



Children's Defense Fund builds community so young people grow up with dignity, hope, and joy. 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* fosters 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 200,000 children (Pre-K–12) have had the *CDF Freedom Schools* experience, and more than 23,000 young adults and child advocates have been trained on the delivery of the *CDF Freedom Schools* model.

In 2024, *CDF Freedom Schools* partnered with 136 organizations to serve over 11,700 children at 199 program sites in 107 cities and 26 states (including Washington, D.C.). Across the nation, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs served nearly 8,500 African-American and Latinx children, and 150 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 2024 show that over 81 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 23,000 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 1,350 *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 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), 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), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (IL), Tennessee Tech University College of Education (TN), University of Florida, Collaborative for Equity in Education (FL), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (IL), and Wake Forest University (NC).

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

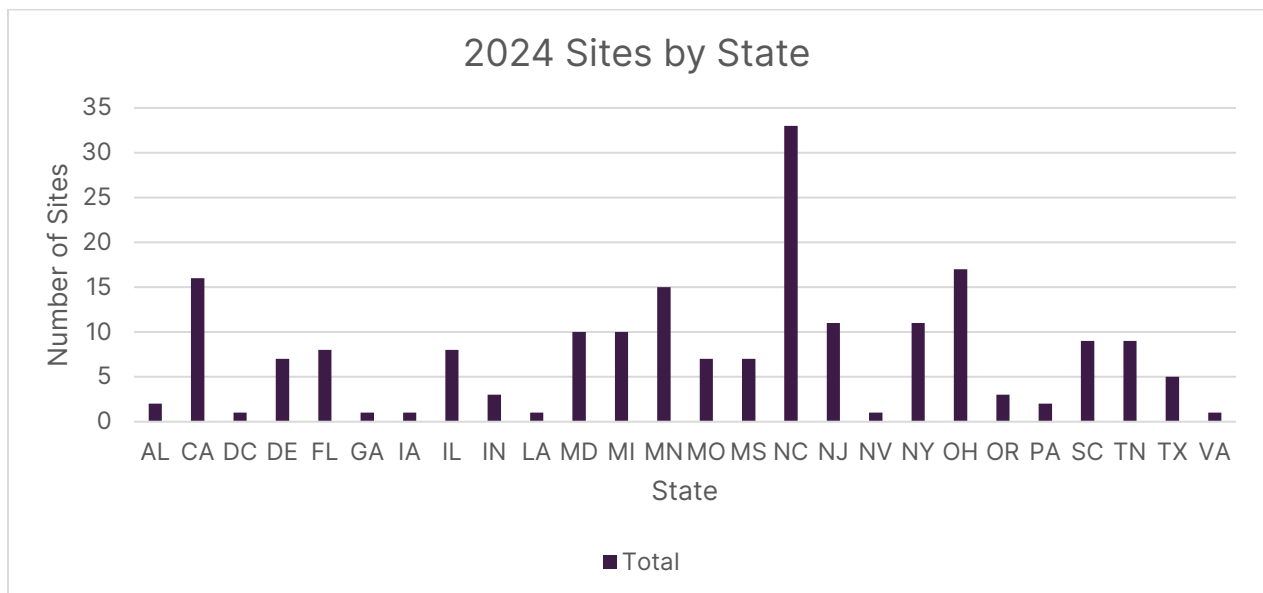
Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School (MN), Ashley Academy Freedom School (NC), Christina School District (DE), Cook Literacy Model School (NC), Edmund F. Lindop School District 92, DECA PREP (OH), El Colegio High School (MN), Friendship Academy of the Arts (MN), Guilford County Schools (NC), Hopkins 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

Three *CDF Freedom Schools* sites served adolescents in juvenile detention centers. These facilities are located in Brooklyn (NY), Bronx (NY), and Cleveland (OH).

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 June 3 – June 8, 2024 at the Knoxville Convention Center in Knoxville, TN and at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, TN.



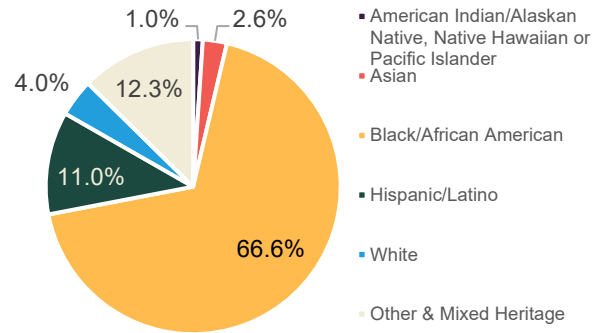
2024 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SITE LOCATIONS

