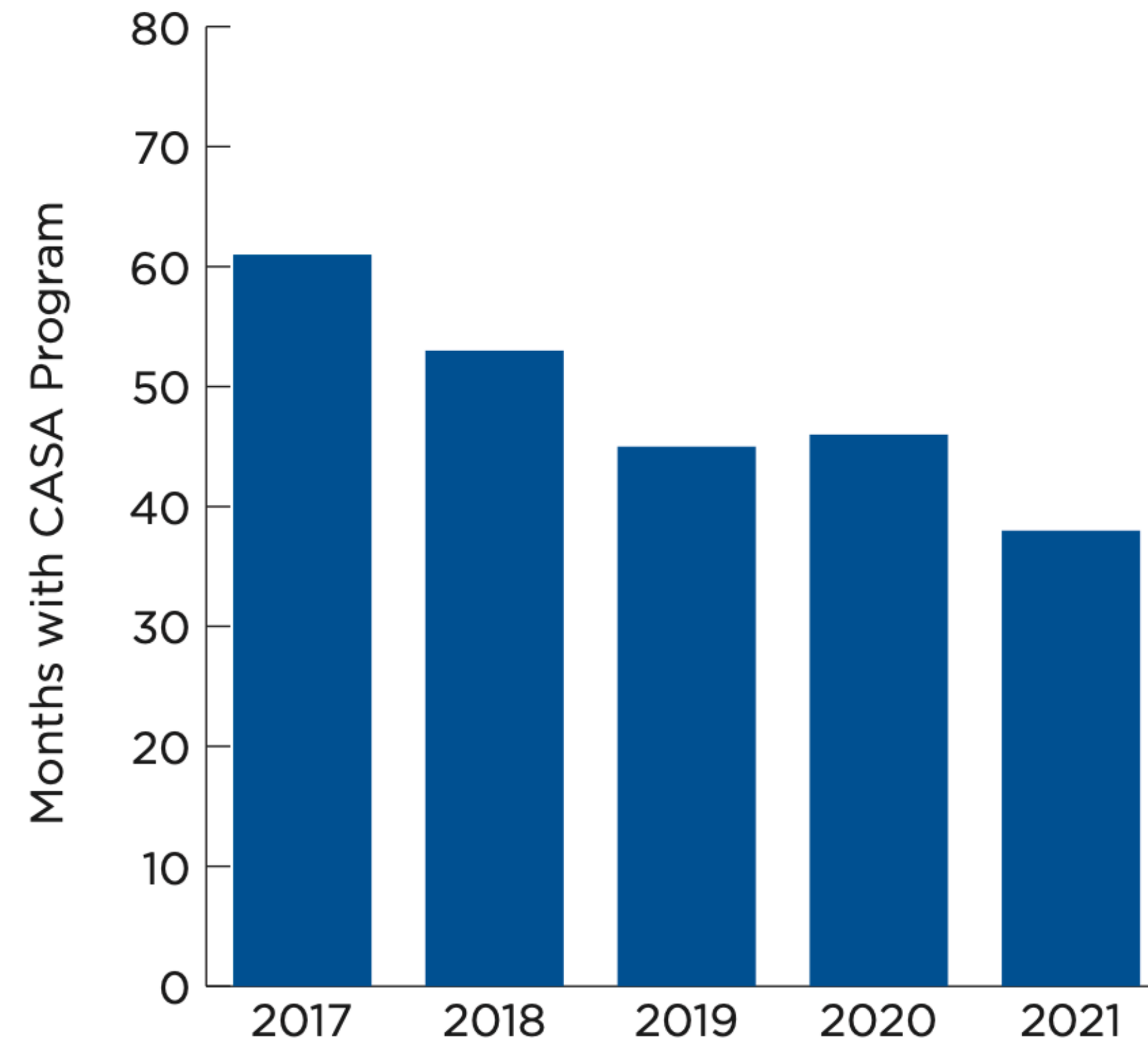


# GAL RETENTION

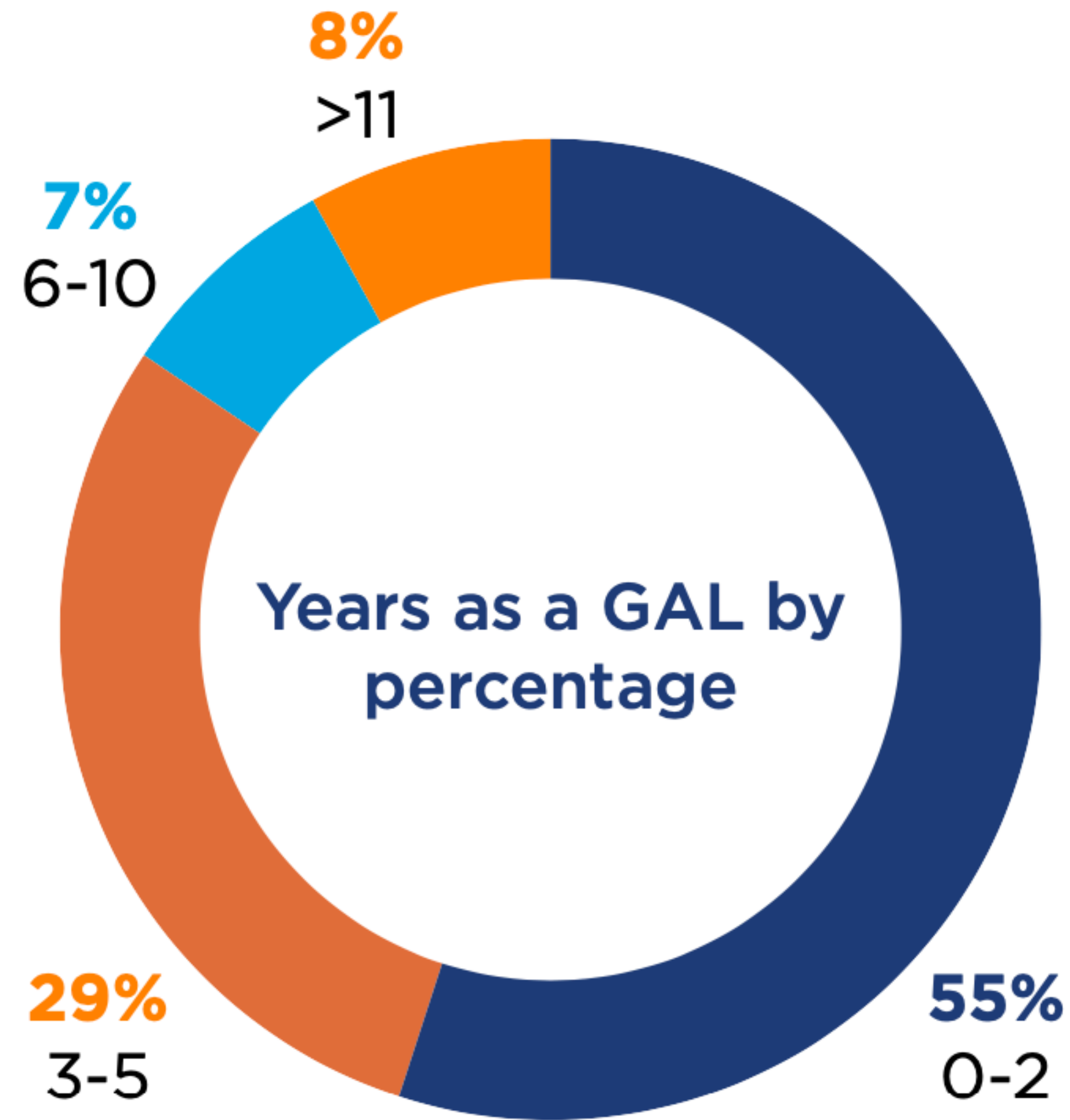
