Child Sex Trafficking: A Data Analysis of Risk Factors

PRESENTED TO ARAMINTA
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Bringing all the pieces together for a healthier community

Table of Contents

About Mosaic Group

Mosaic Group provides management consulting to organizations, and designs and implements effective and sustainable healthcare improvement solutions.

We aim to achieve health equity by strengthening the capacity of systems and organizations to meet their community's most pressing needs.

We innovate sustainable, whole health solutions—tailored to the unique needs of each community we serve—to improve health and well-being.

Background

Child trafficking is a gross violation of human rights. It inflicts severe physical, psychological, and social harm on its victims, robbing them of their innocence and basic rights. Trafficked children are often subjected to extreme violence, including physical and sexual abuse, as well as psychological manipulation and neglect (Barnert et al., 2017). The latest estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate that approximately 28 million individuals are trafficked globally, with 3.3 million of these being children.

Despite the prevalence of child trafficking, accurate data on its scope and scale remain elusive, hampering efforts to combat the problem effectively. While various organizations and agencies attempt to quantify the scope of the issue, there is no definitive estimate of these crimes (Barnert et al., 2017). The complex nature of trafficking operations, coupled with underreporting and inconsistencies in data collection methodologies, contribute to the absence of accurate statistics. And despite efforts to raise awareness and improve data collection mechanisms, child trafficking remains largely underreported and misunderstood.

Victims often face significant barriers to reporting their experiences, including fear of retribution from traffickers, lack of trust in law enforcement and service providers, and shame or stigma associated with their victimization (Kinnish et al., 2021). Additionally, many cases of child trafficking go unrecognized or misidentified, further obscuring the true extent of the problem (Barnert et al., 2017).

The state of Maryland's geographical positioning along the I-95 corridor, I-270, and I-70, coupled with the presence of international airports, renders it an ideal hub within the trafficking circuit (Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, 2022). The proximity to truck stops further exacerbates the issue, providing traffickers with convenient venues for exploitation. Moreover, Maryland's demographic landscape encompasses multiple vulnerable populations, such as youth engaged in the child welfare system, unaccompanied minors, domestic servants, and agricultural workers. This convergence of factors among others underscores the urgent need for targeted prevention strategies, and ultimately systemic reforms to combat child trafficking within the state. Given Maryland's unique vulnerabilities and position within trafficking networks, addressing these challenges is crucial to protecting children.

While certain risk factors can increase vulnerability, it is important to recognize that all children, regardless of their background, can fall victim to trafficking. Several studies have identified risks for experiencing child sex trafficking, including "child maltreatment (e.g., prior sexual abuse), involvement in foster care, a history of running away, alcohol and substance use, poor mental health, justice system involvement, unstable home environments, peer or family influence (e.g., witnessing others engage in sex work), identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community, severe physical disabilities, and/or low cognitive abilities" (Allen et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the nuanced interplay of these risk factors is essential for developing effective prevention strategies that protect all children. In response to this need, Araminta, a non-profit organization in Baltimore, Maryland, partnered with the Mosaic Group to identify nationally recognized risk factors and conduct a comprehensive data analysis. This collaboration aims to inform Araminta's prevention strategy and strengthen efforts to reduce child sex trafficking.

Methodology

The methodology was designed to ensure a comprehensive and data-driven approach to identify and analyze the confluence of risk factors that may increase the vulnerability of child sex trafficking. The methodology consisted of the following:

Literature Review

An extensive literature review was conducted, drawing insights from a diverse array of scholarly sources and empirical studies. This review aimed to identify known risk factors for child sex trafficking, recognizing that all children, regardless of background, can be at risk.

The literature review included an assessment of fourteen (14) scholarly articles and empirical studies focused on child trafficking and related vulnerabilities. These studies were selected based on their relevance, methodological rigor, and the frequency with which they were cited in other works.

Data Source Identification

Based on the identified risk factors, a corresponding set of data sources were identified, compiled, and analyzed to determine the prevalence and distribution of the risk factors in the state of Maryland.

In instances where data was unavailable for a specific risk factor, a proxy measure was used. A proxy measure is an indirect indicator that closely approximates or correlates with the actual data point of interest, allowing for robust analysis despite data gaps.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted at both the zip code and county levels, depending on data availability. This level of granularity allowed for a more detailed understanding of regional variations and the identification of local hotspots. Graphs, tables and heat maps were created for each data source to create visual representations of the data and inform the data analysis process. These visualizations highlighted potential patterns and trends.

Drawing from literature and available data, a total of twelve (12) risk factors and corresponding indicators were identified and analyzed. Each data indicator was independently assessed to determine which Maryland jurisdictions or zip codes exhibited the highest prevalence or total number of cases.

Given the extensive number of zip codes in Maryland, heat maps and graphs were created to spotlight the "areas of higher risk," highlighting those with the highest percentages, rates, or total numbers related to the risk factors. These heat maps were used to visually identify the most impacted areas, with the top two gradients indicating the highest risk zones. The synthesis of this data across multiple indicators allowed for the identification of jurisdictions where the overlap of risk factors is most pronounced, marking them as critical hotspots for targeted intervention. A detailed list of the top high-risk zip codes and their corresponding jurisdictions, where applicable, is provided in the Appendix.

Additionally, a principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to examine the relationship between the identified risk factors and the incidence of child trafficking across Maryland jurisdictions. PCA is a statistical technique that simplifies data by reducing the risk factors into principal components. This reduction facilitates clearer insights into which risk factors may be most significant. This method was chosen for its ability to account for multiple variables simultaneously and to identify the most significant predictors of child trafficking. Based on the results of this analysis, we were able to identify the most significant contributing factors associated with increased risk for human trafficking. By isolating these risk factors, we then analyzed the impact across Maryland jurisdictions to determine potential hotspots with increased risk.

The PCA statistical technique has limitations and assumes linear relationships between variables, and may not fully capture complex, nonlinear interactions. The results are also influenced by the quality and completeness of the input data, and any inherent biases or missing data can affect the accuracy of the principal components. Furthermore, while PCA can reduce data dimensions in large datasets, it might also lead to a loss of detailed information, potentially overlooking nuanced aspects of the risk factors. Therefore, while the PCA may identify a stronger correlation between some of the variables, it is important to note that all variables identified and reviewed for this analysis can still pose an associated risk to specific populations across Maryland. Despite these limitations, PCA provides a valuable tool for simplifying and analyzing complex datasets as a means of identifying potential next steps towards improvement.

Insights from the Literature

The risk factors guiding this data analysis were identified based on their prevalence in existing literature and their specific relevance to Maryland's unique socio-economic and geographical context.

These risk factors were consistently highlighted across multiple studies, and included scholarly articles that highlighted the impact of geographical factors that were particularly relevant to Maryland, such as major transportation corridors and the presence of international airports, which facilitate trafficking operations.

Informed by the National Human Trafficking Prevention Framework, risk factors were categorized into the following categories: societal, community, relationship, individual, intersecting vulnerabilities, trauma and vulnerability, and systemic failures and disparities. The frequency with which these studies were cited in the articles reviewed are referenced below.

- Sexualization of Children (12/14 articles): Society's increasing portrayal of children in a sexualized manner lowers barriers to their exploitation, making them more susceptible to trafficking. This trend desensitizes the public to the dangers and normalizes inappropriate perceptions of children.
- Gender-Based Violence (13/14 articles): The widespread occurrence of violence against women and girls fosters an environment where exploitation, including trafficking, is more likely to occur. Deep-rooted gender inequalities and cultural norms exacerbate this risk.

Community Factors

- Poverty (14/14 articles): Poverty is a universally acknowledged risk factor that significantly increases the vulnerability of children to trafficking as they or their families seek ways to alleviate financial hardships. This economic hardship makes them more susceptible to manipulation by traffickers.
- Under-Resourced Schools and Neighborhoods (11/14 articles): Communities that lack sufficient educational and social resources tend to see higher rates of trafficking. The absence of these protective factors leaves children with limited opportunities and increases their vulnerability.
- Tolerance of Violence (10/14 articles): In communities where violence is accepted or goes unchallenged, traffickers find fertile ground to exploit. The normalization of violence in these environments reduces the likelihood that victims will seek help or be recognized as in need.

Relationship Factors

- Family Dysfunction (13/14 articles): Dysfunctional family settings, particularly those with domestic violence, significantly increase children's risk of being trafficked. Such environments often expose children to trauma early on, weakening their resilience and making them easy targets for exploitation.

- Domestic Violence (12/14 articles): Children exposed to domestic violence are at a higher risk of trafficking, as this often coexists with other forms of abuse. The trauma and instability from domestic violence make these children more vulnerable to traffickers' manipulations.
- Involvement in Commercial Sex (10/14 articles): A history of involvement in commercial sex is a strong indicator of future trafficking. Children and adolescents in this situation often remain in cycles of exploitation, with traffickers taking advantage of their vulnerability.

Individual Factors

- Abuse and Neglect (14/14 articles): Children who have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and neglect are consistently at higher risk of trafficking. These experiences damage their self-esteem and ability to trust, making them more susceptible to traffickers' false promises of care.
- Homelessness (12/14 articles): Homeless youth, lacking stable housing, are highly vulnerable to exploitation. Traffickers often exploit their need for basic necessities by luring them into exploitative situations under the guise of providing food, shelter, or safety.
- LGBTQ+ Identity (10/14 articles): LGBTQ+ youth, especially those rejected by their families, face elevated risks of trafficking. The discrimination and lack of support they encounter leave them isolated and vulnerable, making them prime targets for exploitation by traffickers.
- Intellectual Disabilities (9/14 articles): Children with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable to trafficking due to their increased dependency and social isolation. Their limited ability to understand exploitation or resist coercion makes them easy targets for traffickers.
- Substance Use (11/14 articles): Substance use, whether by the child or within their family, significantly increases the risk of trafficking. Traffickers often use substances as a means to control and exploit these individuals, deepening their dependency and vulnerability.

Intersecting Vulnerabilities

Child trafficking arises from a complex mix of societal, community, relationship, and individual factors that disproportionately affect marginalized groups. These intersecting vulnerabilities create a heightened risk for trafficking, particularly among those already facing systemic inequalities.

- Marginalized and Minority Backgrounds (13/14 articles): Children from racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately impacted by trafficking due to systemic discrimination and barriers to resources. This lack of access creates environments where traffickers can exploit vulnerabilities related to race and ethnicity.
- Economic Disparities (14/14 articles): Economic instability amplifies vulnerability, pushing children and families into precarious situations. In disadvantaged communities, traffickers exploit the desperation of those struggling to meet basic needs, leading to higher risks of trafficking.
- Familial Trafficking (8/14 articles): In some cases, exploitation happens within the family, where those meant to protect children instead exploit them. This type of trafficking highlights the complexity of relationships that can lead to exploitation, showing that even close relatives can be perpetrators.

These intersecting vulnerabilities illustrate how socio-economic, demographic, and personal factors intertwine to create a precarious landscape for at-risk youth. Addressing child trafficking requires a nuanced understanding of these intersections to develop targeted interventions that mitigate these vulnerabilities and protect the most at-risk populations from exploitation.

Trauma and Vulnerability

Trauma is a significant precursor to trafficking victimization, with many trafficked children having experienced prior abuse or violence (Barnert et al., 2017). A history of trauma leaves individuals more vulnerable to exploitation, as traffickers often prey on the psychological scars left by past abuse. For example, girls who have endured sexual abuse may exhibit trauma-related behaviors that traffickers exploit to perpetuate cycles of victimization (Right4Girls, 2015).

A critical issue compounding this vulnerability is the limited or lack of trauma-informed care within child welfare and juvenile justice systems. These systems, which are intended to protect and support at-risk youth, often fail to provide the specialized care needed to address the complex effects of trauma. This absence of trauma-informed interventions exacerbates vulnerabilities and leaves youth susceptible to exploitation, creating a gap that traffickers readily exploit (Peck et al., 2020).

The normalization of violence and exploitation within certain communities perpetuates cycles of victimization. In environments where abuse is normalized, survivors often struggle to seek help or escape their traffickers. The societal acceptance of such violence creates a barrier to intervention and recovery, further entrenching the cycle of trafficking.

Key findings from the literature highlight the profound impact of trauma on vulnerability:

- Prior Abuse or Violence (14/14 articles):
  A history of abuse or violence is a significant indicator of vulnerability to trafficking. Survivors of prior trauma often struggle with self-esteem and trust issues, making them more susceptible to manipulation and control by traffickers.
- Absence of Trauma-Informed Care (12/14 articles):
  The lack of access to trauma-informed care leaves affected children without essential support and intervention, increasing their risk of being trafficked. Without appropriate care, these children are less equipped to heal from past traumas and more likely to fall prey to exploitative situations.

Systemic Failures and Disparities

Structural deficiencies within child welfare and juvenile justice systems play a significant role in perpetuating child trafficking. Inadequately supervised residential facilities often provide fertile ground for exploitation, especially for girls with histories of abuse, as these environments fail to offer the protection and oversight needed to prevent victimization (Right4Girls, 2015). Furthermore, disparities in access to quality care and support services exacerbate vulnerabilities among marginalized populations, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and victimization.

Discriminatory practices and systemic biases within these systems further marginalize vulnerable youth, increasing their risk of trafficking. These biases often lead to inequitable treatment and support, leaving many at-risk children without the necessary resources to escape dangerous situations.

Key issues highlighted in the literature include:

- Inadequately Supervised Residential Facilities (9/14 articles): Poor supervision in residential care settings creates opportunities for exploitation. Without proper oversight, these facilities become breeding grounds for traffickers who prey on vulnerable youth.
- Disparities in Access to Quality Care and Support Services (13/14 articles): Inequitable access to essential support services for marginalized populations exacerbates vulnerabilities. Many children lack access to mental health care, education, and legal support, increasing their susceptibility to exploitation.

