Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families

2020 Community Plan

Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families
Charles County Local Management Board
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Port Tobacco, MD 20677

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INTRODUCTION

The Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families (CCACCYF) (Local Management Board - LMB) seeks to improve the quality of life for Charles County children, youth, and families by ensuring that human service programs are plentiful, accessible, and excellent. As part of its efforts to support this mission, the CCACCYF has developed this Community Plan to better understand, quantify, and articulate the needs of Charles County children, youth, and families. Target areas outlined within this Community Plan include the following seven strategic Goal Areas identified by the Governor's Office for Children and Maryland's Children's Cabinet to improve child well-being in Maryland as related to:

- Improving Outcomes for Disconnected/Opportunity Youth;
- Reducing Childhood Hunger;
- Reducing Juvenile Arrest Rates;
- Reducing the Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Youth, Families, and Communities;
- Preventing Out-Of-State Placements;
- Reducing Youth Homelessness; and,
- Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Definitions, indicators, and program strategies for each Goal Area are provided throughout this report.

METHODOLOGY AND KEY PROCESS COMPONENTS

Study Design

The CCACCYF worked in partnership with the planning and consulting firm Ascendient Healthcare Advisors (Ascendient) to complete a multi-step process to assess the total community need, availability of existing services and resources, and the need that remains unmet by those resources for Charles County. Multiple sources of publicly available information along with input from numerous community organizations were incorporated throughout the study to paint a more complete picture of the need within Charles County.

Quantitative Data

Research conducted by Ascendient staff and input provided by the LMB yielded an initial list of more than 20 data measures related to the seven strategic Goal Areas. Data for those 20+ measures were collected, and the list of most relevant measures narrowed to only those that directly correspond to the populations of interest.

Twelve direct data measures ultimately remained for county and state-level data. One direct measure was available for disconnected/opportunity youth, four measures were available for childhood hunger, one measure was available for juvenile justice diversion, one measure was available for the impact of parental incarceration, one measure was available for out-of-state placements, two measures were available for youth homelessness, and two measures were available for adverse childhood experiences.

Additionally, data are also shown for Charles' peer Southern Maryland counties (St. Mary's and Calvert) as data were available.

Qualitative Data

Multiple variations of qualitative data were collected via this collaborative process including initial interviews, web-based surveys for providers serving the population targeted within each of the seven Goal Areas, a focus group with the parents served by the Maryland Coalition for Families, and discussions with community board members serving those populations. Each of these sources are summarized below and additional detail related to their findings are incorporated throughout the report.

A focus group was held with the parent population served by the Maryland Coalition for Families on February 26, 2020. During this focus group, seven attendees provided input on a variety of topics, including:

- The greatest strengths and weaknesses of community programs in Charles County.
- The greatest challenges currently faced by Charles County children and their families.
- The most significant barriers to accessing services.
- Identifying changes that can be made to best impact the youth population going forward.

Input from this focus group relates to several Goal Area populations, but for purposes of this document, all findings from this focus group have been summarized within the section of this report related to Disconnected/Opportunity Youth.

Efforts to hold a focus group with the population served by the Tri-County Youth Services Bureau (TCYSB) on February 8, 2020 were unsuccessful due to the fact that no youth attended this effort. This is indicative of the targeted population, as oftentimes disconnected youth are pulled away from other "crises of the moment" that ranks at a higher priority than attending the focus group. In order to gain insight from this population, a web-based survey was developed and distributed via the organization's social media page. The survey remained "live" from February 10 through February 21, 2020, and 12 responses were received. Questions focused on:

- identifying programs in which respondents were involved;
- identifying ways in which these programs can be improved; and,
- assessing the perceived gaps in existing services provided.

In addition, a web-based survey for each of the seven Goal Areas was developed and sent to existing organizations serving these populations. In total, surveys were distributed to 11 organizations. Surveys remained "live" from January 21 through February 7, 2020. Questions focused on:

- Successful programs/initiatives implemented by organizations and the scale of success of those programs
- Methods used to identify individuals to participate in programs/initiatives
- Duplication of services within the community
- Geographic areas of focus for organizational efforts
- Gaps in existing services
- Estimated number of target population served annually

Representatives from the following three organizations completed at least some portion of the surveys:

- LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Center for Children

Input from LMB board members was also obtained through group discussions on what works to "Turn the Curve" for each of the seven Goal Areas. Topics discussed included the story behind the curve (recent trends), community partners serving the various populations, and what strategies could be implemented to focus on turning the curve (improving performance).

Additionally, the CCACCYF Board and staff met for a four-hour "Board Retreat" on February 13, 2020 during which they assessed local data, prioritized results/indicators, and planned for funding allocations in FY 2021 and beyond. Although the scope of this meeting extended beyond the Goal Areas discussed throughout this report, many prioritized indicators and identified strategies also impact the Goal Area populations.

During this meeting, the Board voted on the indicators they felt should be prioritized in the coming year. The five prioritized indicators identified include those listed below, some of which are related to the Goal Area populations discussed throughout this report:

- The percentage of students absent for more than 20 days.
- The percentage of children under the age of 18 living in poverty.

- The number of youth not in school and not working.
- Kindergarten readiness.
- Juvenile felony offenses, ages 11 to 17, rate of referrals per 1,000.

After identifying these indicators, the Board and staff broke into small groups to assess the data relative to Charles County within each of the five prioritized indicators. Each group was responsible for listing what could be influencing the most recent data trends, what can help to either continue a positive trend or to turn the curve if the trend has been negative, which community partners are key to serving these populations, and what gaps in existing services should be filled.

The Board then assessed available funding and decided what programs are needed and how they should be funded. The Board also began discussing program gaps that will contribute to future program development and planning in FY 2022.

Study Limitations

This study utilized a broad range of data to gauge the need within Charles County for each Goal Area; however, limitations in the data do exist.

Specifically, quantitative data are typically available at a lag time of one to three years from the data occurrence. As a result, one limitation in the data analyses process relates to the staleness of the data which may not depict the most recent occurrences experienced within the community.

Additionally, data that precisely align with the population definitions set by the GOC were not commonly available. This was an issue prevalent within both the quantitative and qualitative data collected. While best attempts were made to refine quantitative data as closely as possible to the population definition, there are instances where the calculated estimated need are broader in scope than the population definition. Regarding quantitative data, one of the largest limitations of this study was that many organizations within the community do not track program participants by the very specific population definitions outlined by the GOC, which made efforts to quantify gaps in services for these populations very difficult.

RELEVANT STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

Detailed quantitative and qualitative findings for each Goal Area are discussed throughout this section.

Improving Outcomes for Disconnected/Opportunity Youth

Introduction and Indicators

Disconnected youth are teenagers and young adults who are between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. This population is also known as "Opportunity Youth" because of the positive economic impact they can have when they are supported on pathways to self-sufficiency. Primary indicators for this population include the percentage of youth ages 16 to 24 considered disconnected.

