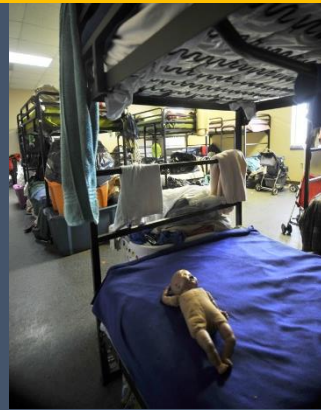


CHARLOTTE- MECKLENBURG **FAMILY HOMELESSNESS SNAPSHOT** 2014-2015



March 2017

PREPARED BY:

University of
North Carolina
at Charlotte
Urban Institute

PREPARED FOR:

The Housing Advisory Board of
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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Mecklenburg County Community
Support Services

The Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (HAB), formerly known as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coalition for Housing, is a volunteer appointed board charged with educating, advocating, engaging and partnering with community stakeholders to end and prevent homelessness and ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing throughout the community. Members are appointed by the Mayor, City Council and the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners. HAB looks to national best practices and local research to make its recommendations to community stakeholders and providers, and advocates and advises on a strategic level to reduce homelessness and increase affordable housing. In addition, HAB is responsible for the governance of the Continuum of Care in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which carries out activities as specified in 24 CFR part 578.5(b) of the Federal Register of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute is a nonpartisan, applied research and community outreach center at UNC Charlotte. Founded in 1969, it provides services including technical assistance and training in operations and data management; public opinion surveys; and research and analysis around economic, environmental, and social issues affecting the Charlotte region.

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About

The 2016 Housing Instability & Homelessness Report Series is a collection of local reports designed to better equip our community to make data-informed decisions around housing instability and homelessness. Utilizing local data and research, these reports are designed to provide informative and actionable research to providers, funders, public officials and the media as well as the general population.

The 2016 Spotlight Report on Family Homelessness and the 2016 Annual Count Report will be released in 2017. The 2017 Housing Instability & Homelessness Report Series will begin with the 2017 Point-in-Time Count Report scheduled for release in Spring 2017.

In 2014, the Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg outlined four key reporting areas that, together, comprised an annual series of reports for community stakeholders. The four areas include:

1. Point-in-Time Count

An annual snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County. This local report is similar to the national report on Point-in-Time Count numbers, and provides descriptive information about both the sheltered and unsheltered population experiencing homelessness on one night in January.

2. Annual Count

An annual count of the population experiencing sheltered homelessness over twelve months. Like the Point-in-Time Count Report, this local report is similar to the national report on annual counts of sheltered homelessness, providing descriptive information about the population experiencing sheltered homelessness throughout the year. The Point-in-Time Count and Annual Count Reports are complements, and together help paint a picture of homelessness and trends in our community.

3. Housing Instability

An annual report focusing on the characteristics and impact of housing instability in the community. During the 2016 reporting cycle, this report will feature innovative affordable housing development strategies that other communities have implemented.

4. Spotlight

An annual focus on a trend or specific population within housing instability and homelessness. During the 2016 reporting cycle, this report will focus on households with adults and children experiencing homelessness within Mecklenburg County.

The 2016 reporting cycle is completed by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. Mecklenburg County Community Support Services provided funding for the report series.

Key Definitions

These definitions are based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Affordable Housing

A household does not spend more than 30% of their pre-tax gross annual income on rent and utilities.

Extremely Low-Income

A household's annual income is less than 30% of the area median income.

Housing Choice Voucher

The federal government's major rental assistance program for assisting very low-income households, the elderly, and those with disabling conditions to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market.

Housing Cost Burdened

If a household spends more than 30% of their pre-tax gross annual income on rent and utilities, then they are considered housing cost burdened.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

Local planning body responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or even an entire state.

Emergency / Seasonal Housing (ES)

A facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless people.

HUD Homeless

A person sleeping in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a place unfit for human habitation.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless people. Each CoC maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs, but must also conform to HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

Households with Adults and Children (Families)

People who are homeless as part of households that have at least one adult and one child under the age of 18.

McKinney-Vento Homeless

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis to formerly homeless people. This is considered permanent housing.

Point-in-Time Count (PIT)

An unduplicated one-night estimate of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations.

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

A program that provides financial assistance and services to help those experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. This is considered permanent housing.

Transitional Housing (TH)

A program that provides temporary housing and supportive services for up to 24 months with the intent that the person to move towards permanent housing.

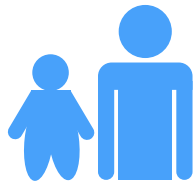
Sheltered

People who are living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals.)

Unsheltered

People with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Executive Summary



Family: A household with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18

Homeless definitions

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Homeless definition: Literally homeless

Definition is used for



Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data



Point-in-Time Count (PIT) data

U.S. Department of Education
Homeless definition: Literally homeless and unstably housed

Definition is used for



McKinney Vento status data

Factors

associated with family homelessness

Lack of affordable housing

Poverty

Domestic violence and trauma

Intergenerational transfer of homelessness

Evictions and foreclosures

Impact

of homelessness on families/children

Family separation

Health

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Interventions

for family homelessness

Affordable housing

Rapid Re-housing

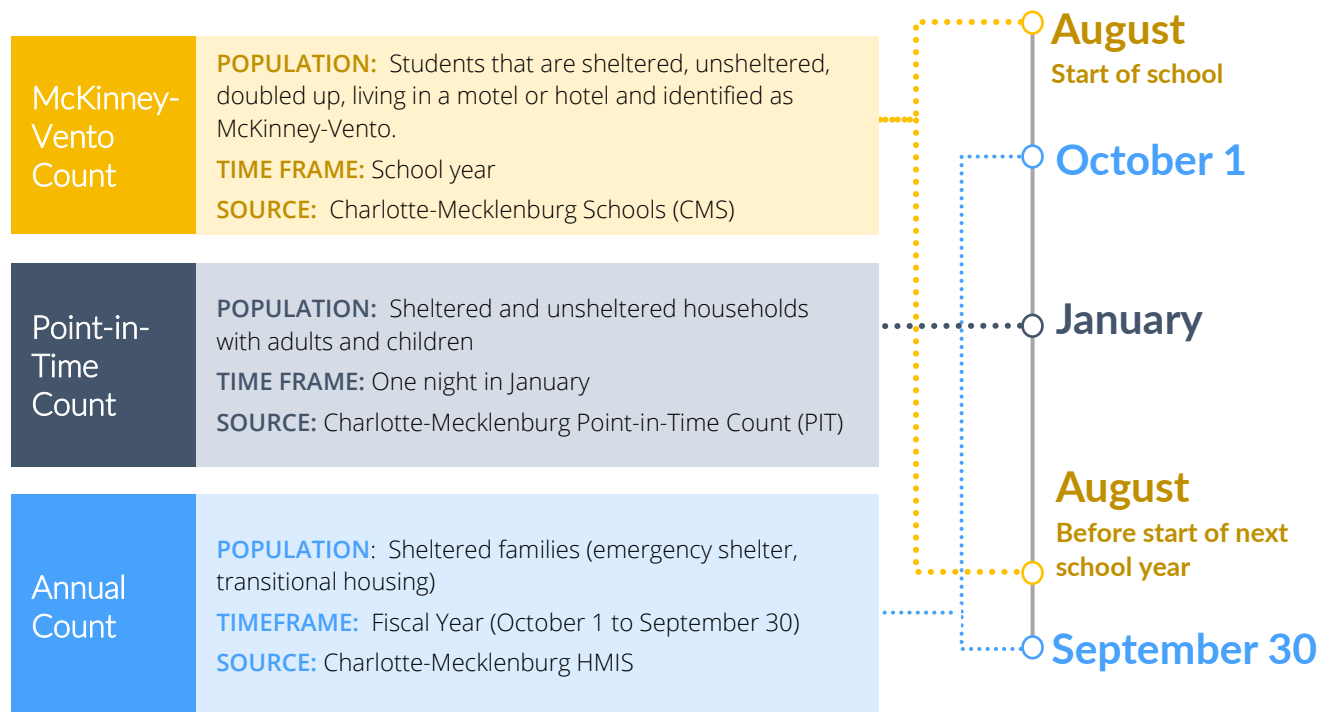
Transitional housing

Two generational approach

Supportive services

Measuring family homelessness

These three data sources are used to measure homelessness. The data sources vary in reporting requirements and are reported over different time periods. Below is a summary of the time periods used when reporting each of these data sources.



In Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 2015

ANNUAL COUNT



People in sheltered families experiencing homelessness in **FY2015 (10/1/14 – 9/30/15)**

2,405

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT



People in sheltered and unsheltered families experiencing homelessness on the **night of January 29, 2015**

758

↓ 8% from 2014

MCKINNEY-VENTO COUNT



MKV Students **2014/2015 school year**

4,388

Connection to Services

Are students in families that were sheltered in an emergency shelter or transitional housing also identified for McKinney-Vento services?



38% of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students in emergency shelter or transitional housing during the 2014/2015 school year were not identified as McKinney-Vento (MKV)

Of the students not identified as MKV*:

33%

were in **transitional housing** at some point during the school year.

70%

were in **emergency shelter** at some point during the school year.

* Some students were in both TH and ES, which is why the percentage is greater than 100.

Reading proficiency

What is the likelihood of being proficient in reading for students experiencing homelessness?

- **RACE.** The odds of a black student experiencing sheltered homelessness being proficient in reading are 50% lower than their non-black peers who experienced homelessness.
- **EXCEPTIONAL CHILD STATUS.** Exceptional students (students with disabilities) that experience homelessness are 93% less likely than non-exceptional students experiencing homelessness to be proficient in reading.
- **CHRONIC ABSENCE.** Chronically absent students that experience homelessness are 21% less likely to be proficient in reading. Chronically absent students who were suspended at least one time are 40% less likely to be proficient in reading.
- **SCHOOL LEVEL.** Two school level indicators significantly predict reading proficiency: school performance and school level concentrated poverty. Students experiencing homelessness who attend a school with a NC School Performance Grade of D or F are 28% less likely to be proficient in reading, and students experiencing homelessness attending a school that qualifies for the Community Eligibility Provision (a service that provides free breakfast and lunch to students in schools and districts in low-income areas) are 35% less likely to be proficient in reading.