- Discriminatory Practices and Systemic Biases (11/14 articles): Prejudices and inequities that disproportionality effect marginalized youth, such as stereotyping and stigmatizing youth as "troublemakers" or unworthy of support, increase their risk of trafficking. These biases often result in inadequate protection and support for children from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Understanding these systemic failures is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policy reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of child trafficking and enhancing support for survivors (Peck et al., 2020). In comprehending the complexities of child trafficking, it becomes evident that multiple factors contribute to the vulnerability and victimization of children and adolescents.

Gaps in the Literature

Despite extensive research on child trafficking, significant gaps remain, hindering effective prevention and intervention strategies. Identifying and addressing these gaps is critical for enhancing our understanding of risk factors, and prevention and response interventions.

- Data Collection and Reporting: One of the most significant research gaps is the lack of reliable data on the scope and scale of child trafficking. Inconsistencies in data collection methodologies and underreporting by victims contribute to this gap. The literature review reveals a consistent call for standardized data collection practices to provide more accurate statistics and trends. Standardizing data collection and reporting practices across agencies and jurisdictions could provide more accurate statistics and trends.
- Longitudinal Studies: There is a dearth of longitudinal studies tracking the long-term outcomes of trafficking survivors. Only 3 out of 14 articles reviewed include any form of longitudinal analysis. Understanding the long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts of trafficking can inform the development of comprehensive support services and reintegration programs.
- Intersectionality: While research acknowledges the role of intersectional factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status in increasing vulnerability, there is a need for more studies. Of the 14 articles reviewed, all authors claim that studies on the experiences of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ youth and disabled children, are particularly lacking.
- Prevention Strategies: Most existing research focuses on victim identification and support, with only 4 out of 14 articles discussing prevention strategies. There is a need for more studies on effective prevention strategies, particularly those that address the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, family dysfunction, and systemic inequalities.
- Impact of Technology: With the rise of digital platforms, traffickers increasingly use technology to recruit and exploit victims. Only 2 of the reviewed studies explore the role of technology in child trafficking. Research on the role of technology in child trafficking and the development of digital tools for prevention and intervention is limited.
- Trauma-Informed Care: While the importance of trauma-informed care is recognized, there is a lack of empirical research on its effectiveness in the context of trafficking.

Selection of Data Indicators for Risk Measurements

This section outlines the categories, risk factors, and corresponding data indicators that were selected to measure the identified risk factors documented in the literature. Where applicable, related factors were grouped together to highlight their interconnections and combined impact on vulnerability. The table below outlines these synthesized categories and their corresponding data indicators. It is important to note that this table does not reflect every possible measure but focuses on those for which data is publicly available.

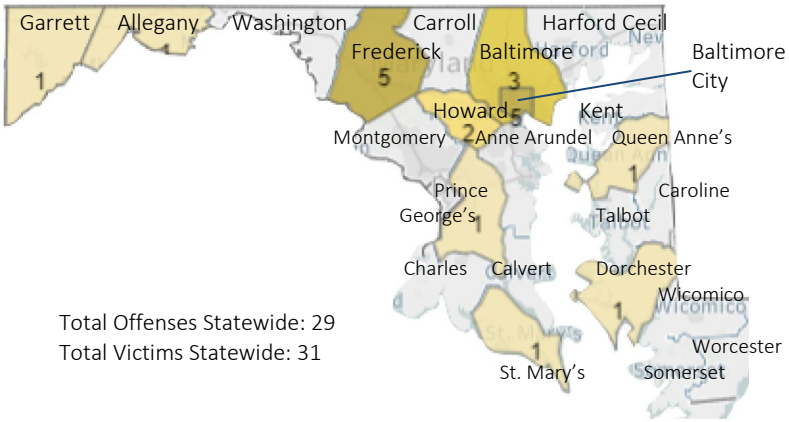
Category	Risk Factor	Data Indicator
Societal Factors	Gender-Based Violence	Prevalence of gender-based violence incidents including human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, sex offenses.
	Normalization of Violence	Rate of violent crime.
Community Factors	Poverty	Percent of the population under age 5 and ages 5 to 17 living below the federal poverty level.
Relationship Factors	Domestic Violence	Number of Intimate Partner Violence related deaths.
Individual Factors	Age and Gender	Percent of females under age 5; 5 to 14; 15 to 17; and 18 to 24.
	Homelessness	Number of unstably housed or homeless youth.
	Intellectual Disabilities	Percent of children and youth with intellectual disabilities.
	Substance Use	Percent of Public Behavioral Health System recipients of substance-related disorder program services.
	Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth Children	Number of unaccompanied immigrant children and youth released to a sponsor.
Intersecting Vulnerabilities	Minority Children and Child Welfare Involvement	Number of children and youth in out-of-home placement.
		Percent of children and youth in out-of-home placement by race and ethnicity.
	Child Welfare Involvement and an Indication of Child Sex Trafficking	Number of child protective services screenings with an indication of child sex trafficking by age, gender, and race/ethnicity.
	Multiple Child Welfare Placements	Average number of out-of-home placements per child/youth.

Data Analysis

SOCIETAL RISK FACTORS

Gender-Based Violence: The following maps display the prevalence of gender-based violence incidents including human trafficking, kidnapping/abduction, sex offenses. Data Source: Maryland National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRS) Crime Dashboard, 2023.

1. **Total Number of Offenses Related to Trafficking Female Victims Under Age 18, 2023**

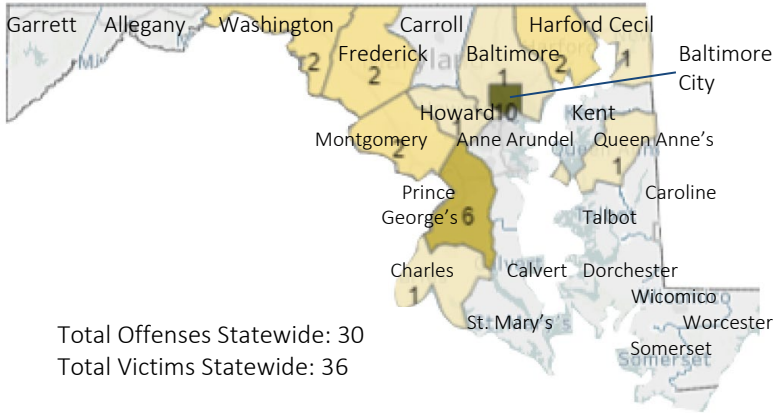


Total Offenses Statewide: 29
Total Victims Statewide: 31

Jurisdictions with the highest total number of offenses related to trafficking female victims under the age of 18 include:

- Frederick County (5)
- Baltimore City (5)
- Baltimore County (3)

2. **Total Offenses of Kidnapping/Abduction of Female Victims Under Age 18, 2023**

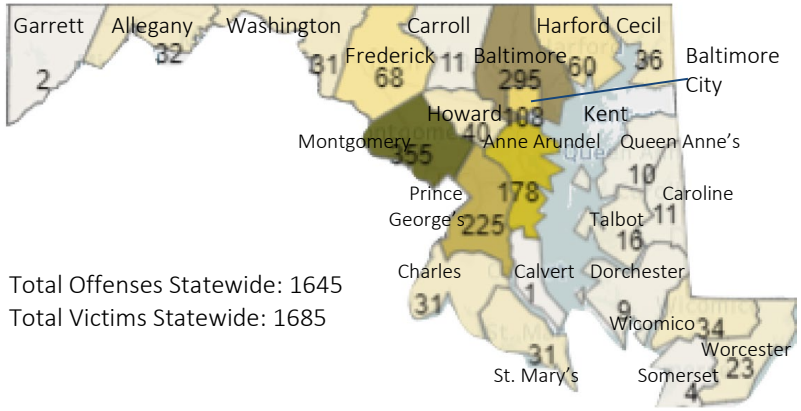


Total Offenses Statewide: 30
Total Victims Statewide: 36

Jurisdictions with the highest total number of offenses related to kidnapping/abduction of female victims under the age of 18 include:

- Baltimore City (10)
- Prince George's County (6)

3. Total Sex Offenses of Female Victims Under Age 18, 2023



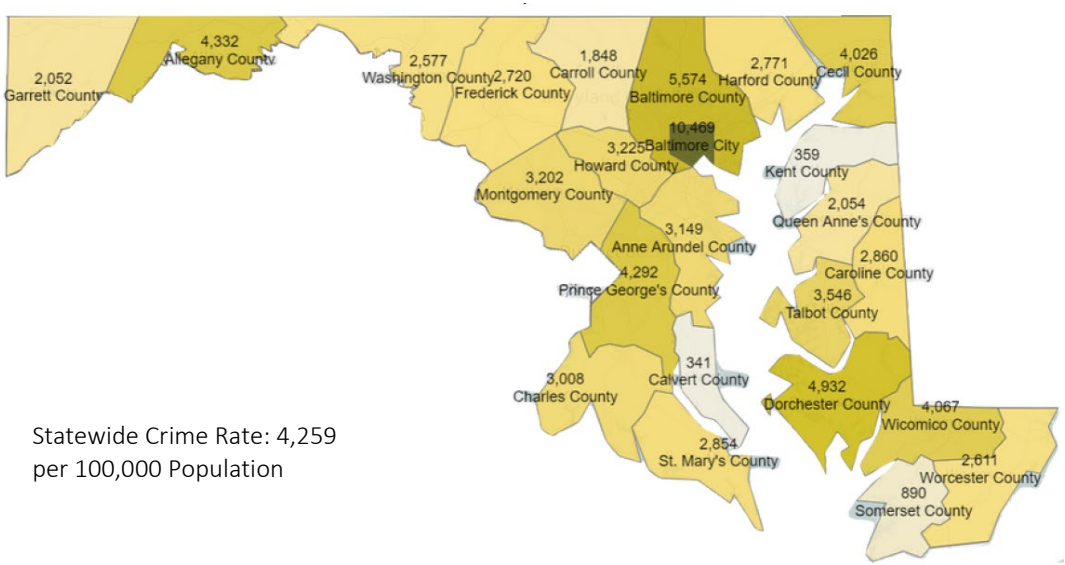
Total Offenses Statewide: 1645
Total Victims Statewide: 1685

Jurisdictions with the highest total number of sex offenses of female victims under the age of 18 include:

- Montgomery County (355)
- Baltimore County (295)
- Prince George's County (225)

Normalization of Violence - The following map displays the violent crime rate by jurisdiction. Data Source: Maryland National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRS) Crime Dashboard, 2023.

4. Crime Rate per 100,000 of the Population, 2023



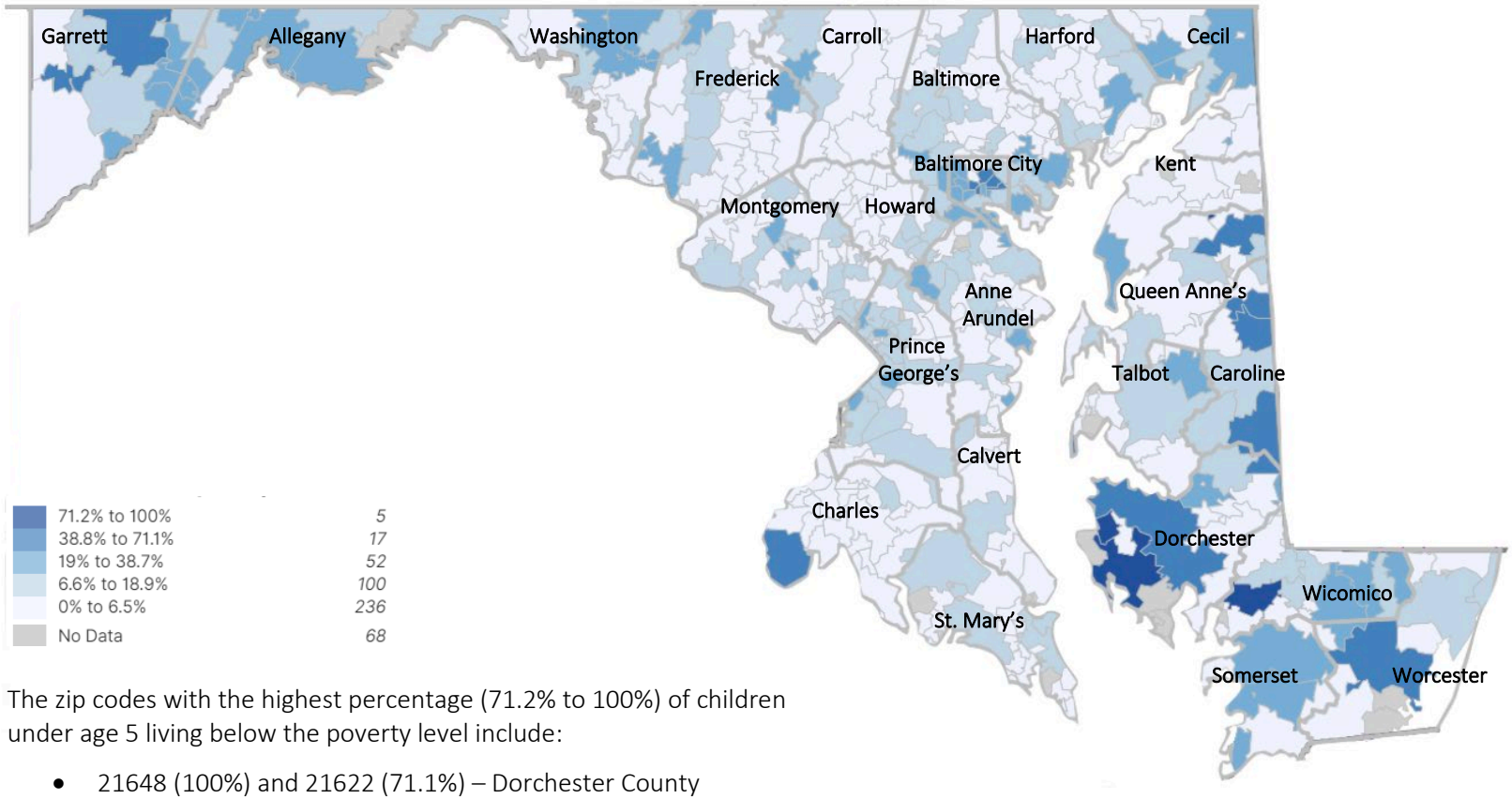
Statewide Crime Rate: 4,259 per 100,000 Population

Jurisdictions with the highest crime rate per 100,000 of the population include:

- Baltimore City (10,469)
- Baltimore County (5,574)
- Dorchester County (4,932)

Poverty: The following maps display the percentage of children (under age 5) and youth (ages 5 to 17) living below the federal poverty level. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate.

