



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Wild Horse and Burro Program Update

Dec. 2023 National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting – Phoenix, Arizona

Holle' Waddell, Division Chief Wild Horse and Burro Program







# Agenda

- Legal Authorities
- Program Objectives
- Estimated Population Size
- On-Range Updates
- Off-Range Updates
- Partnerships
- Policies and Bulletins
- Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program
- Budget



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# Legal Authorities

## Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, 1971

- Protect and manage wild horses and burros “as components of public lands”
- Maintain a “thriving natural ecological balance”

## Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976

- Established BLM “multiple-use” mission
- Allowed for motorized vehicles for wild horse and burro management

### THE WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS ACT OF 1971 (PUBLIC LAW 92-195)

#### §1331. Congressional findings and declaration of policy

Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.

#### §1332. Definitions

As used in this Act-

(a) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior when used in connection with public lands administered by him through the Bureau of Land Management and the Secretary of Agriculture in connection with public lands administered by him through the Forest Service;

(b) "wild free-roaming horses and burros" means all unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros on public lands of the United States;

(c) "range" means the amount of land necessary to sustain an existing herd or herds of wild free-roaming horses and burros, which does not exceed their known territorial limits, and which is devoted principally but not necessarily exclusively to their welfare in keeping with the multiple-use management concept for the public lands;



# Program Objectives

- To manage wild horses and burros as an integral part of the natural system of public lands in balance with BLM's multiple use mission.
- **Goal: healthy herds on healthy public lands**





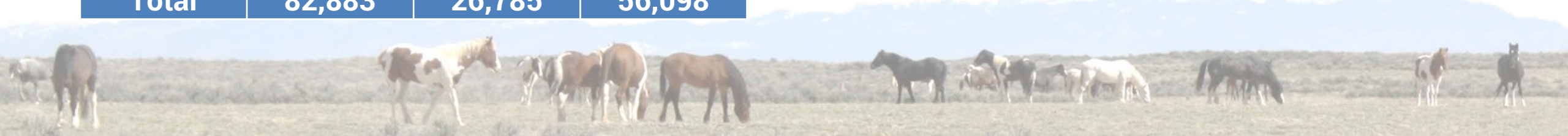
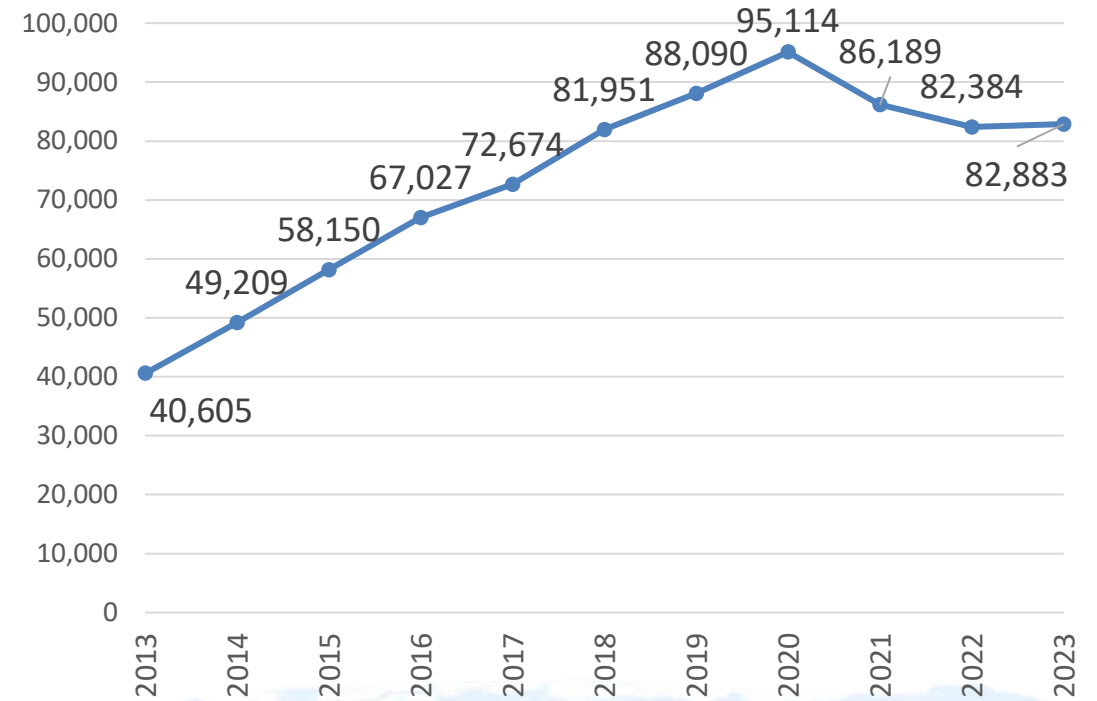