Introduction

Family homelessness is a significant social problem in our nation. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness set a goal to end family homelessness by 2020. One step in ending family homelessness is understanding it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress provides national data on homelessness that is used to help inform policies, funding, and strategies for ending homelessness. In addition to national data and trends, it is also important to look locally at Charlotte-Mecklenburg data to better understand households experiencing family homelessness.

This report combines multiple data sources that shed light on family homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, each from a different angle. Data are presented from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Point-in-Time Count, and the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). Due to the availability of data, analysis is focused on data from 2014 to 2015. For the purposes of this report, families are defined using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of a household with at least one adult over age 18 and at least one child under the age of 18.

Using the Institute for Social Capital's integrated data system, data from CMS and HMIS are linked together to better understand how children experiencing homelessness in a family are or are not connected to McKinney-Vento (MKV) services. This work is supplemented by interviews with local practitioners at agencies that serve families experiencing homelessness. Together, HMIS agencies and CMS are in key positions to assist and support children and families experiencing homelessness and connect them with resources.

The last section of this report presents the results of a regression model that predicts the likelihood of being grade proficient in reading after controlling for a number of variables. Research has shown that grade-level proficiency in reading, beginning at an early age, is a significant predictor of high school graduation and other life course outcomes, and this relationship is even more pronounced for students experiencing poverty.¹ This model incorporates data at three different levels: home/family (shelter and MKV status), student (demographics and attendance), and school (performance and demographics).



Context



Defining homelessness

A family is defined as a household with at least one adult over age 18 and at least one child under the age of 18. However, depending on the agency, homelessness can be defined differently. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Education use different definitions of homelessness to determine how to target services and resources.² This report utilizes data from both of these sources to describe family homelessness. It is important to understand the differences in definitions when looking at the data in the report.

HOMELESS DEFINITIONS

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Families (households with at least one adult over age 18 and one child under age 18) are defined by the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act, as amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009, as experiencing homelessness if they fall within one of four categories:

- ▶ Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who reside in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation and those who are exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided;
- ▶ Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
- ▶ Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; and
- ▶ Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, violence that is targeted against the individual or a family member.

SUMMARY
Literally homeless

This definition is used for
HMIS and PIT data

(See page 24 for more details)

U.S. Department of Education

Homeless children and youth are defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Section 725 as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This includes children and youth who are:

- ▶ Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up); living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement;
- ▶ Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- ▶ Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar setting; and
- ▶ Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

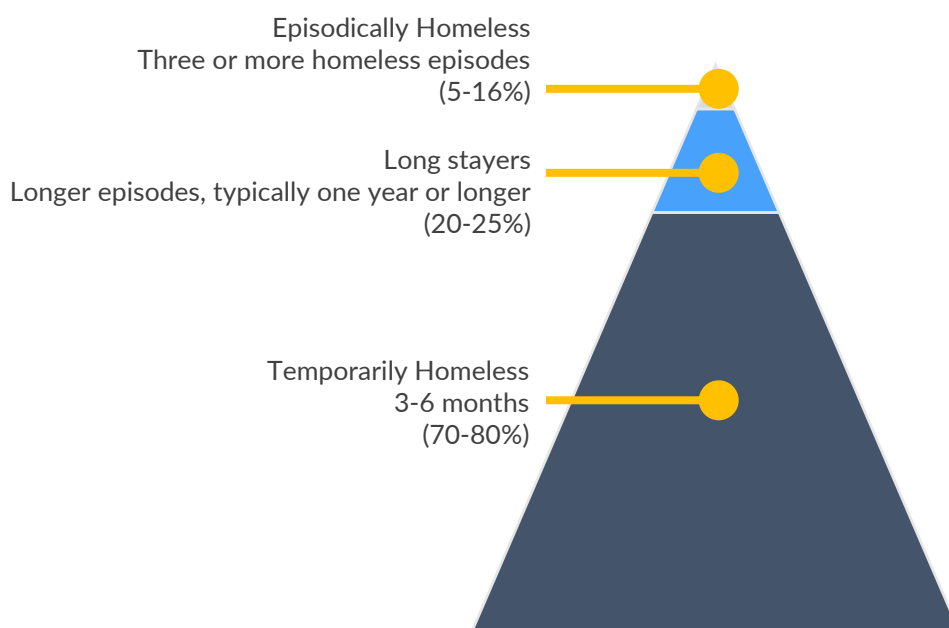
SUMMARY
Literally homeless and unstably housed

This definition is used for
MKV data

(See page 25 for more details)

Characteristics of sheltered family homelessness

The Corporation for Supportive Housing and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2012) describe three clusters of families—temporarily homeless, long stayers, and episodically homeless—that experience homelessness. The temporarily homeless are the largest group (70% to 80%) amongst homeless families and are homeless for the shortest duration, typically less than three to six months. These families face similar barriers when compared to other low-income families but have weaker social networks and lack access to social programs. The long stayers, which represent 20% to 25% of the homeless family population, are those with usually one episode of homelessness but of longer duration, typically one year or longer. This group has similar service needs and barriers as the temporarily homeless. The third cluster includes the episodically homeless, whom experience three or more episodes of homelessness and comprise 5% to 16% of families experiencing homelessness. These families have wide-ranging needs that contribute to frequent cycling through the homeless service system.³



Factors associated with family homelessness



Affordable Housing

A lack of affordable housing is one of the major causes of homelessness for families.⁴ A shortage of affordable rental units for low-income households and lengthy wait times for rental assistance make it difficult for families to find affordable housing. The need for affordable housing is especially great for extremely low-income renters (households earning less than 30% of area median income). The National Low Income Housing Coalition (2016) reports that there are only 30 units affordable and available per 100 extremely low-income renters. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015) found that in addition to this unmet need for affordable rental housing, there is also an inability to provide housing assistance to meet this growing need. Sixty percent of extremely low-income renters and 30% of very low-income renters cannot afford housing even with the provision of housing assistance.

Low-income households have some of the greatest barriers in securing affordable housing. Complicating the ability to obtain housing, is the ability to qualify for housing when a household has prior evictions. In 2013, families with children made up 2.83 million of those with worst case housing needs, paying more than half of income on rent.⁵ A household that spends more than 30% of their gross income on housing is considered cost burdened. In Mecklenburg County, 90% of extremely low-income renter households (0 to 30% area median income) and 84% of low-income renter households (31 to 50% area median income) were cost burdened from 2008 to 2012.⁶

Wages also are not keeping pace with housing. Based on American Community Survey 1-year estimates, from 2005 to 2015 the median household income in Mecklenburg County decreased 7% while the median gross rent increased 11%. A full-time worker making minimum wage (\$7.25) cannot afford adequate housing at fair market rent in Mecklenburg County without spending more than 30% of their gross income on rent and utilities. In addition to housing costs, a household may have medical, transportation and childcare costs that put additional strain on household income and may lead to difficult tradeoffs. For example, if a household cannot afford childcare and lacks a support network, it could result in a parent having to leave the workforce and potential loss of income for the family.

Poverty

Poverty is another cause of homelessness among families with children.⁷ According to the National Center for Family Homelessness (2014), the highest poverty rates for families are amongst those headed by single minority women. In 2010, children comprised 24% of the country's population but made up 33% of individuals living in poverty.⁸ In Mecklenburg County, from 2011 to 2015, 17% of families with children and 35% of female headed households with children were living below the poverty line.⁹ A lack of adequate wages contributed to increasing poverty. Based on American Community Survey data, from 2005 to 2015, the median household income in Mecklenburg County decreased 7%, while the median gross rent increased 11%.¹⁰ In 2016, there was no state in the U.S. where someone working 40 hours a week making minimum wage was able to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent.¹¹ In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, a full-time worker making minimum wage (\$7.25) would have to work 92 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rent.¹²

Domestic Violence and Trauma

The National Center on Family Homelessness (2014) cites traumatic experiences or violence as a contributor to family homelessness. More than 90% of mothers affected by homelessness have had at least one severe traumatic experience, and 20% to 50% of homeless women attribute homelessness to intimate partner violence. Women that are victims of partner violence are also more likely to attest to a housing instability.¹³ The National Coalition for the Homeless (2007) also identifies domestic violence as a contributing factor to homelessness among families. Women with few resources that leave their partners often have no means of securing housing. The New York City Independent Budget Office (2014), in their study of families with children entering shelters in New York City from 2002 to 2012, found that domestic violence was one of the most common reasons families sought entrance. The findings also show that the number of families that were admitted into shelters due to domestic violence rose during that period.

Intergenerational Transfer of Homelessness

Adverse childhood experiences, which are stressful or traumatic events, are another factor associated with family homelessness.¹⁴ In a study which examined the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, adult homelessness and future risk of homelessness in households with children, Cutuli et al. found that adults who had experienced higher levels of adverse childhood experiences were more likely to experience homelessness as an adult. Homelessness was also associated with developmental risks for future generations.¹⁵ The National Center on Family Homelessness (2014) found that when children are exposed to early adverse childhood experiences they are at greater risk for poor social, behavioral and health outcomes as adults. These experiences make them more vulnerable to poverty, food insecurity, and homelessness.¹⁶

Evictions and Foreclosures

During the great recession, many families were unable to make their mortgage and rent payments. CoreLogic (2016) estimates there were approximately 6.1 million completed home foreclosures since 2008, with low-income and minority borrowers disproportionately impacted by foreclosures.¹⁷ Renters also faced eviction due to the foreclosures of the homes they were renting, adding to the population of households in need of affordable housing. Nationally, twenty percent of foreclosed properties were rentals in 2008. The National Coalition for the Homeless study of the foreclosure crisis (2009) revealed that non-profits had an average of 19% of clients become homeless as a result of the foreclosure of their homes and 79% of organizations stated that at least some of their clients were experiencing homelessness due to foreclosure.¹⁸ In Mecklenburg County, there were 3,188 residential foreclosures in 2015, representing 1.1% of all units.¹⁹

The New York City Independent Budget Office (2014) found that eviction was the most common reason families entered the shelter from 2002 through 2012 in New York City.²⁰ Desmond et al. (2013) also found from their analysis of aggregate and individual level data that Milwaukee communities with a high percentage of children were more likely to have higher rates of eviction. The authors found that families with children were significantly more likely to receive an eviction judgement in court.²¹ A history of evictions can make it more difficult for a household to obtain housing.