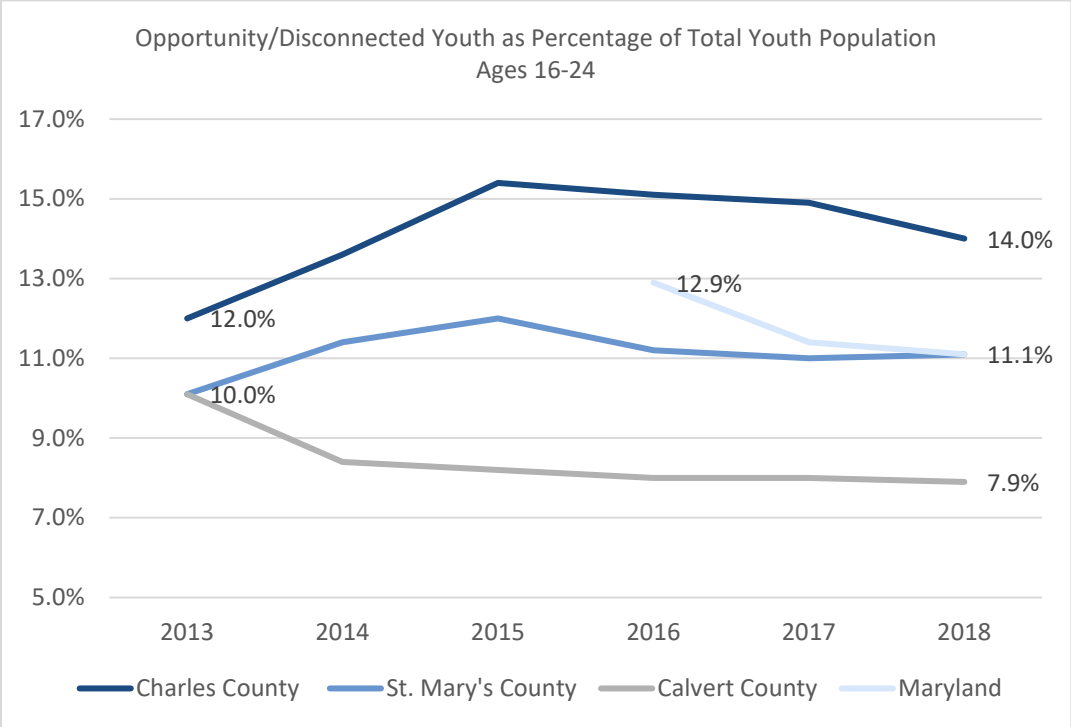
The data shown in the table below were obtained from Measure of America and America's Health Rankings to illustrate the percentage of total youth considered to be disconnected within Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert counties, respectively, as well as within the state of Maryland overall. As demonstrated in the table below, Charles County had a larger percentage of disconnected youth when compared to other geographies in 2018. Charles County is home to an estimated 2,523 teenagers and young adults who are neither working nor in school (14.0 percent of the total population ages 16 to 24).

2018		
Geography	**Number of Disconnected/ Opportunity Youth**	**Disconnected/Opportunity Youth as Percentage of Total Youth Population**
Charles County	**2,523**	**14.0%**
St. Mary's County	1,495	11.1%
Calvert County	791	7.9%
Maryland	76,992	11.1%

Source(s): County-level data were obtained from Measure of America. Maryland overall data were obtained from America's Health Ranking. Not in school means that a young person has not attended any educational institution and has also not been home schooled at any time in the three months prior to the survey date. Not working means that a young person is either unemployed or not in the labor force at the time they responded to the survey. Disconnected youth are young people who are simultaneously not in school and not working. This population cannot be estimated by simply adding the number of young people not enrolled in school to the number of young people not working because many students in this age range do not work and many young workers are not in school.
Note: The number of disconnected youths by geography were calculated by multiplying the reported percentage of disconnected youth in 2018 by Esri 2019 population data by age for each respective geography.

When analyzing the county trends related to the percentage of disconnected youth from 2013 to 2018, only Calvert County has experienced a decline. Although Charles County's percentage has declined since

2015, it remains the geography in Southern Maryland with the largest percentage of the youth population considered disconnected at 14.0 percent.



Source(s): County-level data were obtained from Measure of America. Maryland overall data were obtained from America's Health Ranking. Not in school means that a young person has not attended any educational institution and has also not been home schooled at any time in the three months prior to the survey date. Not working means that a young person is either unemployed or not in the labor force at the time they responded to the survey. Disconnected youth are young people who are simultaneously not in school and not working. This population cannot be estimated by simply adding the number of young people not enrolled in school to the number of young people not working because many students in this age range do not work and many young workers are not in school.

As mentioned previously, qualitative data related to this Goal Area were collected via a web-based survey distributed to the population served by Tri-County Youth Services Bureau (TCYSB). This survey was "live" from February 10 through February 21, 2020 and a total of 12 responses were received. Key feedback collected through the survey related to program improvements and perceived gaps in existing services are summarized below.

When asked to identify ways in which Charles County programs could be improved to positively impact the populations served, respondents mentioned:

- Increasing outreach services to meet youth where they are within the community.
- Expanding the services available including after-school programs and supervised, un-organized physical activities such as basketball and soccer.
- Extending operating hours for after-school youth activities.
- Increasing the number of coat drives and food pantries dedicated to youth.
- Increasing access to mental health services at an affordable cost for low-income families.

When asked to identify gaps in the existing services provided within Charles County, respondents mentioned:

- The lack of services for the high-school aged population.
- Insufficient non-faith-based mentoring for youth.
- The lack of communication between organizations working together to maximize outcomes.
- The lack of awareness of the services available in the community.
- Insufficient transportation to and from community programs and services.
- The lack of trained staff equipped to handle extreme cases.
- The lack of a dedicated youth center for the youth population.
- Inadequate services on drug education/prevention as well as anxiety and anger management.

Additionally, a focus group was held with the parent population served by the Maryland Coalition for Families on February 26, 2020. During this focus group, seven attendees were asked to describe their experiences with the community services offered within Charles County. Key concerns expressed in this focus group included:

- Limited program and service offerings within Charles County. Community members often must drive far distances to Washington, D.C. or Baltimore to receive the services they need.
- Inadequate staffing which causes community programs to be extremely overwhelmed. Community members are often placed on a waitlist for high-demand programs and struggle to reach staff members.
- A lack of well-trained and experienced public-school employees equipped to handle specific needs of children with learning challenges who are particularly vulnerable and at-risk for disconnection.
- A lack of year-round program offerings.
- A "one size fits all" style of learning in public schools which is viewed as being significantly insufficient for children with unique learning styles.

Story Behind the Curve

Although the percentage of disconnected youth in Charles County has decreased since 2015, possible barriers still exist for this population, including:

- Limited access to transportation for youth due to affordability, limited public transportation routes, and the added dangers associated with walking to work during late hours.
- Employers unwilling to hire youth due to lack of work-readiness skills compared to their adult counterparts.
- A lack of resources and support for youth who are not interested in further education and are unsure of other opportunities.
- Limited housing options for youth and young adults, including the absence of a dedicated shelter that is appropriate for this population and its specific needs.
- A lack of street outreach efforts targeting the population.
- A lack of community engagement with the youth population.

