



## Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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 180,000 children (Pre-K–12) have had the *CDF Freedom Schools* experience, and more than 20,000 young adults and child advocates have been trained on the delivery of the *CDF Freedom Schools* model. Although we remain in the COVID-19 global pandemic, this is the first year that we've surpassed pre-pandemic levels of partnership and participation!

In 2022, *CDF Freedom Schools* partnered with 109 organizations to serve over 10,200 children at 174 program sites in 88 cities and 29 states (including Washington, D.C.). Across the nation, *CDF Freedom Schools* programs served nearly 7,000 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 of 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 27% 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 2022 show that over 84 percent of students participating in *CDF Freedom Schools* maintain or gain an average of five 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 20,000 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 1,200 *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 400 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), IUPUI School of Education and Liberal Arts Center for Africana Studies and Culture (IN), North Carolina A&T State University (NC), 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), and Wiley College- Freedom to STREAM (TX).

## PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

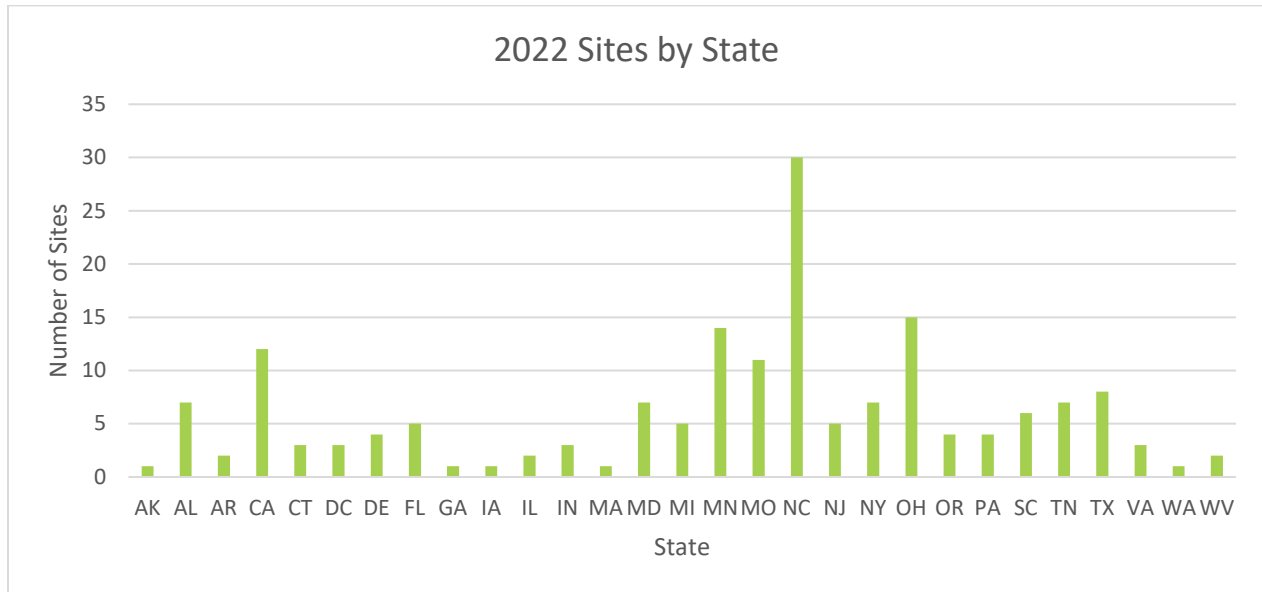
Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School (MN), American International Academy (MI), Bullock County School District (AL), Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences (CA), Excell Academy for Higher Learning (MN), FAMU College of Edu - Developmental Research School (FL), Forrest City School District (AR), Friendship Academy of the Arts (MN), Guilford County Schools (NC), Independent School District 622 (MN), Kimberley Park Elementary School (NC), McRae Learning Center (AL), Minneapolis Public Schools (MN), Reynolds School District (OR), Robbinsdale Area Schools (MN), Saint Paul Public Schools (MN), The Legacy of Dr. Josie R. Johnson Montessori (MN), 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 is returning in-person and will be held from June 1 – 4, 2023 at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, TN.