Impact on Families/Children



Homelessness can have lasting impacts on families with children.²² It is important to identify what these impacts are so that local, state and federal initiatives and policies can help mitigate them. The research literature points to the deleterious effects that homelessness can have on family cohesiveness; physical and mental health; and developmental and academic outcomes for children.

Family Separation

Dworsky (2014) examines the relationship between housing and child welfare. Dworsky's assessment of the literature sheds light on the higher rate of child welfare system involvement among homeless families when compared to housed low-income families. Due to inadequate housing conditions that can have dangerous effects on the health and safety of a child, child protective services may become involved and place children in care outside of the home. Additionally, stress that results from being homeless can lead to physical abuse or neglect, or worsen other problems such as substance use and mental health disorders, which can lead to child protective services' involvement. Dworsky encourages child welfare agencies to address the housing needs of families experiencing homelessness in order to improve children's well-being.²³ Park et al. (2004) also finds that sheltered families experiencing homelessness were more likely to be involved with the child welfare system when compared to low-income stably housed families in New York City. When examining the rates of involvement before and after entering shelters, they found the rate drastically increased once families entered.²⁴

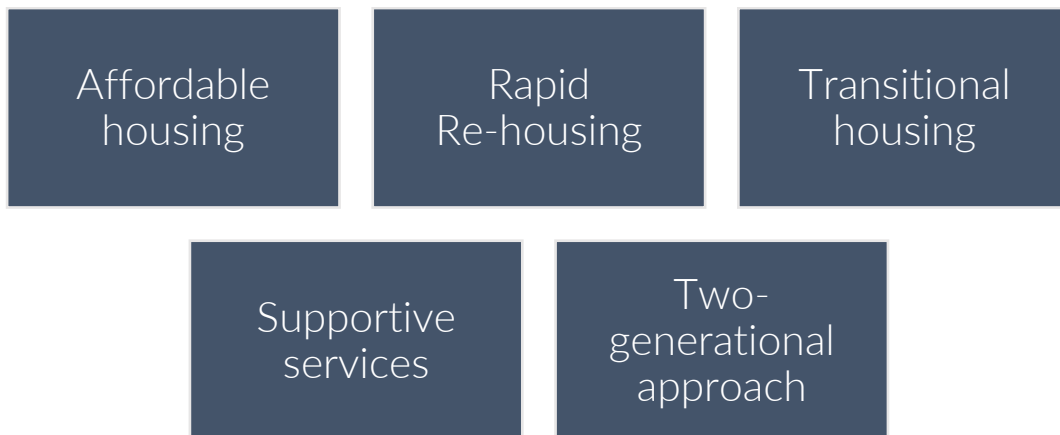
Health

In addition to the separation that families might endure as a result of being homeless, children also face a host of other barriers. Tobin and Murphy (2013) assessed the effects of child and family homelessness and found that homeless children develop four times as many respiratory infections and twice as many ear infections as children that are not homeless and are also four times more likely to have asthma. Malnutrition is a common health issue amongst families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, families and children experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer from stress; acute and chronic health issues; and higher rates of depression, anxiety and aggression.²⁵ Maqbool et al. (2015) reports that homeless families are more at risk of mental health problems, developmental delays, poor cognitive outcomes, stress, anxiety, depression and hospitalization.²⁶ The Administration for Children and Families (2014) also discuss the effects of homelessness on the health of children. Early adverse experiences such as homelessness can lead to toxic stress responses in children, affecting their brain function and other health outcomes.²⁷

Academic/Social-Emotional Well Being

Tobin and Murphy (2013) found that homelessness has negative developmental and educational outcomes for children. Preschool children experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to developmental delays (language, reading, social and motor development). Also, due to experiencing higher rates of residential instability, children experiencing homelessness have more absences, face more disruptions to learning, and are less engaged in the classroom. These students are also more likely to perform below grade level in math and reading.²⁸ Further, Voight, Shinn and Nation (2012) found that residential instability in the early elementary years has a negative influence on math and reading performance in third grade and a negative impact on future reading scores.²⁹ Walker, Brown & Shinn (2016) found that housing instability is closely related to school mobility, which negatively impacts children's academic and social outcomes.³⁰ The National Center for Homeless Education (2006) found that with each time a student changed schools it placed them behind academically by an average of four to six months. Also, high mobility rates contribute to poor academic outcomes, with three-fourths of older homeless youth dropping out of school.³¹ The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2016) reports that children experiencing housing instability are more likely to repeat a grade and less likely to graduate from high school.³²

Interventions for family homelessness



Comprehensive and Strategic Plan to End Family Homelessness

The research literature illustrates that homeless families are heterogeneous and have unique needs, and as such, the interventions employed to serve them need to be comprehensive and individually tailored to meet those needs effectively.³³ Culhane and Metraux (2008) discuss the homelessness assistance system and alternative solutions that can reduce and possibly end homelessness for families. Culhane and Metraux call for a more comprehensive and targeted system to meet the needs of the families that experience homelessness. Their alternative framework recommends a system that provides more than just shelter, and includes an array of interventions that improve housing stability. They suggest that rental assistance (payment of rent, outstanding utility bills, security deposits) and supportive services (assessment, referrals, employment training etc.) be paired to the needs and characteristics of homeless families. They assert that these interventions are more cost effective than shelter stays and less disruptive to families. In this alternative system, resources would be used more efficiently, reserving costlier programs for people with complex needs.³⁴

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) also calls for a comprehensive, strategic crisis response system to end family homelessness. The USICH details a coordinated system that tailors interventions and assistance to meet the needs of homeless families. The aim of this system is to bring together state, local, and federal partners and resources to provide families with affordable permanent housing and adequate supports and services. This allows families to be connected to prevention and diversion assistance (financial assistance, housing location, etc.), temporary shelter, and support services for domestic violence victims. The system also includes a range of interventions and models to better serve families, including: rapid re-housing; permanent supportive housing; affordable housing; and transitional housing. Lastly the system aims to connect families with community-based programs and services and build upon evidenced based practices.³⁵

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is identified in the literature as an instrumental component to ending family homelessness.³⁶ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2015) affirms that without housing assistance, substantially more low-income families would be contributing more than half of their income to rent and would be considered having worst case housing needs.³⁷ The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2006) identifies promising communities that have utilized federal, state and local funding sources to subsidize the cost of housing for families and to help families exit homelessness more quickly. Along with federal housing assistance, including housing vouchers that allows low-income families to devote only 30% of their income for rent, some localities have dedicated other resources to help subsidize housing for families such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants and funds from housing trusts. In a review of the research it was found that housing subsidies have helped families exit homelessness and remain housed, and have also prevented families from entering into homelessness.³⁸

HUD's Family Options study examined the cost and outcomes for four housing and service interventions: permanent housing subsidy (SUB), community-based rapid re-housing (CBRR), project-based transitional housing (PBTH) and usual care (emergency shelter and housing or services that families access without a referral to the other interventions). The study population consisted of households that spent at least 7 days in emergency shelters in various parts of the country. These families were assigned randomly to each intervention and surveys were conducted at various points over a three-year period. In the three-year follow-up of participants, it was found that families that had priority access to a long-term housing subsidy (typically a Housing Choice Voucher) had greater reductions of reports of homelessness or living in doubled up situations when compared to transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and usual care. Relative to the other three interventions, assignment to the SUB intervention reduced the outcome of being homeless (at least 1 night in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation) or doubled up in the past 6-months or in emergency shelter in the past 12 months by more than half.³⁹ The assignment of the long-term housing subsidy also improved measures of adult well-being; academic outcomes for children, and food security for families.⁴⁰

Rapid Re-housing

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) (2015) identified a Housing First approach as a critical component to ending family homelessness. The Housing First approach aims to move households experiencing homelessness directly into permanent housing as quickly as possible, and then once housed, provide supportive services as needed. An intervention utilizing the Housing First approach is rapid re-housing (RRH). RRH was introduced at a federal level through the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) in 2009 and HUD has continued to shift funding towards RRH programs in recent years. RRH is an intervention designed to provide temporary assistance to help move households out of emergency shelter and into permanent housing as quickly as possible. RRH consists of three main components: housing identification services, financial assistance for housing-related expenses (move-in costs, deposits, rent, utility costs), and case management services.⁴¹ Cunningham et al. states that the RRH strategy emerged as a solution to families spending lengthy amounts of time in shelters, transitional housing, and other temporary housing solely because they could not afford a permanent housing situation. The Family Options study by HUD found that community based rapid re-housing programs and subsidies had the lowest average per-month program costs. The study also found that households assigned to CBRR fared as well as those assigned to usual care and better than those assigned to project-based transitional housing as it pertained to adult well-being, child well-being and self-sufficiency measures. The CBRR intervention utilized the least amount of financial resources when compared to the three other interventions.⁴²

A 2016 report by the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH) highlights the fact that rapid re-housing does not solve the affordable housing crisis that is present in many communities. ICPH states that programs must implement best practices, considering local factors to effectively serve families. These practices include putting in place a centralized community-wide intake program, client centered case management, a strong network of public and non-profit partnerships, work place development services and building strong relationships with local land lords.⁴³ ICPH suggests that rapid re-housing may best serve households that have histories of housing stability and are homeless due to a life event and that other programs may be better suited for households that have multiple experiences of homelessness or more complex needs.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing emerged as a response to the realization that emergency shelters could not adequately help people leave homelessness and remain stably housed. Transitional housing provides people experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services for up to 24 months, with the goal of helping the household overcome barriers that prevent them from moving into and retaining permanent housing (commonly referred to as needing to be “housing ready”). While a household is in transitional housing, it is still considered homeless by HUD’s definition. Research on transitional housing suggests that it is most appropriate for households with domestic violence survivors, unaccompanied youth, and people with substance use disorder. In a series of studies, Burt (2006 & 2010) assesses a sample of transitional housing programs that serve homeless families. Burt found that some families in transitional housing programs had considerable barriers to housing, such as mental and substance abuse issues, limited income and several episodes of eviction. Burt asserts that transitional housing programs should target their extensive resources to the families with multiple barriers, families that would not be able to access housing on their own.⁴⁴ Critiques of the transitional housing approach include that it is prolonging homelessness and that the screening criteria for many transitional housing programs results in households with the highest needs not qualifying for services. HUD’s Family Options Study examined the cost and outcomes of families assigned to transitional housing interventions compared to community based rapid-rehousing, usual care, and subsidies, and found that families assigned to the transitional housing intervention did not have different outcomes compared to usual care or the other interventions but had higher costs.

