



# Grassroots to Rooftops: Building a free community WiFi network across Ottawa

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**In Partnership with:**





# Land Acknowledgement

NCF acknowledges the Anishinàbe Algonquin People whose traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory is where our work takes place.

We recognize that the digital divide disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples, communities and Nations and that reconciliation is central to advancing digital equity in our region.



# Overview

- 1 - About National Capital FreeNet
- 2 - Community Need and Impact
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Founded in 1992, National Capital FreeNet (NCF) is a local not-for-profit internet provider committed to advancing digital equity.

This includes the understanding that some groups are disproportionately affected by the digital divide.

**We believe everyone in our region has a right to affordable, high-quality internet that they can understand how to use, while feeling safe online.**

We serve thousands of residential and business members through our affordable internet, free locally-hosted email, digital skills resources and award-winning HelpDesk of staff and community volunteers.





### The Need is Real:

- The high cost of home internet and cellphone data plans means that many of those living on low incomes struggle to afford internet access.
- In a 2020/21 survey of more than 200 OCH tenants, 22.5% did not have home internet
- Lack of reliable internet connectivity limits people's ability to access health and government services, stay in touch with friends and family, find and apply for jobs and practice critical digital skills.



## 03 Coalition in Action

### CIRA

- Joined our mission in December 2023 through their Net Good program to fund our pilot.
- Provides free use of their DNS Firewall service and is deploying its Internet Performance Test service for continuous improvement.

### Ottawa Community Housing (OCH)

- Hosts our supernode by offering free power and roof space, along with support for community engagement sessions and workshops.