1.	Birmingham	AL	37.	Flint	MI	73.	Brooklyn	NY
2.	Huntsville	AL	38.	Kalamazoo	MI	74.	Flushing	NY
3.	Altadena	CA	39.	Saginaw	MI	75.	Forest Hills	NY
4.	El Sobrante	CA	40.	Golden Valley	MN	76.	Rochester	NY
5.	Long Beach	CA	41.	Maplewood	MN	77.	White Plains	NY
6.	Los Angeles	CA	42.	Minneapolis	MN	78.	Cleveland	OH
7.	Oakland	CA	43.	Minnetonka	MN	79.	Columbus	OH
8.	Richmond	CA	44.	Saint Paul	MN	80.	Dayton	OH
9.	Sacramento	CA	45.	St. Paul	MN	81.	East Cleveland	OH
10.	San Francisco	CA	46.	White Bear Lake	MN	82.	Johnstown	OH
11.	Santa Monica	CA	47.	Kansas City	MO	83.	Lima	OH
12.	Washington	DC	48.	Saint Louis	MO	84.	Newark	OH
13.	Dover	DE	49.	St. Louis	MO	85.	Springfield	OH
14.	Georgetown	DE	50.	Webster Groves	MO	86.	Toledo	OH
15.	Wilmington	DE	51.	Anguilla	MS	87.	Trotwood	OH
16.	Wyoming	DE	52.	Greenville	MS	88.	Portland	OR
17.	Gainesville	FL	53.	Jackson	MS	89.	Allentown	PA
18.	Miami Gardens	FL	54.	Leland	MS	90.	Beaufort	SC
19.	Pensacola	FL	55.	Metcalfe	MS	91.	Columbia	SC
20.	Tallahassee	FL	56.	Brevard	NC	92.	Conway	SC
21.	Atlanta	GA	57.	Charlotte	NC	93.	North Charleston	SC
22.	Cedar Rapids	IA	58.	Davidson	NC	94.	Orangeburg	SC
23.	Broadview	IL	59.	Durham	NC	95.	St. George	SC
24.	Champaign	IL	60.	Greensboro	NC	96.	Chattanooga	TN
25.	Chicago	IL	61.	High Point	NC	97.	Cookeville	TN
26.	Edwardsville	IL	62.	Rocky Mount	NC	98.	Jackson	TN
27.	Kankakee	IL	63.	Wilmington	NC	99.	Knoxville	TN
28.	Springfield	IL	64.	Winston-Salem	NC	100.	Maryville	TN
29.	Indianapolis	IN	65.	Camden	NJ	101.	Memphis	TN
30.	West Lafayette	IN	66.	Ewing	NJ	102.	Nashville	TN
31.	Campti	LA	67.	MONTCLAIR	NJ	103.	Austin	TX
32.	Baltimore	MD	68.	Newark	NJ	104.	Fort Worth	TX
33.	Fort Washington	MD	69.	Paterson	NJ	105.	Galveston	TX
34.	Suitland-Silver Hill	MD	70.	Trenton	NJ	106.	Houston	TX
35.	Battle Creek	MI	71.	Las Vegas	NV	107.	Hampton	VA
36.	Detroit	MI	72.	Bronx	NY			

2024 SCHOLAR DETAILS

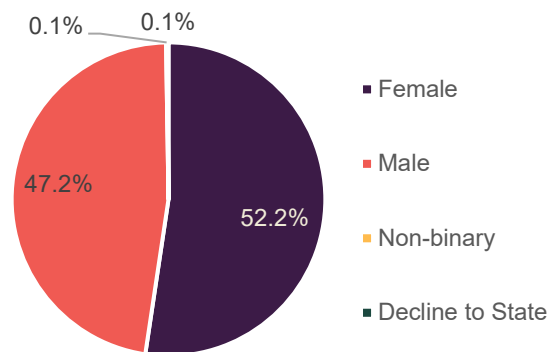
Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.0%
Asian	2.6%
Black/African American	66.6%
Hispanic/Latino	11%
White	4.0%
Other & Mixed Heritage	12.3%



