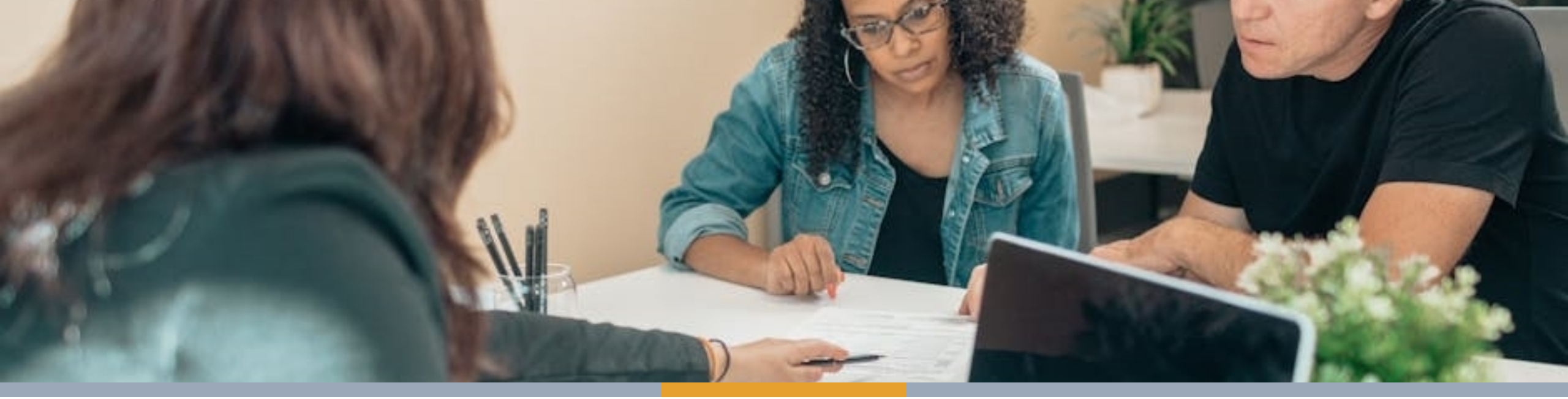


Vertical Integration:

Foster Care Providers, Social Services, and Clinical Services

Purpose & Values

Improving Lives in Burke County

SERVICE | SUPPORT | ENHANCEMENT

Empathy:

We treat all people with fairness, respect, and kindness; we encourage diverse perspectives.

Teamwork:

We prioritize shared goals and believe we can achieve more when we work together.

Accountability:

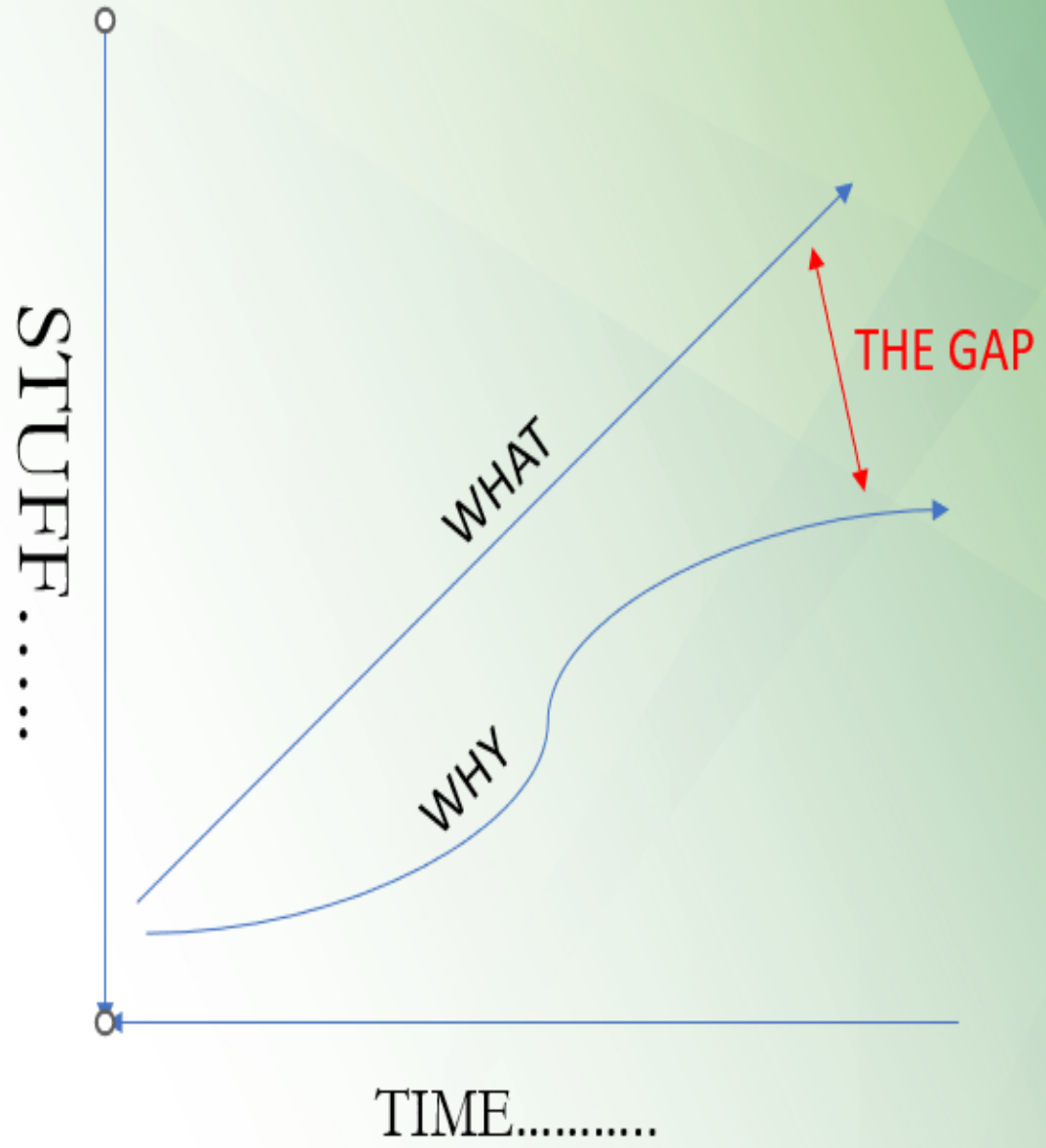
We can communicate openly and honestly with employees and stakeholders. We have integrity to do what is right.

Performance:

We are focused on innovation, efficiency, and measured outcomes. We strive for a high-quality customer experience.

Growth:

We support and invest in the advancement of our team and prioritize professional development.


STUFF.....
WHAT
WHY
THE GAP
TIME.....