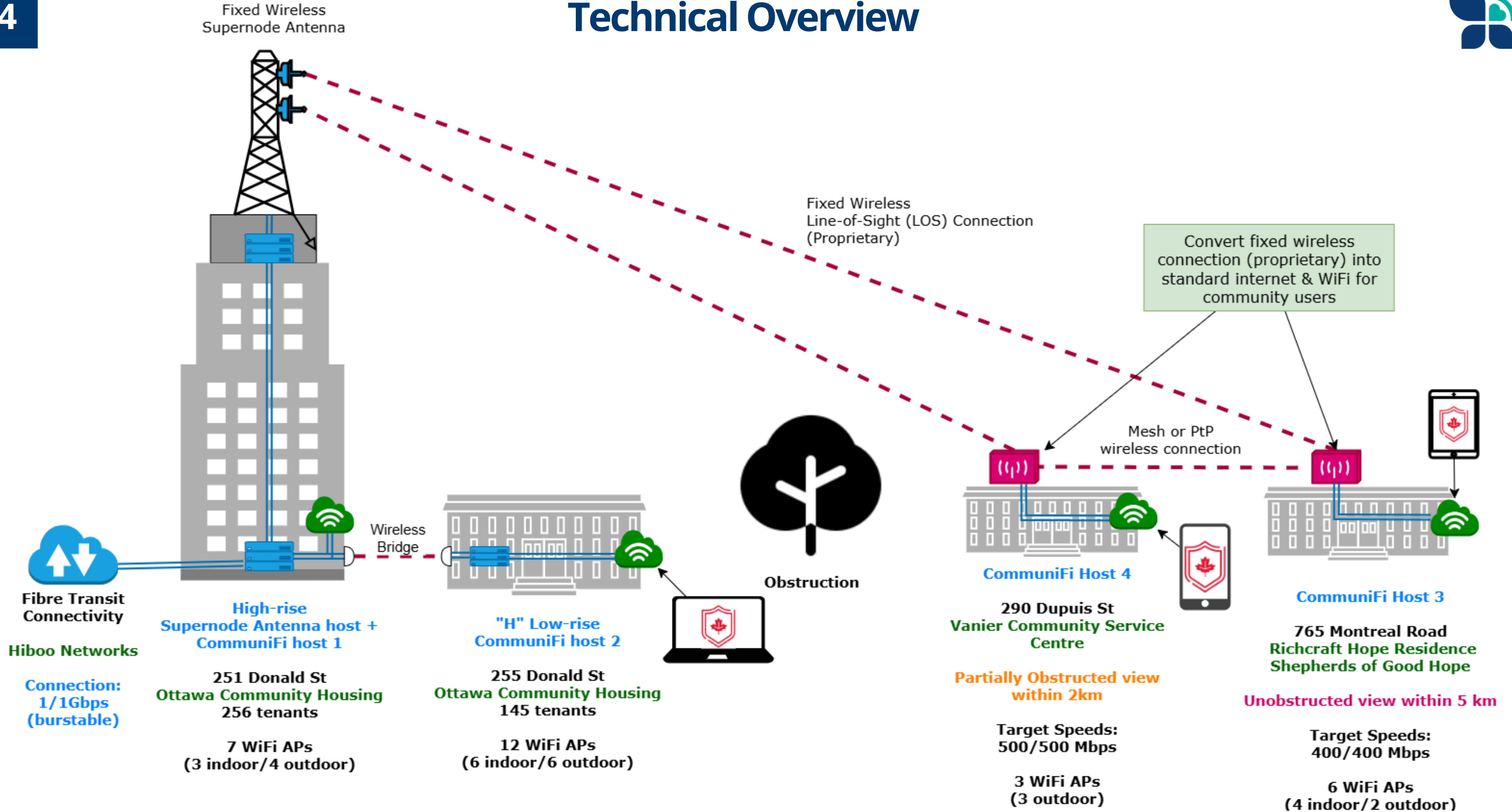
### Hiboo Networks

- A wholly-owned subsidiary of Hydro Ottawa, built our network backhaul, offering free transit for 18-months and lower than market rates for at least five years.

We're proud that this project is coalition of Ottawa-based