Possible explanations for the increase of disconnected youth in Charles County from 2013 to 2015 include:

- The State's increase in age for compulsory school enrollment from 16 to 18 years old.

- The rapid population growth experienced in Charles County compared to other areas of Maryland which could contribute to an increased rate of disconnected/opportunity youth. Despite maintaining youth service offerings, the demand created by the increased number of youth could not be adequately met by existing programs.
- The increased minimum wage may be a disincentive for small business owners to employ youth.

Possible explanations for the slight decline beginning in 2015 include:

- An increase in and improvement of youth referral services and programs.
- New youth mentoring programs within the County that may be reaching more youth.

Community Partners

Several community organizations offer services for the disconnected youth population. Ascendient staff reached out to each of the following partners to try to obtain estimates of the number of individuals within the disconnected youth population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted - Data Available	Population Served in 2019
Arc of Southern Maryland- Day Services	12 youth (ages 22-24)
Arc of Southern Maryland – Summer Work Based Learning	7 youth (ages 19-20)
Center for Children	20 youth
Charles County Department of Social Services	1 youth
Functional Family Therapy*	70 youth
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation Inc.	48 youth
Tri-County Youth Services Bureau*	475 youth

*GOC funded program

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Accokeek Foundation
Beyond High School – Charles Public Library
Board of Education
Boy Scouts
Building Resiliency from Infancy through Development, Growth, & Empowerment
Cadet Program, Explorers Post 1658, Criminal Justice Program – Sheriff's Office
Charles County Department of Community Services
Charles County Literacy Council
Charles County Public Schools
Family Navigation*
Promise Resource Center
Recovery Centers of America
Southern Maryland Job Source
University of Maryland Extension
Vesta Inc

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

Based on input from the Charles County LMB, strategies with the potential to further reduce the percentage of disconnected youth in Charles County include:

- Increasing access to year-round programs and mentors available for youth at risk of becoming disconnected and those who are currently disconnected.
- Offering professional development opportunities to proactively train and equip youth with skillsets to mitigate the risk of failure once in the workplace.
- Providing immediate crisis shelter and connecting youth to case management support, employment matching, transportation, and housing search and placement services through the Safe Nights emergency shelter program at LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing the rate of disconnected youth in Charles County include:

- Increasing the awareness and availability of programs with preventative family-focused interventions.
- Early intervention programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT), which can change the trajectory for youth and steer them to a path of success as they move into adulthood.
- Increasing access to assistive and coordinative services and supports. This can include basic information and referral assistance, a basic level of care coordination, and assistance with care planning and intensive care management.
- Programs such as Family Navigation which helps families access and coordinate among available services and supports, both public and private, to address the full range of problems encountered by families of children with intensive needs.
- Better preparing youth to have opportunities for employment and career readiness as well as connecting them with a variety of resources (mental health, physical health, housing, etc.).
- Youth Interventions & Engagements' "Ready for Life" program which assists youth ages 16 to 24 in learning life skills.
- Increased supportive services for disconnected youth who have left home. These services should facilitate reunification or may recommend a referral to the County's Continuum of Care-based intervention programs for homelessness.

Reducing Childhood Hunger

Introduction and Indicators

Childhood hunger is broadly defined as food insecure children ages 0 to 17. Primary indicators for childhood hunger include the number of students enrolled in free/reduced meals and the number of food insecure children likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance. When looked at together, these indicators provide the total estimated percentage of children considered food insecure.

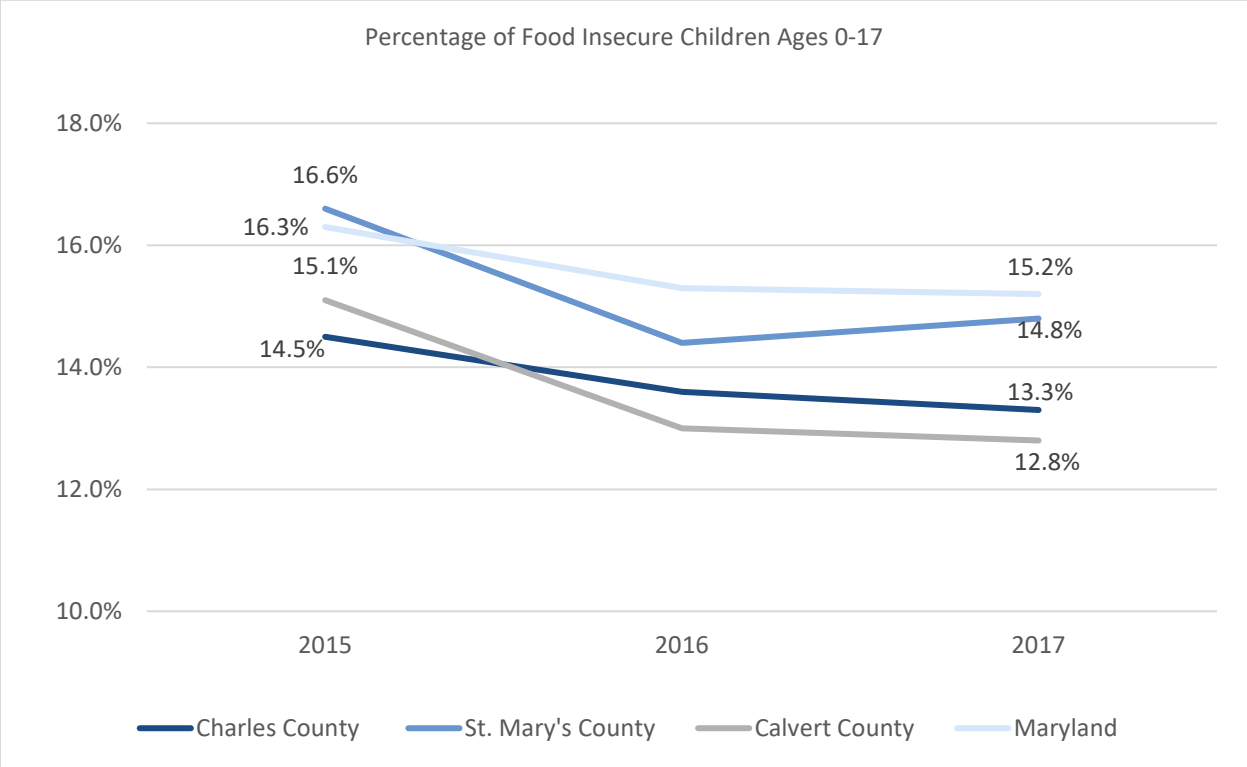
Two methodologies with slightly different definitions of food insecurity were used to illustrate the percentage of food insecure children in Charles County. Methodology 1 uses 2018 data obtained from Kids Count which demonstrates that 34.4 percent of Charles County children are food insecure. This percentage was calculated by adding the number of students enrolled in free and reduced meals to the number of food insecure children likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance. This sum was then calculated as a percentage of the total child population ages 0 to 17 by county. Kids Count defines food insecure children as children under the age of 18 living in households where in the previous 12 months there was an uncertainty of having, or an inability to acquire, enough food for all household members because of insufficient money or other resources. As shown below, Charles County has a higher percentage of its child population experiencing food insecurity than both St. Mary's and Calvert counties.