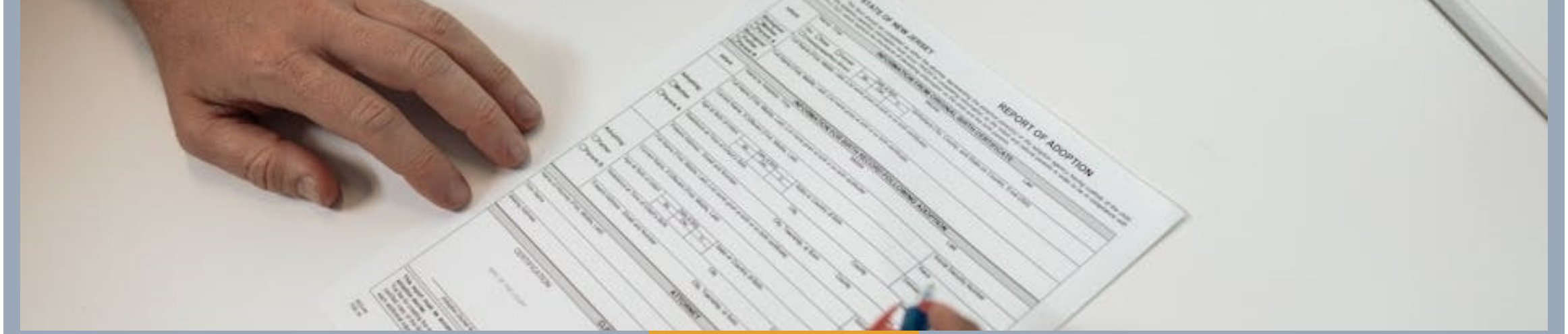


Agenda

Awareness

Advocacy

Action

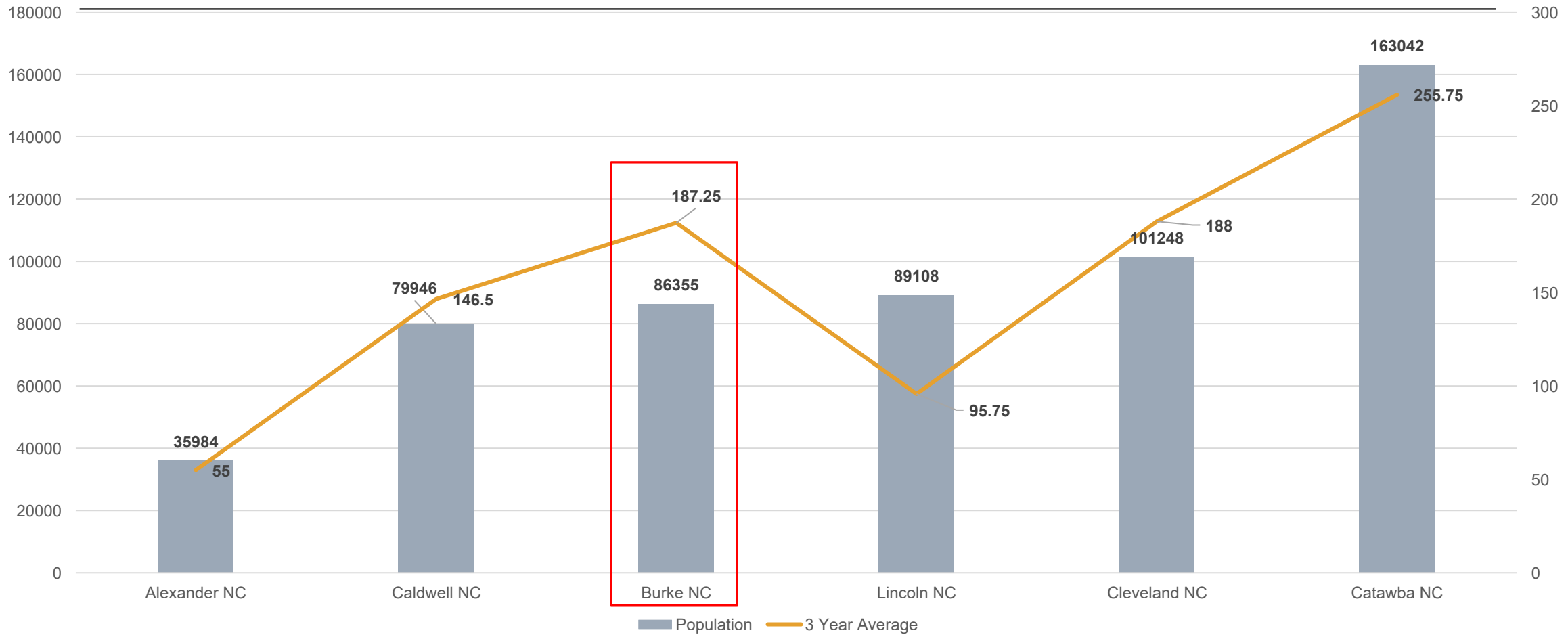


Awareness…….

FOSTER CARE OVERVIEW

In Burke County, there is a pressing issue regarding foster care. The current number of children in need of foster homes greatly surpasses the available licensed homes. This imbalance highlights the urgent need for more foster parents to step in and provide stable environments for these vulnerable children, ensuring they receive the care and support necessary for their development.

County Population vs. 3 Year Average Foster Clients



Annual Rate of Investigations/ Assessments for Child Welfare (per 1,000 children)

Higher than state and federal rates (2025 Reaching for Excellence and Accountability in Practice (REAP) Q2 results)

NC	Burke
43.6	67.39
The federal rate was 41.7 in 2023	

Claims

Annual Rate of Child Victimization (per 1,000 children)

Higher than state and federal rates (2025 REAP Q2 results)