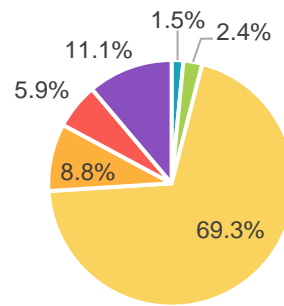


### 2022 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SITE LOCATIONS

1. Juneau	AK	31. Flint	MI	61. Columbus	OH
2. Birmingham	AL	32. Inkster	MI	62. Dayton	OH
3. Florence	AL	33. Brooklyn Park	MN	63. East Cleveland	OH
4. Montgomery	AL	34. Crystal	MN	64. Lima	OH
5. Selma	AL	35. Minneapolis	MN	65. Newark	OH
6. Union Springs	AL	36. Minnetonka	MN	66. Springfield	OH
7. Forrest City	AR	37. North St. Paul	MN	67. Fairview	OR
8. Long Beach	CA	38. St. Paul	MN	68. Portland	OR
9. Oakland	CA	39. White Bear Lake	MN	69. Allentown	PA
10. Richmond	CA	40. Florissant	MO	70. Easton	PA
11. Sacramento	CA	41. Maplewood	MO	71. Columbia	SC
12. San Francisco	CA	42. St. Louis	MO	72. North Charleston	SC
13. Santa Monica	CA	43. Webster Groves	MO	73. Orangeburg	SC
14. Hartford	CT	44. Brevard	NC	74. Cookeville	TN
15. Washington	DC	45. Charlotte	NC	75. Jackson	TN
16. Georgetown	DE	46. Davidson	NC	76. Knoxville	TN
17. Wilmington	DE	47. Greensboro	NC	77. Nashville	TN
18. Gainesville	FL	48. Rocky Mount	NC	78. Rockford	TN
19. Miami Gardens	FL	49. Wilmington	NC	79. Austin	TX
20. Pensacola	FL	50. Winston-Salem	NC	80. Baytown	TX
21. Tallahassee	FL	51. Ewing	NJ	81. Dallas	TX
22. Atlanta	GA	52. Newark	NJ	82. Houston	TX
23. Cedar Rapids	IA	53. Paterson	NJ	83. Marshall	TX
24. Champaign	IL	54. Trenton	NJ	84. Charlottesville	VA
25. Springfield	IL	55. Bronx	NY	85. Lynchburg	VA
26. Indianapolis	IN	56. Brooklyn	NY	86. Petersburg	VA
27. Dorchester	MA	57. NEW YORK	NY	87. Seattle	WA
28. Baltimore	MD	58. Rochester	NY	88. Charleston	WV
29. Battle Creek	MI	59. Alexandria	OH		
30. Detroit	MI	60. Cincinnati	OH		

**Race/Ethnicity**

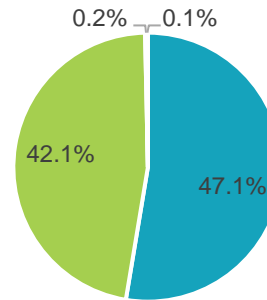
American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.5%
Asian	2.4%
Black/African American	69.3%
Hispanic/Latino	8.8%
White	5.9%
Other & Mixed Heritage	11.1%



- American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- White
- Other & Mixed Heritage

**Gender**

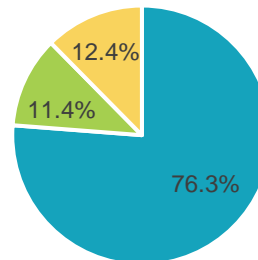
Female	47.1%
Male	42.1%
Non-binary	0.2%
Decline to State	0.1%



- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Decline to State

**Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)**

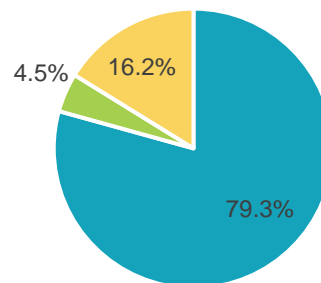
Receives or Qualifies for Free/Reduced Lunch	76.3%
Does not receive or qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch	11.4%
Unknown	12.4%



- Receives or Qualifies for Free/Reduced Lunch
- Does not receive or qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch
- Unknown