2018				
Geography	**Number of Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Meals**	**Number of Food Insecure Children Likely Ineligible for Federal Nutrition Assistance**	**Total Estimate of Food Insecure Children**	**Estimated Food Insecure Children as Percentage of Total Ages 0 to 17 Population**
Charles County	**10,183**	**2,964**	**13,147**	**34.4%**
St. Mary's County	5,946	2,355	8,301	29.3%
Calvert County	3,236	1,618	4,854	23.2%
Maryland	381,797	118,703	500,500	37.8%

Source(s): Kids Count Data.
Note: To estimate food insecure children as a percentage, the Kids Count data total estimate of food insecure children was divided by the population ages 0 to 17 to calculate the estimated food insecure percentage.

Methodology 2 below shows the trend data from 2015 to 2017 by geography as reported by Feeding America. Food insecurity as defined by Feeding America refers to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. In Charles County, 13.3 percent of children were food insecure in 2017 with only Calvert County demonstrating a lower percentage among the comparative geographies.

Please note that while Charles County works hard to track childhood hunger, underreporting can occur due to the sensitivity of the topic and families not wanting to self-identify as facing such hardships.



Source: Feeding America

Story Behind the Curve

Based on the Feeding America data shown above, the percentage of Charles County children experiencing food insecurity has decreased since 2015 possibly in response to food pantries and community organizations working collaboratively to supply the community with hot food every day of the week. Ongoing efforts must continue to be supported to decrease this percentage even further. Examples of such efforts include:

- LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.'s provision of food on a daily basis through its food pantry and emergency food request assistance.
- LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc.'s Summer Meals program which is offered to families in need during the two-week gap time from the end of the Charles County Public Schools program listed below and the start of the school year. Distribution points such as the public libraries are accessible for families.
- The Summer Meals program offered through the Public-School System, which helps to offset family food needs for eight weeks during the school year as well as providing meals for students who are homeless.
- The expansion of existing food assistance programs to include families that are currently not eligible for SNAP food stamp benefits due to income thresholds and therefore are not labeled as food insecure despite being in need.

- End Hunger in Charles County's, a 501 (C)3 organization, promotion of programs and services to address the needs of those who are food insecure by providing access to healthy meals and supportive services that will ensure ongoing food stability.
- The collaborative work being conducted by the Arnold House, the Charles County Board of Education, and other community partners to help address the need for children to be provided food over the weekend. The Back Pack Program provides students with breakfast, lunch, drink, and snack items to help eliminate hunger on the weekend.
- Economically, the decline in childhood hunger could be due, in part, to an increase in wages within the county.

Community Partners

Numerous community partners offer programs to positively impact childhood hunger in Charles County. Ascendient staff reached out to each of the following partners to try to obtain estimates of the number of children experiencing hunger served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
The Arnold House	20 schools, 620 students
Charles County Public Schools	465 families
Children's Aid Society	1,264 children
Children's Aid Society – Thanksgiving Baskets	537 children
Children's Aid Society – Miscellaneous Food Items	14,968 children
Healthy Families Southern MD	25 children
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation Inc.	1,947 children
Our Place Waldorf Soup Kitchen	1,750 children
Southern Maryland Food Bank – Snack Sak Program	191 students
Southern Maryland Food Bank – Soup Kitchen	40 children per month

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Catholic Charities
Catholic Communities Services
Charles County Department of Health
Charles County Department of Community Services
Charles County Department of Social Services
Charles County Meals on Wheels
Family Navigation*
First Baptist Church of St. Charles Food Pantry
Functional Family Therapy*
Good Shepherd Food Pantry
Interfaith Community Connection
Lutheran Mission Society Southern Maryland Mobile Compassion Center
Neighbors Eager to Serve
New Hope Community Outreach Services
Star of the Sea Pantry
Summer Meals*
Wayside Food Bank at Holy Ghost Catholic Church

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

In addition to the items listed above, strategies identified as having the potential to continue the positive trend experienced in recent years within Charles County as related to childhood hunger include:

- Offering cooking classes to raise awareness about healthy eating.
- Focusing on the underlying issue of poverty within the community.
- Increasing utility partners' awareness of childhood hunger and including them in the conversation moving forward - allowing tenants to keep heating services, particularly during colder months, will give them the flexibility to put their financial resources towards essentials such as food.
- Increasing the maximum income limits for SNAP benefits.
- Increasing the hours and availability of food pantries on evenings and weekends.
- Implementing better identification protocols to identify children suffering from hunger.
- Increasing transportation to make pantries more accessible to youth and families and to minimize the negative effects of food deserts in areas such as Indian Head and Nanjemoy.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing the prevalence of childhood hunger in Charles County include:

- Increasing access to programs such as Summer Meals/Mobile Meals providing free and healthy meals to children and youth during the summer months when school is not in session.
- Increasing access to programs such as The Charles County Public School's Summer Food Service Program to provide free summer meals to children and youth participating in summer camps hosted at non-advertised public-school sites.

When school is out during the summer months and children are no longer receiving breakfast and lunch at school, many families struggle to feed their children nutritious meals each day. Prioritizing the above strategies will help to reduce the risk of children experienced hunger during these months.