5. Percent of Children Under Age 5 Living Below Poverty Level by Zip Code, 2022

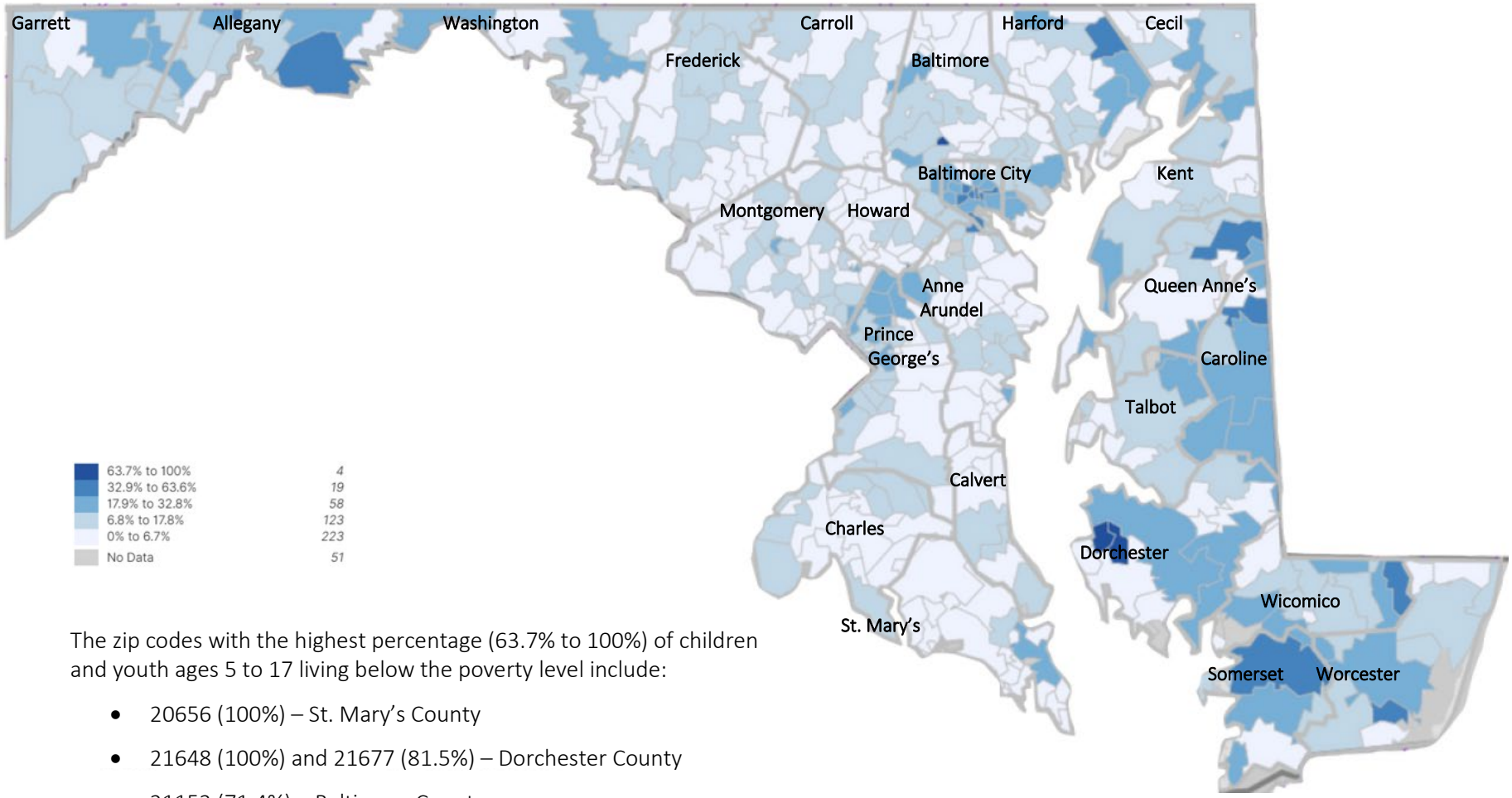


The zip codes with the highest percentage (71.2% to 100%) of children under age 5 living below the poverty level include:

- 21648 (100%) and 21622 (71.1%) – Dorchester County
- 21628 (100%) – Queen Anne's County
- 21540 (100%) – Allegany County
- 21856 (77.4%) – Wicomico County

Statewide Percent: 12.3%

6. Percent of Children and Youth Ages 5 to 17 Living Below Poverty Level by Zip Code, 2022



The zip codes with the highest percentage (63.7% to 100%) of children and youth ages 5 to 17 living below the poverty level include:

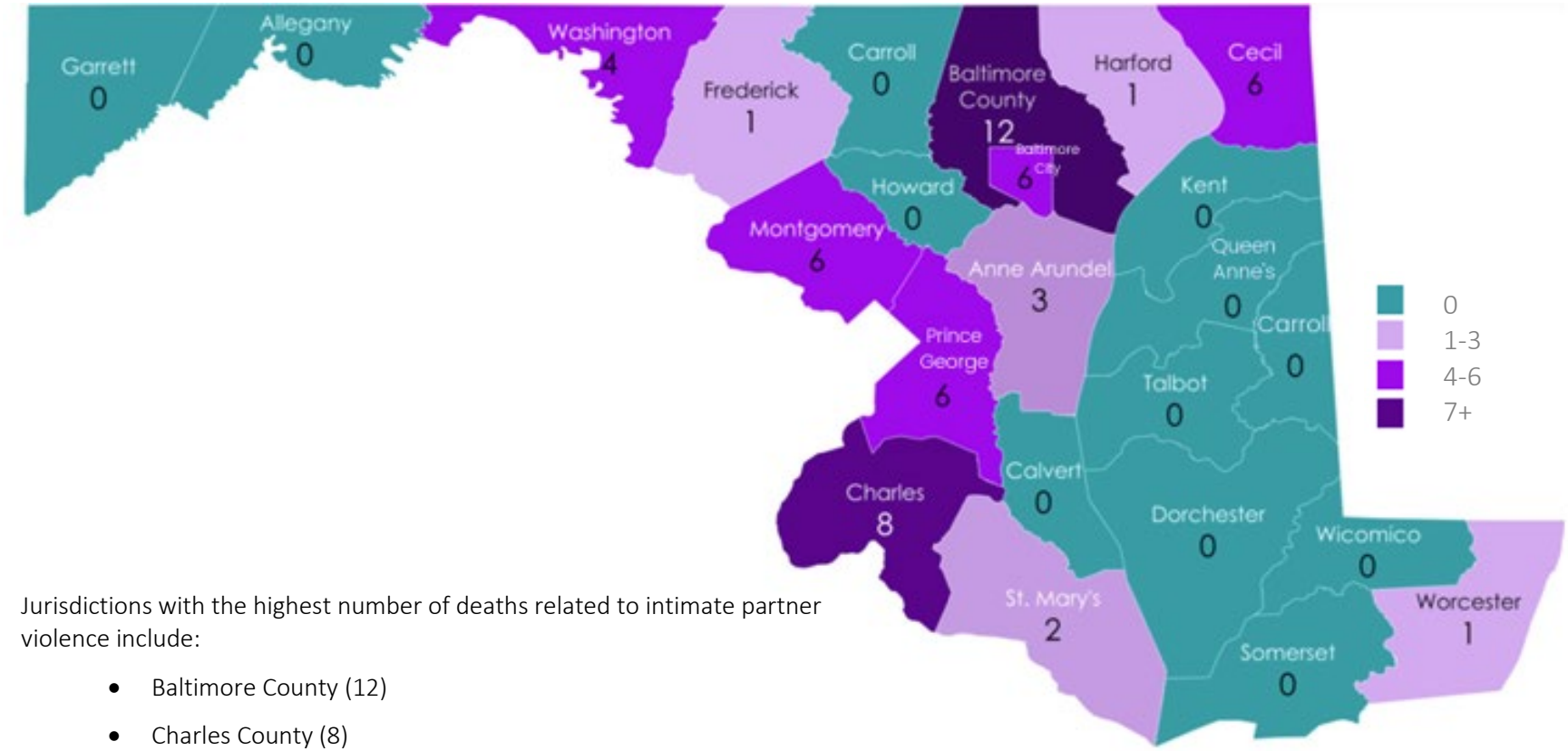
- 20656 (100%) – St. Mary's County
- 21648 (100%) and 21677 (81.5%) – Dorchester County
- 21153 (71.4%) – Baltimore County

Statewide Percent: 11.7%

RELATIONSHIP FACTORS

Domestic Violence: The following map displays intimate partner violence related deaths by jurisdiction. Data Source: Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review State Implementation Team, 2022-2023 Yearly Report.

7. Intimate Partner Violence Related Deaths by Jurisdiction, 2022

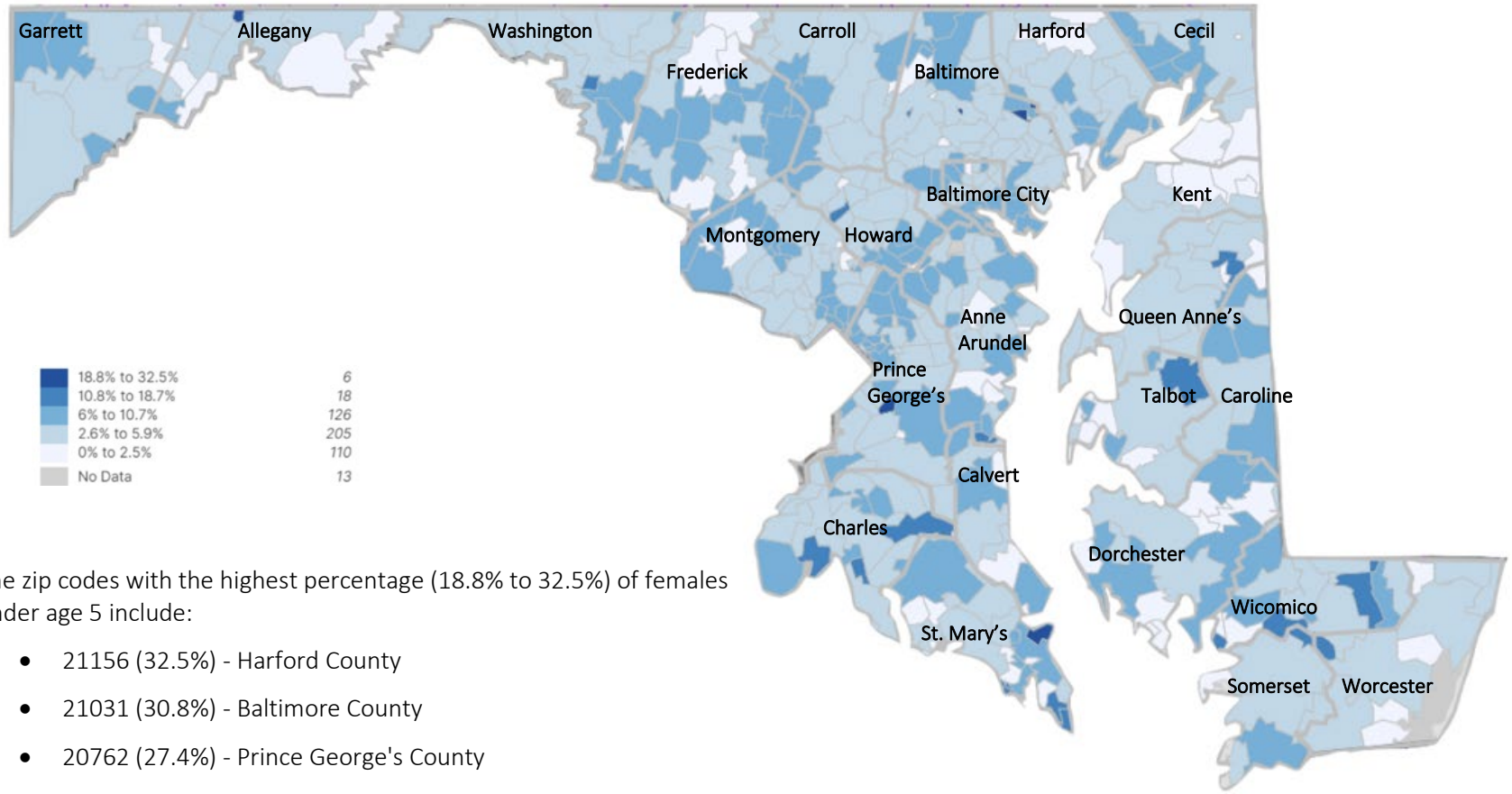


Jurisdictions with the highest number of deaths related to intimate partner violence include:

- Baltimore County (12)
- Charles County (8)
- Montgomery (6), Cecil (6), Prince George's (6), Baltimore City (6)

Age and Gender: The following maps display the percentage of females under the age of 5, between ages 5 to 14, between ages 15 to 17, and between ages 18 to 24 by zip code. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate.