AVERAGE # GALS IN CASA PROGRAMS



AVERAGE MONTHS WITH CASA PROGRAMS



# GAL RETENTION





# CPS CASES WITH GALS



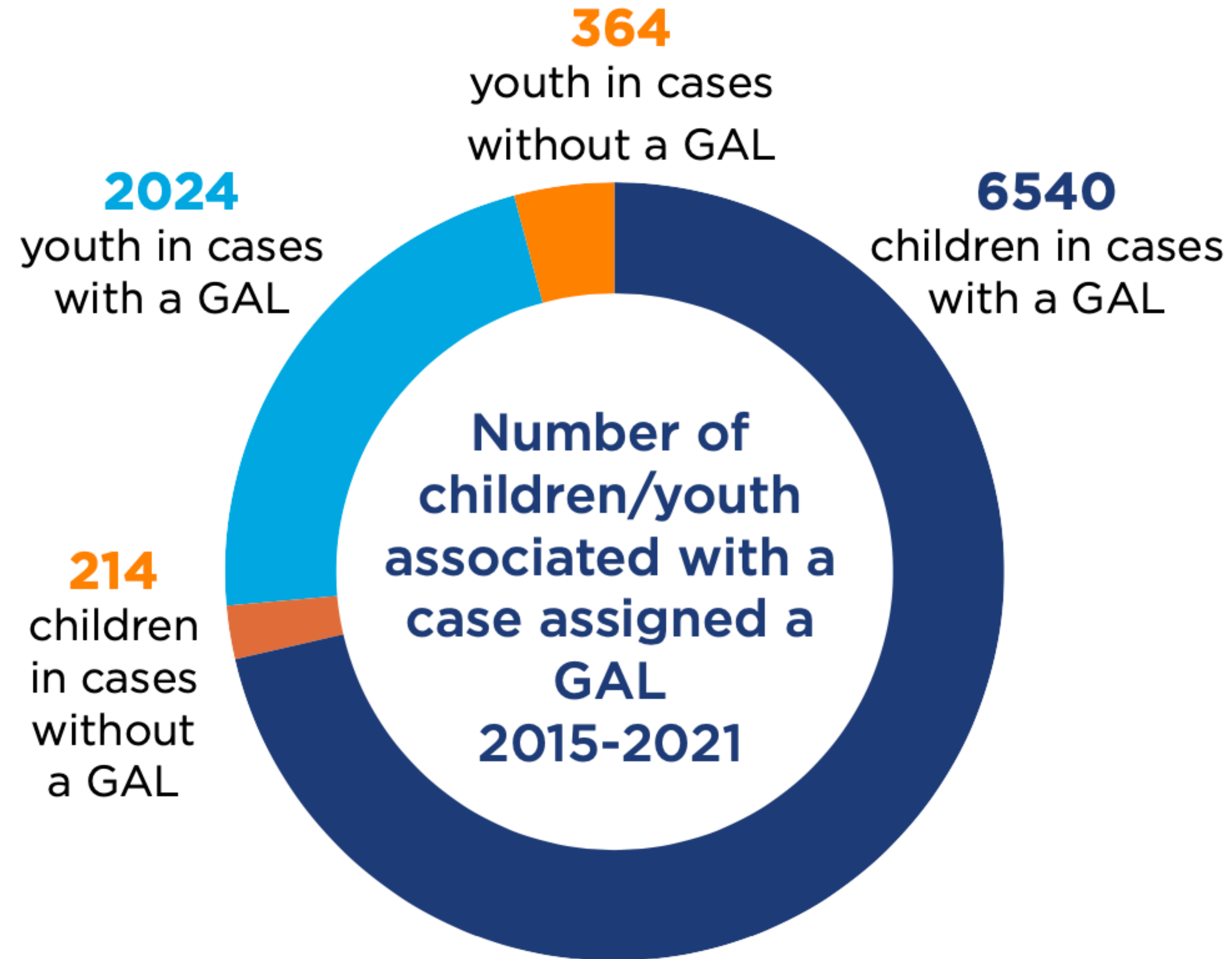
**NUMBER OF IDAHO  
CHILDREN/YOUTH  
IN CPS**