Two-Generational Approach

The research literature shows a strong connection between a child’s well-being (social-emotional, physical, and economic) and their family’s well-being and stability (and vice versa). The two-generational approach is an intervention aimed to provide both the parent(s) and the child with the resources needed to succeed. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2014) ⁴⁵calls for an intentional and coordinated approach to strengthening families. The Casey Foundation identifies three key components to this two-generational approach: equipping parents with resources to secure jobs that can support their families and achieve financial stability; providing children with access to quality educational experiences; and providing parents with opportunities to build healthy relationships with their children and the tools to be advocates for them. The Foundation for Child Development (2014) and Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2012) also support a dual-generational strategy aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty. These strategies include linking education, job training, economic supports (housing, transportation, child care subsidies), and peer support services in the aim of assisting families achieve greater stability and economic mobility.⁴⁶

Supportive Services

Another strategy that should be considered when discussing possible solutions to ending family homelessness is community based programs and services. Prior research examines local programs that connect families with human services and housing supports with the aim of preventing and ending family homelessness.⁴⁷ Abt Associates Inc. (2012) studied 14 programs that served families that had multiple barriers to housing. Non-profit organizations were the most common type of organization linking families to services and supports. These organizations coordinated and provided case management services that connected families with human services (mental and physical health services, substance abuse treatment, transportation, child-care, employment, etc.) and housing assistance. The programs in this study were able to leverage their relationships and partnerships they had built in the community to help families obtain housing. They were also able to utilize a breadth of funding sources and use assessments to drive their decisions and connect families to the right supports. Although programs were successful in linking some families to critical supports, they faced challenges, as the demand for services often exceeded their capacity.⁴⁸ The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2006) also examines promising communities and programs that aim to end family homelessness. These communities have utilized prevention activities (mediation service between tenant and landlord, rent and utility assistance) housing assistance (security deposit, first month’s rent; short-term housing subsidy), targeted services (mental health counseling, employment, housing and child care services) and data to assist families in gaining housing stability. Communities have also made it a priority to house families quickly. Cities such as Washington DC, Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, Portland and New York City have utilized these strategies to prevent and end family homelessness.⁴⁹

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Context

Interviews were conducted with staff at nine agencies that work with families experiencing homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. These interviews provide local perspectives on what family homelessness looks like in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and help to contextualize the research literature themes and data presented in the report. Below are themes that emerged from these interviews.

Contributing factors to homelessness

- Agencies have seen an increase in families seeking services. According to agencies these trends are due to the lack of affordable housing, rising housing costs, and lack of income.
- The most cited factors contributing to episodes of homelessness include a lack of employment, underemployment, lack of income, trauma, a change in situation that displaced them (e.g. divorce, job loss, hospitalization). Some agencies have identified families that experience repeat homelessness as having a history of generational poverty or previous homelessness in their family.
- Five of the nine agencies interviewed estimated that more than roughly half of the families experiencing homelessness that they serve are accessing services for the first time.

Challenges to obtaining housing

- Every agency referenced the lack of affordable housing as a barrier for housing families experiencing homelessness. Other common challenges included a lack of sufficient income (unemployment or underemployment in the face of rising housing costs); previous evictions; and past utility debt. Agencies serving families also saw the shortage of affordable housing as a barrier as well as a lack of funding.
- The most common needs of adults in families are affordable housing; employment/job opportunities; and services which include health care, education, financial literacy, parenting, child care and counseling.
- The most common needs of children in families include stable housing, education/academic support, counseling and afterschool programming/mentoring.
- Six of the nine agencies interviewed stated that the largest gap in services for homeless families include housing services. Agencies cite the need for services for working poor families, men with children and families that are experiencing housing instability but do not meet HUD's definition of literally homeless.



Describing families experiencing homelessness



Measuring family homelessness

Three data sources are used in this report to describe family homelessness. The first two sources, the Point-in-Time Count and Homeless Management Information System data, provide a picture of family homelessness under HUD's definition of homelessness. The third source, McKinney-Vento data, provides a more detailed picture of children experiencing homelessness and includes the broader definition of homelessness and housing instability from the U.S. Department of Education.

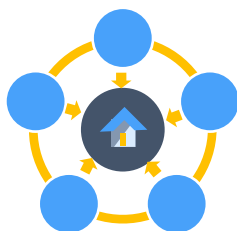


Point-in-Time Count (PIT) data

The Point-in-Time Count provides an unduplicated one-night estimate of both sheltered (emergency shelter and transitional housing) and unsheltered homeless populations.

How unsheltered and sheltered families with at least one adult and child are identified on one night: The design of the PIT Count is guided by HUD requirements and is implemented locally by each community's Continuum of Care (CoC). Each CoC uses HMIS data to identify sheltered families and a one-night survey to identify people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The one-night survey may be tailored by each individual community to meet HUD requirements and to include additional questions unique to that community's needs.

Limitations to this data: The PIT Count is an undercount of people experiencing homelessness on one night. For the sheltered count, changes over time must be interpreted with caution because the number of beds that are for emergency shelter or transitional housing may change each year. The unsheltered count relies on self-reported data and volunteer observation.



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data

HMIS data provide an unduplicated count of people who experienced homelessness and sought shelter or services over the course of a year at agencies receiving certain federal funding.

How sheltered families with at least one adult and child are identified during the year: HMIS is a local data system used to collect information on people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and seeking shelter in emergency/seasonal shelter, transitional shelter, or permanent housing. Each Continuum of Care maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs, but must also conform to HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

Limitations: Due to data quality, all numbers and trends should be viewed as estimates. Agencies and capacity of agencies entering data into HMIS may change over time, impacting the number of people able to be served. Identification of families relies on all household members being identified as part of the same household and entered correctly into HMIS. If households are not entered correctly it could result in an undercount in the number of family households. Data on families surviving domestic violence and seeking shelter in a domestic violence agency are not included in the analysis of Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS data due to privacy protections.



McKinney-Vento Act student data (MKV)

The McKinney-Vento Act ensures that homeless children and youth have equal access to public education by barring the segregation of homeless students; requiring transportation to and from their original schools; requiring an expeditious enrollment process; making placement determinations based on the best interests of the child; and designating a local liaison for homeless children and youth. Once identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento Act services (MKV), a student is eligible for services the entire year, even if their immediate housing crisis is resolved.

How MKV students are identified: School districts are required to collect data on whether a child is identified as MKV. Students are identified as MKV through self-reporting or identification by a MKV liaison, a school resource person, or the emergency shelter or transitional housing where the family is staying. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools these data are collected via a database tool called PowerSchool.

Limitations: The number of students identified as experiencing homelessness or housing instability is generally understood to be underreported by MKV numbers. Students experiencing homelessness or housing instability may not be identified as MKV for a variety of reasons such as lack of knowledge about the program, lack of self-report due to fear or embarrassment, or unawareness of school staff of where a child is residing. It is estimated that a large proportion of MKV students are identified when transportation to school is needed.

REPORTING TIME FRAME

These three data sources are used to measure homelessness. The data sources vary in reporting requirements and are reported over different time periods. Below is a summary of the time periods used when reporting each of these data sources.

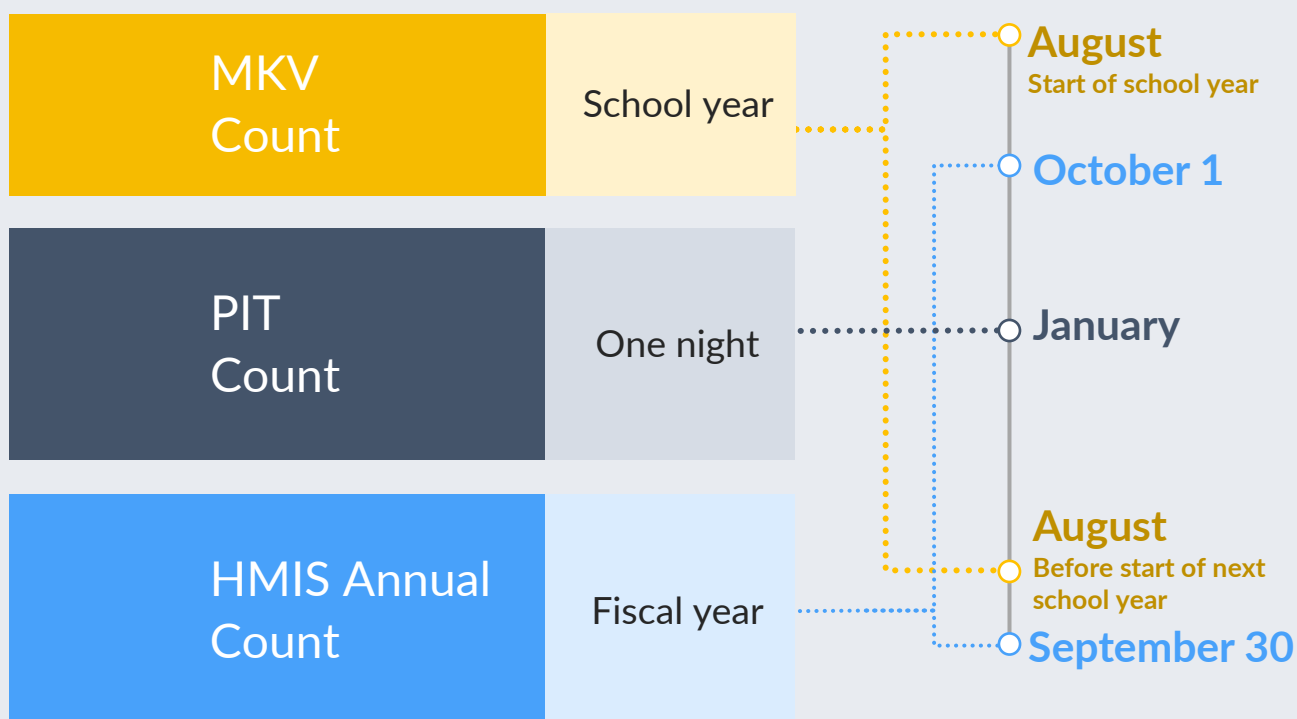


Table 1. Summary of definitions of family homelessness and measurement tools using each definition.