Reducing Juvenile Arrest Rates

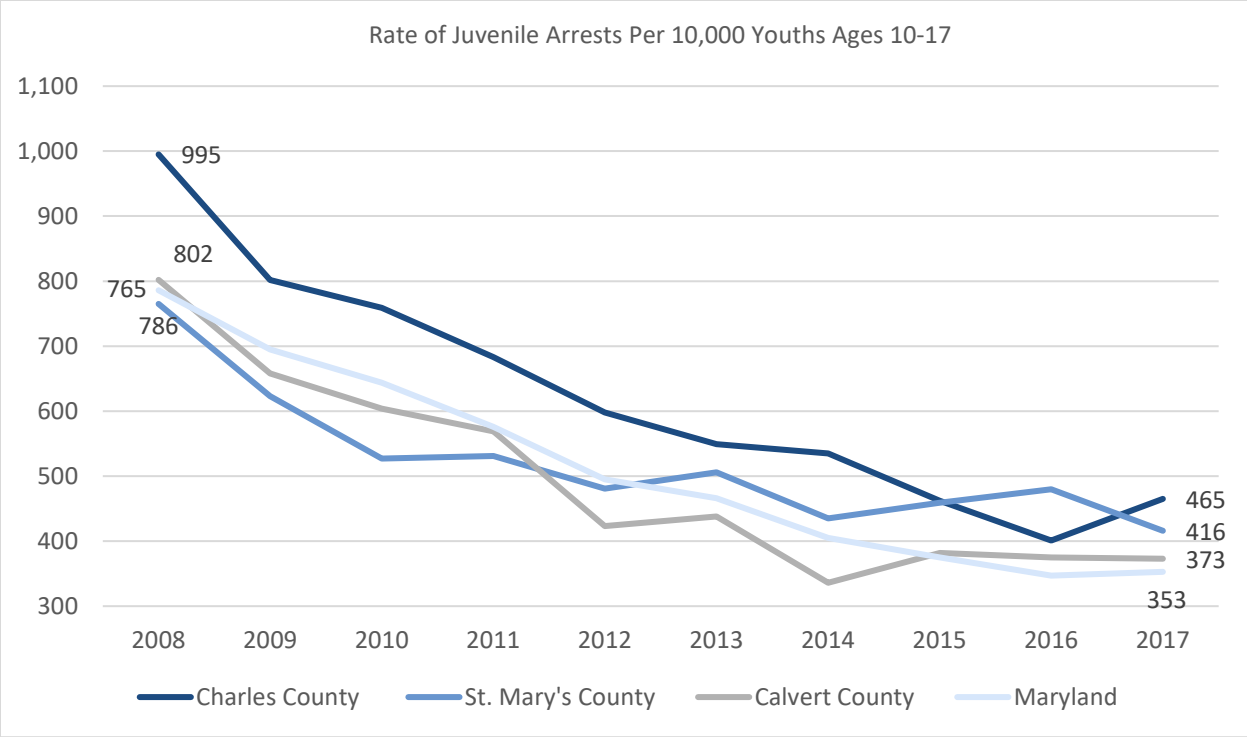
Introduction and Indicators

Adjudicated youth are youth ages 10 to 17 who have been arrested for violent or non-violent offenses. As shown below, the trend data represent the rate of juvenile arrests per 10,000 youths ages 10 to 17 in Charles County and surrounding areas. Among the geographies shown, the state of Maryland and Calvert County had the lowest percentage of juvenile arrests while Charles County had the highest percentage in 2017.

2017		
Geography	**Juvenile Arrests**	**Juvenile Arrests as a Percentage of Total Juvenile Population 10 to 17**
Charles County	**852**	**4.7%**
St. Mary's County	524	4.1%
Calvert County	373	3.5%
Maryland	21,417	3.5%

Source: Arrest data from the Maryland State Police. Percentage of Juvenile Population calculated using 2019 Esri Population data.

All four geographies have experienced an overall decline in the rate of juvenile arrests per 10,000 youths from 2008 to 2017; however, Charles County experienced an increase from 2016 to 2017.



Source: Arrest data from the Maryland State Police. Population data from Puzzanchera et al, Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2017.

Story Behind the Curve

Despite having the highest rate of juvenile arrests in 2017, Charles County experienced significant declines from 2008 through 2016 before experiencing an increase from 2016 to 2017. Strategies that have been successful in helping to reduce juvenile arrest rates include:

- Community-based services offered through the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services focused on treating and understanding the whole family – not solely the youth.
- Community service offerings with a strong focus on mental health.
- Availability of community resources such as mentoring and extracurricular activities has led to fewer arrests within the community, although there is still room for improvement.
- The Department of Juvenile Services' Functional Family Therapy program provides mentoring for youth and families as well as connections to services best suited to meet the youth's needs.
- Diversion programs (such as Teen Court) have allowed cases to remain on informal supervision status resulting in a referral for services as opposed to legal action.
- Stronger collaboration among service providers serving the same clients has resulted in more personalized and beneficial services overall.
- Stronger focus on reducing gang and drug-related activities within the community which target at-risk youth.

Community Partners

Community partners with service offerings targeting the adjudicated youth population are listed below. Each of the following partners were contacted by Ascendient staff and were asked to provide data for the population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
Center for Children	300 youth
DJS Functional Family Therapy	700 youth

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Board of Education
Charles County Department of Community Services
Family Navigation*
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation Inc.
School Resource Unit, Teen Court – Sheriff's Office
Tri-County Youth Services Bureau*
Vesta Inc.

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

Strategies with the potential to reduce the rate of adjudicated youth in Charles County include:

- Offering therapeutic interventions.
- Continuing to increase diversion programs to best catch youth on the front-end instead of putting more resources in place for committed programs.
- Enhancing access to parks and recreation facilities through efforts such as offering discounted costs for low-income families, improving transportation to and from facilities, and expanding hours of operation.
- Expanding services to include pro-social activities at low costs to youth.
- Strengthening relationships between community and youth at a young age to prevent arrests.
- Expanding the hours of operation for libraries and public schools to offer additional activities and services outside of traditional school hours.
- Increasing funding grants to offer enhanced services year-round, including mentoring, extracurriculars, and after-school programs.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing juvenile arrests in Charles County include:

- Increasing the awareness and availability of programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) with preventative family-focused interventions.
- Increasing access to early interventions to assist with changing the trajectory for youth and helping them overcome significant challenges as they move into adulthood.

Reducing the Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Youth, Families, and Communities

Introduction and Indicators

The population impacted by parental incarceration is defined as children and youth ages 0 to 18 who have a parent under some form of correctional supervision – parole, probation, jail, or prison. Data were estimated using Maryland State Police, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and Maryland Correctional Facilities data for 2019. Trended data were not available for this population. As shown in the table below, Charles County has a smaller estimated percentage of its child population impacted by parental incarceration than both the state of Maryland overall and Calvert County. Charles County's percentage is only slightly larger than St. Mary's County.

Estimated 2019							
Geography	Estimated Number of Parents of Minors in Prison			Estimated Number of Children Impacted			Estimated Children Impacted as Percentage of Total Children
	Federal	State	Total	Federal	State	Total	
Charles County	**59**	**693**	**752**	**131**	**1,447**	**1,578**	**3.9%**
St. Mary's County	35	417	452	78	877	955	3.2%
Calvert County	46	548	594	102	1,153	1,255	5.7%
Maryland	3,010	35,952	38,962	6,732	75,321	82,053	5.8%

Note: Excluding Local data

State Facilities: Data as provided by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for Charles County as of July 1, 2019. Estimates of Parents impacted were calculated by summing the number of currently incarcerated individuals in Maryland State prison and the number of individuals under parole and probation criminal supervision (excluding those in the Drinking Driver Monitoring Program) by gender and county and then multiplying the corresponding sums by the 2007 Bureau of Justice Statistics gender-specific state average of those in state facilities who were parents. Estimates of children impacted were calculated by summing the number of currently incarcerated individuals in Maryland State prison and the number of individuals under parole and probation criminal supervision (excluding those in the Drinking Driver Monitoring Program) by gender and county and then multiplying the corresponding sums by the 2007 Bureau of Justice Statistics gender-specific state average of those in state facilities who were parents and the gender-specific average number of children for inmates

Federal Facilities: Prison Policy, Maryland correctional control pie chart 2016. The number of both federal and state prisoners were pulled for Maryland overall. The percent of total Maryland state prisoners attributable to each County per the Governor's source was then applied to the Maryland overall number of federal prisoners to estimate the number of federal prisoners attributable to each County. The number of parents was then estimated by multiplying the number of estimated federal inmates by the 2007 Bureau of Justice Statistics gender-specific state average of those in state facilities who were parents. The number of impacted children was then estimated by multiplying the number of estimated federal inmates by the 2007 Bureau of Justice Statistics gender-specific state average of those in state facilities who were parents and the gender-specific average number of children for inmates.