# Estimated population size

Estimated Wild Horse and Burro Populations on BLM-managed Public Lands as of March 1, 2023

State	Total	Max. AML	Excess
Arizona	6,670	1,676	4,994
California	7,020	2,200	4,820
Colorado	1,527	827	700
Idaho	651	617	34
Montana	205	120	85
Nevada	49,268	12,811	36,457
New Mexico	385	83	302
Oregon	4,573	2,700	1,873
Utah	3,756	1,956	1,800
Wyoming	8,828	3,795	5,033
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,883</b>	<b>26,785</b>	<b>56,098</b>

Estimated Wild Horse and Burro Populations on BLM-managed Public Lands, 2013-2023



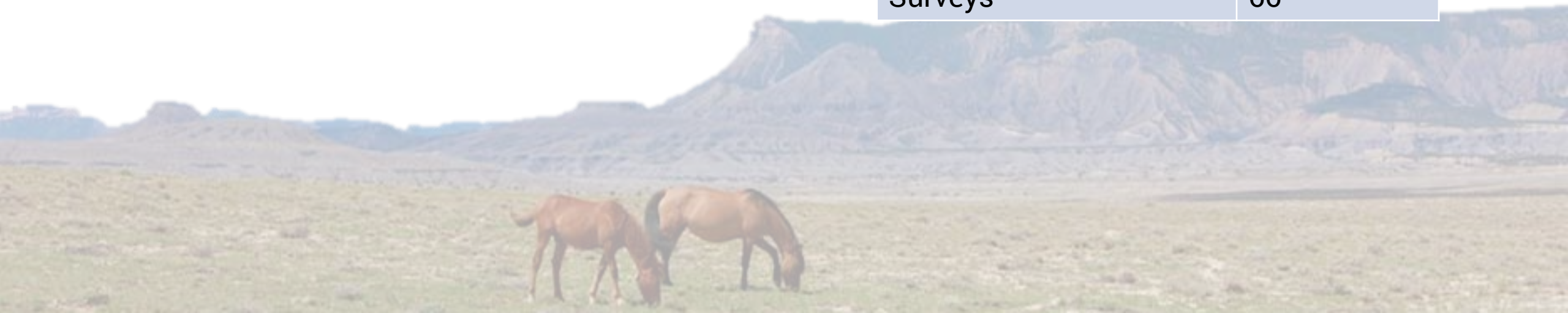


# On-Range Program Update

- Began two fertility control-related research projects
- Implemented catch-treat-hold-release contract

## FY23 Accomplishments

Activity	Completed
Gathered	5,759
Removed	5,335
Treatments via darting	549
Treatments via gather	171
Surveys	66







# Off-Range Program Update

## Placement Events and Animals Offered

Events (Facility, Satellite, Online, Storefront)	Animals Offered
83	8,042*

## Key Metrics

Adoptions	Sales	Transfers	Compliance	Titled
6,220	1,798	27	6,668	5,723

## AIP vs Non-AIP Adoptions

AIP	Non-AIP/Trained
2,908	3,312

## Off-Range Facilities\*\*

Corrals	Pastures	Public Pastures	Total
20,048	40,640	1,227	61,915



\* Some animals were offered multiple times, for a total of 16,785 instances of an animal being offered

\*\*As of November 2023





# Off-Range Program Update

- Online Corral held seven adoption/sale events in FY23 that offered 3,746 animals, of which 1,438 were placed into private care.
- Preparing new solicitations for Off-Range Corrals and Pastures to sustain and increase capacity to provide off-range care.
- Three critical positions filled on Off-Range staff to support private care placement, off-range holding and marketing/outreach.