8. Percent of Females Under Age 5 by Zip Code, 2022

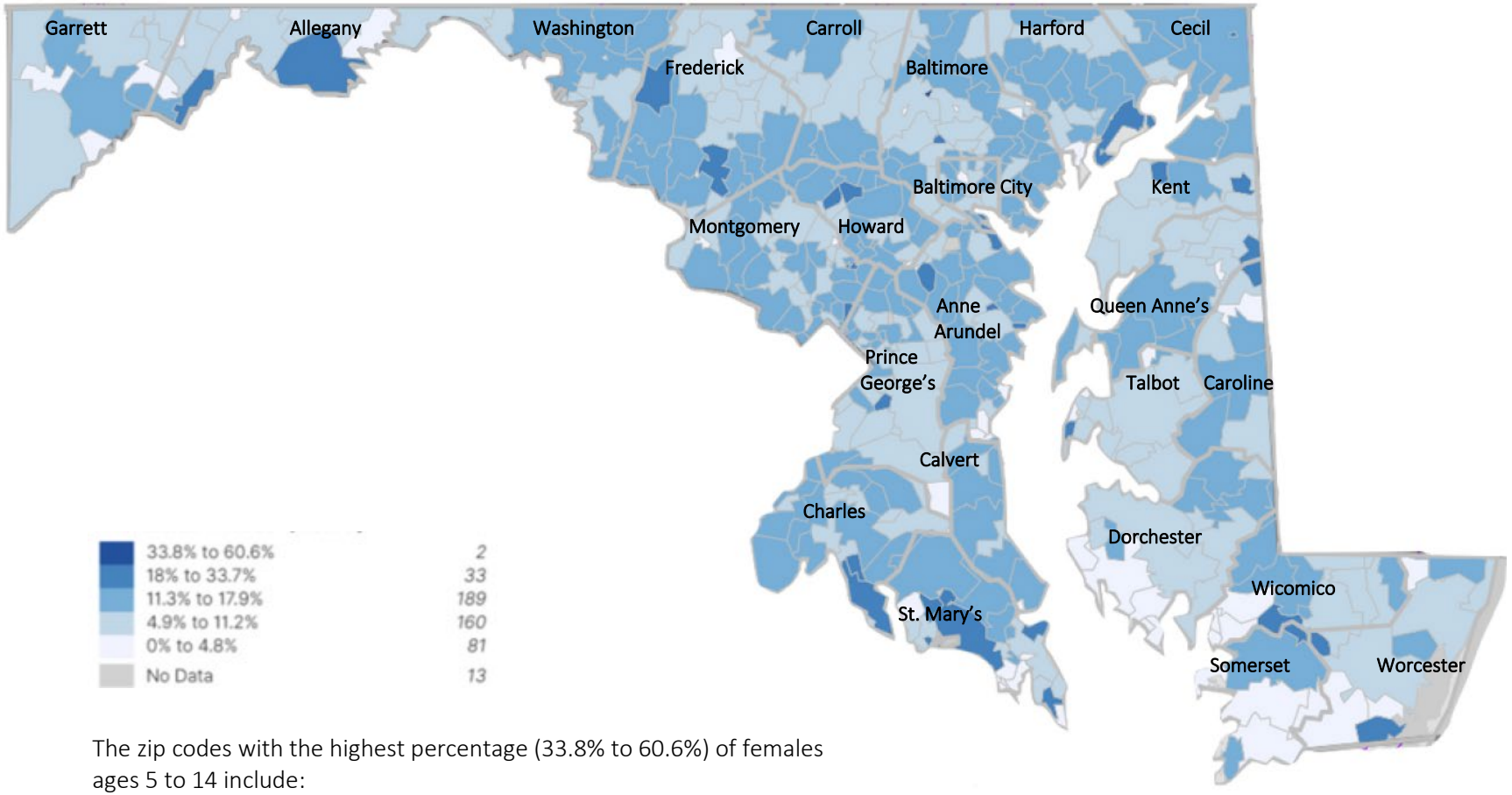


The zip codes with the highest percentage (18.8% to 32.5%) of females under age 5 include:

- 21156 (32.5%) - Harford County
- 21031 (30.8%) - Baltimore County
- 20762 (27.4%) - Prince George's County
- 20670 (23.8%) - St. Mary's County
- 21524 (23.2%) - Allegany County
- 21082 (21.8%) - Harford County

Statewide Percent: 5.6%

9. Percent of Females Ages 5 to 14 by Zip Code, 2022

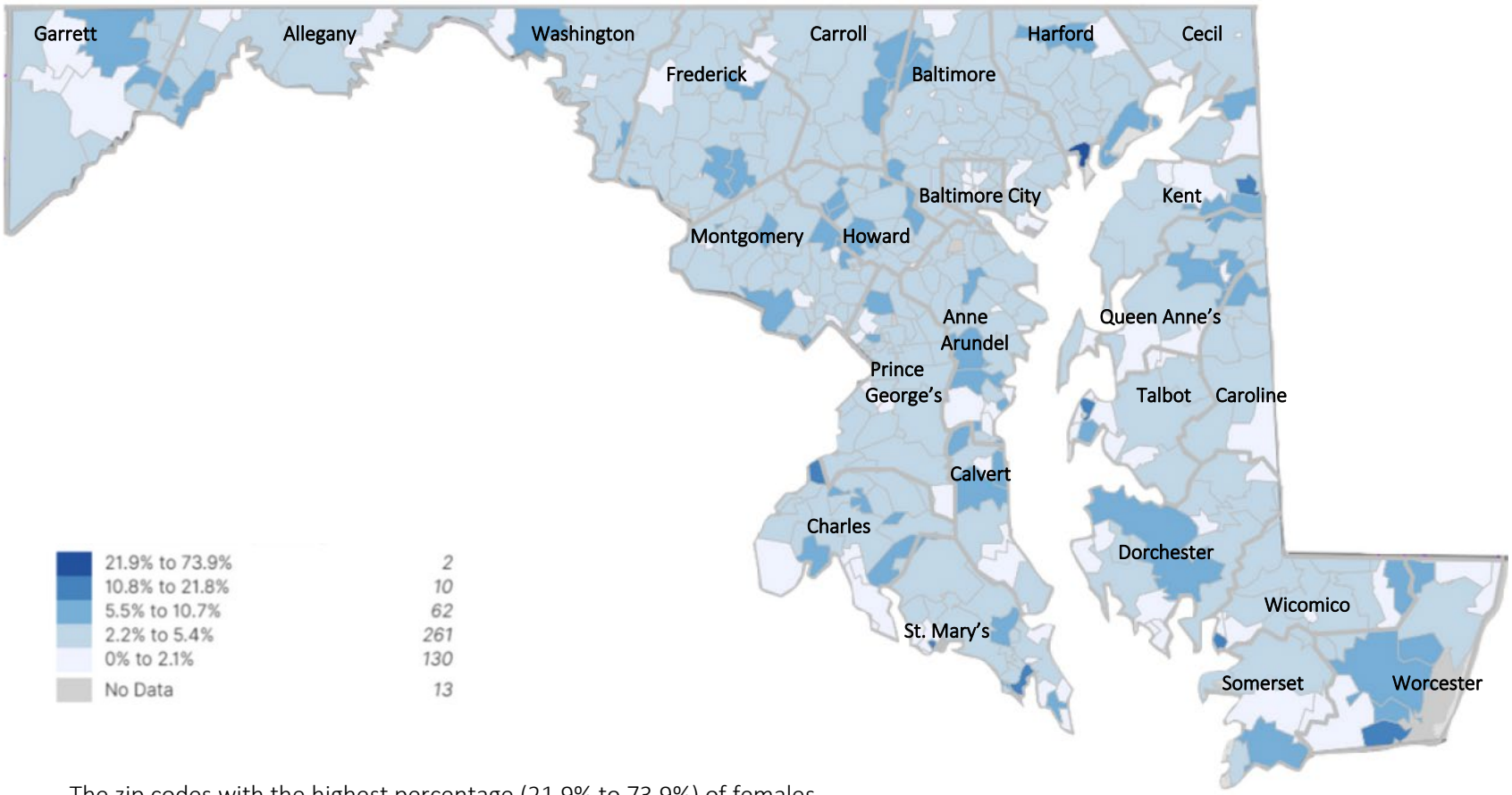


The zip codes with the highest percentage (33.8% to 60.6%) of females ages 5 to 14 include:

- 21023 (60.6%) - Baltimore County
- 21824 (39.3%) - Somerset County

Statewide Percent: 11.8%

10. Percent of Females Ages 15 to 17 by Zip Code

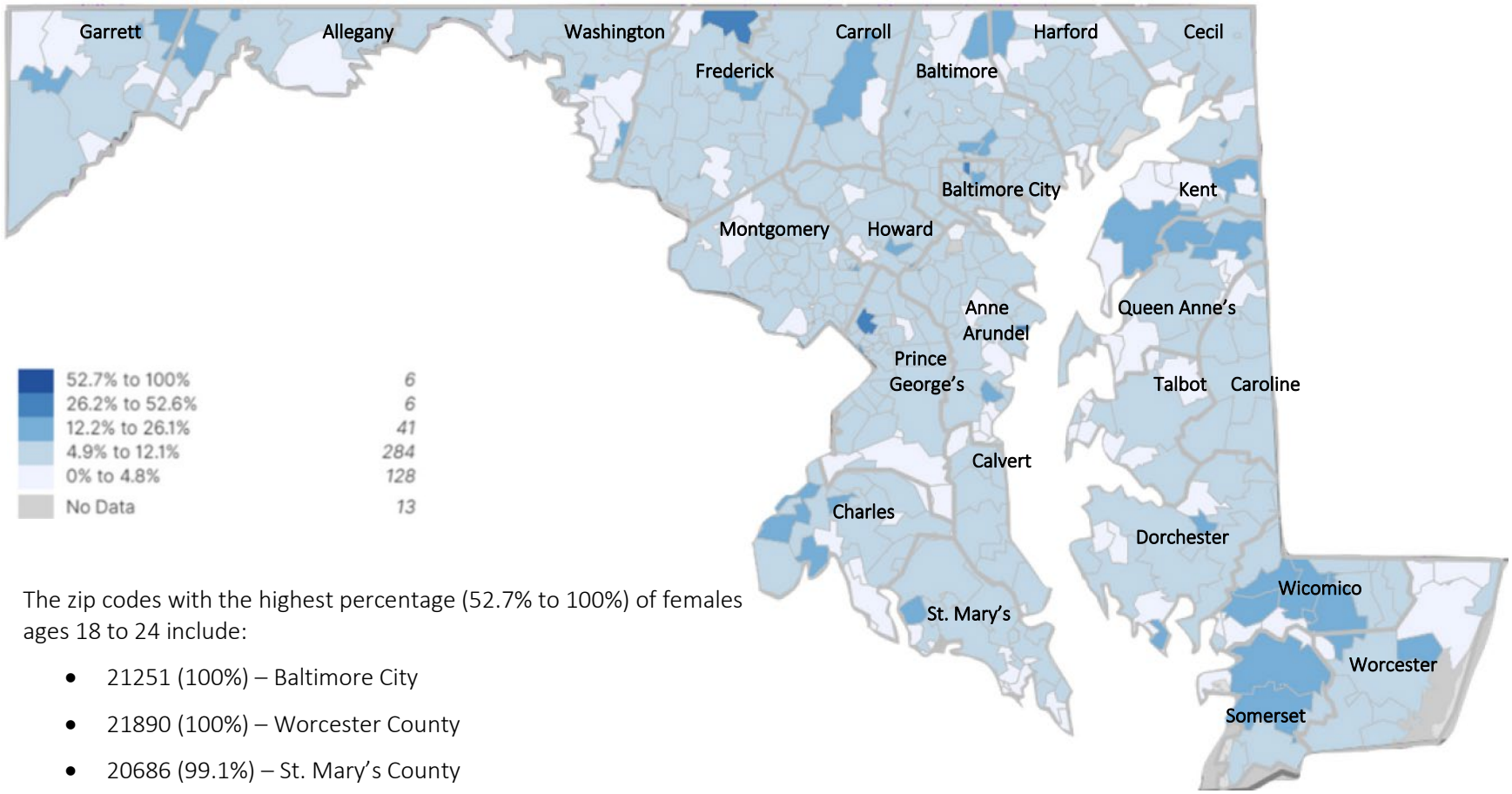


The zip codes with the highest percentage (21.9% to 73.9%) of females ages 15 to 17 include:

- 21781 (73.9%) – Washington County
- 21010 (54.1%) – Harford County

Statewide Percent: 3.7%

11. Percent of Females Ages 18 to 24 by Zip Code



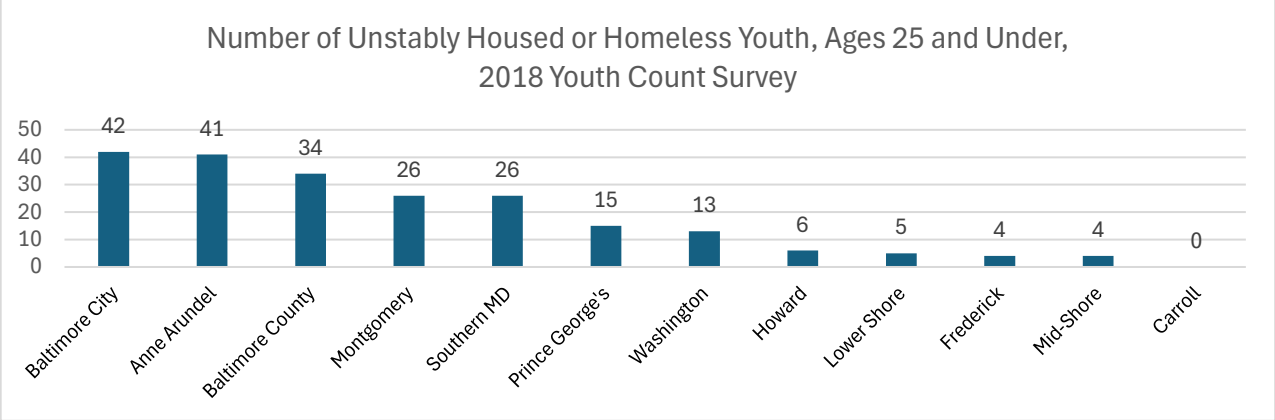
The zip codes with the highest percentage (52.7% to 100%) of females ages 18 to 24 include:

- 21251 (100%) – Baltimore City
- 21890 (100%) – Worcester County
- 20686 (99.1%) – St. Mary's County
- 21252 (99.1%) – Baltimore County
- 21250 (99%) – Baltimore County
- 20742 (98.5%) – Prince George's County

Statewide Percent: 8.5%

Homelessness: The following graph displays the number of unstably housed or homeless youth by the location where each participating jurisdiction collected survey data. The data was collected as a part of the Youth County 2018 survey. Data Source: 2018 Youth Count Survey.