not-for-profits and municipally-owned agencies committed to connecting those who need it most.



# Technical Overview



# Impact: Client Devices



## Number of unique clients (devices)

**5256**

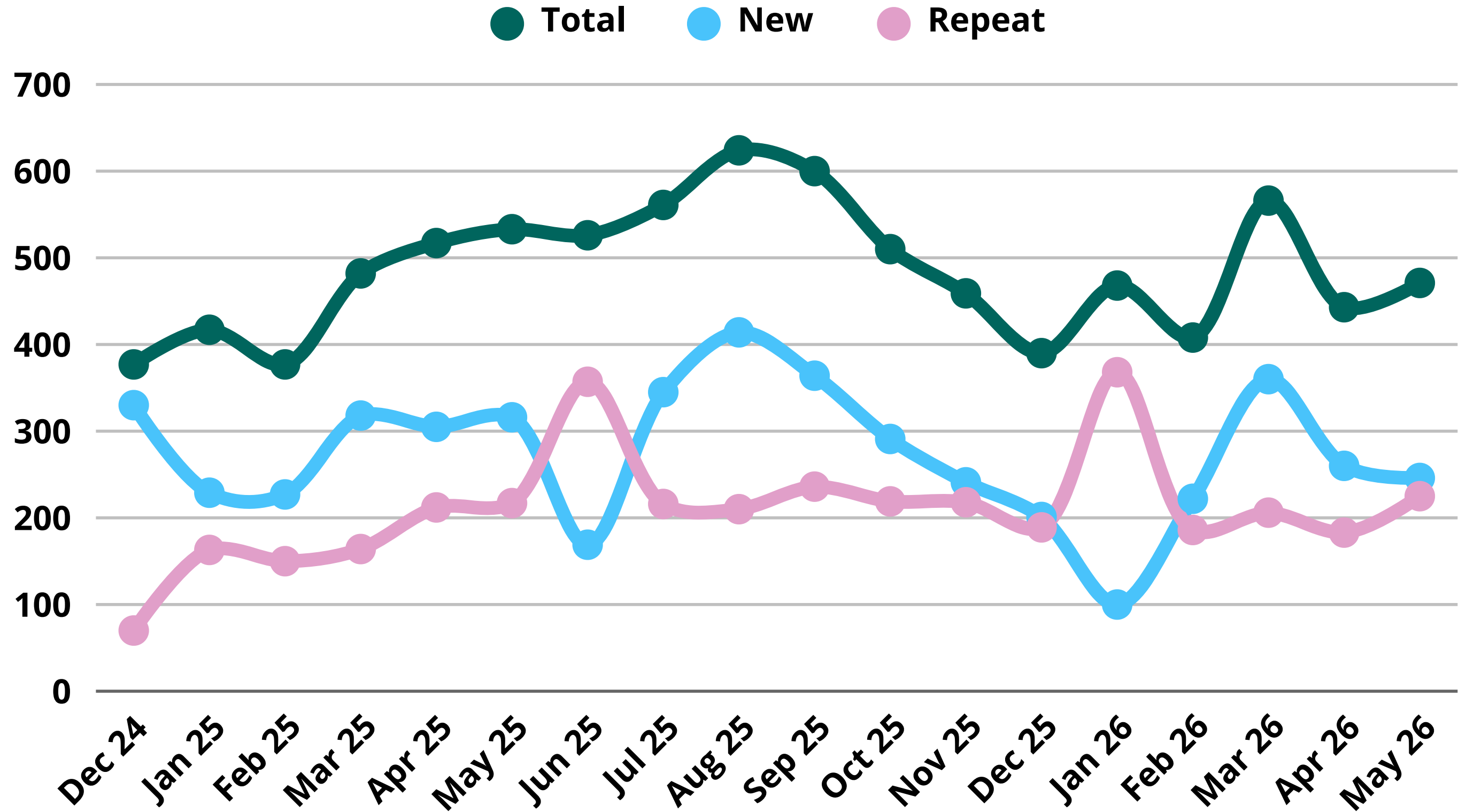
Total unique clients (devices)

