

## PART 3: How many housing-vulnerable children and youth were also connected to food and nutrition, child protection, and foster care services?

This is Part 3 in a five-part integrated data report exploring the connections and gaps in services used by children and youth currently or previously experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability. Part 3 explores connections between the 6,558 children and youth identified as housing-vulnerable and services provided by Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) from August 2016 to July 2017. For more background on the integrated data report, read Part 1.

The **6,558** children and youth included in this section were identified as currently or previously experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability through services provided by HMIS agencies and CMS- McKinney Vento. Housing and homelessness services related to each housing situation (homelessness, housing instability, exited to permanent housing) are indicated in the boxes below.

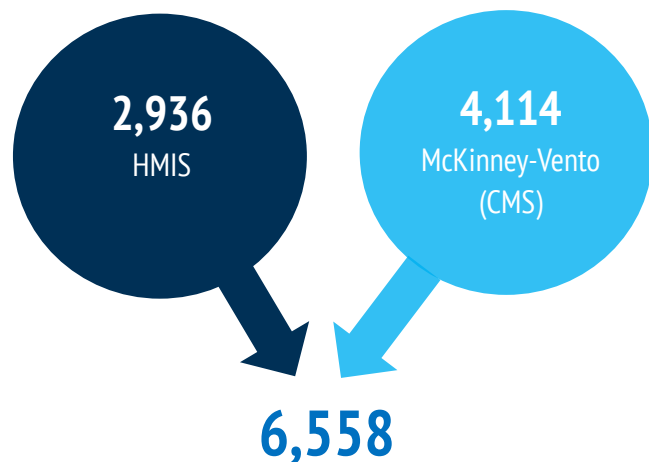
Homelessness
Emergency Shelter (HMIS)
Transitional Housing (HMIS)
McKinney-Vento (CMS)
Coordinated Entry (HMIS)
Supportive Services Only (HMIS)

Housing Instability
McKinney-Vento (CMS)
Homelessness Prevention (HMIS)
Supportive Services Only (HMIS)

Exited to Permanent Housing
Permanent housing (HMIS)
Supportive Services (HMIS)



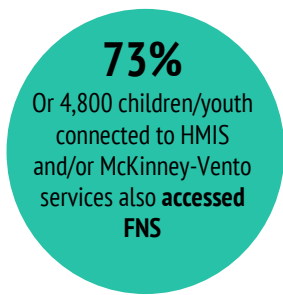
Children and youth experienced homelessness, housing instability, or were recently homeless in 2016/2017

(492 children and youth were connected to both HMIS and CMS McKinney-Vento services)

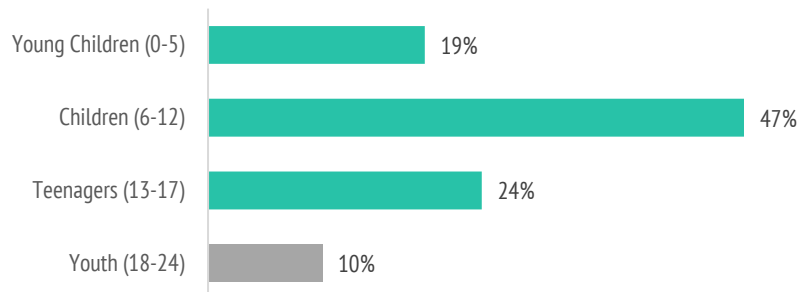
## Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) provide grocery benefits to aid low-income families and children, including those experiencing a housing crisis. When households experience housing cost burden (spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses) and/or work in professions that pay low wages, the FNS benefit can provide critical support to help households afford basic necessities like food.

From August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, 73% (or 4,800) of all 6,558 children and youth receiving services from an HMIS agency or identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services were in households that also accessed food and nutrition services from the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services. Of those 4,800 children and youth accessing Food and Nutrition Services, nearly half were children ages 6 to 12 (47%).

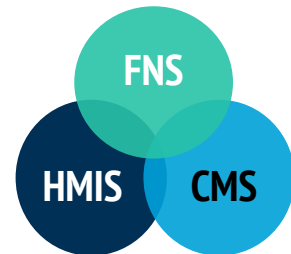


Children and youth in HMIS and/or McKinney-Vento who received FNS



## Cross System Service Utilization

Slightly over half (56%) of the 4,800 children and youth were only connected to FNS and McKinney-Vento services and were not receiving services from an HMIS agency. Over one-third (35%) of children and youth accessing FNS were receiving services through an HMIS agency but were not identified as McKinney-Vento, while only 9% were connected to both an HMIS agency and identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services. Children and youth may be in only HMIS because they are eligible but have not been identified for McKinney-Vento services, or if they are receiving permanent housing services from an HMIS agency and are no longer considered homeless. Children and youth may be in only McKinney-Vento if their family is doubled up or living in a hotel but have not sought services from an HMIS agency.