It has been noted that one of the areas lacking data for Charles County relates to parental incarceration. In January 2020, with new representation from the Charles County Sheriff's Office on the CCACCYF Board, the Charles County Detention Center has begun the process of tracking the number of inmates with children. This change has been implemented within their existing data system and is collected via inmate

self-reporting. This will enable the CCACCYF to better track this population and connect inmates and their families to services.

Story Behind the Curve

Data related to the number of children impacted by parental incarceration is extremely difficult to obtain. Children often may not be aware that their parent is incarcerated, and families may be unwilling to discuss these matters, which makes this information extremely difficult to gather directly from the community.

Community Partners

Community partners with service offerings available to children and families impacted by parental incarceration are listed below. Each of the following partners were contacted by Ascendient staff and were asked to provide data for the population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
Functional Family Therapy*	10 children

*GOC funded program

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Charles County Department of Community Services
Charles County Department of Social Services
Charles County Mediation
Family Navigation*
Family Recovery Court

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

Strategies with the potential to reduce the percentage of children and families impacted by parental incarceration in Charles County include:

- Offering in-jail programs that include both parenting classes for those incarcerated and face-to-face visits with their minor children.
- Offering career development resources for the non-incarcerated guardian to financially support the children impacted by parental incarceration.
- Offering support and companionship groups for impacted children and caregivers in addition to resources for childcare and housing.
- Offering services focused on the re-entry of incarcerated individuals into society, including mentoring, rehabilitation, and case management programs.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing the impact of parental incarceration in Charles County include:

- Increasing the awareness and availability of programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) with preventative family-focused interventions.
- Increasing access to early interventions to assist with changing the trajectory for youth and helping them overcome significant challenges as they move into adulthood.
- Programs such as Family Navigation which helps families access and coordinate available services and supports, both public and private, to address the full range of problems encountered by families of children with intensive needs.
- Increasing access to assistive and coordinative services and supports. This can include basic information and referral assistance, a basic level of care coordination, and assistance with intensive case management.

Preventing Out-of-State Placements

Introduction and Indicators

An out-of-state placement is defined as the placement of a child (ages 0 to 18) in welfare custody in a state outside of Maryland. The data shown below were obtained from the State of Maryland Out-of-Home Placement and Family Preservation Resource Plan. There are no trended data available for this population.

2018	
Geography	Number of Out-of-State Placements
Charles County	**2**
St. Mary's County	0
Calvert County	3
Maryland	160

Note: Source FY2018 State of Maryland Out-of-Home Placement and Family Preservation Resource Plan

Story Behind the Curve

The collection of data related to out-of-state welfare custody placements did not begin in Charles County until 2018. As such, trended data are not available to provide a story behind the curve. The following programs and services are currently in place to prevent out-of-state placements:

- Programs (such as the Local Care Team) that connect youth and families to community-based resources to prevent out-of-state placements.
- Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) requires that all in-state options for placement must be exhausted before a request for out-of-state placement can be made, which helps to ensure that the number of out-of-state placements is limited.
- DJS utilizes a Multi-Assessment Services Team to ensure that placement recommendations are made as a result of comprehensive evaluations and assessment that include the analysis of the youth's psychological, psychosocial, substance abuse history, education, history in the community, and offense record in order to make the most informed decision regarding placement.

Community Partners

Community partners with services related to reducing out-of-state placements are listed below. Each of the following partners were contacted by Ascendient staff and were asked to provide data for the population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
Functional Family Therapy*	2 youth
Local Care Team*	0 youth
Charles County Department of Social Services	8 youth

*GOC funded program

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Charles County Department of Community Services
Family Navigation*

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

Programs and services previously included within the Story Behind the Curve section also remain key strategies to turn the curve going forward. The development of stronger in-state programs with greater capacity to prevent out-of-state placements was also identified as an important strategy.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing out-of-state placements in Charles County include:

- Increasing access to early interventions focused on identifying and responding to early signs of emotional and behavioral concerns. This includes programs such as the Local Care Team.
- Increasing collaboration among multi-disciplined teams to ensure that youth are provided appropriate care through available community-based services.

Reducing Youth Homelessness

Introduction and Indicators

The definition and composition of youth homelessness varies significantly depending on the data source. The definition of homelessness used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) excludes most homeless children and youth whose families pay for a motel room or who must stay with other people temporarily because they have nowhere else to live. These situations are unstable and often unsafe, putting children and youth at an increased risk of trafficking and violence. Other federal agencies and programs recognize children and youth staying in these situations as being homeless but under HUD's definition, these children and youth are not assessed for services.[1]

In an effort to include the broadest representation of homeless youth, this community plan is using the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness which includes children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Specifically, this definition includes children and youth who are:

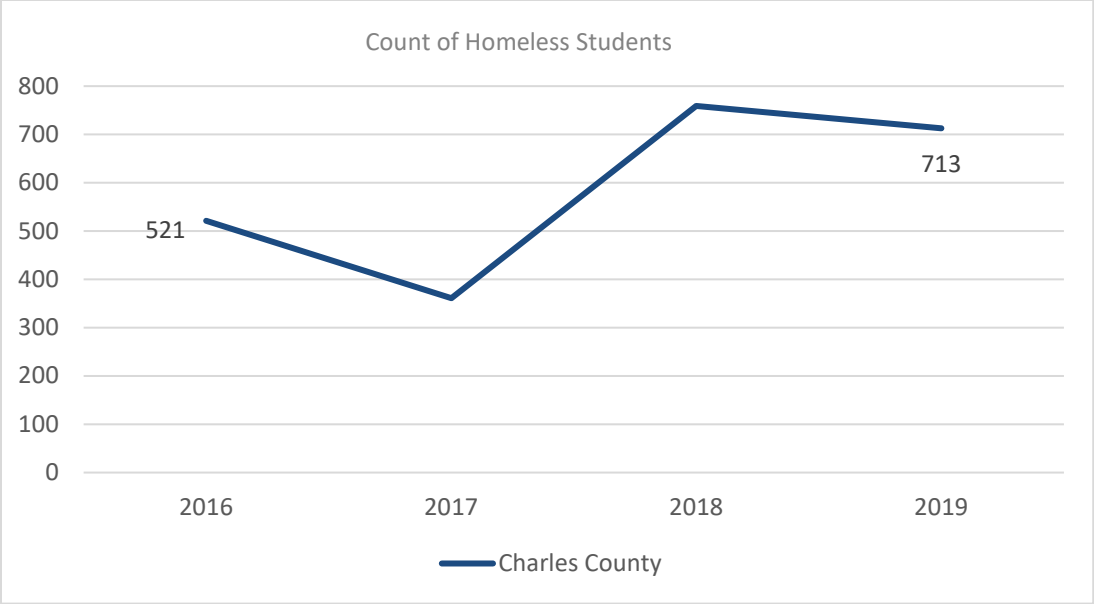
- sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- living in shelters, transitional housing, or cars; and,
- staying in motels or campgrounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.