**277**

Average new clients (devices) each month

**215**

Average repeat client (devices) each month





# 16.4 GB

Average monthly usage  
per client (Apr 2026)

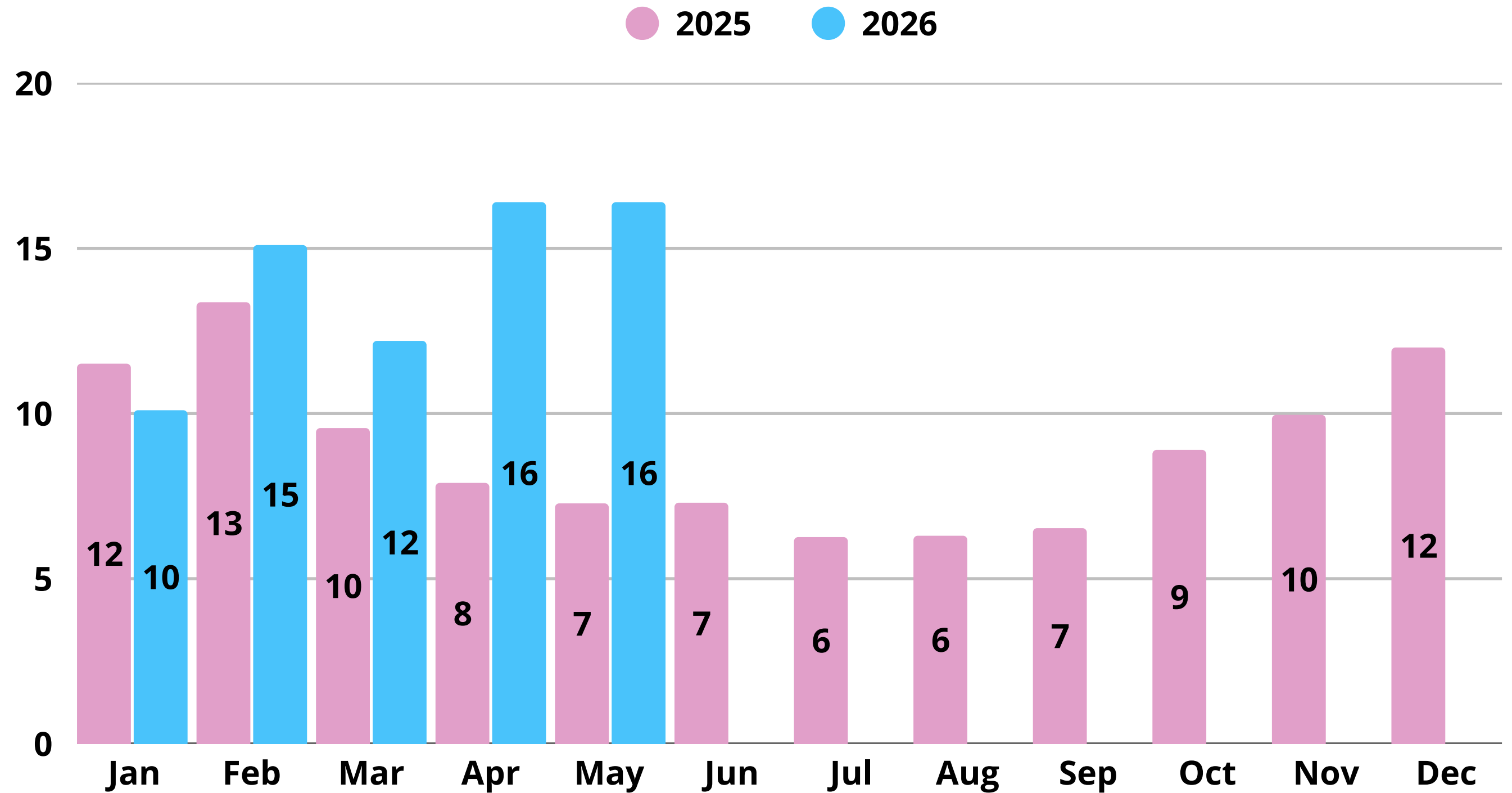
# 10.95 GB

Average usage per mobile  
subscriber in Canada  
(Q3 2025)