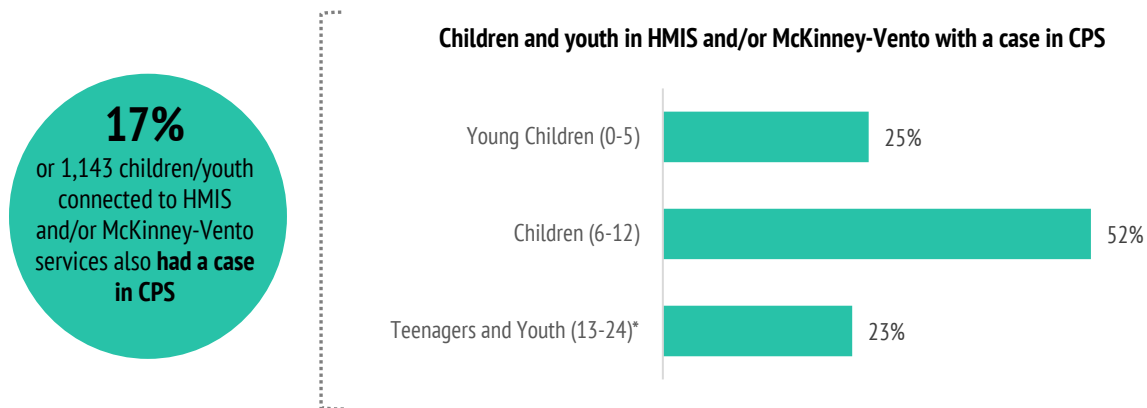


HMIS Only	HMIS & McKinney-Vento	McKinney-Vento Only
<p><b>35%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families utilizing FNS were in <b>HMIS</b> but not identified as McKinney-Vento.</p>	<p><b>9%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families utilizing FNS were identified as <b>McKinney-Vento</b> by CMS and were also receiving services through an <b>HMIS</b> agency.</p>	<p><b>56%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families utilizing FNS were identified as <b>McKinney-Vento</b>, but not in HMIS.</p>

## Child Protective Services (CPS)

Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and other situations, which may impact a child's safety. CPS services may overlap with homeless services if a household is unable to provide a safe environment for children.

From August 2016 to July 2017, there were 1,512 Child and Protective Service (CPS) cases involving 1,143 children or youth involved with an HMIS agency and/or identified as McKinney-Vento. In total, 17% of children and youth receiving services from an HMIS agency or McKinney-Vento had a case in CPS. The majority (52%) were children, 25% were young children age 5 and under, and 23% were teenagers or youth.



\*Fewer than 10 cases involved youth ages 18-24

## Case Severity and Investigation Findings

Once a report has been filed, Child Protective Services cases are prioritized by severity. Cases of abuse, serious neglect, and dependency<sup>2</sup> are assigned to an Investigative Assessment Track, while cases of neglect that are considered less serious are assigned to the Family Assessment Track.

**Investigative Assessment:** Due to the sensitivity of the case, social workers do not notify parents prior to beginning the investigation. Investigations of abuse are initiated within 24 hours while investigations of serious neglect are initiated within 24 or 72 hours.

**Family Assessment:** Social workers work alongside families to identify barriers to child safety and prevent further incidence. Investigations are initiated within 72 hours.