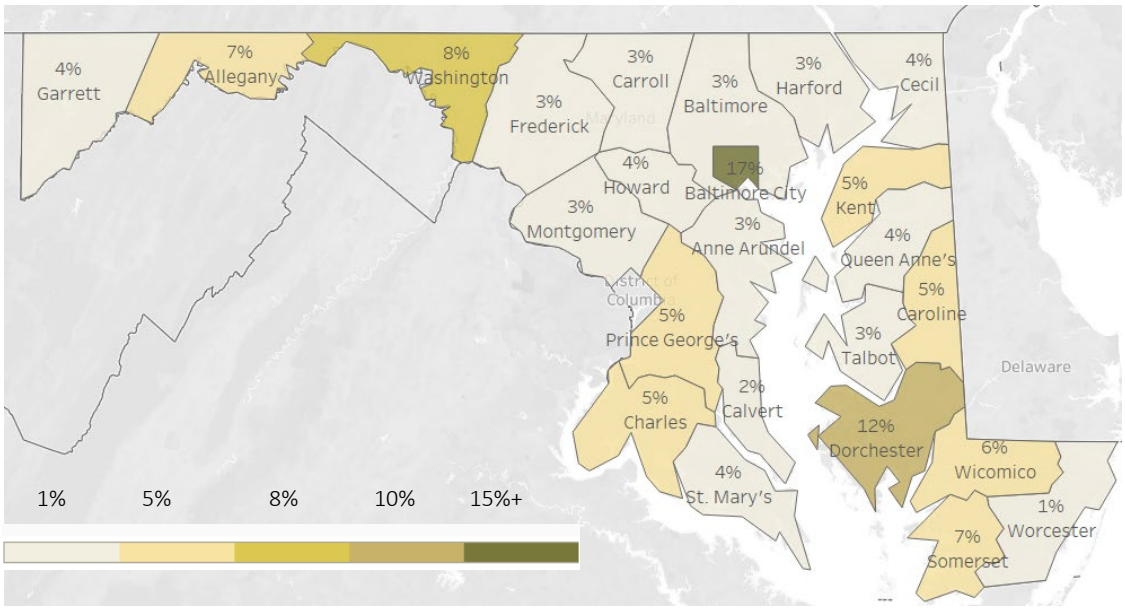
12. Number of Unstably Housed or Homeless Youth, 2018 Youth Count Survey



Lower Shore includes Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties
Mid-Shore includes Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties
Southern Maryland includes Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties

Intellectual Disabilities: The following map displays the percentage of Maryland students with intellectual disabilities by jurisdiction. Data Source: Maryland State Department of Education, 2022 (Percents are rounded).

13. Percent of Maryland Students with Intellectual Disabilities by Jurisdiction, Ages 3 to 21, 2022

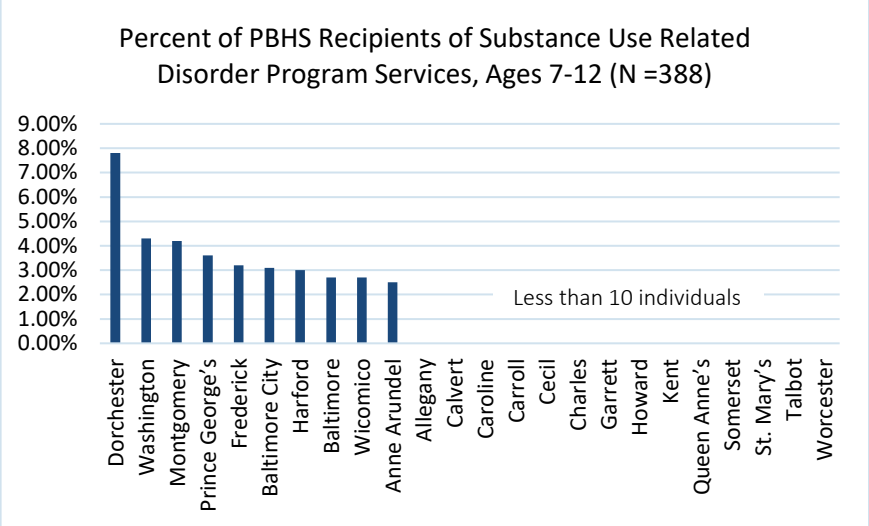


Jurisdictions with the highest percent of children ages 3 to 21 with intellectual disabilities include:

- Baltimore City (17%)
- Dorchester County (12%)
- Washington County (8%)

Substance Use: The following graph displays the percentage of Public Behavioral Health System Recipients of Substance-Related Disorder Program Services by jurisdiction. Data Source: Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration, December 2023. Report on Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth Adults.

14. **Percent of Public Behavioral Health System Recipients of Substance-Related Disorder Program Services, 2022**



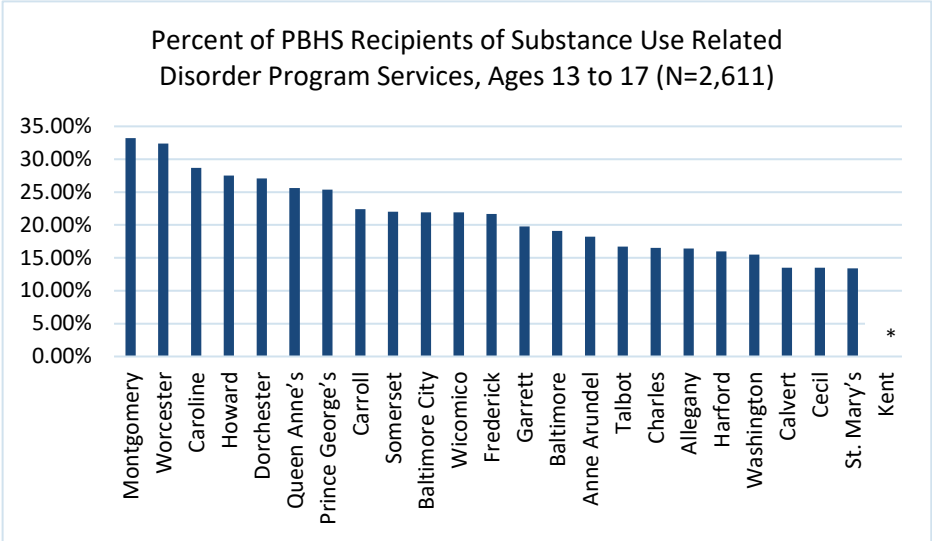
Statewide Percent: 3.2%

Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of PBHS recipients of substance use related disorder program services, ages 7 to 12 include:

- Dorchester County
- Washington County
- Montgomery County

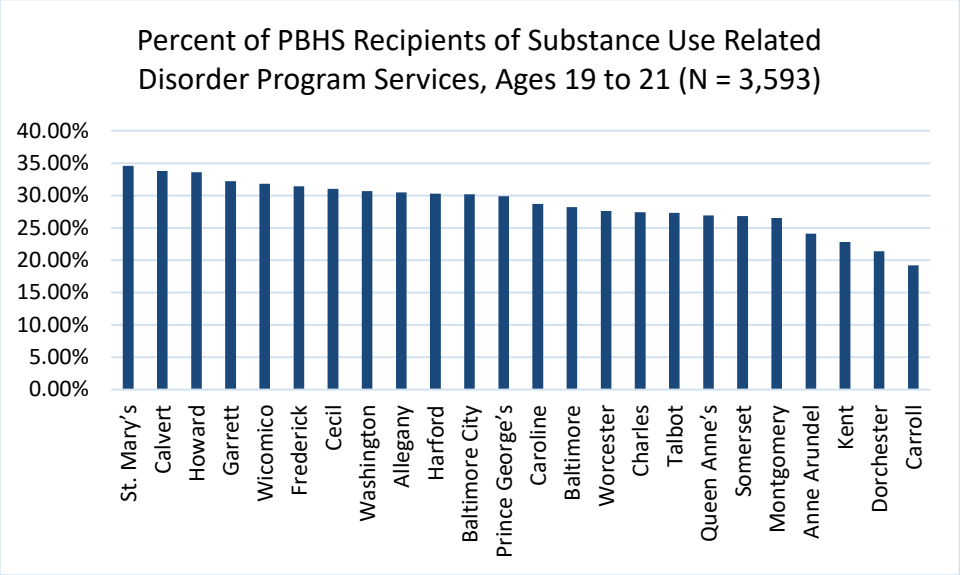
Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of PBHS recipients of substance use related disorder program services, ages 13 to 17 include:

- Montgomery County
- Worcester County
- Caroline County



*Less than 10 individuals

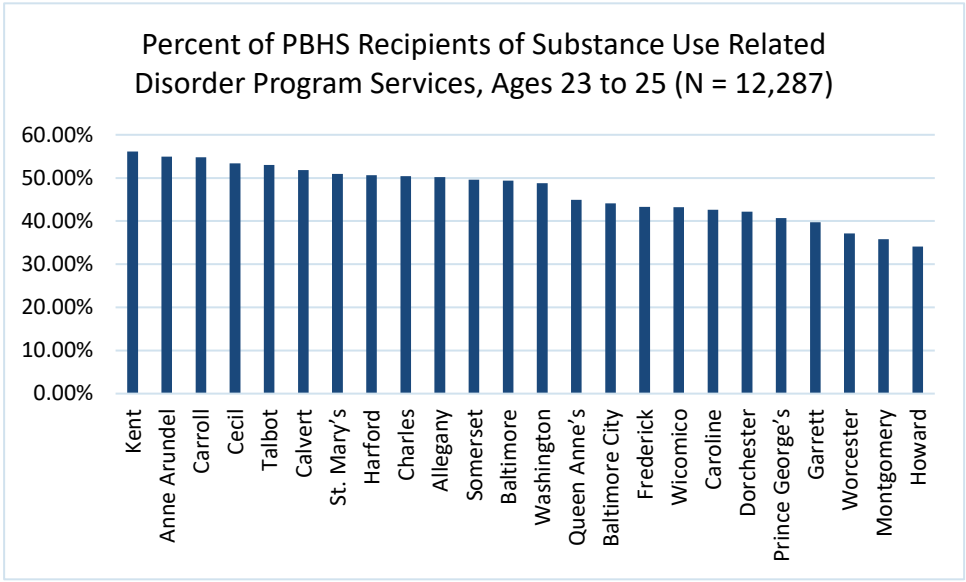
Statewide Percent: 21.30%



Statewide Percent: 29.20%

Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of PBHS recipients of substance use related disorder program services, ages 19 to 21 include:

- St. Mary's County
- Calvert County
- Howard County



Statewide Percent: 45.80%

Jurisdictions with the highest percentage of PBHS recipients of substance use related disorder program services, ages 23 to 25 include:

- Kent County
- Anne Arundel County
- Carroll County

Unaccompanied Immigrant Children: The following table displays the number of unaccompanied immigrant children transferred to the care and custody of the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), who are released to a sponsor. Data Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors by Jurisdiction, July 2024.

