



The mission of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF Freedom Schools® provide summer and after-school enrichment through a research-based and multicultural curriculum that supports children and families through five essential components: high quality academic and character-building enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational servant leadership development; and nutrition, health and mental health. *CDF Freedom Schools* incorporate the totality of CDF's mission by fostering environments that support children and young adults to excel and believe in their abilities to make a difference in themselves and in their families, schools, communities, country, and world with hope, education and action.

Since 1995, more than 190,000 children (Pre-K-12) have had the *CDF Freedom Schools* experience, and more than 21,000 young adults and child advocates have been trained on the delivery of the *CDF Freedom Schools* model.

In 2023, *CDF Freedom Schools* partnered with 128 organizations to serve over 11,600 children at 191 program sites in 101 cities and 26 states (including Washington, D.C.). Across the nation, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs served nearly 8,000 African-American and Latinx children, and 175 youth in secure detention facilities.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* has origins in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964, which brought college students from around the country to Mississippi to secure justice and voting rights for Black citizens. These early Freedom Schools aimed at keeping Black children and youth safe and giving them rich educational experiences that were not offered to them in Mississippi's public schools. In a variety of makeshift settings, college student volunteers provided instruction in reading, writing, humanities, mathematics, and science along with subjects not taught in Mississippi public schools, such as Black history and constitutional rights. All their instruction was tailored to encourage children and youth to become independent thinkers, problem solvers, and agents of change in their own communities.

CDF opened the first two *CDF Freedom Schools* sites in 1995 to address the needs of children who lacked access to high-quality literacy programs during the summer. *CDF Freedom Schools* today are designed to improve reading, language skills, and interpersonal relationships; strengthen families, connect children to medical and other needed social services, and develop in all participants the skills needed to improve conditions for children and families in their communities.

At the center of the *CDF Freedom School* program is a research-based Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC) that fosters literacy. CDF has been in the forefront of raising consciousness about the fact that fewer than 30% of children's books published in the United States are about nonwhite children. Each year, a group of outstanding authors and illustrators select from a diverse body of children's literature books that will celebrate and nurture multiple racial identities and cultures. A distinguished group of historians and scholars reviews and recommends books used in *CDF Freedom Schools* to ensure that children read only those containing accurate narratives of history.

IRC instruction is delivered by college-aged Servant Leader Interns who serve as multigenerational mentors for small classes of no more than ten children. By providing rich, culturally-relevant and high-quality books

that deepen children's understanding of themselves and all they have in common with others in a multiracial, multicultural democratic society, *CDF Freedom Schools* students gain understanding and a sense of connection to the books they read, which fosters a love of reading.

Extracurricular activities and social action projects provide opportunities for children in *CDF Freedom Schools* to build confidence about the ways in which they, their peers, and role models can become empowered and capable. During the afternoon, children and youth participate in structured extracurricular enrichment activities, such as organized sports and recreation; artistic pursuits of all forms, hands-on activities that promote learning in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and field trips. *CDF Freedom Schools* afternoon activities also include service and social action projects that foster awareness of community problems and ways of solving them. Students visit and write letters to elected officials, join town hall meetings, rallies, and marches, and take part in public education activities and voter registration drives.

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program is making an impact in the lives of children and families nationwide. National evaluations completed in 2023 show that over 85 percent of students participating in *CDF Freedom Schools* maintain or gain an average of nine months in their reading levels. Research has established other positive effects that the *CDF Freedom Schools* program has on students' attitudes about school and parents' engagement in the education of their children.

Since 1995, more than 21,000 college students and recent graduates who have worked as CDF servant leader interns have received training in research-based pedagogical strategies that have proven their effectiveness in increasing the academic achievement and school engagement of children growing up in poverty. The recruitment and training of servant leader interns is another way in which CDF is addressing the nation's critical need for nonwhite teachers who reflect the diverse ethnic and cultural composition of the majority of children in America's public schools. Each year on average, over 1,300 *CDF Freedom Schools* staff members learn how to make the CDF Integrated Reading Curriculum accessible and enjoyable for children with vastly different learning styles. The young adults who complete the *CDF Freedom Schools* training and parents of children in the program learn how to ask questions and engage children in discussions that foster the development of their critical and creative thinking skills. Most of all, training provided by *CDF Freedom Schools* teaches adults who work with children both in and outside of classrooms to love, support and set high expectations that instill self-confidence that can transform a child's life.

*CDF Freedom Schools* also have produced over 450 Ella Baker trainers since 1995. Ella Baker trainers are the best of the best *CDF Freedom Schools* teacher-mentors and are selected to join a national training team to implement the *CDF Freedom Schools* model. Many Ella Baker trainers move on to become teachers, educational administrators and CDF staff members. All staff working in *CDF Freedom Schools* complete training virtually or in-person at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee. If you would like more information or would like to become a partner, please contact *CDF Freedom Schools* at [freedomschools@childrensdefense.org](mailto:freedomschools@childrensdefense.org) or (202) 662-3524.

## HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Claflin University (SC), Davidson College Center for Civic Engagement (NC), FAMU College of Education – Developmental Research School (FL), Florida State University – CARE (FL), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (IL), IUPUI School of Education and Liberal Arts Center for Africana Studies and Culture (IN), North Carolina A&T State University (NC), Purdue CDF Freedom Schools (IN), Rutgers University, Newark Campus (NJ), Tennessee Tech University College of Education (TN), University of Florida, Collaborative for Equity in Education (FL), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (IL), University of Virginia (VA), Virginia State University (VA), and Wake Forest University (NC).

## PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

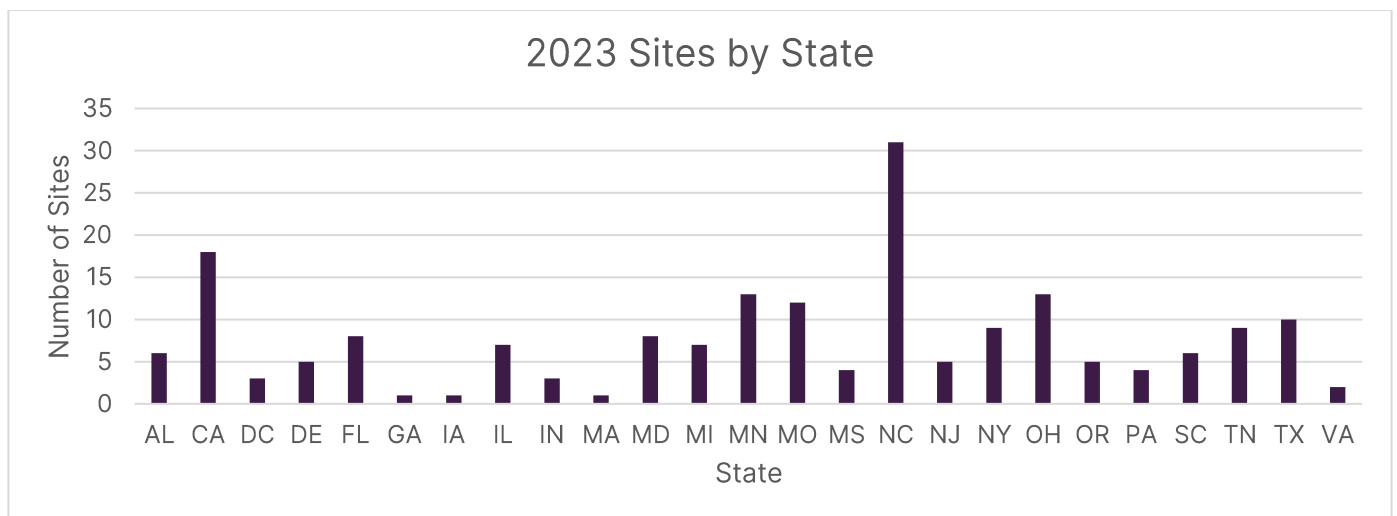
Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School (MN), American International Academy (MI), Ashley Academy Freedom School (NC), Bourbonnais Elementary School District 53 (IL), Bullock County School District (AL), Citywide Tutorial Program, SFUSD (CA), DECA PREP (OH), Friendship Academy of the Arts (MN), Guilford County Schools (NC), Hopkins Public Schools (MN), Independent School District 622 (MN), Jackson Public Schools (MS), Kankakee School District 111 (IL), Kimberley Park Elementary School (NC), Minneapolis Public Schools (MN), PasadenaLEARNs After School Program (CA), Reynolds School District (OR), Robbinsdale Area Schools (MN), Saint Paul Public Schools (MN), Trotwood-Madison City Schools (OH), W.A. Perry Middle School (SC), and White Bear Lake 624 (MN).

## JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER PARTNERSHIPS

Two CDF Freedom Schools sites served adolescents in juvenile detention centers. These facilities are located in Brooklyn (NY) and Bronx (NY).

## ELLA BAKER CHILD POLICY TRAINING INSTITUTE NATIONAL TRAINING

The Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute National Training for Site Coordinators and Servant Leader Interns will be held from May 28 – June 2, 2024 at the Knoxville Convention Center in Knoxville, TN and at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, TN.