# Partnerships

- Agreements were signed or renewed with 10 organizations in Fiscal Year 2023 to support adoptions, fertility control application and research, and public education.
  - ❖ Mustang Champions
  - ❖ High Desert Strategies
  - ❖ Piceance Mustangs
  - ❖ Colorado State University
  - ❖ American Wild Horse Campaign
  - ❖ Utah State University Cooperative Extension
  - ❖ Wild Horses of America Foundation
  - ❖ Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and Northwest Wildlife Conservation Research
  - ❖ U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's National Wildlife Research Center
- Hosted public webinar in September 2023 to help future prospective applicants
- Three funding opportunities remain open for off-range, on-range and research proposals

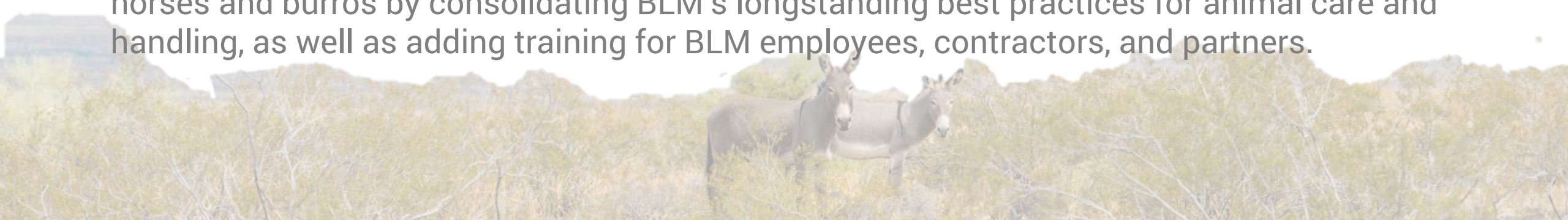




# HQ-Issued Policies/Bulletins in FY23

**Animal Health and Preparation** – On February 27, 2023, the Program updated policy for Animal Health, Vaccination, Gelding and Microchipping of Wild Horses and Burros (IM 2023-028). This IM establishes policy and procedures for evaluating animal health and body condition, providing preventive medical care for animals in holding, gelding (castrating) male wild horses and burros, issuing gelding reimbursement vouchers, and microchipping wild horses and burros.

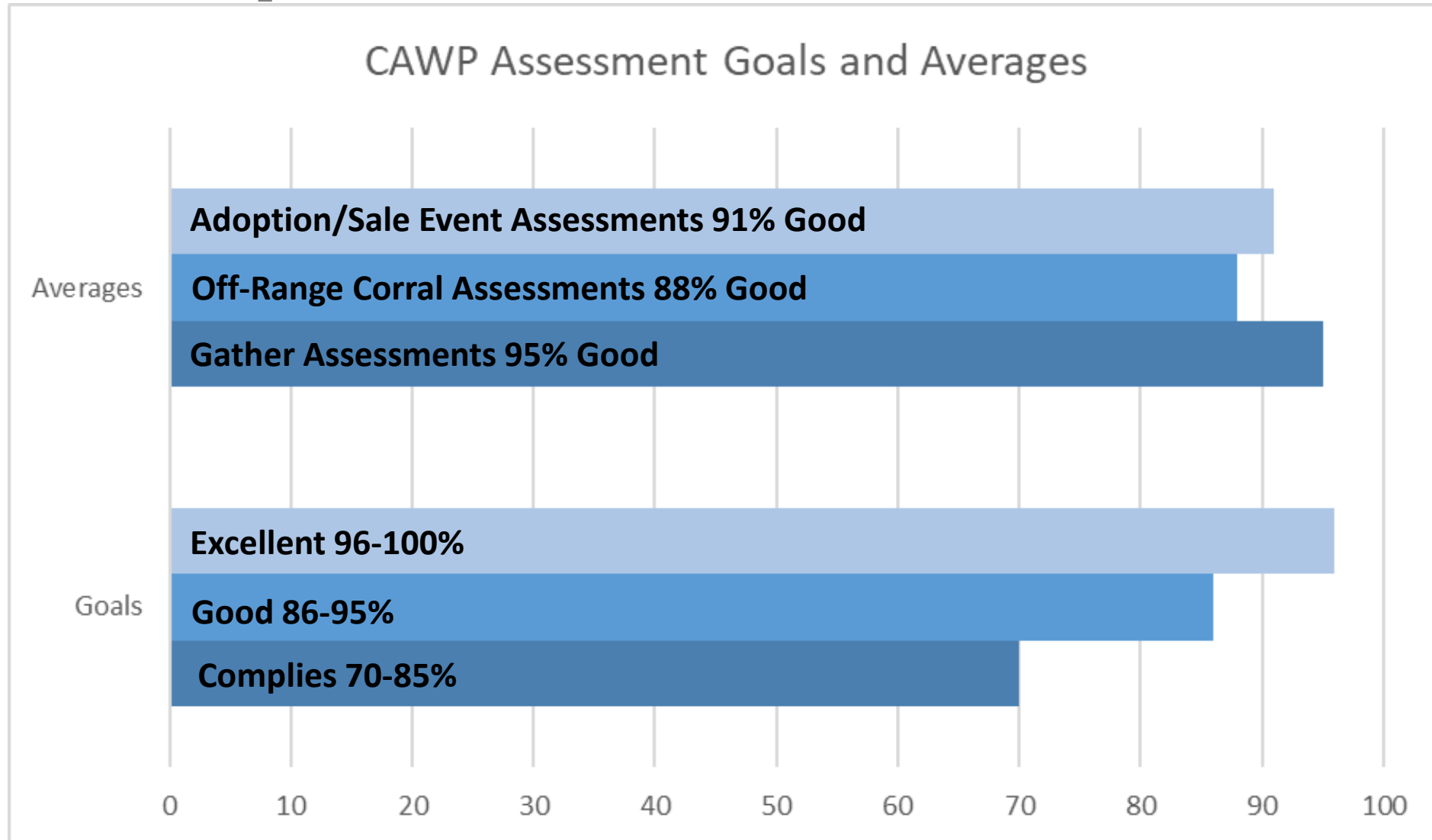
**Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP) for Off-Range Pastures** – On May 15, 2023, the Program issued new policy for the CAWP for Off-Range Pastures and Public Off-Range Pastures (IM 2023-41). This IM helps ensure humane treatment, handling, and care of wild horses and burros by consolidating BLM's longstanding best practices for animal care and handling, as well as adding training for BLM employees, contractors, and partners.





