



children's
defense fund
Leave No Child Behind®

FALL 2020 JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

CDF Freedom Schools® Juvenile Justice Programs

The CDF Freedom Schools® model empowers scholars to excel and believe in their ability to make a difference in themselves, their families, communities, country, and the world with hope, education, and action. Through reading and the promotion of social-emotional learning, we help scholars change the way they think about learning. Youth in *CDF Freedom Schools* can achieve measurable results in just six weeks, increasing their appetite for learning, their academic achievement, and their social-emotional growth.



Rooted in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program is designed to serve K–12 scholars in communities where quality academic enrichment programming is limited, too expensive, or non-existent. By partnering with juvenile justice facilities, schools, faith and community-based organizations, colleges and universities, and municipalities, we can offer this program in these communities at no cost.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program enhances motivation for scholars that are in juvenile justice facilities to read and make them feel good about learning. *CDF Freedom Schools* children and youth engage in CDF's research-based, multicultural **Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC)** that supports them and their families through five essential components:

- High-quality academic enrichment
- Parent and family development
- Civic engagement and social action
- Intergenerational servant leadership development
- Nutrition, health and mental health

CDF Freedom Schools empowers scholars to maintain and build upon the skills they learn during the school year through exposure to the IRC. The lessons in the IRC consist of **project-based learning** activities and include opportunities for **civic engagement, conflict resolution, self-empowerment, and social action skill development**. IRC books feature heroes, heroines, and settings that reflect the scholars' cultural images and history. The *CDF Freedom Schools* IRC increases **social-emotional learning, academic achievement, and the importance of restorative justice while teaching in trauma-informed social models**.

"Camp educators and probation officers started seeing fewer fights, fewer suspensions and more interest in the classroom. Attitude among the youths evolved from wary and angry to openness and with an increase in self-confidence."

— **Mark Ridley-Thomas**,
Los Angeles County Board
of Supervisors for the
2nd District

**During the summer of 2019,
330 scholars were served by 33 program staff (including non-instructional)
at 6 juvenile justice program sites.**

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program encourages scholars to embrace their cultural history and reinforces confidence in their abilities to create positive changes in the world. *CDF Freedom Schools* youth participate in book discussions and social action projects that address fairness, voting rights, and education access.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program has served over 1,700 youth in juvenile justice facilities since 2014.

Each day at *CDF Freedom Schools* begins with “Harambee!”—a Kiswahili word for “let’s pull together.” Harambee! brings scholars, staff, parents and community members together to celebrate themselves and prepare for the work ahead. During this time, we encourage scholars and staff to get excited and ready for the day.

Impacting the Lives of Children and Families

CDF Freedom Schools creates spaces for scholars, parents, and educators to come together and engage in meaningful action that allows communities to grow academically and socially. With hope, education, and action, communities are able to learn from one another and provide resources and support to address community needs. **Here are a few benefits of hosting *CDF Freedom Schools* at juvenile justice facilities:**

- Improves internal relations between youth, probation officers and camp educators
- Decreases chances of youth reentering juvenile justice facilities after they leave
- Improves academic achievement and social skills
- Opens opportunities for job training and employment
- Extends additional positive options for support when youth are released



“The kids are enjoying it and like what it is bringing to them..... Their relationship to the staff is moving in a positive direction. That benefits the kids and also the staff.”

— **Alberto Ramirez,**
Director of Residential Treatment Services Bureau at the LA camps

These boys will go back to the community eventually....and Freedom School has ensured that when they go back, they’re a different person than when they came.”

— **LaDonna Harris,**
LA County’s chief probation officer

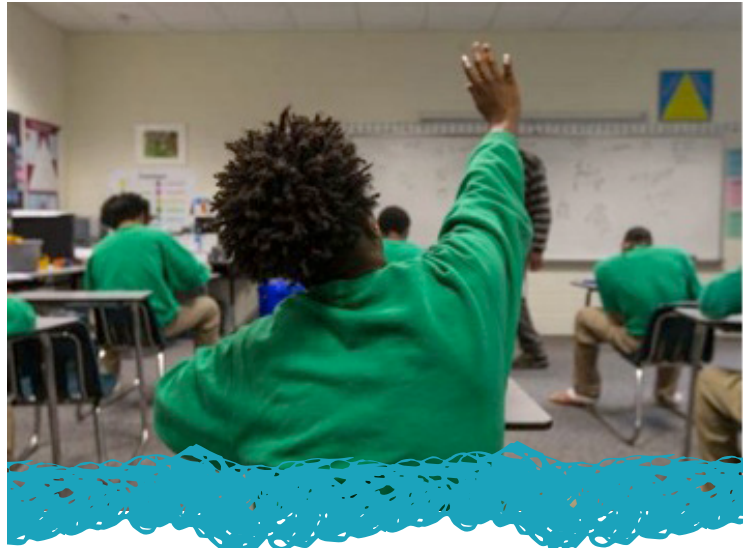
Interested in starting a *CDF Freedom Schools* site in your community?

To apply, sponsor organizations (such as churches, schools, and school districts, community organizations, etc.) should complete an application and budget worksheet online at

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/cdf-freedom-schools/>

Some additional information:

- The Children's Defense requires sites to serve a minimum of 30 children.
- As a response to the ongoing pandemic, sponsor organizations can operate in-person, virtual, or hybrid programs based on their community needs.
- The cost to sponsor a program is set at \$285 per scholar.
- As a part of the partnership, the Children's Defense Fund provides sponsoring organizations training on its multicultural, research-based Integrated Reading Curriculum, accompanying reading and site library books, training, program monitoring, and evaluation.
- Staff working in *CDF Freedom Schools* programs must attend mandatory virtual training meetings throughout the year.



Contact the *CDF Freedom Schools* national office to learn more about how you can start your application to sponsor a *CDF Freedom Schools* site. Our team can be reached via phone at (202) 662-3543 or by email at freedomschools@childrensdefense.org.