

Massachusetts Family Resource Center Network

2024 Program Evaluation Report



March 2025

The Massachusetts Family Resource Center (FRC) network supports families and communities across the Commonwealth by providing access to various resources, services, events, and programming. The FRCs support all families seeking assistance or experiencing a crisis, connecting them to needed resources in the community and providing direct services. These can include basic goods and materials, evidence-based parent education classes and support groups, and school-related educational supports. FRCs also host various celebratory, recreational, seasonal, cultural, and other community-strengthening events and activities.

The FRCs also offer a low barrier, free resource for families with children at risk of a Children Requiring Assistance (CRA) filing or with an existing filing with a juvenile court, as established by the legislative requirements of Chapter 240 of the Acts of 2012. FRCs work to strengthen relationships between children and their families so that both can thrive. The FRC Network is overseen by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), with administrative support provided by ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School, including data collection and reporting (pursuant to Chapter 240, Section 16U), marketing and communication support, evaluation, and technical assistance.



www.frcma.org

FRC Network Expansion, Training, and Evaluation

In 2024, there were 32 FRCs across the Commonwealth, with at least one in each of the state's 14 Counties.



*This location will open in 2025.

Ongoing Training of FRC Staff

DCF and the ForHealth Consulting Administrative Support Organization (ASO) conduct ongoing trainings to ensure that FRC staff have a strong base of knowledge and skills with which to provide services to families: the current Orientation and Foundational Training Series (launched in 2021), facilitator trainings in a variety of Evidence-Based Parenting Education Programs that are a core service of the FRCs, and additional supplemental trainings that provide staff with the capacity to address the range of challenges faced by FRC families.

In 2024, more than 400 FRC staff attended trainings offered by DCF and the ASO:

- 23 **Orientation and Foundational** trainings
- 48 **Evidence Based Parenting Education Program (EBP) facilitator** trainings
- 56 **skill-building** trainings

DCF and the ASO also provided technical assistance (TA) to the FRCs for developing their 2024 workplans:

- TA sessions reviewed a specific section of the work plan to support FRC leadership with the development of that section.
- DCF Community Support Managers provided additional one-on-one TA sessions with their regional sites to help them complete each section.
- The ASO supported the DCF Program Manager and FRC leadership in understanding their data and how to incorporate it into their workplan targets.

Orientation and Foundational Trainings

- Orientation to the FRC model
- Protective Factors/Strengthening Families
- Trauma Informed Care
- Motivational Interviewing
- Cultural Humility in Child Welfare Practice/ Culture and Parenting
- Child Development and the Adolescent Brain
- Secondary Traumatic Stress, Boundaries, and Self-Care