To help to quantify the number of these individuals in Charles County, the data shown below represents the total McKinney-Vento enrollment in Charles County Public Schools as of July 12, 2019 compared to the state of Maryland overall.

Geography	Count of Homeless Students	Homeless Students as Percent of Total Public-School Students	Count of Unaccompanied Homeless Students	Unaccompanied Homeless Students as Percent of Total Homeless Students
Charles County	**713**	**2.6%**	**195**	**27.0%**
Maryland	17,601	2.0%	2,248	12.7%

Note: Data from McKinney-Vento Homeless Counts. Charles County data are SY18-19. Maryland data are SY17-18. SY18-19 data are not available for Maryland.

[1] SchoolHouse Connection https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/common-questions/

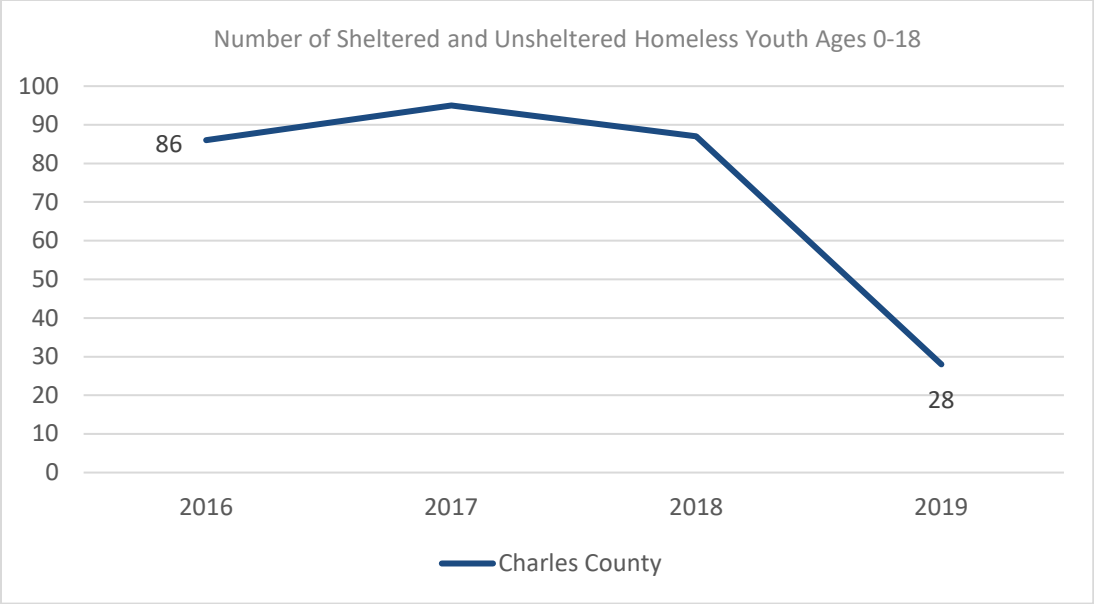


Note: Data from McKinney-Vento Homeless Counts.

The Southern Maryland Continuum of Care Point-In-Time (PIT) Count provides a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night during the last ten days in January. These data reflect the more narrowly defined definition of homelessness as used by HUD. Charles County has a higher percentage of homeless youth than both St. Mary's and Calvert counties but performs better than the state overall. All geographies analyzed have a homeless youth percentage that is less than one percent of total youth.

Estimated 2019 Point in Time Counts					Total Homeless Youth ages 0 to 18	Homeless Youth as Percent of Total Youth Population ages 0 to 18
Geography	Sheltered Youth			Unsheltered Youth		
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe-Haven			
Charles County	**19**	**-**	**-**	**9**	**28**	**0.07%**
St. Mary's County	7	-	-	7	14	0.05%
Calvert County	9	-	-	1	10	0.05%
Maryland	831	434	-	134	1,399	0.10%

Note: Homeless youth counts for each category were estimated using the percentage of homeless population made up of youth from Southern Maryland Continuum of Care (16.7 percent). This percentage was multiplied by the total count of homeless individuals within each county by the COC Point in Time 2019 data in order to get a count specific for the youth population.



Note: 2016-2019 PIT Data

Story Behind the Curve

When looking at McKinney-Vento trended data within Charles County, the number of homeless students increased from 2016 to 2018 but decreased from 2018 to 2019. When looking at Charles County's PIT data which utilizes the HUD definition of homelessness, the number of homeless children under the age of 18 has been decreasing since 2017.

Possible factors that can result in increased youth homelessness in Charles County include:

- Charles County's "Housing First" philosophy which addresses homelessness before addressing other factors that may impact an individual's life. This can cause some individuals to be unable to maintain their homes due to underlying factors such as substance abuse or mental illness. For this reason, there is a large number of reoccurring homeless individuals in Charles County.
- The growing youth population in Charles County.

Possible factors that can result in decreased youth homelessness in Charles County include:

- LifeStyles' Homeless Services Division has been assisting homeless persons with immediate crisis needs and working with individuals to transition into permanent housing. The Division helps individuals perform housing searches and receive placements as well as providing employment and transportation resources. A coordinated entry process also provides youth with the individualized care they need.
- As a result of funding provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, homeless youth seem to be moving from homeless shelters into more permanent housing with more resources being offered, including those related to medical and educational services.
- As a result of a definitional change of homelessness implemented by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on January 4, 2012, the number of youth considered homeless and eligible for various HUD-funded assistance programs has decreased. Youth who are couch

surfing are no longer considered "literally homeless" through the HUD definition, causing these individuals to be unaccounted for in produced findings (specific to PIT data).
- Since January 4, 2012, HUD has limited funding for shelters and has emphasized a strong focus on permanent housing opportunities (specific to PIT data).