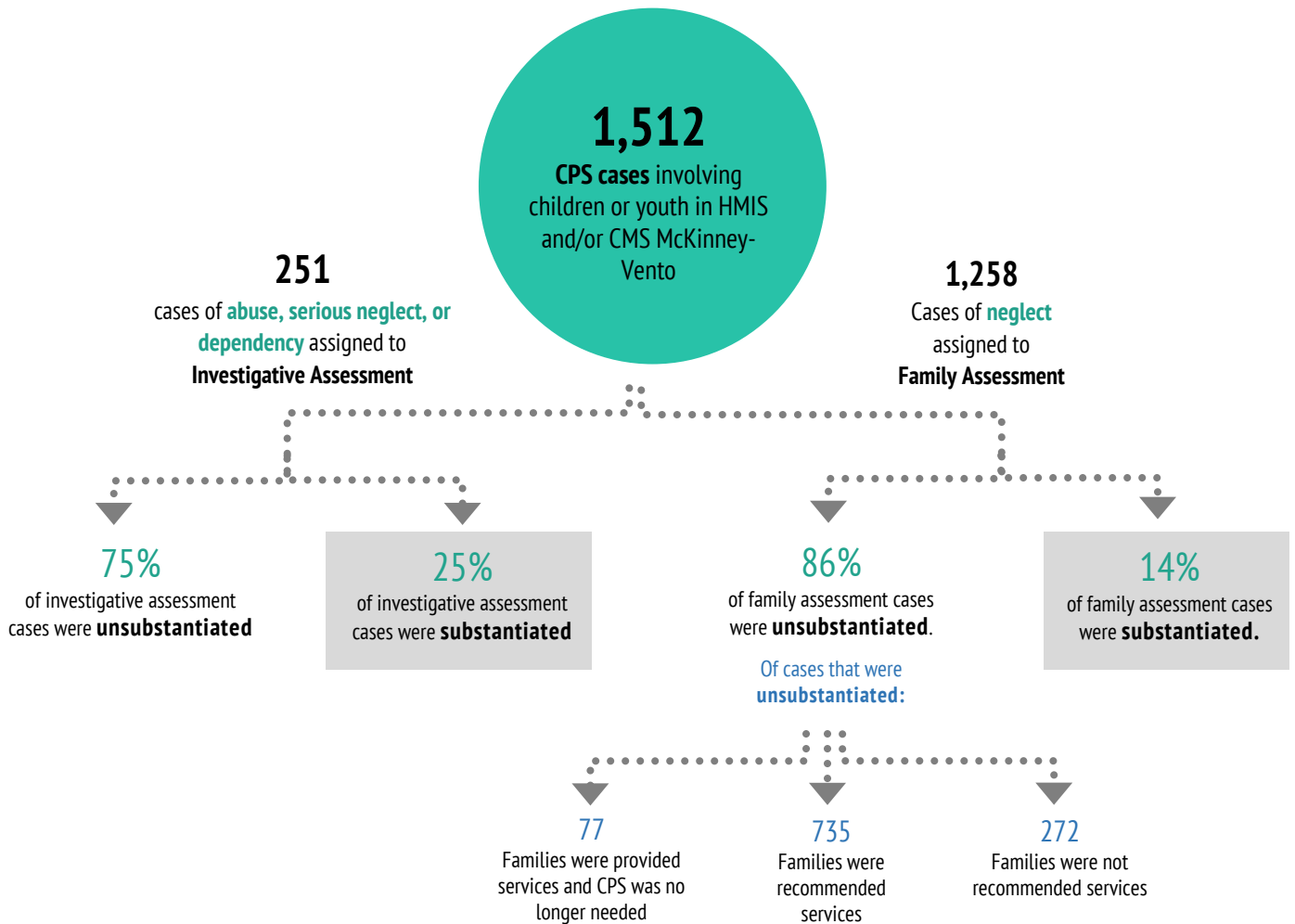
Investigations can result in a case being substantiated or unsubstantiated. **Substantiated** cases are those that require involuntary CPS services in order to ensure the safety of the child. **Unsubstantiated** cases are those in which the child is considered safe. However, services may have been used or recommended to the family over the course of an investigation. Unsubstantiated family assessment cases fall into one of three categories:

- **Services are not recommended:** the investigation concludes that the child is considered safe and not at risk for future maltreatment.
- **Services are recommended:** the child is considered safe, but the family has other non-safety related service needs.
- **Services were provided:** the child is considered safe and not at risk for future maltreatment because necessary services were provided during the Family Assessment.

<sup>2</sup> Dependency is when a child has need of care but his or her guardian is unable or unwilling to provide care.

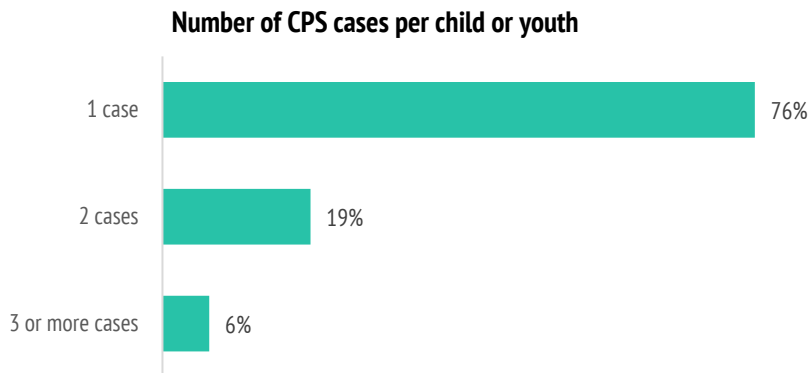
There were 1,512 CPS cases involving children or youth who were receiving services from an HMIS agency or McKinney-Vento. Of these, 16% of all cases were substantiated and required involuntary intervention from CPS services to ensure child safety.