	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	U.S. Department of Education
SOURCE OF DEFINITION		
Statutory Reference	Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the HEARTH Act	Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act
LIVING SITUATIONS COVERED		
Unsheltered	Yes, considered homeless	Yes, considered homeless
Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing	Yes, considered homeless	Yes, considered homeless
Motels and hotels	Generally no , except in specific circumstances	Yes, if there are no alternative adequate accommodations
Staying with Others (Doubled up)	Generally no , except in specific circumstances	Yes, considered housing instability
MEASUREMENT TOOLS		
Data sources using this definition	PIT Count HMIS Data	McKinney-Vento data from school districts

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Administration for Children & Families
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/homelessness_definition.pdf

National estimates of family homelessness



People in sheltered families experiencing homelessness in
Fiscal Year 2015

502,521

↓ 2.9% from 2014



People in sheltered and unsheltered families experiencing homelessness
on one night in 2015

206,286

↓ 4.6% from 2014



McKinney-Vento Students
2013/2014 School Year

1,298,236

↑ 8% from 2012/2013

ANNUAL COUNT

POPULATION: Sheltered (emergency shelter, transitional housing)

TIME FRAME: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 (12-month fiscal year)

SOURCE: HMIS, Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress 2015, Part 2

COUNTS:

- 502,521 people in 154,380 families with children utilized shelter, representing one-third of the sheltered homeless population
- From 2014 to 2015 there was a decrease of 2.9% (14,896 people) in people in families with children utilizing a shelter.

PIT COUNT

POPULATION: Sheltered and unsheltered

TIME FRAME: One night in January 2015

SOURCE: PIT Count, Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress 2015, Part 2

COUNTS

- 206,286 people were homeless in 64,197 families with children one night, representing 37% of all people experiencing homelessness on one night.
- The number of people in households with children experiencing homelessness on one night decreased 4.6% since 2014 and decreased 12% since 2007.
- Ninety percent (185,824) of people in families with children experiencing homelessness were sheltered with only 10% (20,462) of people in families counted as unsheltered.

MCKINNEY-VENTO COUNT

POPULATION: Students that are sheltered, unsheltered, doubled up, living in a motel or hotel and identified as McKinney-Vento.

TIME FRAME: 2013/2014 School year

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

COUNTS:

- There were 1,298,236 MKV students in the 2013/2014 school year.
- The number of MKV students increased 8% from the 2012/2013 school year.
- 76.2% of MKV students were sharing the housing of other persons.
- 14.3% of MKV students were in shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement.
- 6.2% of MKV students were living in a hotel or motel.
- 3.2% of MKV students were in an unsheltered location.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg estimates of family homelessness



People in sheltered families
experiencing homelessness in
Fiscal Year 2015

2,405

*Data from previous year not
comparable*



People in sheltered and unsheltered
families experiencing homelessness
on one night in 2015

758

↓ 8% from 2014



MKV Students
2014/2015 School Year

4,388

ANNUAL COUNT

PIT COUNT

MCKINNEY-VENTO COUNT

This section provides detailed data on people in families experiencing homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg using data from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Point-in-Time Count, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS Data, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools McKinney-Vento data. These three tools for describing family and child homelessness are not directly comparable because they use different definitions of homelessness and cover different time periods. Additionally, as noted in the data and methodology section, all three of these numbers underrepresent the true number of people in families experiencing homelessness. Despite these limitations, these three data points provide different pieces of the picture of family homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Annual Count | FY 2014/2015



POPULATION: Sheltered families (emergency shelter, transitional housing)

TIME FRAME: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 (12-month fiscal year)

SOURCE: Charlotte-Mecklenburg HMIS data

SNAPSHOT

2,405

People in sheltered families,
FY1415

781

Sheltered family households,
FY1415

RACE / ETHNICITY

92% Black 4% Latino

GENDER (ADULTS ONLY)

92% Female 8% Male

AGE

693	855	423	398	34
Under 5	5-17	18-30	31-50	51+

CONTEXT

- Data from HMIS are provided in aggregate from the HUD Homelessness Data Exchange site. These data are unduplicated by shelter type and household type but not across the entire system. As a result, the numbers presented in the report will reflect some duplication if a person utilized both emergency shelter and transitional housing.
- Agencies and capacity of agencies may change over time, impacting the number of people served.
- Due to data quality, all numbers should be viewed as estimates.
- Household members might not have been consistently entered into HMIS, resulting in a lower number of households with adults and children.
- While the majority of agencies that provide emergency shelter or transitional housing input data into HMIS, there are some that do not, and as result their data are not captured.

One-night PIT Count | January 2015



POPULATION: Sheltered and unsheltered

TIME FRAME: One night in January 2015

SOURCE: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Point-in-Time Count

758

People in 256 families
experiencing homelessness
on one-night in January

↓ 8% from 2014

SNAPSHOT

RACE / ETHNICITY

96% Black

GENDER

66% Female 34% Male

LIVING SITUATION

100% 0
Sheltered Unsheltered

CONTEXT

- The PIT Count is a one-night estimate.
- Undercount of people experiencing homelessness.
- Self-reported data have reliability issues and not all people answer these questions.
- Due to Charlotte Family Housing's transition to reporting its transitional housing units as rapid re-housing or other unit types in 2013 and Community Link's programmatic change from providing transitional units to rapid re-housing units in 2014, the decrease in people identified in transitional housing in 2014 and 2015 should be interpreted with caution.

On one night

- There were 758 homeless people identified in 256 households with adults and children, representing 38% of all homeless people on a single night.
- 108 people identified in households with adults and children comprised 42% of the total sheltered homeless population. This is slightly higher than the share nationally (37%).

758

Homeless persons in households with adults and children

▲ 45%

From 2009 to 2015

▼ 9%

From 2014 to 2015

256

Households identified with adults and children

38%

Of all people experiencing homelessness on one night were identified in a household with adults and children

Shelter Status

- 100% of households with adults and children were sheltered. This is better compared to nationally, where 10% of families were unsheltered on one night in 2015.

100%

Sheltered

Age

- 64% of all homeless people identified in households with adults and children were under the age of 18. 6% of all homeless people in households with adults and children were between the ages of 18 and 24. 30% of people in households with adults and children were 25 years or older.
- The majority of homeless children and youth (98% or 486 people) were part of a homeless household with adults and children.

PIT Count: Age

■ Under 18 ■ 18 to 24 ■ 25 or older

64%

6%

30%

N= 758

PIT Count: Gender

■ Female ■ Male



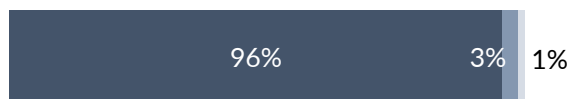
N= 757

Gender

- 66% or 503 people in homeless households with adults and children were females. Gender data is not available broken out by age, however the larger proportion of females is likely in part attributed to female headed households.
- 34% or 254 of homeless people in households with adults and children were males.

PIT Count: Race

■ Black ■ White ■ Other



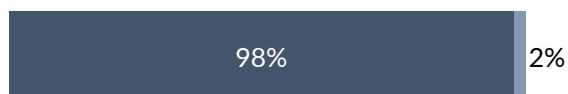
N= 757

Race

- 96% of people in family households were Black. For comparison, 82% of the overall homeless population in Charlotte-Mecklenburg was black and 49% of all homeless people in families nationally identified as Black.

PIT Count: Ethnicity

■ Not Latino ■ Latino



N= 758

Ethnicity

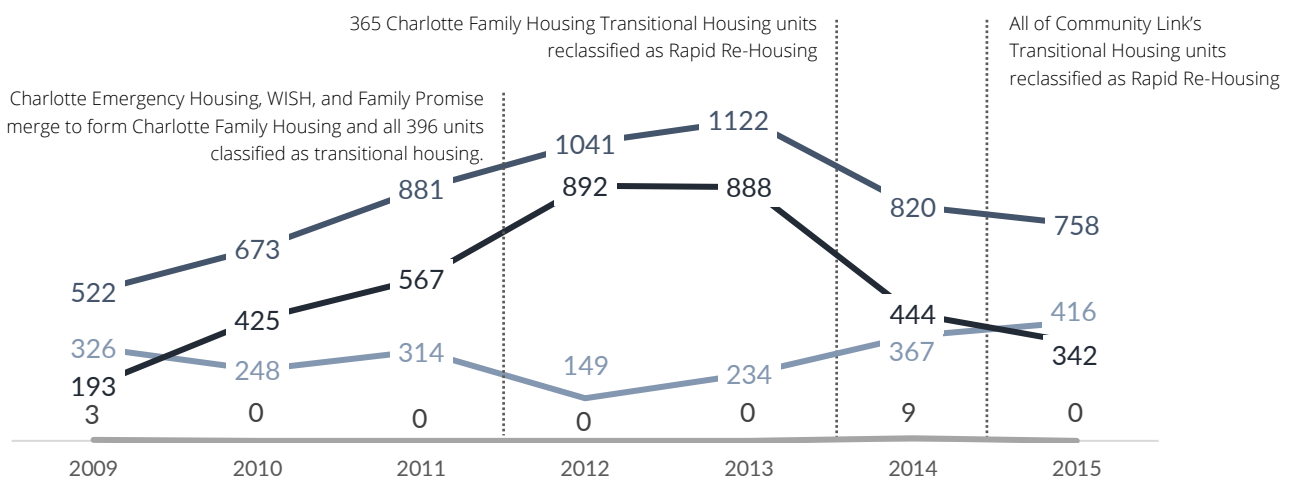
- 2% of all people in family households identified as Latino. Nationally, 26% of all homeless people in families identified as Latino.