Community Partners

Community partners working with homeless youth are listed below. Each of the following partners were asked to provide data regarding the population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation Inc.	225 youth
Charles County Public Schools – McKinney-Vento Programs	195 unaccompanied youth
Charles County Public Schools – McKinney-Vento Programs	713 homeless students

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Catholic Charities
Catholic Communities Services
Center for Children
Charles County Department of Community Services – Housing Authorities
Charles County Department of Social Services
Charles County Mediation
Functional Family Therapy*
Family Navigation*
Pathways Transitional
Southern Maryland Community Network
Tri-County Youth services Bureau*

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

Strategies with the potential to reduce the number of homeless youth in Charles County include:

- Increasing access to community and school programs for prevention, identification, and early intervention.
- Increasing opportunities for youth to participate in coordinated entry and assessment into community housing solutions.
- Creating youth-specific shelter options.
- Increasing access to services designed to assist families in maintaining homes while limiting reoccurring homelessness.
- Acquiring more accurate insights into the youth homeless need with better data capture processes.
- Expanding outreach efforts, including street outreach methods.
- Increasing focus on foster youth transitioning out of foster care for preventative measures.
- Creating crisis beds for at-risk youth.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing youth homelessness in Charles County going forward include:

- Increasing the awareness and availability of programs such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) with preventative family-focused interventions.
- Increasing access to early interventions to assist with changing the trajectory for youth and helping them overcome significant challenges as they move into adulthood.
- Consideration for the development of youth homeless shelters, supported by coordinated wrap-around services for residents.
- Potentially obtaining and leveraging Health and Human Services funding to establish a Basic Center Program in the county.
- Increasing access to assistive and coordinative services and supports. This can include basic information and referral assistance, a basic level of care coordination, and assistance with care planning and intensive care management.
- Increasing access to programs such as Family Navigation which helps families access and coordinate among available services and supports, both public and private, to address the full range of problems encountered by families of children with intensive needs.
- Providing access to programs such as Pathways' Transitional Age Youth (TAY) program which provides transitional housing, psychiatric rehabilitation, and life skills support to homeless youth.
- Increasing access to programs such as Charles County Public Schools – McKinney-Vento Programs that provide public education services, transportation services to attend school of origin, clothing, tutoring, and school supplies to homeless youth.

Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Introduction and Indicators

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being. These experiences can range from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to parental divorce to the incarceration of a parent or guardian. The data shown below is from America's Health Rankings United Health Foundation showing the count of children who experienced ACEs in 2016 and 2018 in Maryland. Data for 2017 are not available.

Maryland		
Year	Children Who Experienced >1 ACE	Children Who Experienced >1 ACE as Percentage of Total Children Population
2016	118,705	19.4%
2017	N/A	N/A
2018	94,229	15.4%

Note: Percent of total children population calculated using US Census Bureau 2019 Population estimate for ages 0-17.

The data show below is from the Maryland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) representing Maryland adults who experienced ACEs during their childhood. Charles County performs better than both Maryland and Calvert County with 44.4 percent of adults never experiencing ACEs.

2015				
Geography	Prevalence of ACEs Among Maryland Adults			
	0 ACEs	1 to 2 ACEs	3 to 8 ACEs	Total Percent of Adult Population with ACEs
Charles County	**44.4%**	**24.3%**	**31.3%**	**55.6%**
St. Mary's County	47.4%	31.8%	20.9%	52.7%
Calvert County	29.1%	46.0%	25.0%	71.0%
Maryland	40.2%	35.7%	24.1%	59.8%

Story Behind the Curve

Trended data for ACEs in Charles County are not available to develop the story behind the curve. Current programs and initiatives to reduce ACEs in Charles County include:

- Healthy Families Southern MD's intensive home visiting program to detect signs of ACEs early on within a child's life.
- Center for Children, Inc.'s provision of services from trainers and presenters who treat childhood trauma and work to prevent additional cases by conducting home visits for newborns.

- Department of Juvenile Services provides identification training to all staff which has increased early detection of ACEs and allowed for appropriate referrals for trauma therapy.

Community Partners

Community partners working to reduce the number and impact of ACEs are listed below. Each of the following partners were asked to provide data surrounding the population served in the most recent year (if available).

Programs Contacted – Data Available	Population Served in 2019
Functional Family Therapy*	2 youth
LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation Inc.	225 youth
Center for Children	4,000 youth

*GOC funded program

Programs Contacted – Data Not Available/Provided
Catholic Charities
Catholic Communities Services
Charles County Department of Community Services – Housing Authorities
Charles County Department of Social Services
Charles County Mediation
Family Navigation*

*GOC funded program

What Works to Turn the Curve

In addition to those listed previously, strategies with the potential to reduce the number of ACEs experienced by children in Charles County include:

- Increasing educational outreach to inform community members and County Commissioners about ACEs.
- Increasing access to licensed therapists equipped to handle ACE cases throughout all community programs.

Prioritized Strategies

Strategies identified as crucial for the success of reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences in Charles County include:

- Increasing access to assistive and coordinative services and supports. This can include basic information and referral assistance, a basic level of care coordination, and assistance with care planning and intensive case management.
- Programs such as Family Navigation which helps families access and coordinate among available services and supports, both public and private, to address the full range of problems encountered by families of children with intensive needs.

SUMMARY

While Charles County has seen some improvement in recent years, additional room for improvement exists across many of the seven Goal Areas. When compared to its peer counties, Charles County's performance trails that of St. Mary's County on all Goal Areas except for Feeding America's childhood hunger indicator and out-of-state placements for which its performance is similar. Charles County's performance is better than Calvert County's on two Goal Areas and the two counties perform similarly on one additional Goal Area. Charles County's performance is better than Maryland's on four of the seven Goal Areas.

Population	Percentage of Charles County Children Impacted	Recent Direction of Trend Line	Charles County's Performance Relative To:		
			St. Mary's	Calvert	Maryland
Improving Outcomes for Disconnected Youth	14.0%	Improving*	Trailing	Trailing	Trailing
Reducing Childhood Hunger^	34.4%/ 13.3%	Improving	Trailing; Leading	Trailing; Trailing	Leading; Leading
Reducing Juvenile Arrest Rates	4.7%	Worsening†	Trailing	Trailing	Trailing
Reducing the Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Youth, Families, and Communities	3.9%	n/a	Trailing	Leading	Leading
Preventing Out-of-State Placements	0.0%	n/a	Similar	Similar	Similar
Reducing Youth Homelessness**	2.6%/ 0.1%	Improving	n/a; Trailing	n/a; Trailing	Trailing; Leading
Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	55.6%	n/a	Trailing	Leading	Leading

*Worsening from 2013 to 2018 but demonstrating recent improvements from 2015 to 2018.

^Charles County's 34.4 percent is based on data obtained from Kids Count. When analyzing data from Feeding America, the Charles County percentage is 13.3 percent. Trend data are based on Feeding America. Charles County's performance relative to other geographies depends on the data source used. For purposes of the chart above, Charles County's performance relative to the Kids Count data are listed first followed by its performance relative to the Feeding America data.

†Improving from 2008 to 2017 overall but worsening from 2016 to 2017.

**Charles County's 2.6 percent is based on McKinney-Vento data which worsened from 2016 to 2019 but demonstrated recent improvements from 2018 to 2019. Charles County's 0.1 percent is based on Point-in-Time data under the HUD definition of homelessness which worsened from 2016 to 2017 but demonstrated improvements from 2017 to 2019. For purposes of the chart above, Charles County's performance relative to the McKinney-Vento data are listed first followed by its performance relative to the Point-in-Time data.

The CCACCYF is committed to improving the status of children and families throughout Charles County. This assessment represents just one component of the work being done, and the findings from this assessment will be used to plan for and fund the services and strategies necessary to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The most critically important needs for the Charles County community will continue to change and evolve as further resources and services are developed. As a result, topics addressed throughout this assessment will continue to be revisited and supporting information will be updated to understand how needs are changing and to monitor the success of ongoing and new initiatives.