The majority of CPS cases (1,258 or 83%) were assigned to the Family Assessment track. Most (86%) family assessment cases were unsubstantiated but families were recommended non-safety related services, such as housing, counseling, or childcare services. The minority of cases (251 or 17%) were assigned to Investigative Assessment for cases of abuse, serious neglect, or dependency.



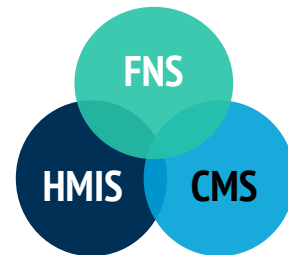
\*3 of the 1512 cases did not report investigation outcome and were not included in the chart

Of those children involved with CPS, the majority (76%) had one case and 19% had two cases open during 2016/2017. A smaller proportion (6%) had 3 or more cases.



### Cross System Service Utilization

During 2016/2017, there were 1,143 children and youth that had at least one CPS case and were receiving services from an HMIS agency and/or McKinney-Vento. Of the 1,143 children and youth, 61% were only connected to McKinney-Vento services, 30% were only connected to HMIS services, and 8% were connected to both McKinney-Vento and HMIS services. Children and youth may be in only HMIS because they are eligible but have not been identified for McKinney-Vento services, or if they are receiving permanent housing services from an HMIS agency and are no longer considered homeless. Children and youth may be in only McKinney-Vento if their family is doubled up or living in a hotel but have not sought services from an HMIS agency.

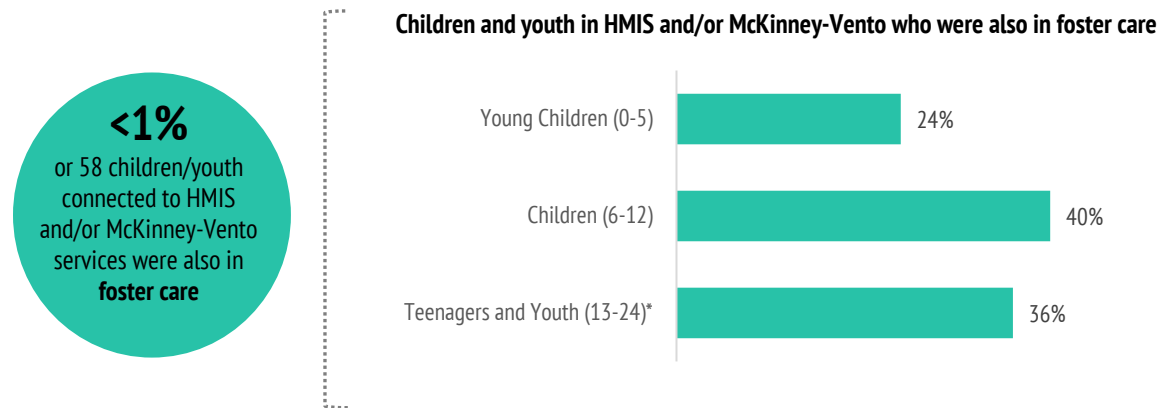


HMIS Only	HMIS & McKinney-Vento	McKinney-Vento Only
<p><b>30%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families with cases in CPS were in <b>HMIS</b> but not identified as McKinney-Vento.</p>	<p><b>8%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families with cases in CPS were identified as <b>McKinney-Vento</b> by CMS and were also receiving services through an <b>HMIS</b> agency.</p>	<p><b>61%</b></p> <p>of children/youth in families with cases in CPS were identified as <b>McKinney-Vento</b>, but not in HMIS.</p>

## Foster Care Placement

A child may be placed into foster care if the household is unable to maintain stable housing or provide a safe environment for children.

From August 2016 to July 2017, less than 1% (or 58 children and youth) who received services from an HMIS agency and/or were eligible for McKinney-Vento services were also in foster care. Of the 58 in foster care, 40% were children ages 6 to 12, 36% were teenagers or youth, and 24% were young children age 5 and under.



\*Fewer than 10 cases involved youth ages 18-24