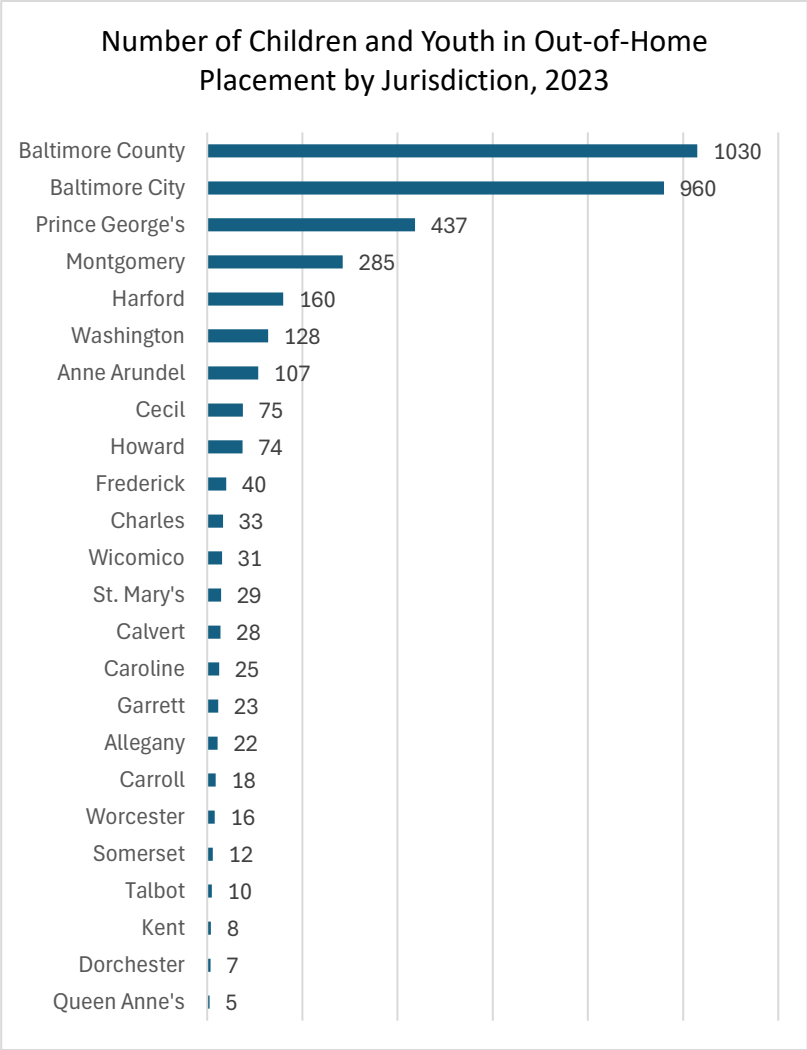
15. Number of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Released to a Sponsor, October 2023 - June 2024

Maryland Jurisdiction	Total Number of Unaccompanied Released to a Sponsor
Prince George's County	895
Montgomery County	602
Baltimore City	388
Baltimore County	345
Wicomico County	94
Howard County	84
Frederick County	80
Charles County	59

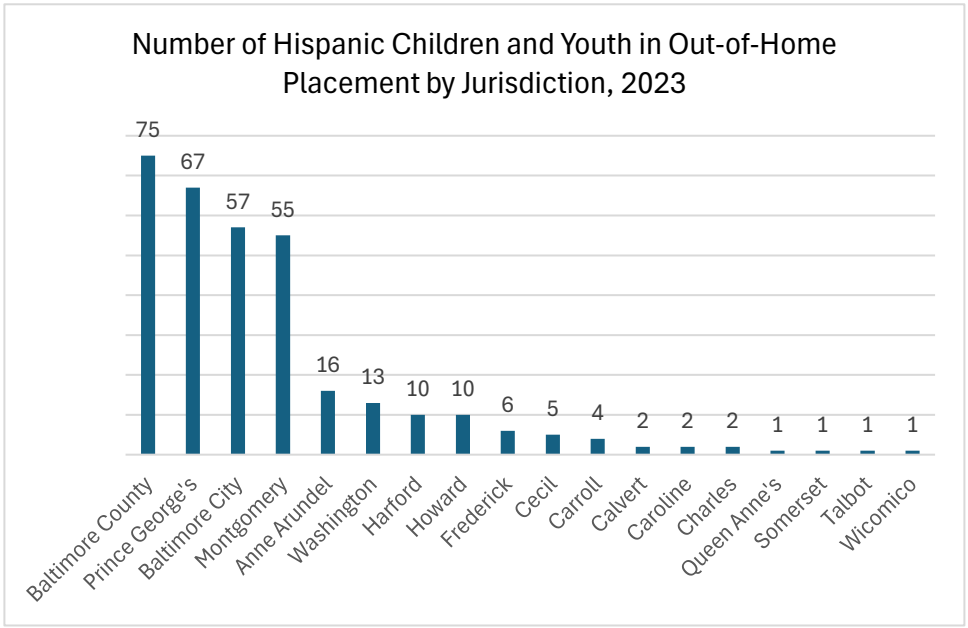
Prince George's County has the highest number of unaccompanied minors released to a sponsor in Maryland, with 895 cases, followed by Montgomery County with 602, while Charles County has the fewest with 59.

Minority Children and Child Welfare Involvement: The following graphs display the number of children and youth in out-of-home placement and their race and ethnicity. Data Source: Maryland Department of Human Services, 2023.

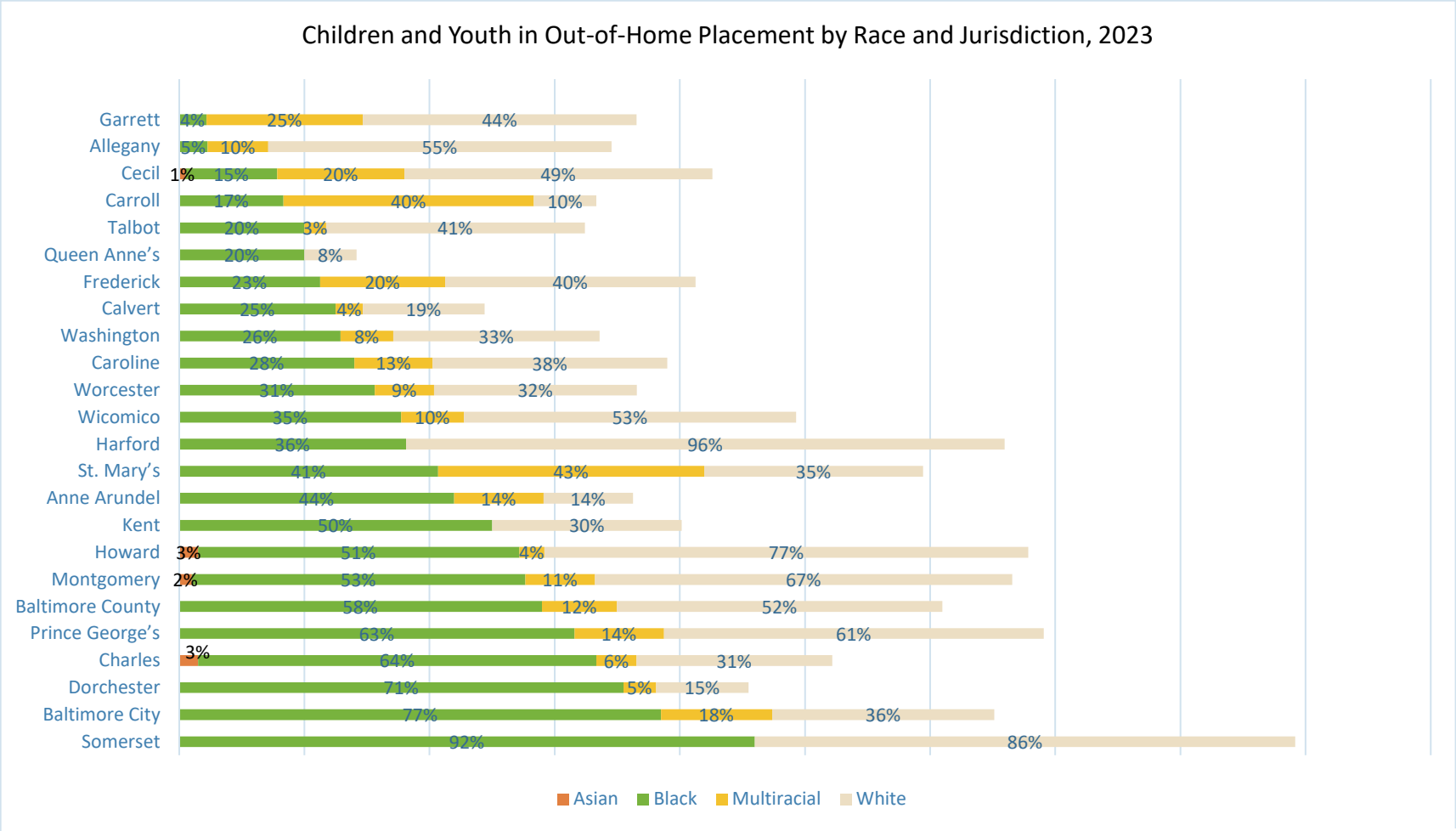
16. Total Children and Youth in Out of Home Placements by Jurisdiction



- Baltimore County has highest number of children and youth in out-of-home placement followed by Baltimore City and Prince George's County.
- When stratified by ethnicity, Baltimore County also has the highest number of Hispanic children and youth in out-of-home placement followed by Prince George's, Baltimore City, and Montgomery County.



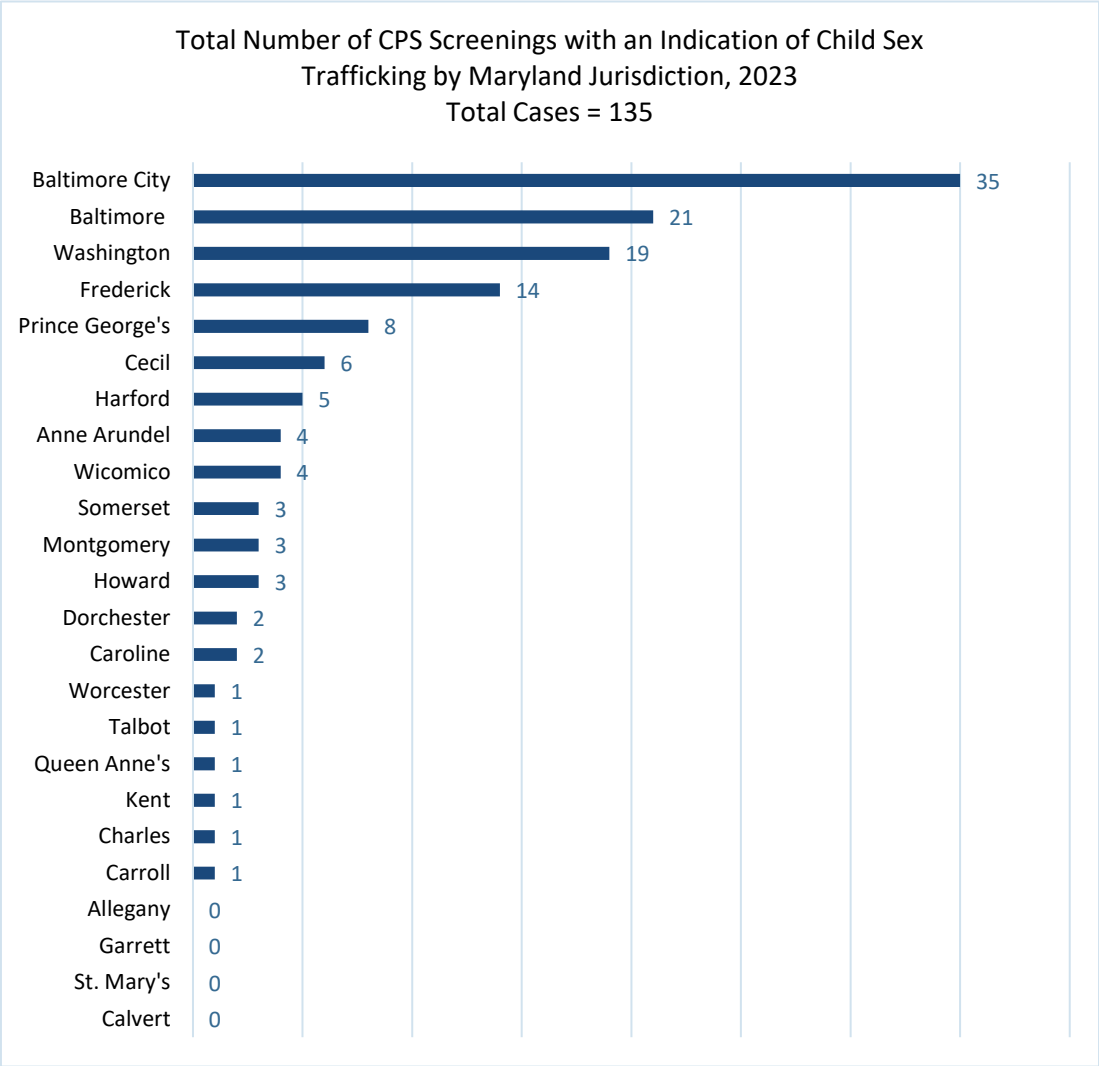
17. Percent of Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Placement by Race and Jurisdiction, 2023



- When stratified by race, Somerset County followed by Baltimore City and Dorchester County have the highest percentage of Black children and youth in out-of-home placement.
- Howard and Charles Counties have the highest percentage of Asian children and youth in out-of-home placement; and, St. Mary's County has the highest percentage of multiracial children and youth.
- Harford County has the highest percentage of White children.
- Note: Race may not be captured for all children and may be noted as unknown or declined.

Child Welfare Involvement and an Indication of Child Sex Trafficking: The following graph displays the number of child protective services (CPS) screenings with an indication of child sex trafficking by jurisdiction, gender, and race/ethnicity. Data Source: Maryland Department of Human Services, 2023.