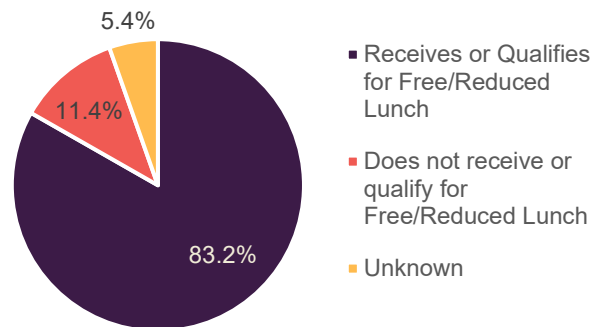
Gender

Female	52.2%
Male	47.2%
Non-binary	0.1%
Decline to State	0.1%



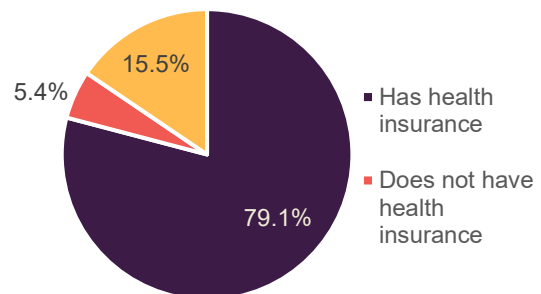
Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)

Receives or Qualifies for Free/Reduced Lunch	83.2%
Does not receive or qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	11.4%
Unknown	5.4%



Health Insurance

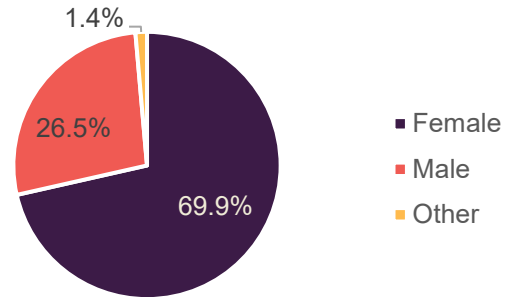
Has health insurance	79.1%
Does not have health insurance	5.4%
Unknown	15.5%



2024 SERVANT LEADER INTERN DETAILS

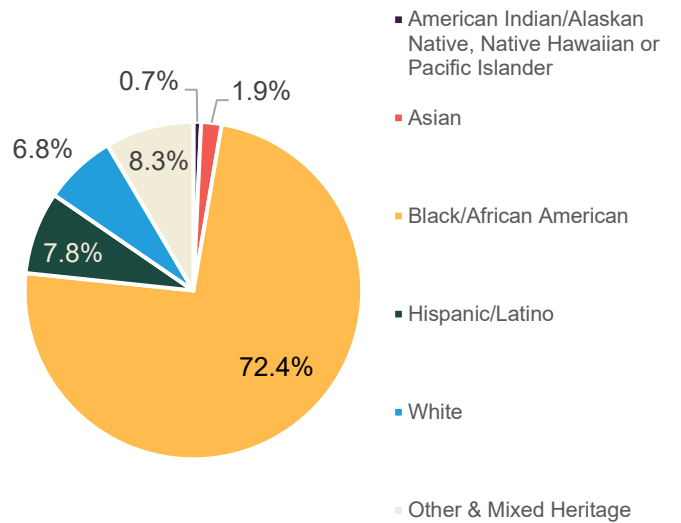
Gender

Female	69.9%
Male	26.5%
Other	1.4%



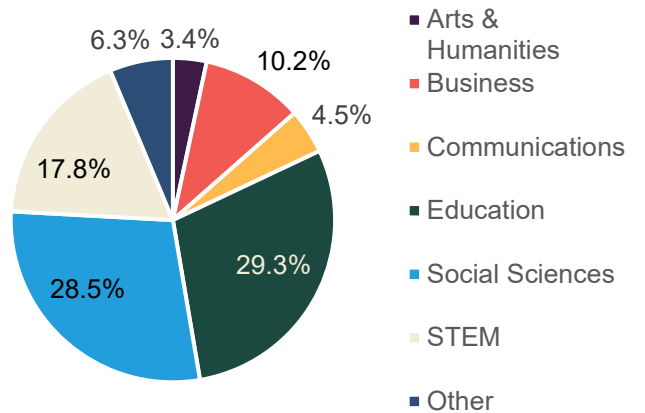
Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific	0.7%
Asian	1.9%
Black/African American	72.4%
Hispanic/Latino	7.8%
White	6.8%
Other & Mixed Heritage	8.3%



Major

Arts & Humanities	3.4%
Business	10.2%
Communications	4.5%
Education	29.3%
Social Sciences	28.5%
STEM	17.8%
Other	6.3%



CDF Freedom Schools National Assessment Results from 2020 to 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average/Total
% Scholars improved	45.6%	52.9%	51.7%	55.1%	50.5%	52.4%
% Scholars maintained	31.1%	31.1%	32.7%	30.0%	31.3%	31.2%
% Scholars declined	23.3%	16.0%	15.6%	14.9%	18.2%	16.4%
Number of sites that participated in the assessment	6	65	96	121	132	420
Number of scholars who participated in the assessment	103	1,201	1,753	2,375	2,556	7,988