Changes over time

- SINCE 2014:** The number of homeless households with adults and children declined by 9% (from 280 households in 2014 to 256 in 2015) and the number of people in those households decreased by 8% (from 820 people in 2014 to 758 in 2015). This decrease was due to the change in the number of people in households with adults and children in transitional housing, which decreased by 23% (from 444 people in 2014 to 342 in 2015). This decrease may be reflective of a true decrease in the number of people in families experiencing homelessness but may also be reflective of a change in the capacity of the agencies that serve this population. For example, one factor contributing to the decrease of families in transitional housing was the reclassification of Community Link's transitional housing units to rapid re-housing.
- SINCE 2009:** The number of homeless people in households with adults and children increased by 45% (from 522 people in 2009 to 758 people in 2015) and the number of households increased by 43% during the same time period (from 179 households with adults and children in 2009 to 256 households with adults and children in 2015). This increase may be the result of a true increase in the number of households with adults and children as well as changes in the capacity of organizations to serve this population.

People in Households with Adults and Children 2009-2015

— Emergency & Seasonal — Transitional Housing — Unsheltered Homeless — Total



McKinney-Vento | 2014/2015 School year



POPULATION: Students that are sheltered, unsheltered, doubled up, living in a motel or hotel and identified as McKinney-Vento.

TIME FRAME: 2014/2015 School year

SOURCE: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

4,388

CMS students identified as MKV in the 2014/2015 school year

SNAPSHOT

RACE / ETHNICITY

87% Black

GENDER

51% Female 49% Male

LIVING SITUATION

3,882	494	9
Doubled up Hotel/motel	Shelter	Unsheltered

GRADE

52%	23%	25%
Elementary	Middle	High

CONTEXT

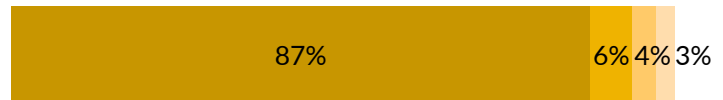
- Limited data on MKV students are collected and when changes in a child's situation occurs, it overwrites the old data so that changes throughout the year cannot be tracked.
- Once a student is identified as MKV, they remain MKV until the end of the school year even if their housing situation stabilizes.
- The number of students identified as experiencing homelessness or housing instability is generally understood to be underreported by MKV numbers. Students experiencing homelessness or housing instability may not be identified as MKV for a variety of reasons such as lack of knowledge about the program, lack of self-report due to fear or embarrassment, or the unawareness of school staff of where a child is residing.
- It is estimated that transportation needs are a trigger for the identification of MKV students.

Race/Ethnicity

- The majority (87%) of MKV students identified as Black.
- 6% of MKV students were Latino.
- The remaining 7% of students identified as American Indian, Asian, Multi-Racial, or White.

MKV: Race/Ethnicity

■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Other



N=4388

Gender

- 51% (2,258) of all MKV students identified as female and 49% identified as male.

MKV: Gender

■ Female ■ Male



N=4388

Exceptional Children

- 55 (1%) students identified as McKinney-Vento were identified as academically gifted while 559 (13%) were identified as learning with a disability or impairment.

1%

Academically
gifted

13%

Learning with
a disability or
impairment

Limited English Proficiency Status and ESL Services

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status is used to describe students who have not yet fully mastered the English language. LEP students are eligible for English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

- 4% (161) of all MKV students in 2014/2015 were identified as LEP
- 3% (123) of all MKV students received ESL services.

4%

Limited
English
Proficiency

3%

English as a
Second
Language

Proficiency

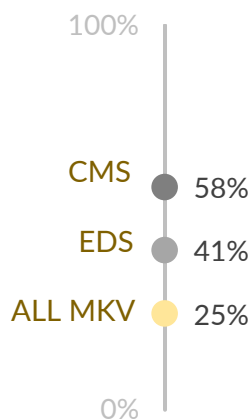
MATH

Of the 2,217 MKV students that took a math assessment in the 2014/2015 school year, 25% were assessed as proficient in Math. For comparison, 58% of all CMS students and 41% of all economically disadvantaged students (EDS) were proficient in math in 2014/2015.

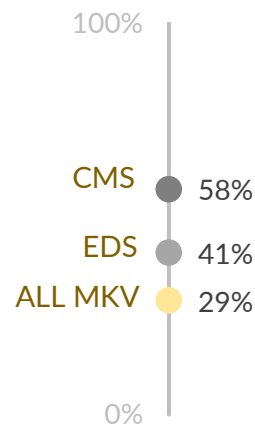
READING

Of the 2,188 MKV students that took a reading assessment in the 2014/2015 school year, 29% were assessed as proficient in reading. For comparison, 58% of all CMS students were proficient in reading and 41% of all economically disadvantaged students (EDS) were proficient.

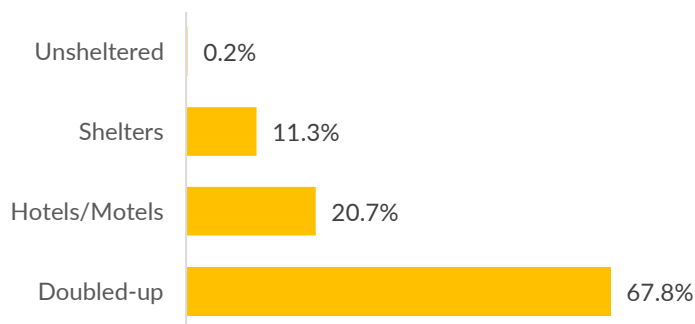
Math Proficiency



Reading Proficiency



MKV: Nighttime Residency*



* This reflects the student's most recent nighttime residency. If their nighttime residency changes throughout the year, the data is overwritten and only the most recent known nighttime residency is kept. It is likely that many of these students cycle through different nighttime residencies throughout the school year.

Nighttime residency*

- The majority (67.8%) of students identified as MKV were most recently living doubled up with family and friends.
- An additional 20.7% were facing housing instability and living in a hotel or motel.
- 0.2% (9) students were unsheltered.
- The remaining 11.3% were in a shelter.

Chronic absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is an important indicator associated with student achievement and graduation. A student is chronically absent when they miss more than 10% of the school year, whether (excused, unexcused, and/or suspended). Assuming a child is enrolled for a full year, this would represent 18 days in most Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools. Because data on the number of days a child is enrolled in school is incomplete, 18 days is used as the chronic absenteeism threshold for all students. In using 18 days, it is possible that the number of chronically absent students represented here is an undercount. For example, if a student were enrolled for less than 180 days, then the number of days absent that would be considered chronically absent would be lower than 18. One of the goals of MKV services is to provide transportation to assist students with getting to school at their original school despite moving out of that school zone.


- Over half (60%) of all MKV students were absent more than 10 days. If a high school student has more than 10 absences they may receive a fail for the class, per state policy.
- 33% of MKV students were chronically absent, missing 18 days or more of school.

MKV: Days Absent

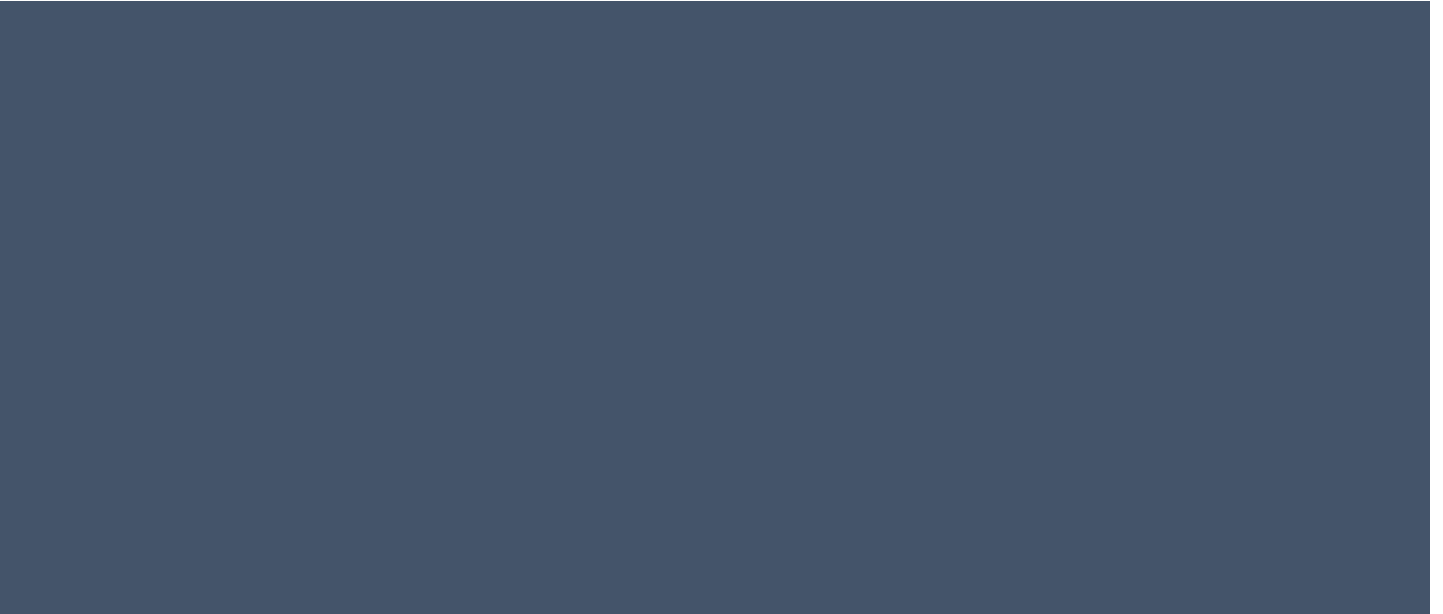
■ Less than 10 ■ 10 to 17 days ■ 18 days or more