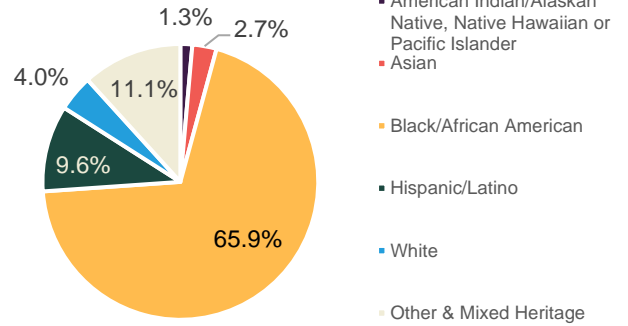
## 2023 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SITE LOCATIONS

1.	Birmingham	AL	35.	Hillcrest Heights	MD	69.	Brooklyn	NY
2.	Fairfield	AL	36.	Battle Creek	MI	70.	Forest Hills	NY
3.	Huntsville	AL	37.	Detroit	MI	71.	New York	NY
4.	Selma	AL	38.	Flint	MI	72.	Queens	NY
5.	Union Springs	AL	39.	Inkster	MI	73.	Alexandria	OH
6.	Altadena	CA	40.	Kalamazoo	MI	74.	Cincinnati	OH
7.	Long Beach	CA	41.	Crystal	MN	75.	Cleveland	OH
8.	Los Angeles	CA	42.	Minneapolis	MN	76.	Columbus	OH
9.	Oakland	CA	43.	Minnetonka	MN	77.	Dayton	OH
10.	Richmond	CA	44.	North St. Paul	MN	78.	East Cleveland	OH
11.	Sacramento	CA	45.	St. Paul	MN	79.	Newark	OH
12.	San Francisco	CA	46.	White Bear Lake	MN	80.	Springfield	OH
13.	Santa Monica	CA	47.	Florissant	MO	81.	Trotwood	OH
14.	Sausalito	CA	48.	Kansas City	MO	82.	Fairview	OR
15.	Washington	DC	49.	Maplewood	MO	83.	Portland	OR
16.	Dover	DE	50.	St. Louis	MO	84.	Troutdale	OR
17.	Georgetown	DE	51.	Webster Groves	MO	85.	Allentown	PA
18.	Wilmington	DE	52.	Bolton	MS	86.	Easton	PA
19.	Gainesville	FL	53.	Jackson	MS	87.	Columbia	SC
20.	Miami Gardens	FL	54.	Brevard	NC	88.	North Charleston	SC
21.	Pensacola	FL	55.	Charlotte	NC	89.	Orangeburg	SC
22.	Tallahassee	FL	56.	Davidson	NC	90.	Cookeville	TN
23.	Atlanta	GA	57.	Durham	NC	91.	Jackson	TN
24.	Cedar Rapids	IA	58.	Greensboro	NC	92.	Knoxville	TN
25.	Bourbonnais	IL	59.	High Point	NC	93.	Maryville	TN
26.	Champaign	IL	60.	Huntersville	NC	94.	Memphis	TN
27.	Chicago	IL	61.	Rocky Mount	NC	95.	Nashville	TN
28.	Evanston	IL	62.	Wilmington	NC	96.	Austin	TX
29.	Kankakee	IL	63.	Winston-Salem	NC	97.	Baytown	TX
30.	Springfield	IL	64.	Ewing	NJ	98.	Fort Worth	TX
31.	Indianapolis	IN	65.	Newark	NJ	99.	Houston	TX
32.	West Lafayette	IN	66.	Paterson	NJ	100.	Charlottesville	VA
33.	Dorchester	MA	67.	Trenton	NJ	101.	Petersburg	VA
34.	Baltimore	MD	68.	Bronx	NY			

## 2023 SCHOLAR DETAILS

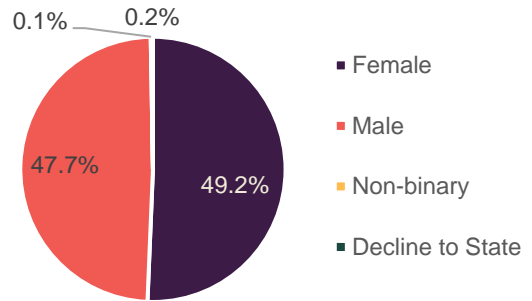
### Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.3%
Asian	2.7%
Black/African American	65.9%
Hispanic/Latino	9.6%
White	4.0%
Other & Mixed Heritage	11.1%