NC	Burke
10.7	17.38
The federal rate was 7.4 in 2023	

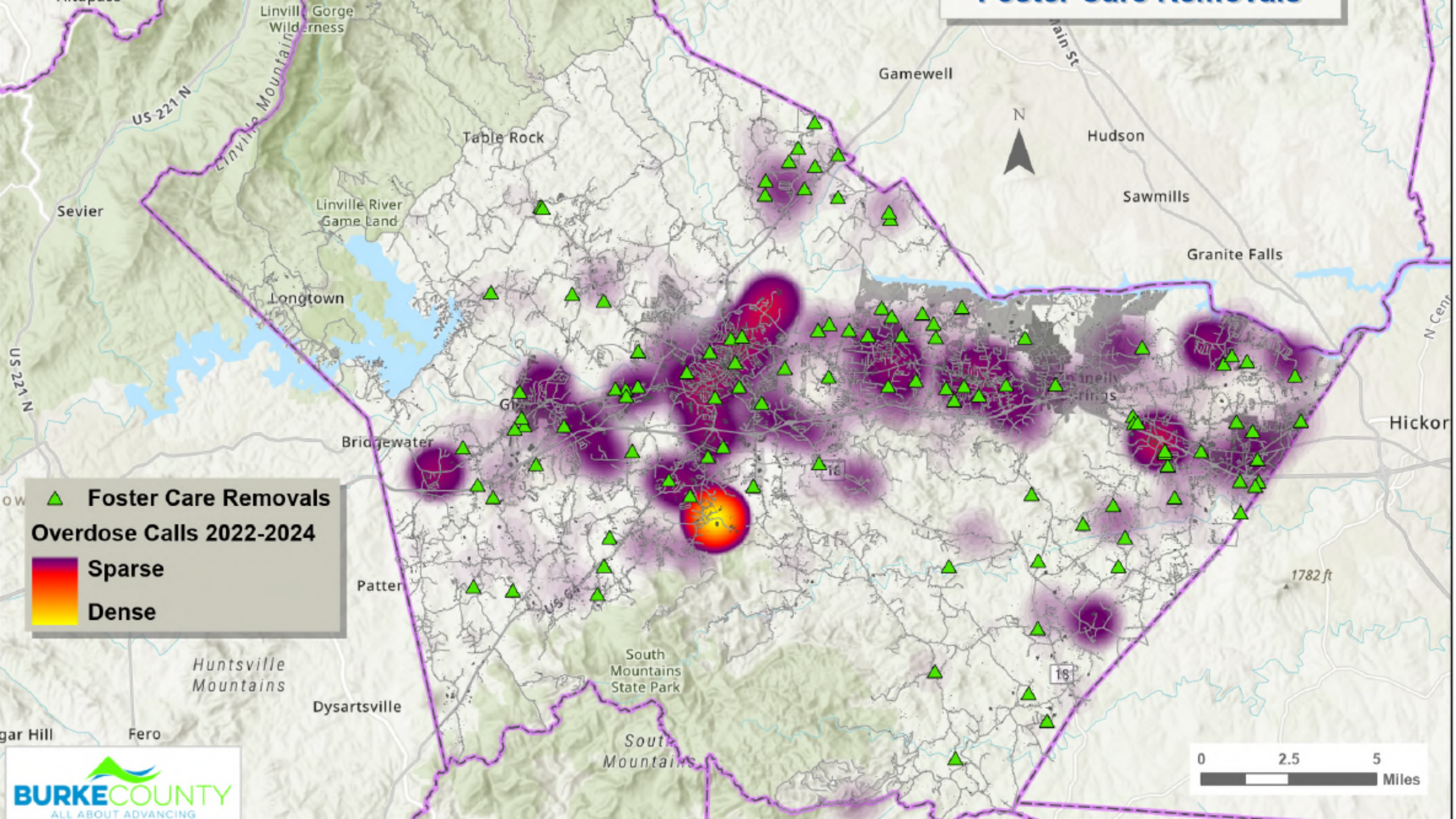
Claims substantiated

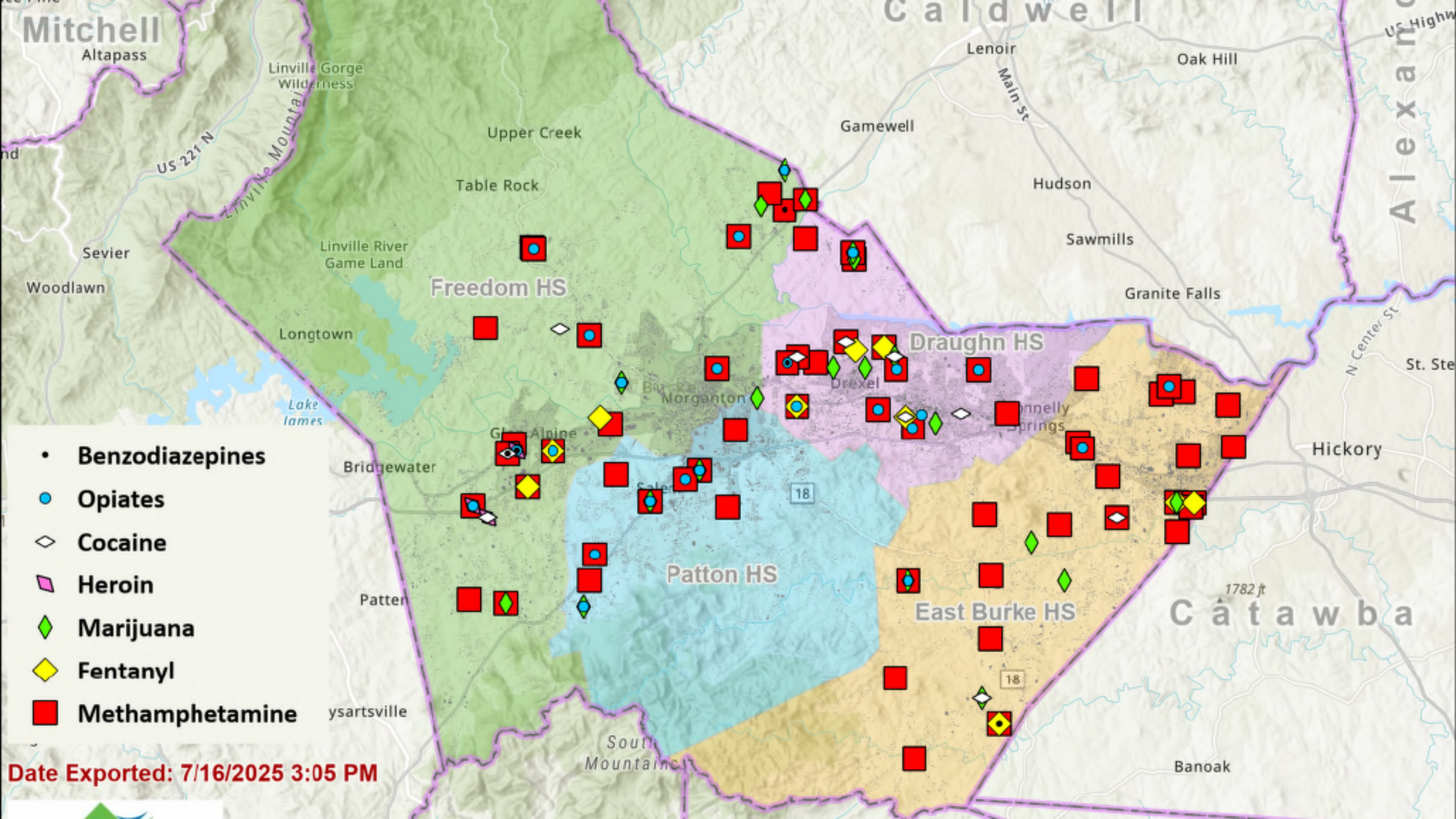
Annual Rate of Children in Foster Care

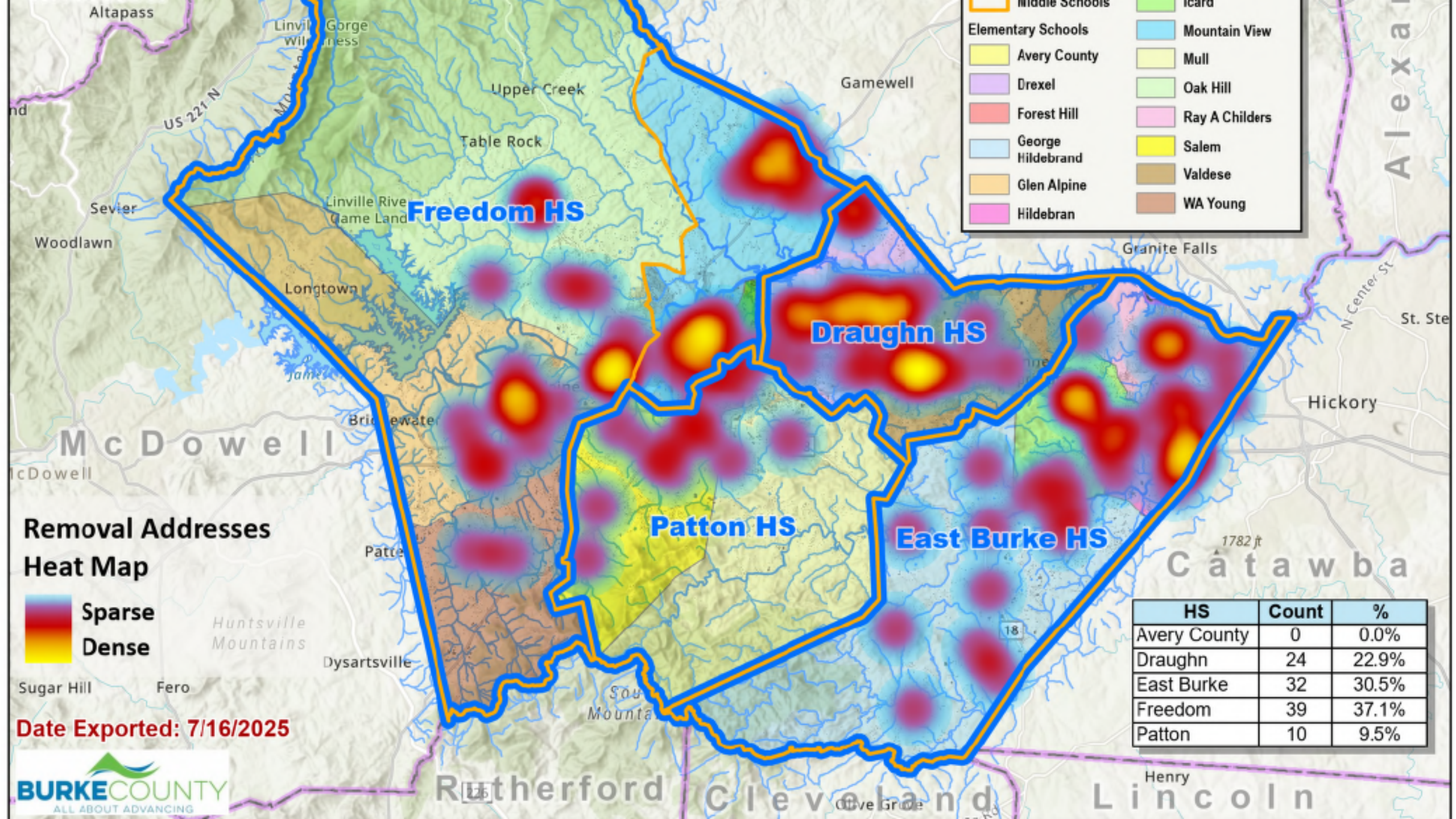
Higher than State, Region, and Similar-Sized Counties (Calendar Year 2024)

Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
13.5%	6%	7.2%	9.8%

Children taken into care


Foster Care Removals
Overdose Calls 2022-2024
Sparse
Dense
Gamewell
Hudson
Sawmills
Granite Falls
Table Rock
Linville River Game Land
Longtown
Sevier
Bridgewater
Patter
Dysartsville
Huntsville Mountains
South Mountains State Park
Fero
Hickor
1782 ft
US 221 N
US 64
N
0
2.5
5
Miles
BURKECOUNTY
ALL ABOUT ADVANCING


Mitchell
Altapass
Linville Gorge Wilderness
US 221 N
Linville Mountains
Upper Creek
Table Rock
Linville River Game Land
Sevier
Woodlawn
Longtown
Lake James
Bridgewater
Patten
ysartsville
South Mountains
Caldwell
Lenoir
Main St
Oak Hill
Gamewell
Hudson
Sawmills
Granite Falls
Alexander
US Highw
N Center St
St. Ste
Hickory
Drexel
Morganton
Glen Alpine
Freedom HS
Draughn HS
Patton HS
East Burke HS
18
1782 ft
Catawba
Banoak
Benzodiazepines
Opiates
Cocaine
Heroin
Marijuana
Fentanyl
Methamphetamine
Date Exported: 7/16/2025 3:05 PM