N=4385



Connection to services for children in families experiencing homelessness

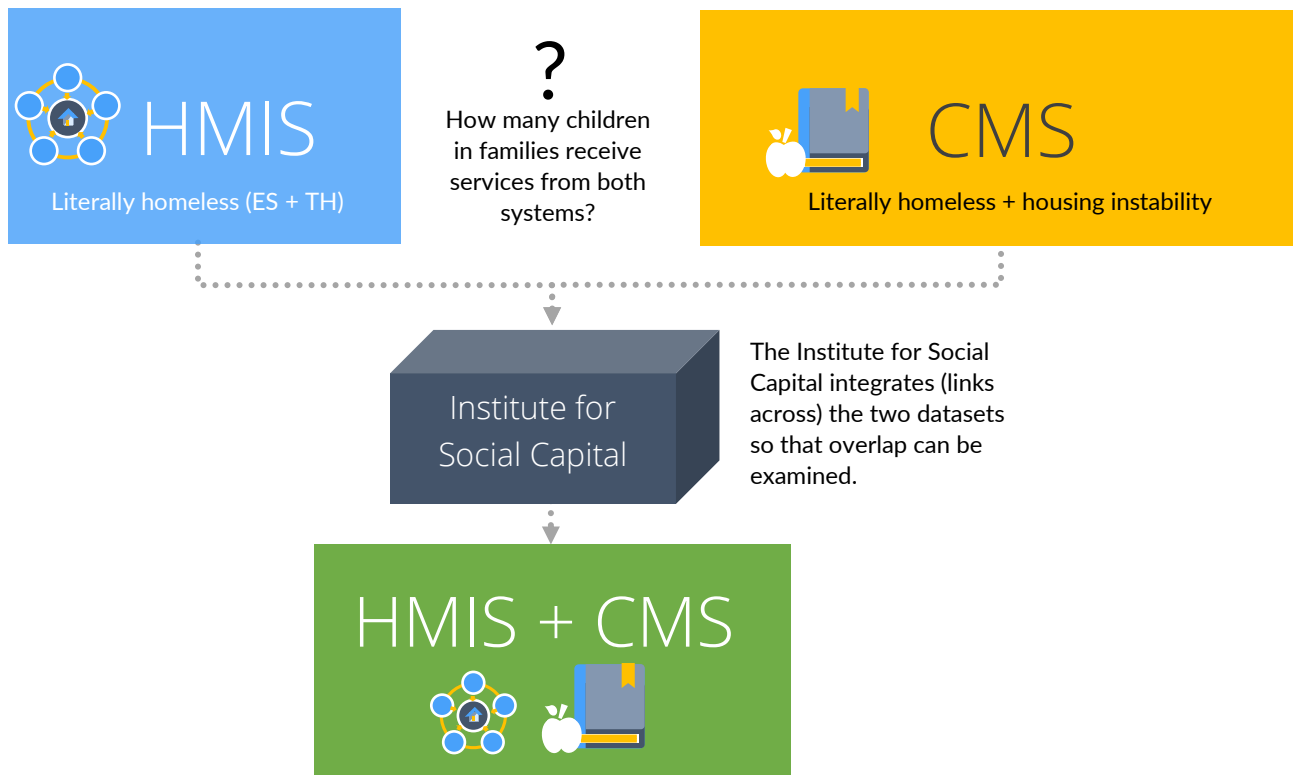


Data & Methodology

While it is helpful to look at each of these data sources individually, it is also helpful to understand how children in families are connected to services across systems. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) data and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data can be integrated to ask questions that cannot be answered by each dataset individually.

In this section, data are linked across CMS and HMIS to answer some of these questions. Data from HMIS for households with at least one adult and child (families) that were sheltered in emergency shelter (ES) or transitional housing (TH) during the 2014/2015 school year were linked with CMS data from the 2014/2015 school year. The linked data from HMIS and CMS were provided by the Institute for Social Capital at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, an integrated community data system.

Students who qualify for MKV resources fall under the U.S. Department of Education's definition of homelessness and housing instability, while the children identified in the HMIS data are identified under the narrower U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of being literally homeless in ES or TH (see page 25 for more details). Due to these differences in definition, not all students that were identified for MKV resources are literally homeless in ES or TH. Additionally, not all students who are in HMIS (ES/TH) may be identified for MKV resources, despite qualifying for them. Reasons for not being identified for MKV resources include a household not self-identifying as experiencing homelessness or housing instability, residing in transitional housing and identifying as housed, not requiring transportation services, or having a brief episode of homelessness that did not trigger a household's need for MKV services despite qualifying for them.

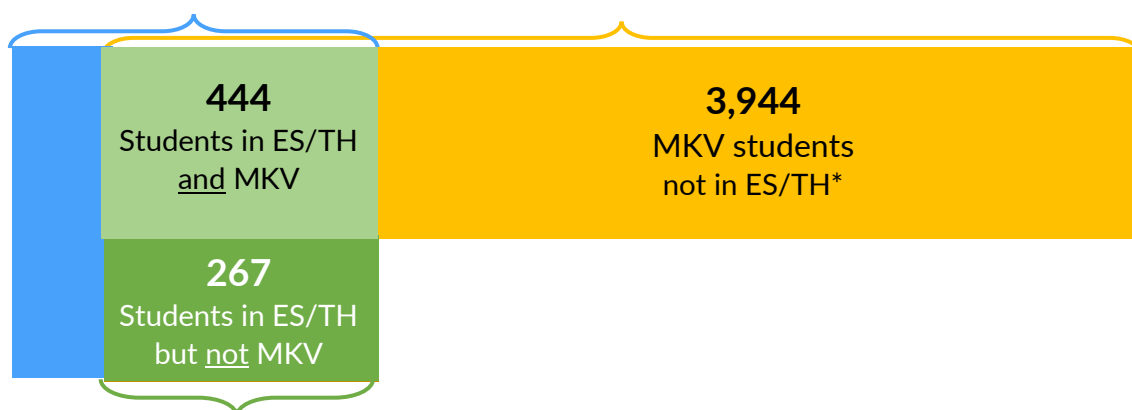


HMIS (ES/TH) and CMS MKV students

During the 2014/2015 school year there were 711 children in families that were sheltered in an emergency shelter (ES) or transitional housing (TH) at some point during the school year that attended a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) school.¹ Of the 711 students living in ES/TH at some point during the school year, only 62% (444) were identified as MKV by CMS. All students in ES/TH are eligible for MKV services, however approximately 38% (267) of students were not identified for MKV services. There are a variety of reasons that a child might not be identified for MKV services including lack of awareness of MKV services, not wanting to be identified as MKV, and not identifying as experiencing homelessness. Of the 267 students not identified as MKV, 90 were in TH at some point during the year and 188 were in ES at some point during the year (11 students stayed in both TH and ES). Transitional housing is considered homeless under HUD's definition, however a family in transitional housing may not self-identify as homeless.

HMIS (ES/TH) children in families

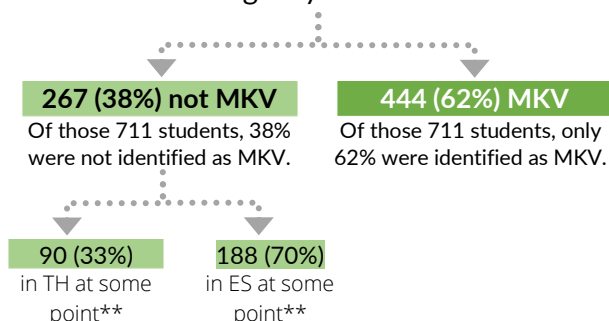
CMS students



HMIS (ES/TH) children in families enrolled in CMS

711

711 children in families were in ES/TH at an HMIS agency and enrolled in CMS.



¹There were 128 students that were identified in both CMS and HMIS, however those students were not in emergency shelter or transitional housing. HMIS agencies provide other services such as supportive services, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent housing. These 128 students would not be considered literally homeless by HUD however, so they were excluded for this analysis. The 3,944 students not in ES/TH may be sheltered in a non-HMIS agency or facing housing instability.

** Some students were in both TH and ES, which is why the percentage is greater than 100.

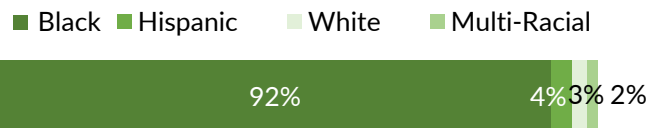
Characteristics of HMIS Students in CMS

The data presented in this section describe children that were sheltered in an emergency shelter or transitional housing at some point during the 2014/2015 school year and also attended a CMS school.

Ethnic Code

The majority of HMIS (ES/TH) students that attended a CMS school identified as Black.

Ethnic code

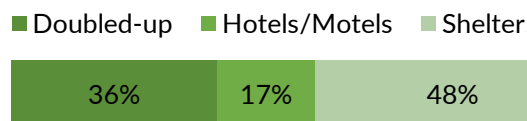


N=711

Nighttime Residency

Of the students in HMIS (ES/TH) that attended a CMS school and were identified as MKV, 48% (211) were most recently identified as experiencing literal homelessness in a shelter. The remaining 52% were doubled-up with family and friends or in hotels/motels.

Nighttime Residency*



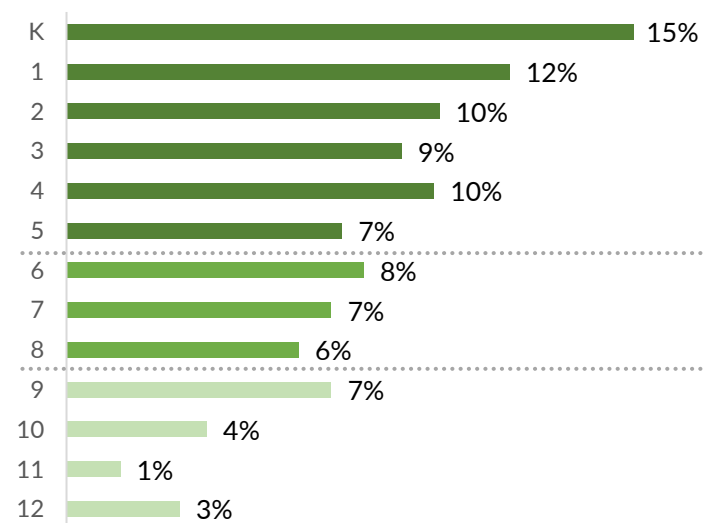
N=444

* This reflects the student's most recent nighttime residency. If their nighttime residency changes throughout the year, the data is overwritten and only the most recent known nighttime residency is kept. It is likely that many of these students cycle through different nighttime residencies throughout the school year.