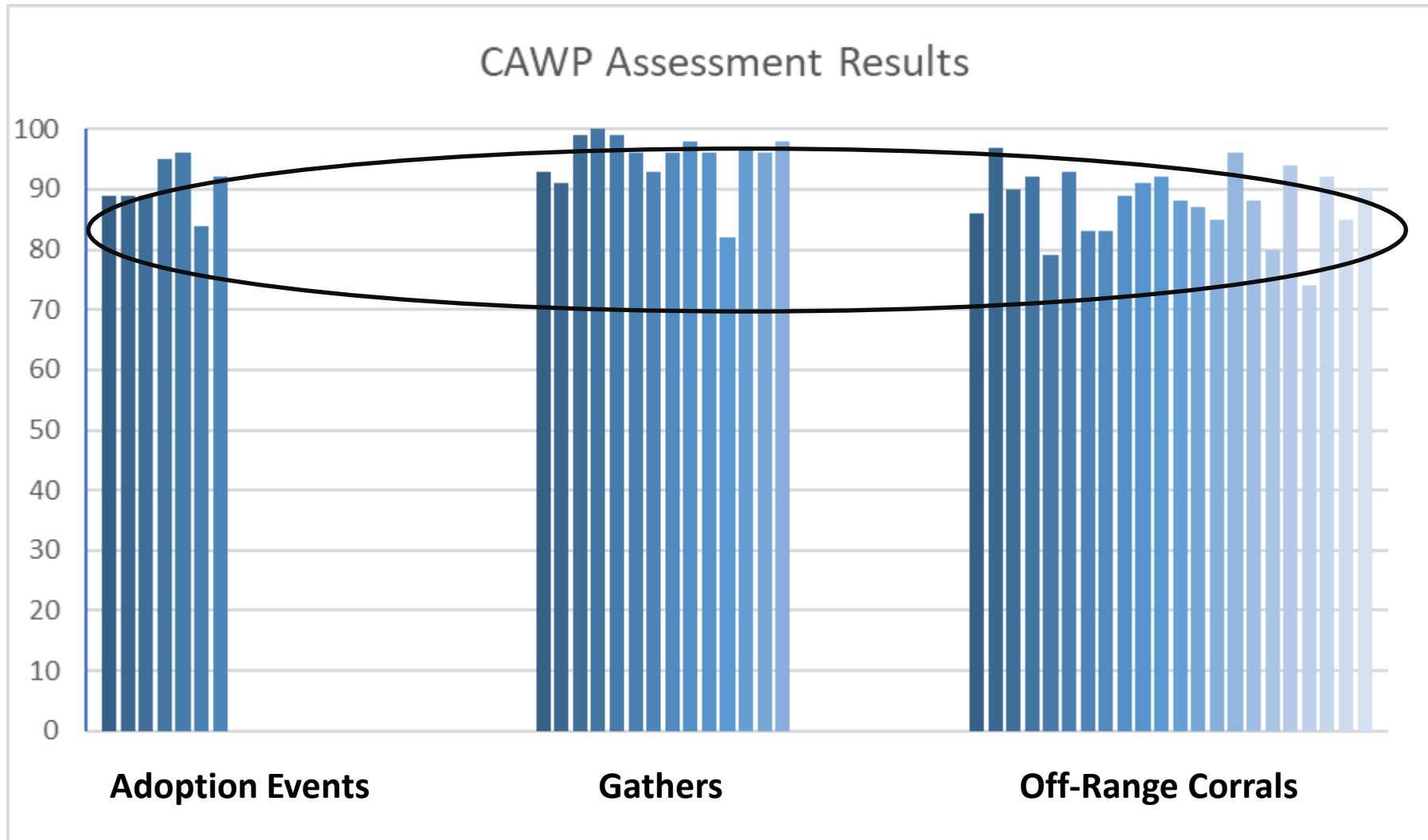


# CAWP Update





# CAWP Update

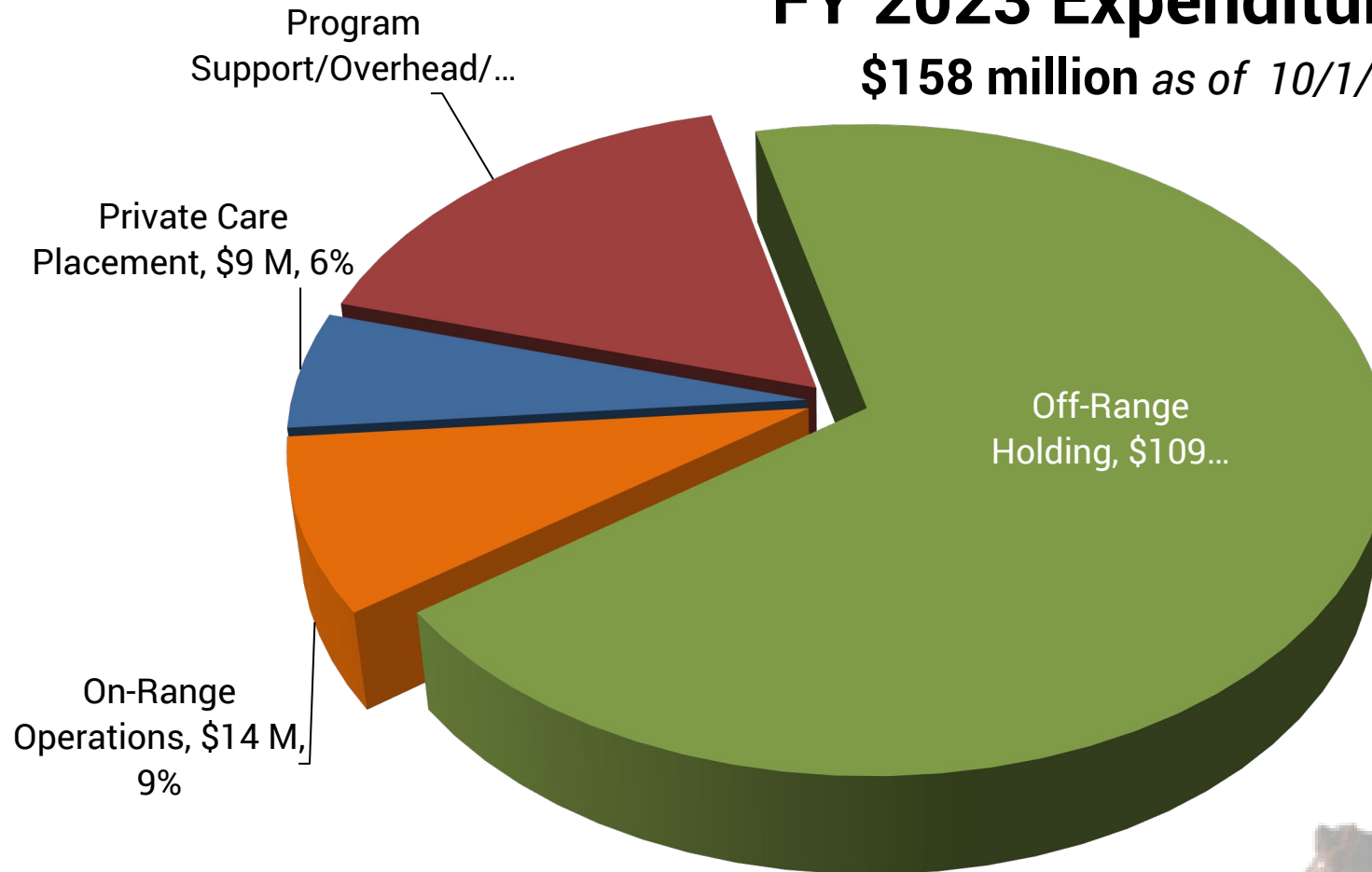