HS	Count	%
Avery County	0	0.0%
Draughn	24	22.9%
East Burke	32	30.5%
Freedom	39	37.1%
Patton	10	9.5%

Maltreatment While in Foster Care

Better than National Standard, State, and Similar-Sized Counties (2024 Calendar Year)

National	Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
8.5%	2.96%	3.07%	3.7%	1%

Treatment in care

Total Length of Time in Custody

Longer than National Standard, State, and Similar-Sized Counties (FY23–24)

% of youth in care after # of days	Burke %	State %	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
90	97.3 %	90%	89%	98.3%
180	91.9 %	83%	82%	94.9%
360	86.5 %	69%	65%	88.7%
450	68.6 %	59%	54%	78.7%
540	68.6 %	52%	47%	69.4%

Delays in court proceedings, lack of available placements, and turnover can negatively impact these outcomes.

Days in care

Percent of Permanency within 12, 23, and 24+ Months of Children Entering Foster Care

Lower than National Standard, State, Region, and Similar-Sized Counties (FY23–24)

# of months	National	Burke	State	Medium Counties	Judicial Region
Within 12	40.5%	13.89%	27.18%	29.5%	13%
12-23	43.6%	34.62%	38.73%	43.1%	42.9%
24+	30.3%	28.3%	35.37%	34.8%	32.5%

Delays in court proceedings, limited placement availability, and high turnover can negatively impact these outcomes.