Grade Level

15% (105) of students in HMIS (ES/TH) that attended a CMS school were in Kindergarten. The number of students identified in both HMIS (ES/TH) and CMS decreases as students age.

Grade level



N=690

Absences

- 23% of HMIS/CMS students were absent 10 to 17 days and 29% were absent more than 18 days. In total, 52% (369) of HMIS/CMS students missed 10 or more days of school.
- 29% of HMIS/CMS students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 18 or more days of school (10% of a full school year).

23%

Absent
10-17 days

N=711

29%

Chronically Absent
18+ days

N=711

Proficiency

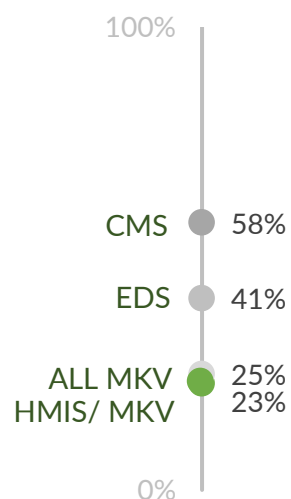
MATH

Of the 321 HMIS/CMS students that took a math assessment in the 2014/2015 school year (N=321), 23% were assessed as proficient. For comparison, 58% of all CMS students and 41% of all economically disadvantaged students (EDS) were proficient in math in 2014/2015.

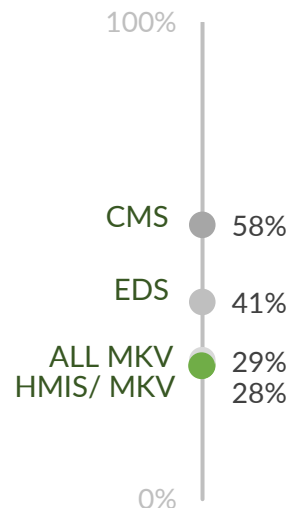
READING


Of the 321 HMIS/CMS students that took a reading assessment in the 2014/2015 school year (N=313), 72% were assessed as not proficient in reading and 28% were assessed as proficient. For comparison, 58% of all CMS students were proficient in reading and 41% of all economically disadvantaged students (EDS) were proficient.

Math Proficiency




Reading Proficiency





Reading proficiency of children experiencing homelessness



Descriptive analyses allow us to understand demographics and trends, but a deeper understanding requires inferential statistics. Inferential statistics allows for judgements of the probability that observed differences between groups is correct and appropriate. A number of statistical techniques exist for researchers to accurately measure and control for many indicators to precisely assess the influence that each variable has on the outcome. A standard tool from the social research toolkit, linear regression, is employed to address the following research question: What is the likelihood of being proficient in reading for a student experiencing homelessness? Reading is an important outcome to monitor. Research has shown that grade-level proficiency in reading, beginning at an early age, is a significant predictor of high school graduation and other life course outcomes, and this relationship is even more pronounced for students experiencing poverty.⁵⁰

What is the likelihood of being proficient in reading for students experiencing homelessness?

To answer this question, a hierarchical linear model predicting likelihood of being proficient in reading for students experiencing homelessness was fitted.² The analysis utilized a Generalized Linear Mixed Model in SAS to predict the likelihood of being proficient in reading. The outcome variable of reading proficiency is an aggregate of reading End-of-Grade tests at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the End-of-Course test for English 2. The population examined by the researchers for this model consists of all students who were identified as McKinney-Vento in school year 2014/15 as well as those students who received shelter services (ES/TH) from an HMIS reporting agency, regardless of whether they were identified as McKinney-Vento by the school system. Only students with valid EOG/EOC scores (the outcome variable) are included in the sample.

Levels of Data Used in Analysis

Different levels of data are accounted for in the analysis. Similar to a building with different floors and departments that make up the building, there are different components that make up an individual's experiences. The more floors you can look at, the better you can understand the building (or in this case, the individual). This analysis takes into account family, student, and school level data to create a more robust understanding of reading proficiency of students experiencing homelessness.

Levels of data		
Familial <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Shelter status•MKV status	Student <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Demographics•Suspensions•Attendance	School <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Demographic composition•Performance

² Multi-level (or hierarchical) modeling is appropriate for analysis of educational data due to the nested nature of the data. That is, the different levels of data are contained within the higher levels. A hierarchy can have many levels of nested data, such as: familial, student, class, school, and county/state levels. Data at each of these levels are nested within the higher level. Results from linear regression at any one of these levels, while telling, can be misleading. It is appropriate and advantageous to employ a model and technique that simultaneously takes all levels into account.

The model is fitted for a sample of 2,222 students experiencing homelessness (N=2,222 is the total number of valid reading proficiency scores). Estimation was completed at three levels of data: familial (shelter and MKV status), student (demographics, suspensions and attendance) and school (demographic composition and performance). The difference between this model and a traditional linear regression model is that this model appropriately situates variables at different levels of the hierarchy to address their nested nature. Table 2 shows the growth model at all levels. It is important to note that while certain variables may indicate significance in lower levels, the full model controls for everything in the model and the inference of the model comes out of the full model rather than the lower levels. For example, when gender was added to the model in model 3, being male was a significant predictor of reading proficiency, but once variables at all levels had been included, gender became an insignificant predictor.

Once identified variables are included in the model, six indicators proved to significantly predict reading proficiency for students experiencing homelessness:

- whether a student is Black;
- identified as an exceptional child;
- has missed 18+ days of school in a school year;
- has been suspended 1 or more times;
- attending a school that is labeled as a D or F by the NC School Performance Grades;
- and/or attending a school that qualifies for the community eligibility provision (an indicator of the percent of economically disadvantaged students in a school).

Table 2. Nested Predictive Growth Model of Reading Proficiency for Students Experiencing Homelessness

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Familial	Intercept	-0.8571 (0.053)	-0.6367 (0.278)	-0.3750 (0.338)	-0.427 (0.333)	-0.748 (0.346)
	MKV		0.2149 (0.2726)	0.1774 (0.280)	0.1178 (0.2828)	0.0524 (0.289)
	Shelter		-0.1115 (0.162)	-0.0621 (0.166)	-0.0683 (0.168)	-0.0409 (0.171)
Student	Male			-0.2422* (0.097)	-0.1811 (0.099)	-0.1824 (0.101)
	Black			0.8432*** (0.1798)	0.7919*** (0.182)	0.6848** (0.187)
	Hispanic			-0.5761* (0.2636)	-0.6079* (0.265)	-0.5434 (0.271)
	Exceptional Child			-2.5545*** (0.310)	-2.5422*** (0.3121)	-2.5691*** (0.3153)
	Chronically Absent				0.2467* (0.116)	0.2357* (0.1184)
	Suspended				0.5751*** (0.1311)	0.5125*** (0.134)
School	NC School Performance Grade of D or F					-0.3265* (0.144)
	School identified as Economically Disadvantaged					-0.4296** (0.192)

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

The coefficients of these significant indicators are transformed into odds ratios by exponentiating their coefficients. The significant odds ratios are provided in table 3.

Overall, students experiencing homelessness are much less likely to be proficient in reading compared to the district. Approximately 29% of these students experiencing homelessness were proficient in reading compared to roughly 58% of the district. The results of the hierarchical model shed light on the co-occurring effects of being homeless and the variables included in the model.

Table 3. Odds Ratios for Statistically Significant Variables for Model 5

Black	0.50**
Exceptional Child	0.93***
Chronic Absence	0.21*
Suspended	0.40***
School Failed Performance	0.28*
School Economically Disadvantaged	0.35**

- **RACE.** The odds of a black student experiencing homelessness being proficient in reading are 50% lower than their non-black peers.
- **EXCEPTIONAL CHILD STATUS.** Exceptional students (students with disabilities) are 93% less likely than non-exceptional students experiencing homelessness to be proficient in reading.
- **CHRONIC ABSENCE.** Chronically absent students that experience sheltered homelessness are 21% less likely to be proficient in reading. Chronically absent students who were suspended at least one time are 40% less likely to be proficient in reading.
- **SCHOOL LEVEL.** Two school level indicators significantly predict reading proficiency: school performance and school level concentrated poverty. Students experiencing homelessness who attend a school with a NC School Performance Grade of D or F are 28% less likely to be proficient in reading, and homeless students attending a school that qualifies for the Community Eligibility Provision³ (CEP) are 35% less likely to be proficient in reading.

³ In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, this means that 39.4% of students are directly certified to meet Community Eligibility Guidelines, see <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/ci/supportservices/section504/title-I/Pages/default.aspx>

Conclusion

As Charlotte-Mecklenburg tackles the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' goal to end family homelessness by 2020, the data and stakeholder perspectives presented in this report can contribute to a deeper understanding of family homelessness within the local context to inform these solutions.

As evidenced by the data presented in this report, family homelessness is complex and impacts one of the most vulnerable populations within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community. Homelessness and housing instability have an impact on the family, health, academic, and social-emotional well-being of homeless families with children. Some of this is evidenced in the data presented on students identified as McKinney-Vento in CMS. On average, students identified as McKinney-Vento in CMS scored lower on both math and reading compared to the school district overall and to students in economically disadvantaged schools. Thirty-three percent of students identified as McKinney-Vento also missed more than 18 days of schools, which is associated with decreased academic achievement. Using integrated data, this study also reports that 38% of children experiencing homelessness in the 2014/2015 school year were not connected to McKinney-Vento services, which is an area for further exploration in how to better serve these children.

Along with other factors, the literature points to a lack of affordable housing and adequate wages as two of the largest factors associated with family homelessness. Interventions for family homelessness point to housing subsidies and increasing the number of affordable housing units. Multiple strategies and tools are needed as part of an overall community approach to end and prevent family homelessness for this generation and those in the future.

Endnotes

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