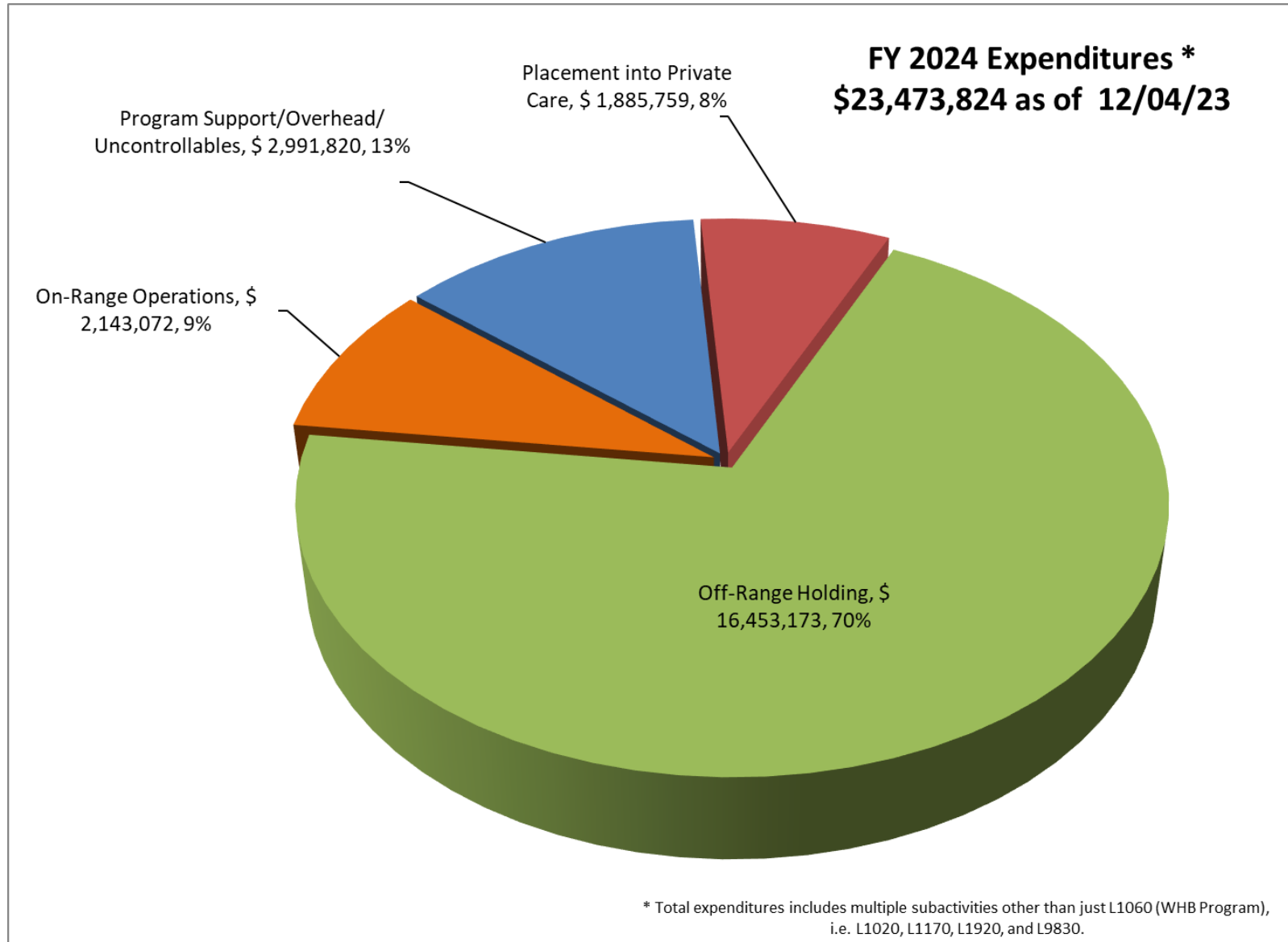
# FY 2023 Expenditures \*

\$158 million *as of 10/1/23*



\* Total expenditures includes multiple subactivities other than just L1060 (WHB Program) i.e. L1020, L1170, L1920, and L9830.







# Questions?



Credit: Frank Sorger