Timeline to permanency

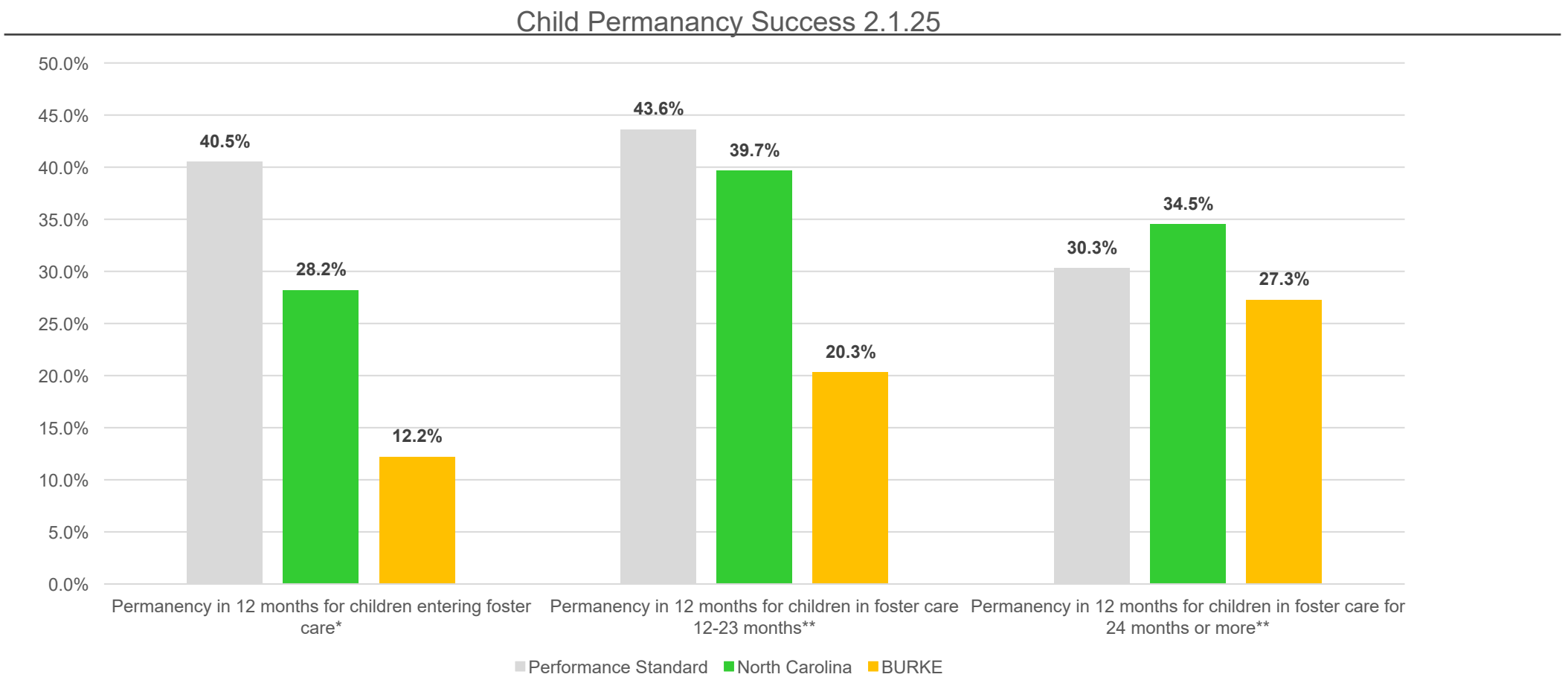
Child Welfare Data Snapshot

BURKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FOSTER CARE ANALYSIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

Total Children in Care: 184

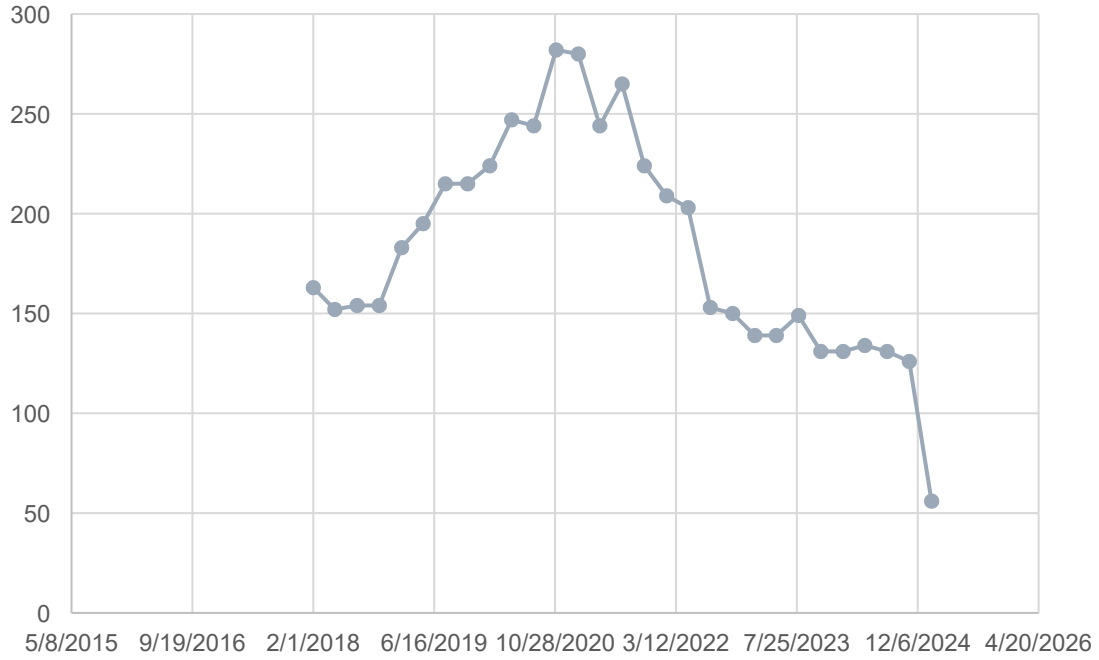
	Number of Children	% of Placement Type	Average Number of Days in Placement	Average Age of Child	% IV-E Eligible
Therapeutic Foster Home	25	14%	1,187	10	44%
Unlicensed Kinship Placement	50	27%	456	6	84%
Level III Group Home	5	3%	2,151	14	0%
Unleveled Group Home	12	7%	1,187	13	0%
IAFT	5	3%	1,616	12	20%
Total in PRTF	6	3%	2,093	12	0%
Licensed Family Foster	60	33%	975	6	75%
DSS Displaced	1	1%	909	14	0%
Other	20	11%	1,108	12	40%
Total	184		1,298	$ 11	29%

Child Welfare Data Snapshot

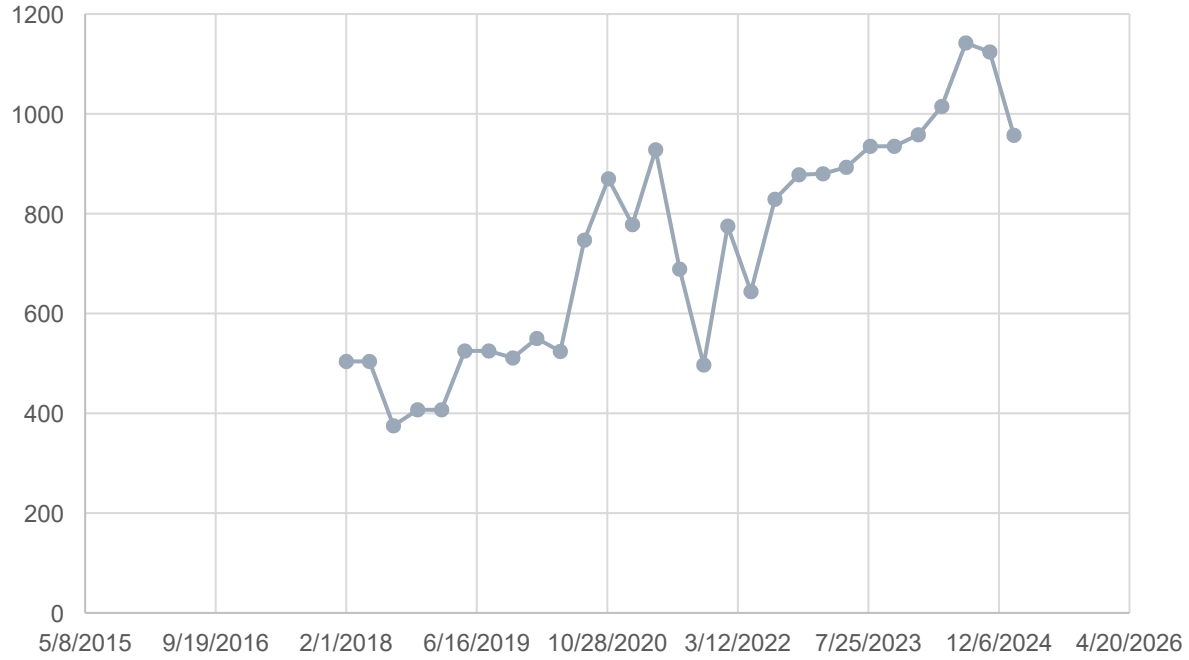


Child Welfare Data Snapshot

Days to first permanancy hearing



Time to permanent placement



Building the Team…

SPARC Services & Programs

FAMILY CENTERED TREATMENT®

Family Centered Treatment® (FCT)

NC Guardian ad Litem - Burke

A Caring Alternative

HIGH COUNTRY community health

Pastor Leadership Group

ONE MORE ONE LESS PROJECT

Meg's Place McDowell

LIVE LIKE MEGAN

RFQ Summary: Integrated Foster Care Support & Clinical Services

•Burke County DSS is seeking 1–2 qualified single-source providers to partner in improving foster care and family reunification outcomes.

