

Foster Care Overview: Key Insights for County Leadership

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Key Data

- **10,846** children in foster care
- **6,057** total licensed foster homes

The Impact of Placement Instability

- Delayed permanency
- Academic difficulties
- Developing meaningful attachments
- Psychological development

Top Reasons for Children Entering Foster Care in North Carolina and Gaston County



- Neglect
- Drug Abuse by Parents
- Housing Instability
- Physical Abuse



Gaston County Foster Care Statistics

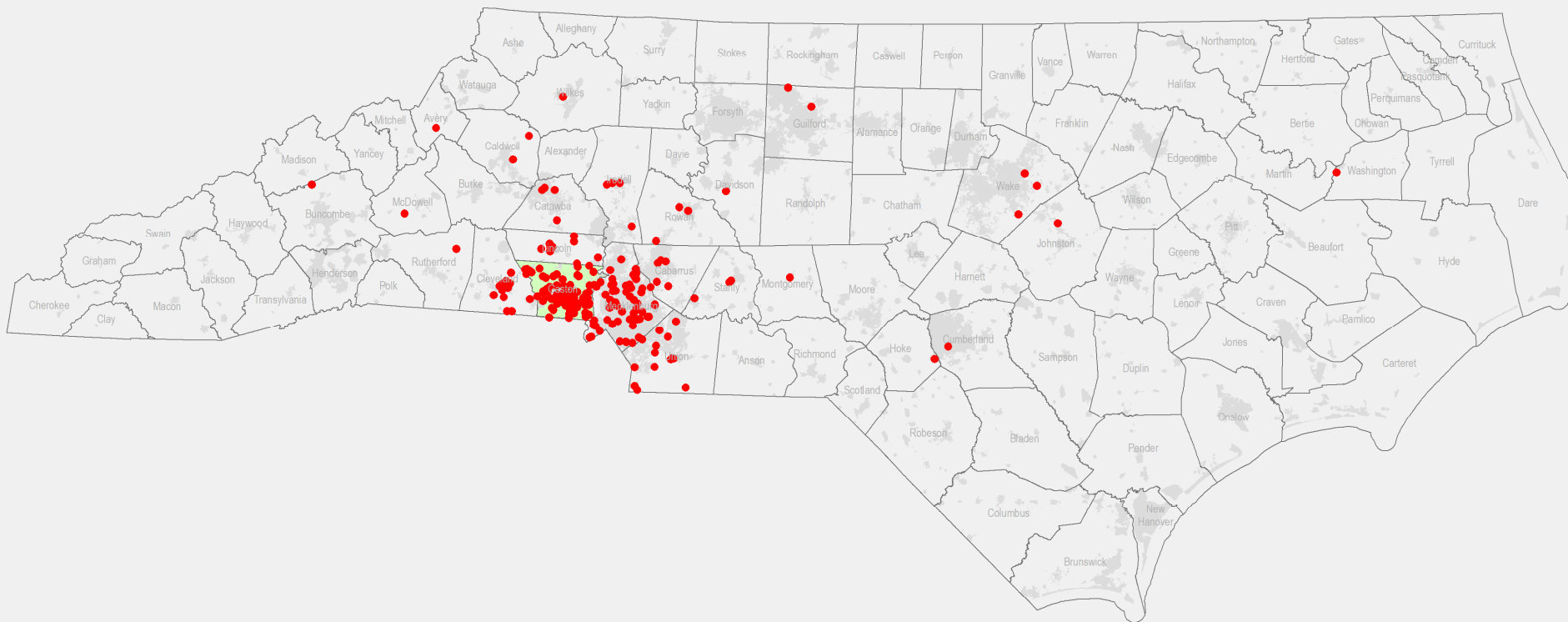


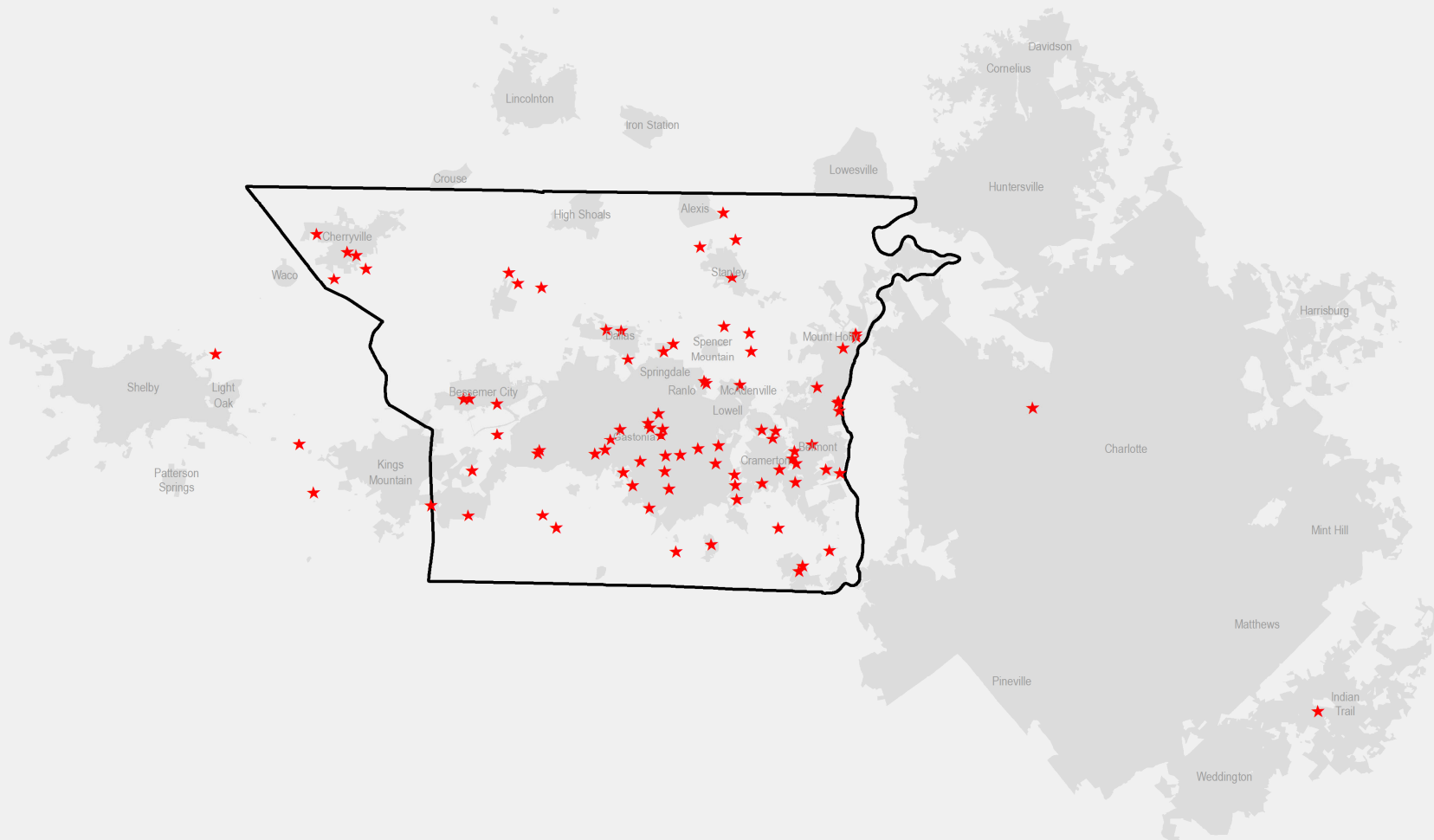
Key Data

- Children in Foster Care: **351**
- Licensed Foster Homes: **92**
- Capacity of Local Homes: **182**
(only 51% of children in care)
- Racial demographic breakdown for children in foster care:
 - Caucasian: **66.5%**
 - African American: **23.6%**
 - Other ethnicities: **9.9%**

Key Issues

- Nearly half of foster children (175) are placed outside of their community
- Children with severe behavioral and medical needs





Regional Licensing Comparison



Total Foster Homes

- **Gaston-92**
- **Buncombe-89**
- **Wake-86**
- **Mecklenburg-76**
- **Cleveland-56**
- **Lincoln-33**

Newly Licensed or Relicensed Homes

From January 2023 to Present

- **Gaston-79**
- **Wake-73**
- **Buncombe-70**
- **Mecklenburg-59**
- **Cleveland-50**
- **Lincoln-28**



Length in Custody

Key Data

- Average months in custody for children currently in Foster Care
 - **26.6**
 - **Their average age is just over 8 years old**
- Average months for a child with a current plan of adoption
 - **35.7**
 - **Their average age is 6.5 years old**

Key Issues

- **Availability of therapeutic providers**
- **Length of Legal Process**

Recent Trends in Gaston County



Foster Care Since June 2023

- **133** children entered foster care since June 2023
- **48** children have been reunified with their families
- **58** children have been adopted
- **19** obtained permanency through Guardianship

Community Call to Action



- Gaston County has over 700 churches
- If one family from each church became a licensed foster home, the local crisis could be significantly alleviated

Together we can ensure every child in Gaston County has the opportunity to grow up in a safe environment close to home.



Interested in Learning More?

Please contact DHHS at
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or scan the QR code provided