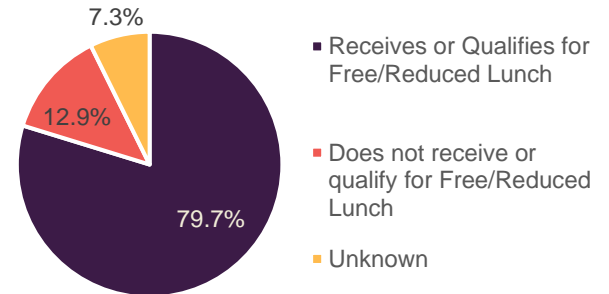
### Gender

Female	49.2%
Male	47.7%
Non-binary	0.1%
Decline to State	0.2%



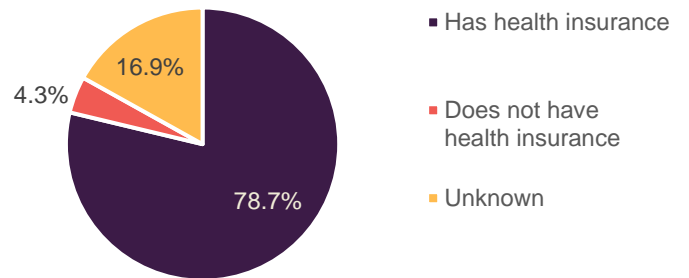
### Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)

Receives or Qualifies for Free/Reduced Lunch	79.7%
Does not receive or qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	12.9%
Unknown	7.3%



### Health Insurance

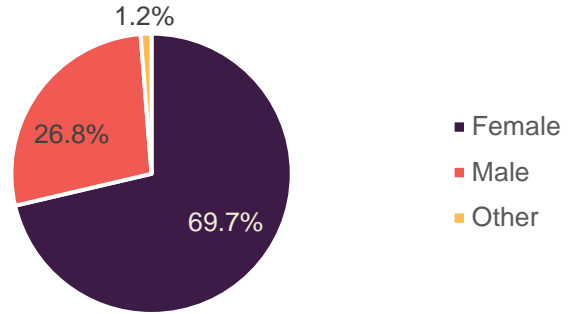
Has health insurance	78.7%
Does not have health insurance	4.3%
Unknown	16.9%



## 2023 SERVANT LEADER INTERN DETAILS

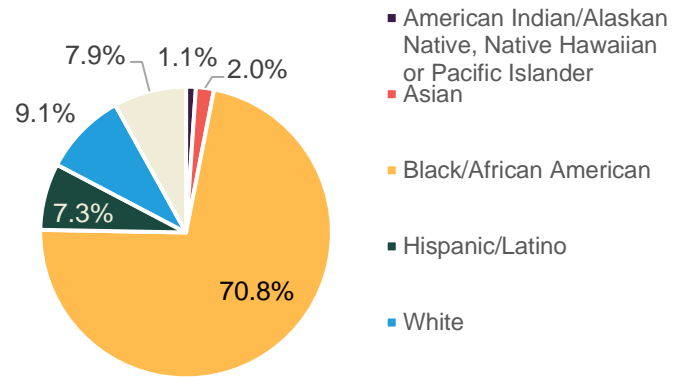
### Gender

Female	69.7%
Male	26.8%
Other	1.2%



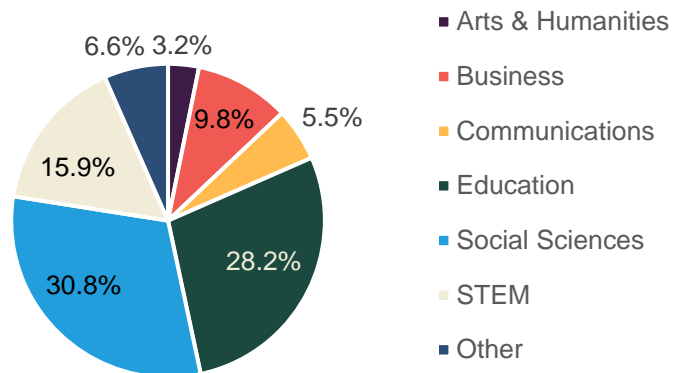
### Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific	1.1%
Asian	2.0%
Black/African American	70.8%
Hispanic/Latino	7.3%
White	9.1%
Other & Mixed Heritage	7.9%



### Major

Arts & Humanities	3.2%
Business	9.8%
Communications	5.5%
Education	28.2%
Social Sciences	30.8%
STEM	15.9%
Other	6.6%



**CDF Freedom Schools National Assessment Results from 2019 to 2023**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Average/Total</b>
% Scholars improved	55.3%	45.6%	52.9%	51.7%	55.1%	54.0%
% Scholars maintained	29.2%	31.1%	31.1%	32.7%	30.0%	30.5%
% Scholars declined	15.5%	23.3%	16.0%	15.6%	14.9%	15.5%
Number of sites that participated in the assessment	107	6	65	96	121	395
Number of scholars who participated in the assessment	2,524	103	1,201	1,753	2,375	7,956