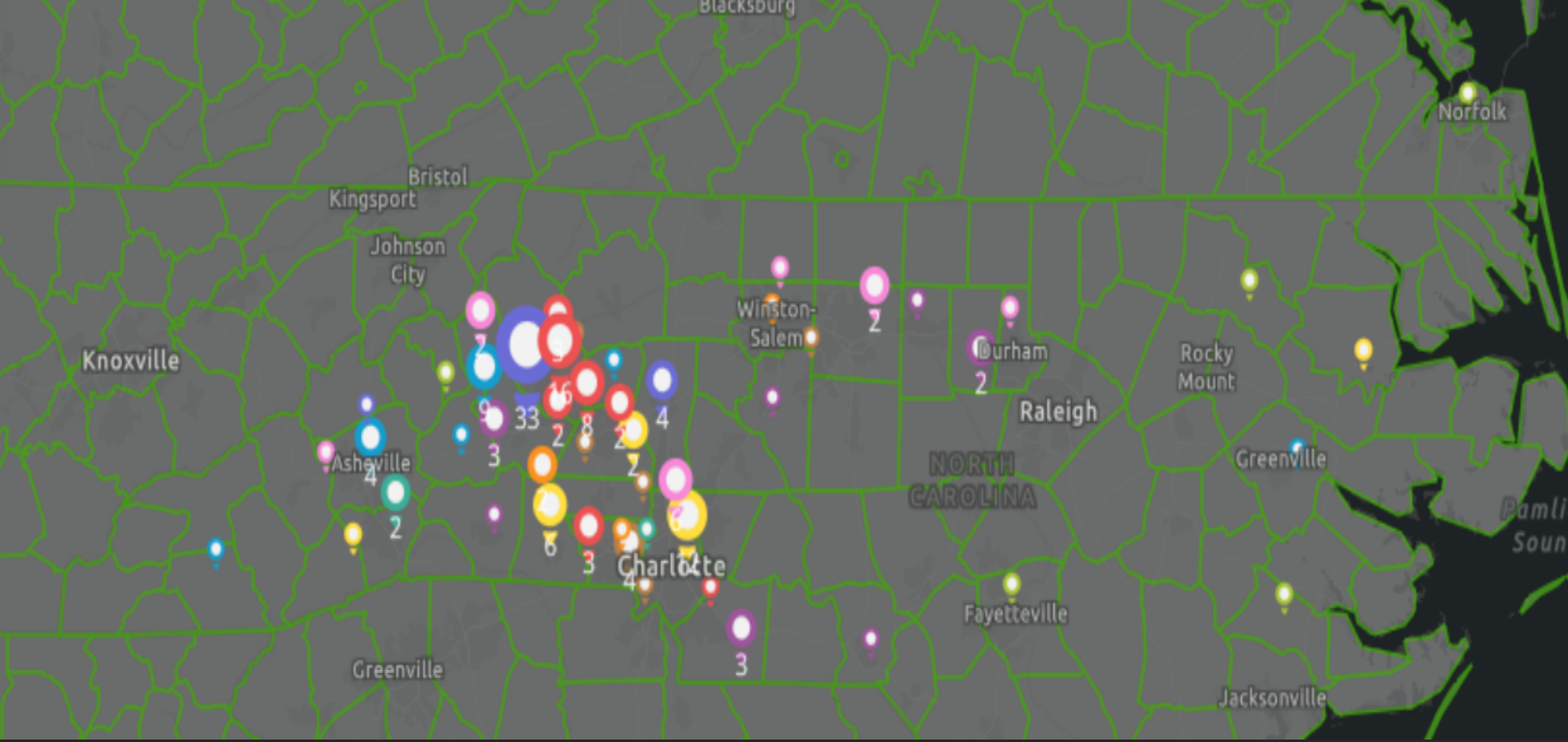
•Selected provider(s) will deliver foster parent recruitment, training, licensing, and ongoing support, along with clinical assessments and reunification-focused services for children and families.

•This coordinated approach aims to:

1. Increase the number of licensed foster parents in Burke County
2. Expand timely access to high-quality assessments and family services
3. Improve safety, timeliness and success of reunifications
4. Reduce time to permanency and lower the number of children in care