**9,498**  
**2015-2021**

**93%**

**OF CPS CASES  
ASSOCIATED  
WITH A GAL  
2015-2021**

# GAL REPRESENTATION



children = <12 yrs old  
youth = 12 yrs and older

# CASA PROGRAM AVERAGES

**AVERAGE NUMBER  
OF GALS PER CASA  
PROGRAM IN 2021**

**98**

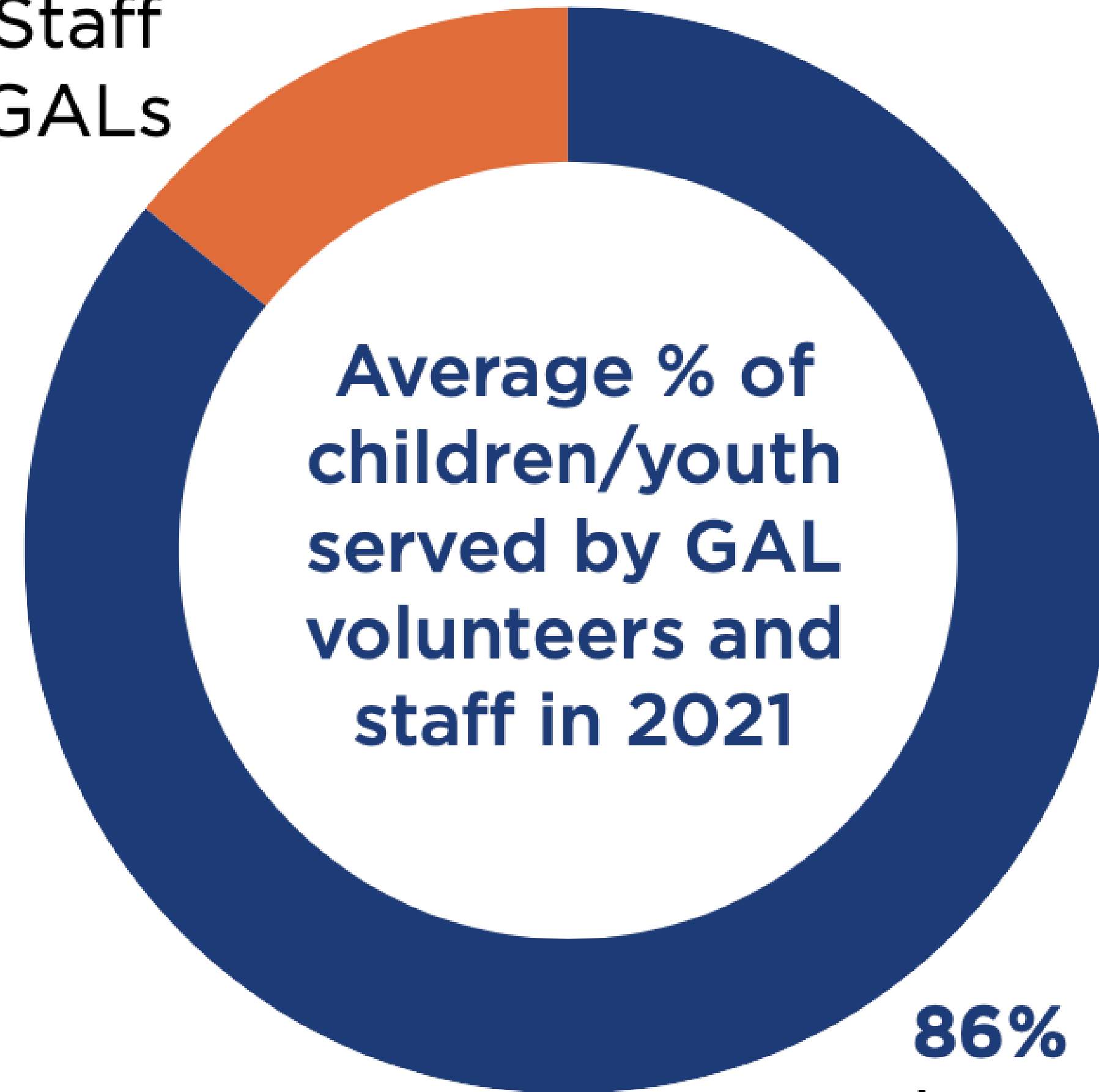
**369**

**AVERAGE NUMBER  
OF CHILDREN/  
YOUTH SERVED PER  
CASA PROGRAM  
IN 2021**



# STAFF VS VOLUNTEER GALs

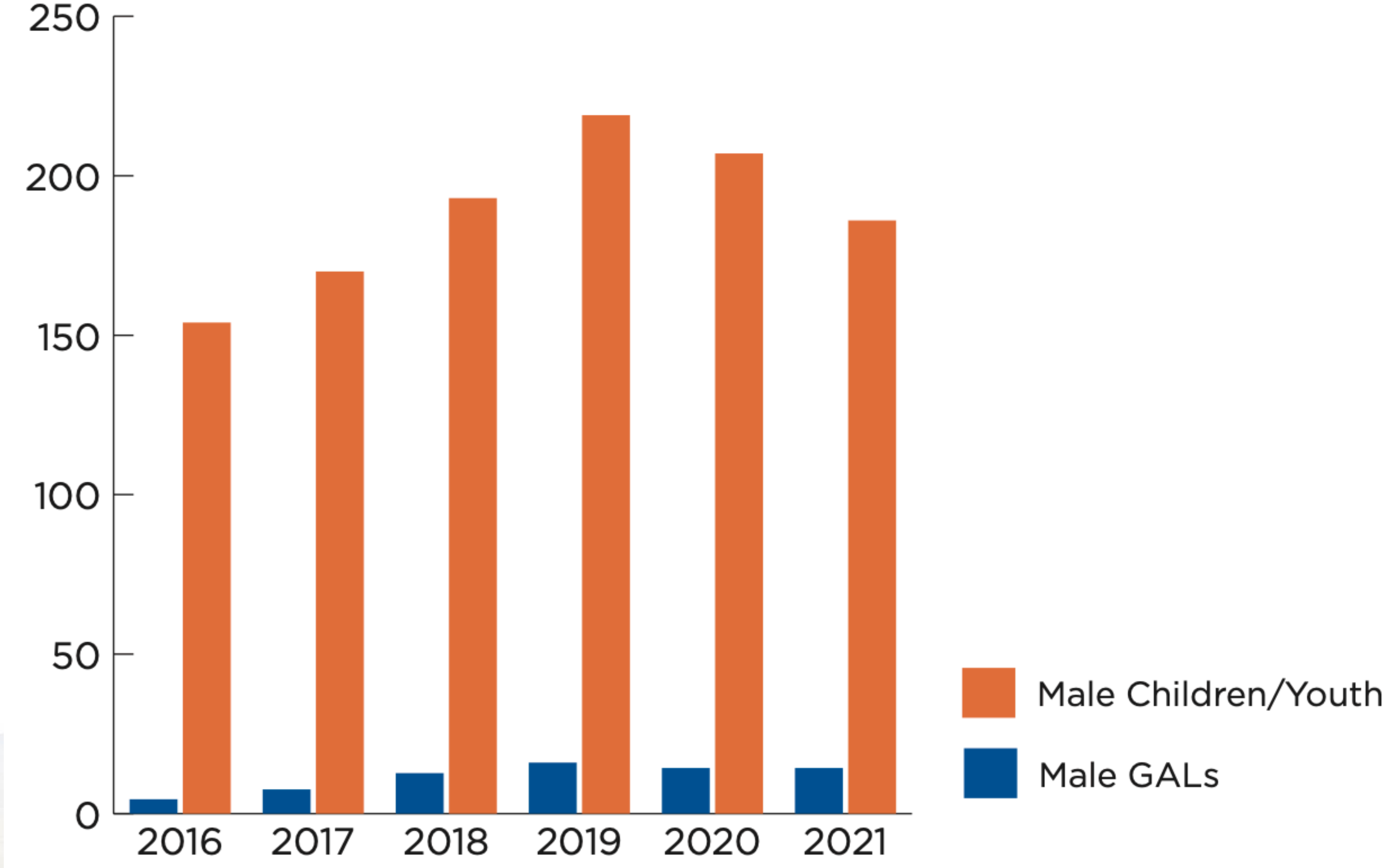
**14%**  
Staff  
GALs



**86%**  
Volunteer  
GALs



# DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION



# PERCEPTIONS



# BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

**32%**

of magistrate judges indicate more GALs are needed

**4**

CASA EDs report not having enough GAL volunteers compared to the demand

**3**

CASA EDs report issues regarding lack of respect for GALs



# BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

**32%**

of GALS report challenges in working with IDHW

**22%**

of GALS report issues regarding having their voice heard

**20%**

of GALS report issues regarding communication





# OPPORTUNITIES

**33%**

of GALS report having  
no suggestions for  
improvement

**29%**

of GALS report need  
for more training

**12%**

of GALS report need  
for collaboration and  
communication



# GAL STRENGTHS

**93%** of Guardians Ad Litem

**100%** of CASA Program Executive Directors

**89%** of Magistrate Judges



believe  
GALs adequately advocate  
for the best interests of  
the child/youth



# EVALUATION OBJECTIVES - REVISITED

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# POLICY & PROGRAMMATIC ALTERNATIVES

- Additional dedicated support to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts and target GALs better aligned with demographics of the children/youth being served.
- Dedicated support toward Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's efforts to attract and retain greater numbers of high-quality social workers which would provide more consistent partnership support for GALs.
- Increased effort to facilitate coordination between all stakeholders in a child protection case would lead to more efficiency and better outcomes for children and youth.

# POLICY & PROGRAMMATIC ALTERNATIVES

- Creation of a support system for GALs including support groups comprised of active GALs and CASA staff, access to therapists/mental health professionals, a mentoring program, and/or additional hands-on training/observation opportunities for GALs would help increase retention by addressing the issues associated with burnout and secondary trauma.
- A coordinated effort (e.g., state liaison position or oversight committee) to help increase stability and consistency for CASA Programs and enabled increased collaboration in their efforts to overcome barriers to aligning with national best practices for child advocacy and Idaho rules and statutes.

## Authors

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