# 89.8 TB

Total usage to date

## Average monthly usage (GB) per client per month





## Web Filter Blocks - CIRA DNS Firewall

# 58,466

Total Web Filter blocks  
for Family Network

# 23,837

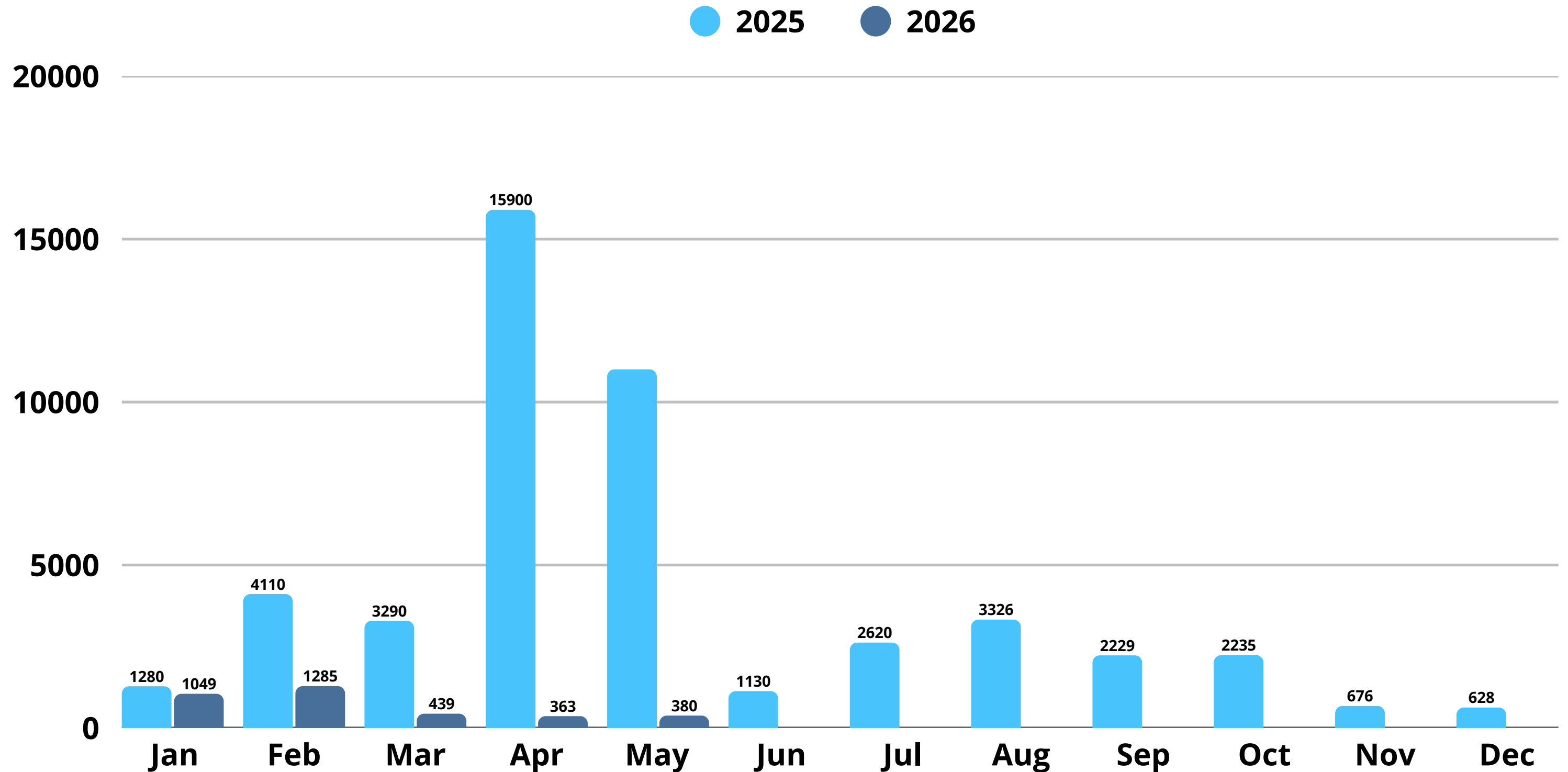
Total Phishing blocks

# 327,428

Total Malware blocks

# 202

Total Botnet and  
Other blocks