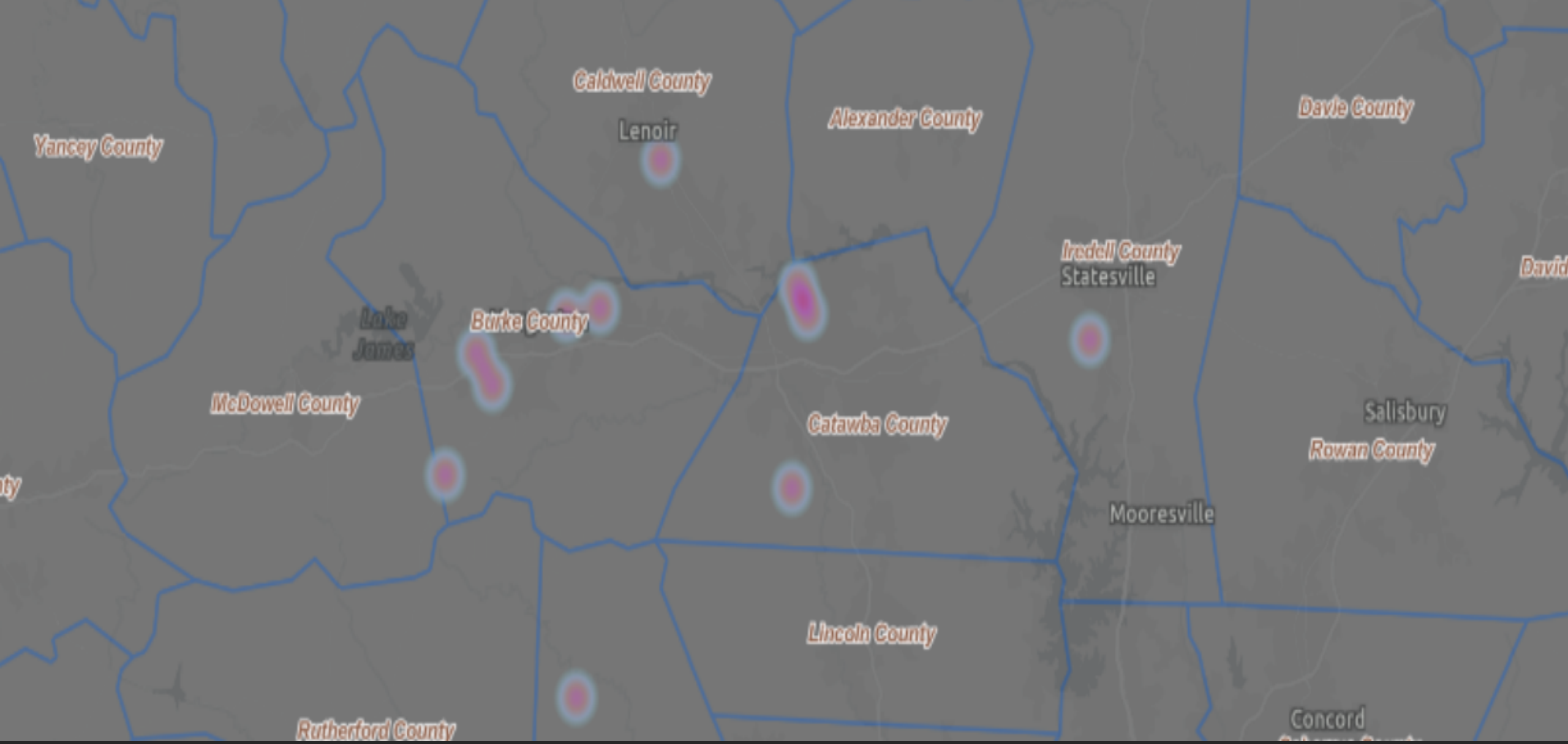
Foster Care Placement Options

- Publicly Licensed
  - Burke County trains, licenses, and manages
- Privately Licensed
  - Separate organization trains, licenses, and managed
- Unlicensed Kinship
  - Family members who do not have a foster care license