**Health Insurance**

Has health insurance	79.3%
Does not have health insurance	4.5%
Unknown	16.2%

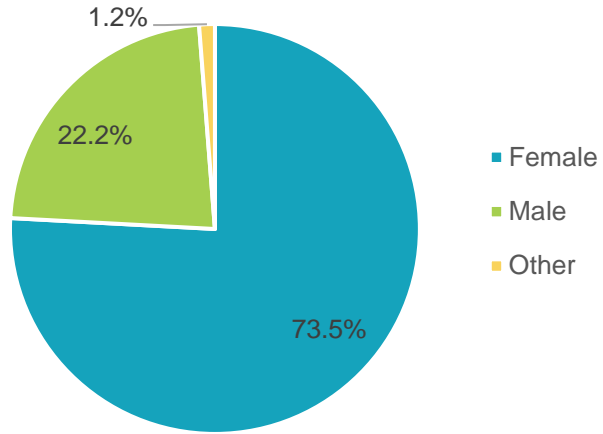


- Has health insurance
- Does not have health insurance
- Unknown

2022 SERVANT LEADER INTERN DETAILS

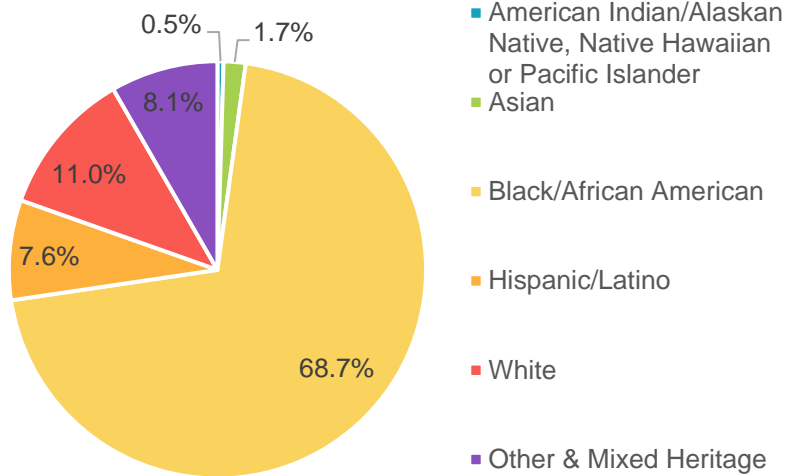
**Gender**

Female	73.5%
Male	22.2%
Other	1.2%



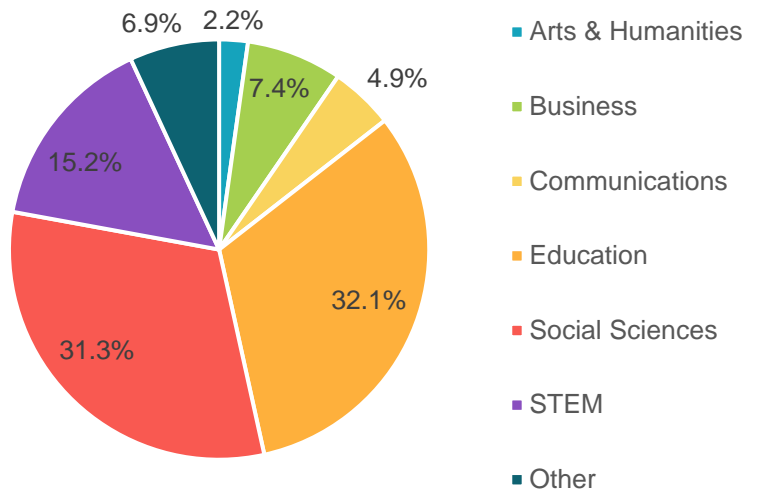
**Race/Ethnicity**

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.5%
Asian	1.7%
Black/African American	68.7%
Hispanic/Latino	7.6%
White	11.0%
Other & Mixed Heritage	8.1%



**Major**

Arts & Humanities	2.2%
Business	7.4%
Communications	4.9%
Education	32.1%
Social Sciences	31.3%
STEM	15.2%
Other	6.9%



**CDF FREEDOM SCHOOLS NATIONAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS FROM 2018 TO 2022**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Average/Total</b>
% Scholars improved	60.2%	55.3%	45.6%	52.9%	51.7%	55.10%
% Scholars maintained	24.6%	29.2%	31.1%	31.1%	32.7%	29.30%
% Scholars declined	15.2%	15.5%	23.3%	16.0%	15.6%	15.60%
Number of sites that participated in the assessment	101	107	6	65	96	375
Number of scholars who participated in the assessment	2,238	2,524	103	1,201	1,753	7,819