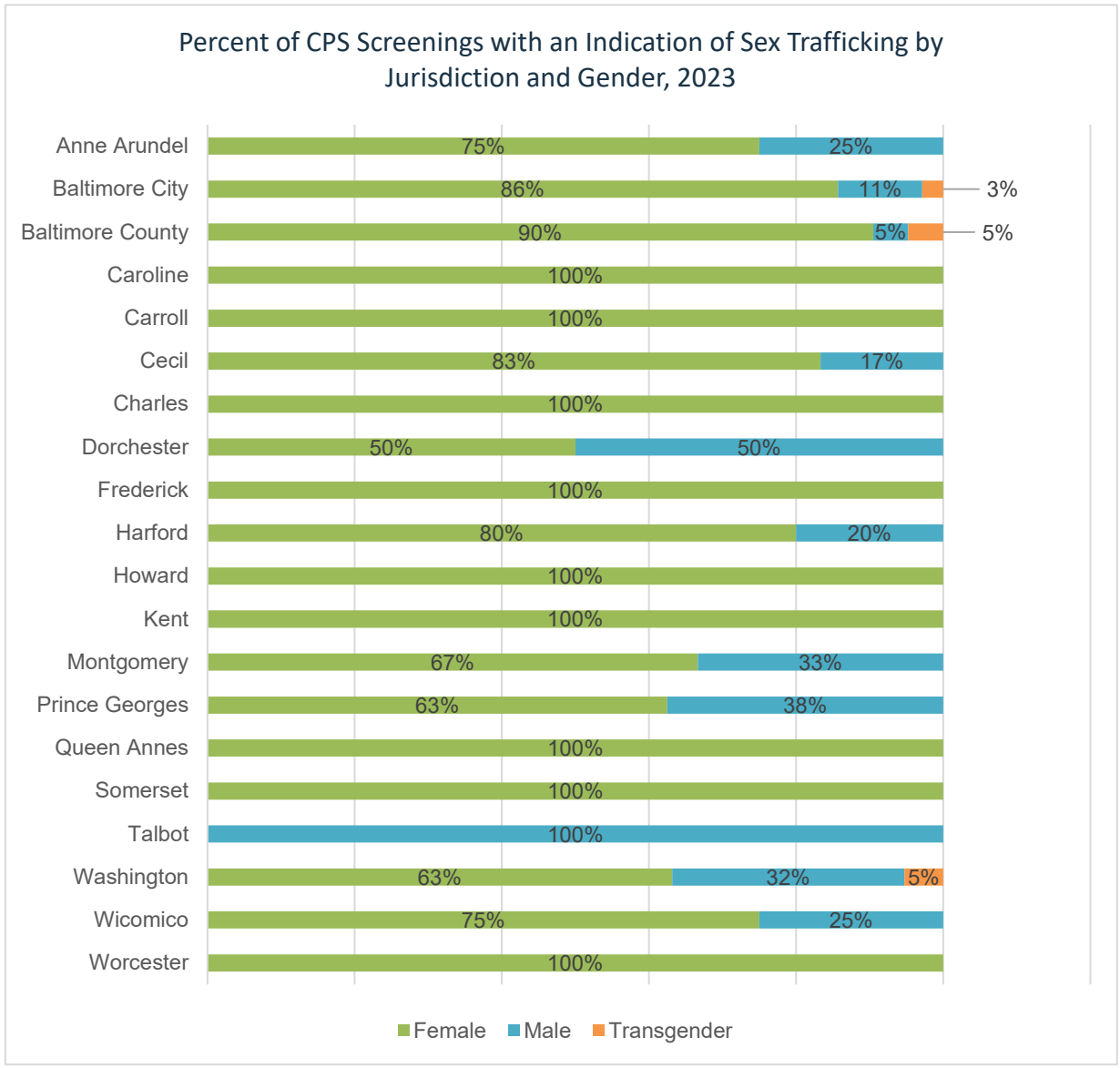
18. Total Number of CPS Screenings with an Indication of Child Sex Trafficking by Jurisdiction, 2023.



Jurisdictions with the highest number of CPS screenings with an indication of child sex trafficking include:

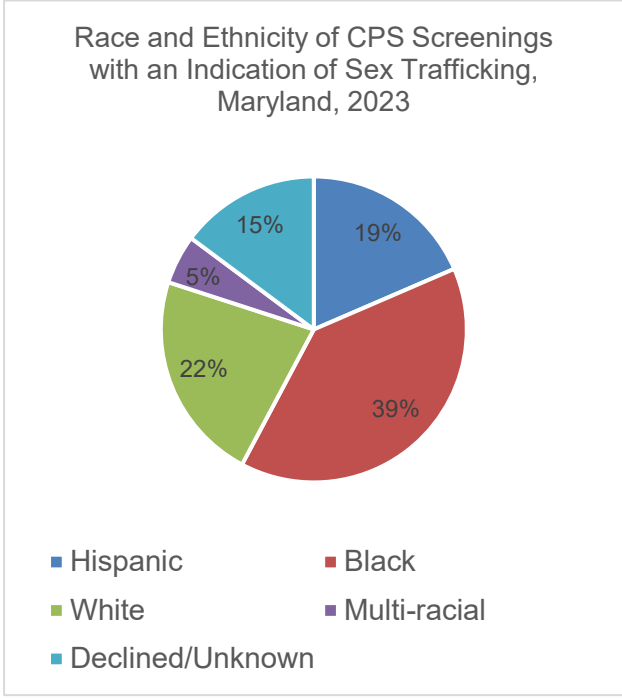
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Washington County

19. Percent of CPS Screenings with an Indication of Child Sex Trafficking by Jurisdiction and Gender, 2023.



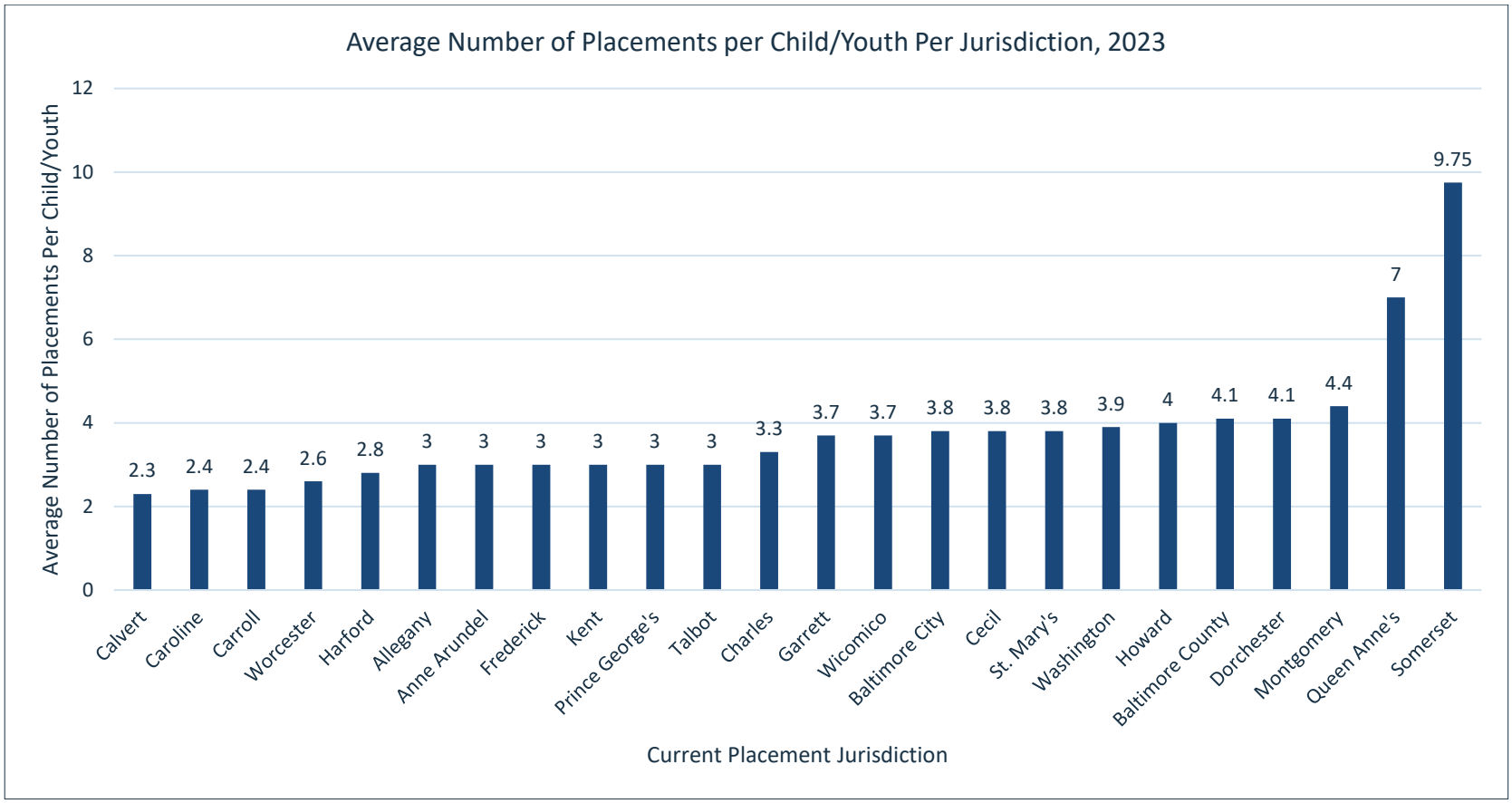
The majority of CPS screenings with an indication of sex trafficking across the state involve females with some counties reporting 100% female involvement. Males and transgender individuals are less represented, however Baltimore County and Washington County report the highest percentage for transgender individuals at 5%.

When stratified by race and ethnicity, Black children and youth represent the largest group at 39% followed by White (22%) and Hispanic (19%) populations.



Multiple Child Welfare Placements: The following graph displays the average number of out-of-home placements per child and youth per jurisdiction.

20. Average Number of Placements per Child/Youth per Jurisdiction, 2023

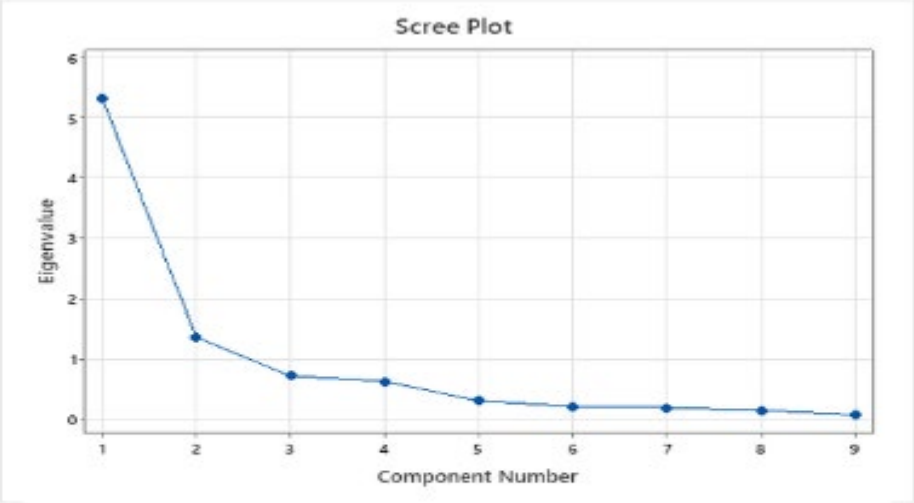


Jurisdictions with children and youth that have the highest average of multiple out-of-home placements include Somerset and Queen Anne's Counties with Calvert County having the fewest.

Principal Component Analysis

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a statistical technique used to simplify complex data by identifying the most important patterns. We used PCA to analyze various factors related to risks associated with sex trafficking across different jurisdictions in Maryland.

A Scree Plot helps visualize how much each principal component (a new dimension that combines related variables) contributes to explaining the overall data. Higher eigenvalues indicate that a component captures more significant patterns.



Each principal component (PC) represents a combination of different risk factors. The significant components include the following:

- **PC1: Child Protection Risks**
  This component highlights issues related to child protection, such as high involvement in child protective services (CPS), out-of-home placements, and exposure to violent crimes. These factors strongly influence the first dimension of the data.

Eigenanalysis of the Correlation Matrix

Eigenvalue	5.3049	1.3620	0.7248	0.6355	0.3150	0.2194	0.2006	0.1565	0.0812
Proportion	0.589	0.151	0.081	0.071	0.035	0.024	0.022	0.017	0.009
Cumulative	0.589	0.741	0.821	0.892	0.927	0.951	0.974	0.991	1.000

- **PC2: Intellectual Disabilities and Vulnerabilities**
  This component is focused on the risks associated with intellectual disabilities and how they relate to vulnerabilities like homelessness.

Eigenvectors

Variable	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6	PC7	PC8
Kidnapping Offenses	0.379	0.169	0.158	-0.153	0.463	0.324	-0.237	-0.626
Sex offenses	0.233	-0.613	0.063	-0.451	-0.113	0.251	0.484	0.005
Crime Rate	0.372	0.157	-0.020	-0.144	-0.742	0.081	-0.445	0.003
Out of home placements	0.390	-0.228	-0.106	-0.068	-0.119	-0.509	0.019	-0.306
Unstably houses or homeless	0.271	-0.288	0.093	0.862	-0.121	0.205	0.125	-0.119
MD students with intellect dis	0.238	0.622	0.339	-0.011	-0.171	0.064	0.618	0.047
CPS screening	0.395	0.100	-0.174	0.060	0.272	-0.597	0.113	0.158
IPV de ths_1	0.366	-0.128	0.463	-0.036	0.270	0.088	-0.309	0.635
Human Trafficking offenses 1	0.302	0.152	-0.769	0.008	0.133	0.396	0.076	0.266

Variable	PC9
Kidnapping Offenses	-0.109
Sex offenses	-0.230
Crime Rate	-0.248
Out of home placements	0.643
Unstably houses or homeless	-0.081
MD students with intellect dis	0.154
CPS screening	-0.576
IPV deaths_1	0.236
Human Trafficking offenses_1	0.207

- **PC3 and PC4: Housing Instability**
  These components capture different aspects of housing instability. One shows that homelessness might be inversely related to trafficking, while the other connects it with intimate partner violence (IPV) deaths.
- **PC5: Crime-Related Factors**
  This component likely reflects general crime rates and related issues.
- **PC6: Child Protection Focused on Disabilities**
  This component highlights the specific risks faced by children with intellectual disabilities.
- **PC7: Vulnerability and Abuse**
  This component suggest a link between intellectual disabilities and higher risks of sexual offenses.
- **PC8: Lethal Violence**
  This component relates to severe violence, particularly in the context of out-of-home placements and IPV deaths.