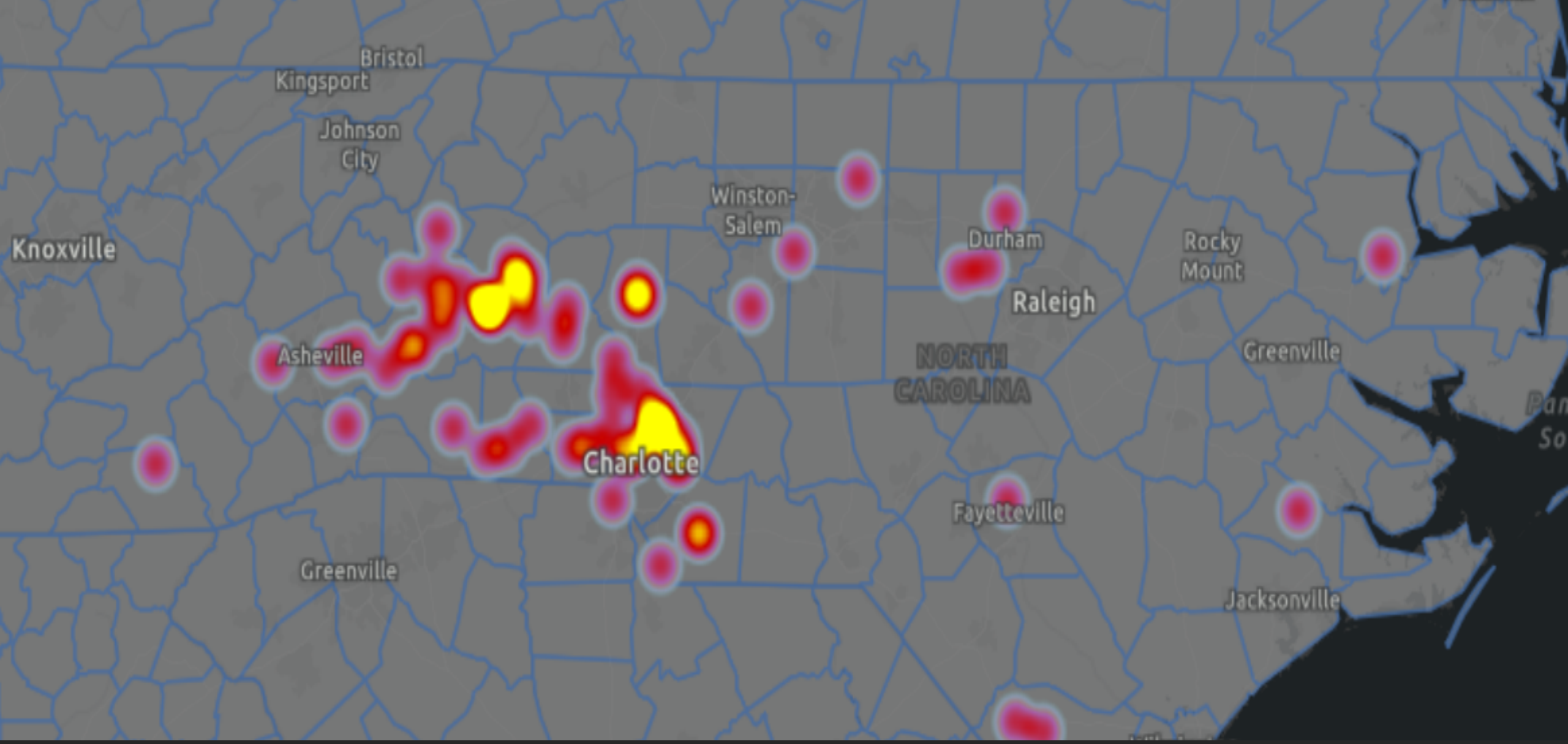


All Children by Location

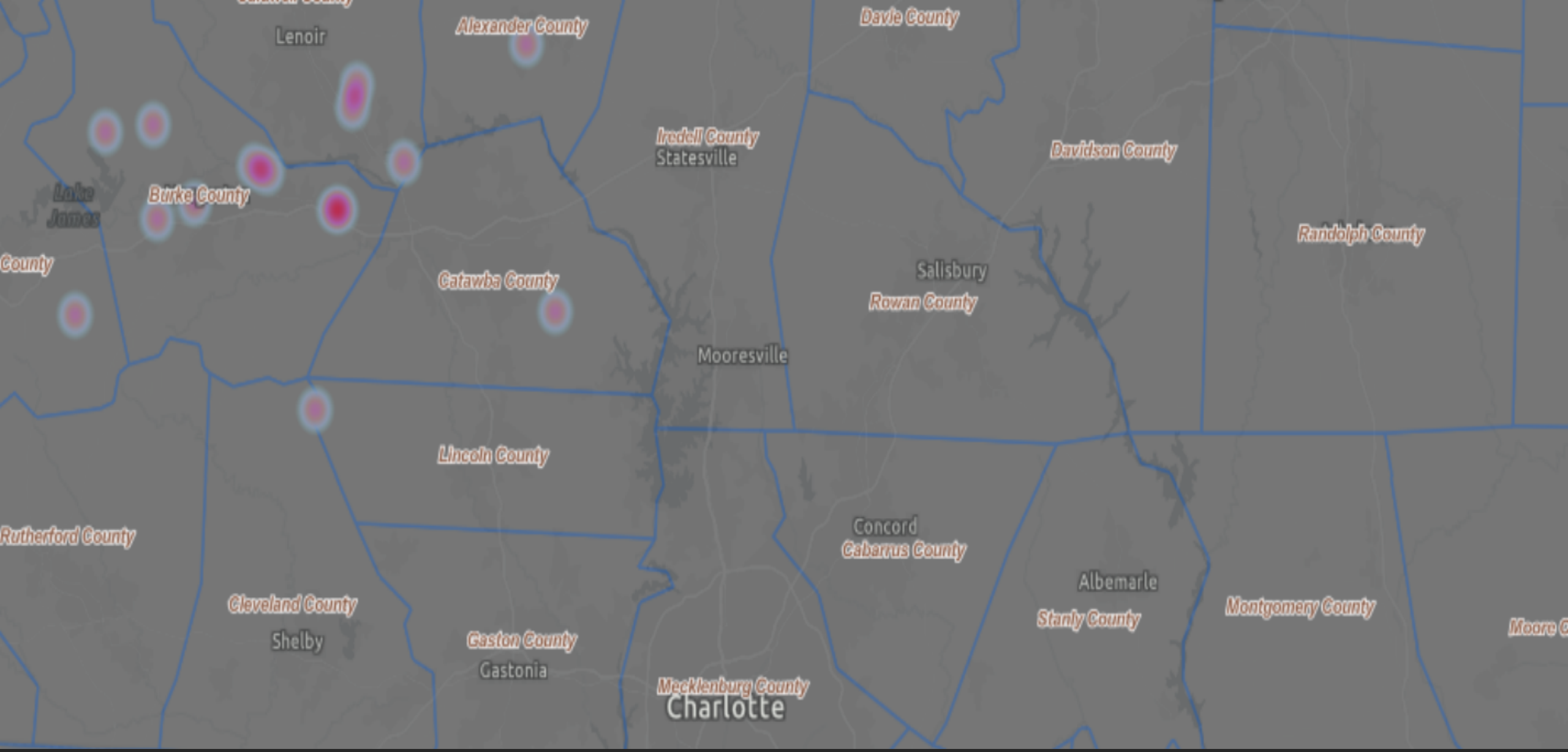
Children out of NC: 3



Licensed Through Burke County DSS



Private Agency Placement



Unlicensed Kinship Placements

Single Sources RFQ Purpose

- Currently the Burke County Department of Social Services (DSS) pays multiple providers for services on a fee for service basis
- Services must be provided to children and families involved with the child welfare system to meet federal and state requirements
- Sometimes services may not be readily available and/or have wait lists, or are not available locally requiring children and families to travel outside of the county
- To remedy these challenges, Burke County is partnering with Health Management Associates (HMA) to identify the most recurring services utilized by DSS for child welfare and a more efficient process to provide them



Purpose

- Assess any opportunities to improve more onsite and readily available services that can be provided locally that will further prevention efforts to reduce maltreatment of child abuse and neglect and expedite children in foster care in finding their forever home
- Identify the amount spent on these services and develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from experienced providers and provider networks capable of delivering a broad array of evidence-based clinical, therapeutic, and supportive services to children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.
- Services will include prevention, intervention, family support, foster care support, and reunification support

Types of Services Sought

- Comprehensive Clinical Assessments (CCA)
- Substance Use Assessments (list the type of assessment your providers have experience or training to administer, including SUD-specific tools)
- Drug Screening (list the type(s): urine, hair, oral, sweat patch, instant and lab-based)
- Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder Treatment (outpatient, intensive outpatient, medication-assisted treatment, peer support, harm reduction, etc.)
- Parenting Education
- Parenting Capacity Evaluations/Screenings

Types of Services Sought

- Individual, Family, and Group Counseling (list all the modality types utilized, including evidence-based/informed, or promising practice models)
- Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Assessments and Interventions (including perpetrator interventions)
- Intensive In-Home Services (e.g. Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (In-home Adaption), High Fidelity Wraparound)
- Medication Management (psychiatric)
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) or ACT-like services
- Forensic Child Medical Examinations (CME) / Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) services for children
- Foster Parent Recruitment, Training (including MAPP/GPS, TIPS-MAPP, Deciding Together, Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma), Licensing, and Retention Support
- Partnerships with faith-based organizations who help with local recruitment of foster homes
- Other value-added or best-in-practice services not listed above that the applicant offers that would benefit Burke County children and families (e.g., trauma-focused interventions, evidence based/informed interventions, social drivers of health services)

GOALS

Establish pre-qualified providers/vendors who can rapidly respond to referrals and help child welfare meet federal and state measures related to safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families

Increase the number of available licensed foster homes in Burke County

Ensure localized and timely access to readily available assessment/screening and services and avoid wait lists



GOALS

Ability to provide services onsite and/or within Burke County

Improved Federal and State Outcomes (Recidivism, Foster Care Stability, Time to Permanency)

Budget neutrality or cost savings at or below the current expenditures assess opportunities to blend and braid funding streams
maximize Medicaid reimbursement (so that county dollars are the payor of last resort)



Where we are now….

Public Foster Care Recruitment and Licensing

- Public DSS foster care offers direct state oversight but limited resources.
- Families are licensed directly through their local Department of Social Services (DSS), which operates under the NC Division of Social Services.
- All foster parents must complete the state-mandated TIPS-MAPP training (30 hours) regardless of whether they go through DSS or a private agency.
- DSS manages placements for children in state custody and typically prioritizes reunification with birth families.
- DSS provides case management, but resources can be limited due to high caseloads and budget constraints.
- No agency fees for families; DSS handles licensing and support directly.
- Few staff dedicated to supporting foster families and to recruit and train.
- Competes with the private sector who pays higher foster parent payment rates.

Foster Care Benefits

Private Foster Care Recruitment and Licensing

- Private agencies provide more flexibility, specialized care, and support.
- They have more staff who are readily available to help with recruitment, training, and licensing
- Private agencies are approved by the state to license foster families and often specialize and provide additional “enhanced” services and wrap around supports that counties typically do not offer (e.g., therapeutic services for behavioral or mental health needs).
- Agencies often provide additional training beyond TIPS-MAPP, plus more individualized support, respite care, and sometimes higher stipends for specialized placements (e.g., they pay families more than counties do which often causes counties to lose foster parents to private agencies due to increased payment rate and more supportive services).
- Can often bill Medicaid to avoid a county from paying county dollars where the county supplements payment versus being the primary payor,
- Private agencies can tailor services to specific populations (e.g., teens, sibling groups).
- Typically have more flexibility and capacity for recruitment, training, and ongoing family support compared to DSS.

Benefits of a Single-Source Foster Care Partner

- Streamlined communication and coordination for current and future foster parents through one unified provider.
- Consistent training, licensing, and support practices countywide.
- Eliminates competition with higher-paying private-sector agencies, supporting stronger local recruitment.
- Simplifies implementation and oversight, with one partner managing recruitment, training, and support across county lines.
- Centralized events, webinars, and statewide resources are easier to deliver through a single agency.
- Enhanced wraparound supports that counties alone often lack the capacity or funding to provide.

Next Steps



01 Release RFQ

02 Select one or more providers/vendors based on responses received for considerations

03 Conduct a request for proposal (RFP) based on the qualified vendors

04 Contract with chosen providers/vendors who can provide turnkey services to meet the needs of child welfare social workers and the children and families they support