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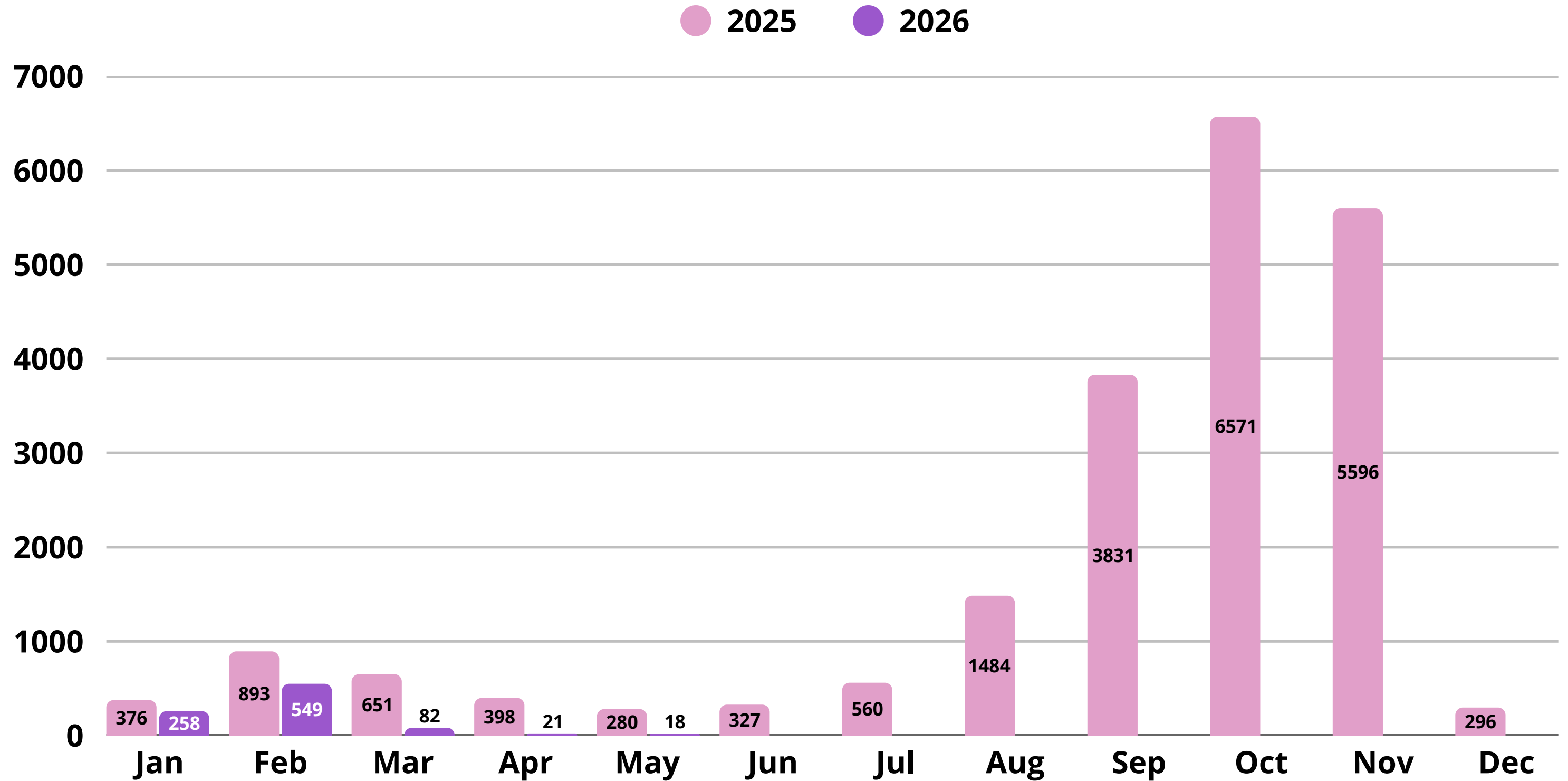
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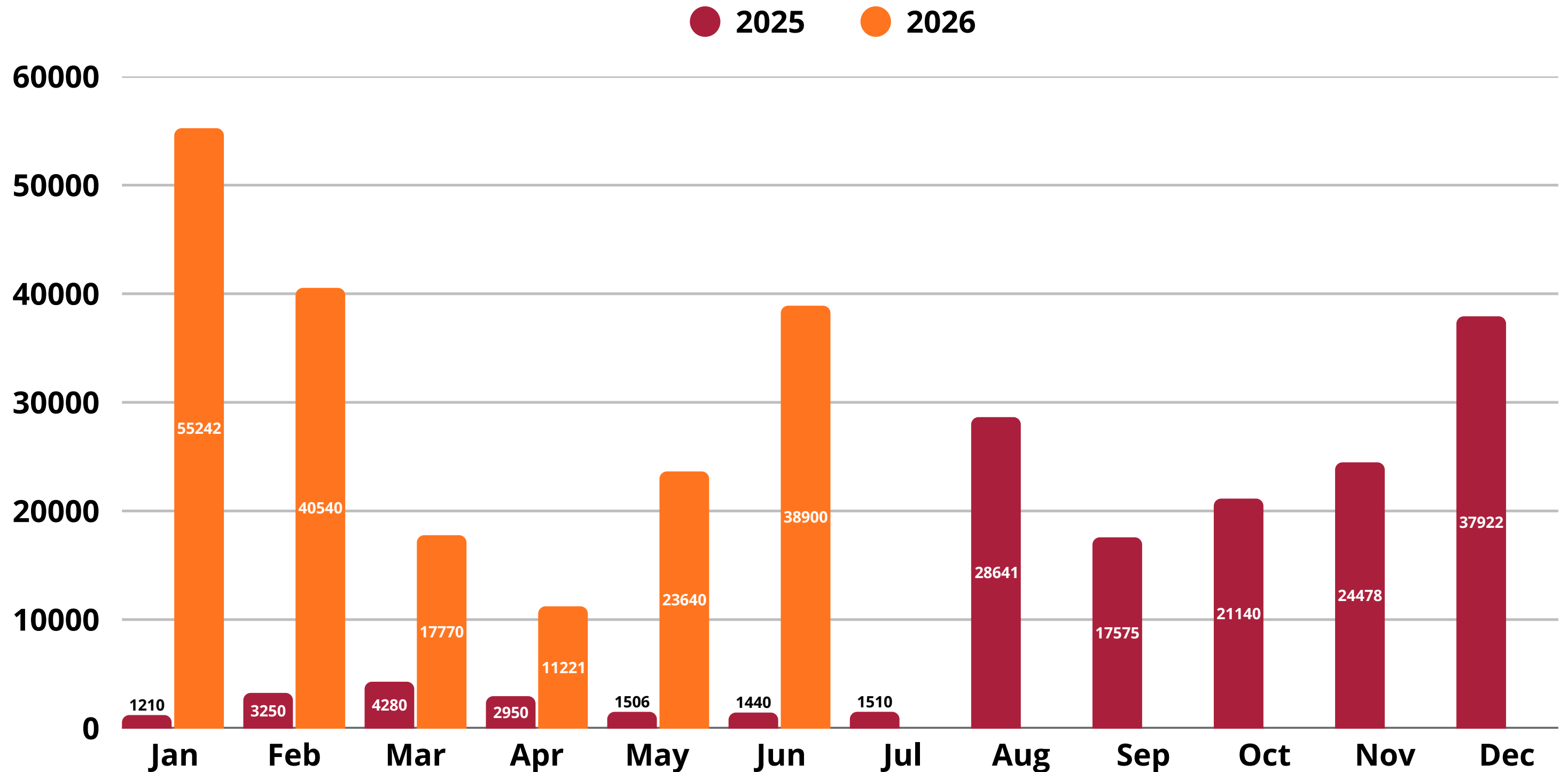
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## Malware Blocks - CIRA DNS Firewall





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