Key Findings: Based on these components, we identified the most significant factors contributing to the risk of child trafficking include the following:

- Child Welfare and Safety
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Housing Instability

These findings were supported by visual tools like loading plots and scree plots, which show how the variables relate to each other and how different jurisdictions compare based on these risks. Jurisdictions that stand out with elevated risk factors included:

- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Dorchester County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County

A similar analysis was also performed at the zip code level and identified the following most significant risk factors at the zip code level:

- Poverty Among Youth
- Substance Use
- Intellectual Disabilities

The zip codes listed below were identified as potential areas that may warrant further investigation due to their potential risks:

- 21104 – Howard County
- 21841 – Worcester County
- 21084 – Harford County
- 20656 – St. Mary's County
- 21742 – Washington County

Maryland Jurisdictions with Elevated Risk

Based on the statistical analysis, the following jurisdictions have been identified as having elevated risk factors due to high levels of child protection risks, including significant involvement in CPS, out-of-home placements, intellectual disabilities, exposure to violent crime, as well as the intersection of housing instability and child welfare involvement:

- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Dorchester County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County
- Howard County
- Worcester County
- Harford County
- St. Mary's County
- Washington County

While all areas could benefit from prevention strategies, these jurisdictions stand out as potential hotspots where targeted interventions and focused efforts are essential to reduce the vulnerability of children to sex trafficking.

The findings from this analysis underscore that it is not a single risk factor that places children at heightened risk of trafficking, but rather the confluence of multiple, interconnected vulnerabilities. Each jurisdiction presents a unique combination of challenges—ranging from child welfare involvement to socioeconomic instability—that collectively create environments where children are more susceptible to exploitation. Addressing these risks requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that considers the full spectrum of factors contributing to a child's vulnerability. By focusing on the interplay of these risk factors, effective prevention strategies can be implemented to protect the most vulnerable and work toward a safer future for all children.

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Appendix

Percent of Females Under Age 5 by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21156	Harford County	32.5%
2. 21031	Baltimore County	30.8%
3. 20762	Prince George's County	27.4%
4. 20670	St. Mary's County	23.8%
5. 21524	Allegany County	23.3%
6. 21082	Harford County	21.8%
7. 21634	Dorchester County	18.7%
8. 21071	Baltimore County	18.4%
9. 21840	Worcester County	18.3%
10. 20680	St. Mary's County	16.7%
11. 20674	St. Mary's County	15.6%
12. 21822	Somerset County	15.3%
13. 20758	Anne Arundel County	15.2%
14. 20637	Charles County	14.3%
15. 21052	Anne Arundel County	14.1%
16. 21737	Howard County	13.8%
17. 20693	St. Mary's County	13.3%
18. 20632	Charles County	13.1%
19. 21733	Washington County	11.9%
20. 20690	St. Mary's County	11.8%
21. 21607	Queen Anne's County	11.8%
22. 21849	Wicomico County	11.5%
23. 21625	Talbot County	11.2%
24. 20687	St. Mary's County	11%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 10.8% to 32.5% of children and youth ages 5 to 17 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Percent of Females Ages 5 to 14 by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21023	Baltimore County	60.6%
2. 21824	Somerset County	39.3%
3. 20868	Montgomery County	33.7%
4. 21402	Anne Arundel County	32.8%
5. 21920	Cecil County	29.7%
6. 21665	Talbot County	29.3%
7. 21557	Allegany County	26.1%
8. 21705	Frederick County	25%
9. 21540	Allegany County	23.9%
10. 20670	St. Mary's County	23.5%
11. 21864	Worcester County	23.4%
12. 21664	Dorchester County	23.3%
13. 21667	Kent County	22.9%
14. 20632	Charles County	22.7%
15. 21226	Anne Arundel County	22.7%
16. 21153	Baltimore County	22.5%
17. 20606	Charles County	22.4%
18. 20762	Prince George's County	22.3%
19. 20755	Anne Arundel County	21.2%
20. 21649	Caroline County	21.1%
21. 21005	Harford County	21%
22. 21822	Somerset County	20.5%
23. 20664	Charles County	20.3%
24. 21773	Washington County	20.2%
25. 21555	Allegany County	20.1%
26. 21523	Allegany County	20%
27. 21704	Frederick County	19.5%
28. 20680	St. Mary's County	19.3%
29. 21650	Queen Anne's County	19.3%
30. 20903	Montgomery County	19%
31. 21794	Howard County	18.9%
32. 21405	Anne Arundel County	18.7%

33. 21738	Howard County	18.5%
34. 20650	St. Mary's County	18.4%
35. 20624	St. Mary's County	18.1%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 18% to 60.6% of children and youth ages 5 to 14 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Percent of Females Ages 15 to 17 by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21781	Washington County	73.9%
2. 21010	Harford County	54.1%
3. 21647	Talbot County	21.8%
4. 21650	Queen Anne's County	18.7%
5. 21864	Worcester County	18.1%
6. 21714	Frederick County	16.5%
7. 21628	Talbot County	13.7%
8. 20606	Charles County	13.3%
9. 20616	Charles County	12.5%
10. 21052	Anne Arundel County	11.9%
11. 20630	St. Mary's County	11.7%
12. 21840	Worcester County	11.5%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 10.8% to 73.9% of children and youth ages 15 to 17 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Percent of Females Ages 18 to 24 by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21251	Baltimore City	100%
2. 21890	Worcester County	100%
3. 20686	St. Mary's County	99.1%
4. 21252	Baltimore County	99.1%
5. 21250	Baltimore County	99%
6. 20742	Prince George's County	98.5%
7. 20889	Montgomery County	52.6%
8. 21130	Harford County	47.6%
9. 20740	Prince George's County	41.6%
10. 21727	Frederick County	36.3%
11. 21402	Anne Arundel County	33.7%
12. 21210	Baltimore City	33.2%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 26.2% to 100% of children and youth ages 15 to 17 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Percent of the Population Under Age 5 Living Below the Federal Poverty Level by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21540	Allegany County	100%
2. 21628	Queen Anne's County	100%
3. 21648	Dorchester County	100%
4. 21856	Wicomico County	77.4%
5. 21622	Dorchester County	71.1%
6. 21863	Worcester County	67%
7. 21536	Garrett County	61.4%
8. 21542	Allegany County	63.2%
9. 21217	Baltimore City	57.2%
10. 21213	Baltimore City	57.2%
11. 21668	Caroline County	55.6%
12. 21671	Queen Anne's County	55.6%
13. 21639	Caroline County	53.5%
14. 21541	Garrett County	50%
15. 21636	Caroline County	46%
16. 21734	Washington County	42.1%
17. 21218	Baltimore City	40.2%
18. 21524	Allegany County	38.7%
19. 21631	Dorchester County	34.6%
20. 21755	Frederick County	34.1%
21. 21231	Baltimore City	33.9%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 38.8% to 100% of children under age 5 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Percent of Children and Youth Ages 5 to 17 Living Below Poverty Level by Zip Code and Jurisdiction, 2022		
Zip Code	Jurisdiction	Percent
1. 21648	Dorchester County	100%
2. 20656	St. Mary's County	100%
3. 21677	Dorchester County	81.5%
4. 21153	Baltimore County	71.4%
5. 21641	Queen Anne's County	63.6%
6. 21201	Baltimore City	53.9%
7. 21034	Harford County	46.8%
8. 21542	Allegany County	46.2%
9. 21223	Baltimore City	45.1%
10. 21205	Baltimore City	44.8%
11. 21523	Allegany County	43.5%
12. 20763	Howard County	42.9%
13. 21231	Baltimore City	41.9%
14. 21217	Baltimore City	41.5%
15. 21636	Caroline County	41.5%
16. 21555	Allegany County	40.6%
17. 21734	Washington County	36.8%
18. 21668	Caroline County	37.7%
19. 21225	Baltimore City	37.6%
20. 21856	Wicomico County	34.7%
Table only shows the percent for zip codes that have 32.9% to 100% of children and youth ages 5 to 17 living below the federal poverty level		

Reference: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate

Total Number and Percent of Public Behavioral Health System Recipients of Substance-Related Disorder Program Services, 2022

	Age Group[a]												
	Birth to 6		7 to 12		13 to 17		18 to 21		22 to 25		Jurisdiction Total[b]		
Jurisdiction												% of State Total	Rate per 1,000
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		
Allegany					50	16.40%	93	30.50%	153	50.20%	**305**	**2.50%**	**26.5**
Anne Arundel			22	2.50%	160	18.20%	212	24.10%	484	54.90%	**881**	**7.20%**	**14.4**
Baltimore City	22	0.70%	93	3.10%	655	21.90%	904	30.20%	1,321	44.10%	**2,995**	**24.40%**	**18.4**
Baltimore			37	2.70%	259	19.10%	383	28.20%	670	49.40%	**1,356**	**11.00%**	**13.4**
Calvert					30	13.50%	75	33.80%	115	51.80%	**222**	**1.80%**	**25.8**
Caroline					31	28.70%	31	28.70%	46	42.60%	**108**	**0.90%**	**13.9**
Carroll					49	22.40%	42	19.20%	120	54.80%	**219**	**1.80%**	**15.4**
Cecil					59	13.50%	135	31.00%	233	53.40%	**436**	**3.50%**	**27.2**
Charles					38	16.50%	63	27.40%	116	50.40%	**230**	**1.90%**	**10.5**
Dorchester			15	7.80%	52	27.10%	41	21.40%	81	42.20%	**192**	**1.60%**	**26.5**
Frederick			15	3.20%	102	21.70%	148	31.40%	204	43.30%	**471**	**3.80%**	**15.9**
Garrett					24	19.80%	39	32.20%	48	39.70%	**121**	**1.00%**	**26.5**
Harford			18	3.00%	96	16.00%	182	30.30%	304	50.60%	**601**	**4.90%**	**20.7**
Howard					63	27.50%	77	33.60%	78	34.10%	**229**	**1.90%**	**8.1**
Kent							13	22.80%	32	56.10%	**57**	**0.50%**	**18.8**
Montgomery			40	4.20%	316	33.20%	252	26.50%	341	35.80%	**952**	**7.70%**	**7.3**
Prince George's			38	3.60%	269	25.40%	317	29.90%	431	40.70%	**1,060**	**8.60%**	**6.1**
Queen Anne's					20	25.60%	21	26.90%	35	44.90%	**78**	**0.60%**	**16.4**
Somerset					27	22.00%	33	26.80%	61	49.60%	**123**	**1.00%**	**25.5**
St. Mary's					38	13.40%	98	34.60%	144	50.90%	**283**	**2.30%**	**20.8**
Talbot					11	16.70%	18	27.30%	35	53.00%	**66**	**0.50%**	**13.2**

Washington			33	4.30%	119	15.50%	236	30.70%	375	48.80%	**768**	**6.30%**	**28.1**
Wicomico			13	2.70%	107	21.90%	155	31.80%	211	43.20%	**488**	**4.00%**	**21.7**
Worcester					55	32.40%	47	27.60%	63	37.10%	**170**	**1.40%**	**21.8**
Statewide	**68**	**0.6%**	**388**	**3.2%**	**2,611**	**21.3%**	**3,593**	**29.2%**	**5,627**	**45.8%**	**12,287**	**100.0%**	**13.7**

Data Source: Behavioral health services claims and eligibility data for FY22. Based on claims paid through June 30, 2023. Note: [a]The number and percent by age group represent the total number of children and young adults within each age group that received services in that jurisdiction and the percentage of the jurisdiction total accounted for by each age group. [b]The percent of state total column represents the percentage of children and young adults receiving services in each jurisdiction, based on the statewide number of service recipients (N=12,287). Statewide and jurisdiction numbers reflect unduplicated counts of service recipients. The sum of jurisdiction counts does not equal the statewide numbers, since some service recipients may receive behavioral health services in more than one jurisdiction over a 12-month period. Cells with counts less than 10 are grayed out to protect individual privacy. The jurisdiction category of unknown is included to reflect counts of children and young adults whose jurisdiction of residence is unknown.

Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration, December 2023. Report on Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth Adults.

CPS Screenings with an Indication of Child Sex Trafficking by Jurisdiction and Zip Code, 2023

Anne Arundel County:

- 21409
- 21061
- 21032
- 21060

Baltimore City:

- 21223
- 21230
- 21224
- 21217
- 21215
- 21239
- 21213
- 21229

Baltimore County:

- 21207
- 21030
- 21227
- 21234
- 21220
- 21236
- 21208
- 21244
- 21093
- 21133
- 21221
- 21222

Caroline County:

- 21660
- 21629
- 21639

Cecil County:

- 21921
- 21901

Frederick County:

- 21701
- 21703
- 21702
- 21793
- 21798
- 21704

Harford County:

- 21085
- 21040

Howard County:

- 21045

Kent County:

- 21620

Montgomery County:

- 20852

Prince George's County:

- 20769
- 20783
- 20781
- 20720
- 20743
- 20784

St. Mary's County:

- 20659

Washington County:

- 21742
- 21740
- 21795

Wicomico County:

- 21801

Worcester County:

- 21851

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