Since the launch of the Orientation and Foundational training series in 2021,

240 FRC staff have completed it, with **22 staff** completing it in 2024.



Ongoing Evaluation of the FRCs

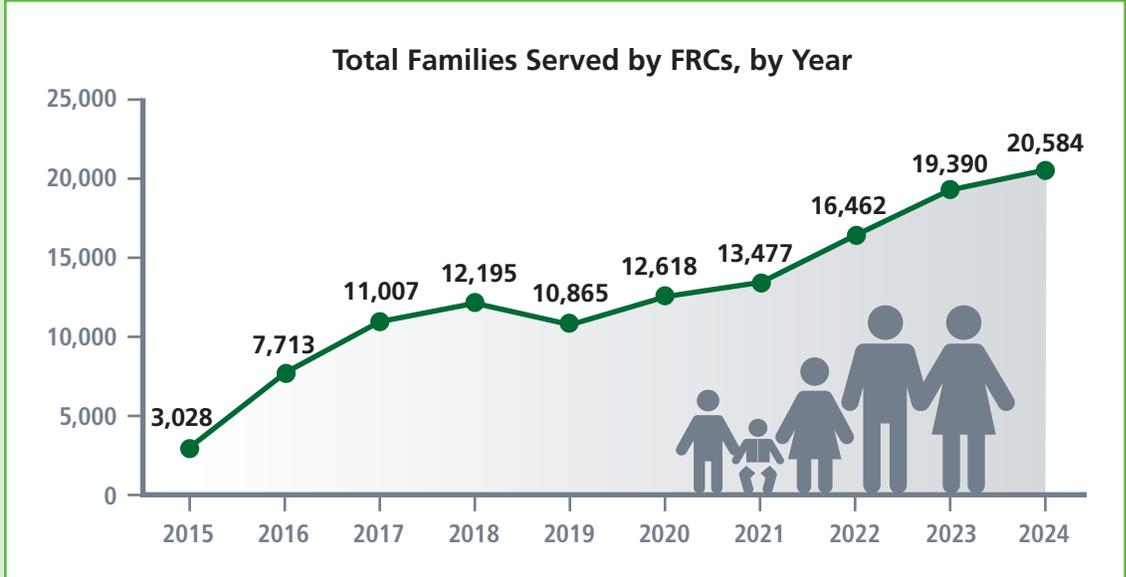
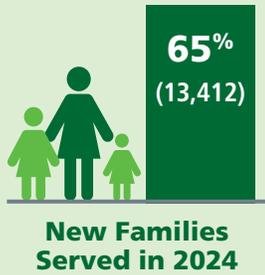
Since the launch of the network in 2015, the evaluation team at ForHealth Consulting has partnered with DCF to understand how the FRCs work with families, document FRC services, and assess outcomes for families served by FRCs. Staff at each FRC enter data into a secure, cloud-based database managed by ForHealth Consulting. The data captured includes information regarding the characteristics of families and family members receiving services, the reasons families come to the FRCs, and the types of services families receive. The data presented in this report reflect a snapshot of the FRC database on January 2, 2025.

Pursuant to Line Item 4000-0051, Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024, the FRC Annual Evaluation Report describes activities across the FRCs during the calendar year Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024. The report tells the story about the families and family members served in 2024, the types of services provided, and includes notable changes in FRC activities since their launch in 2015. The report also highlights innovative FRC practices, and efforts undertaken by DCF and ForHealth Consulting to support FRC operations.

Families Served by the FRCs

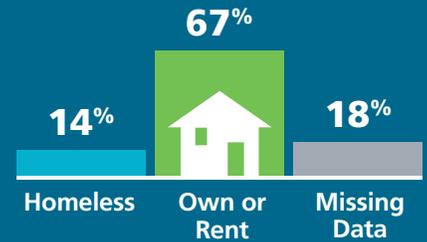
Since opening in 2015, the FRC network has served **more than 89,000** families.

In 2024, the FRC network served **20,584** families, of which **65% (13,412)** were new to the FRC network.



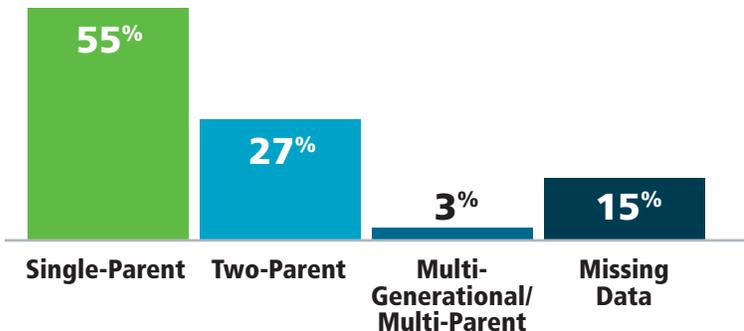
Housing Status of New Families Served by FRCs

Among the **13,412 new families** served in 2024, **14%** were homeless (sheltered and not sheltered) when they were first served by the FRCs. **Most families (9,011 or 67%)** were living in their own apartment or home (owned or rented). Data on housing status was missing for 18% of new families served in 2024.

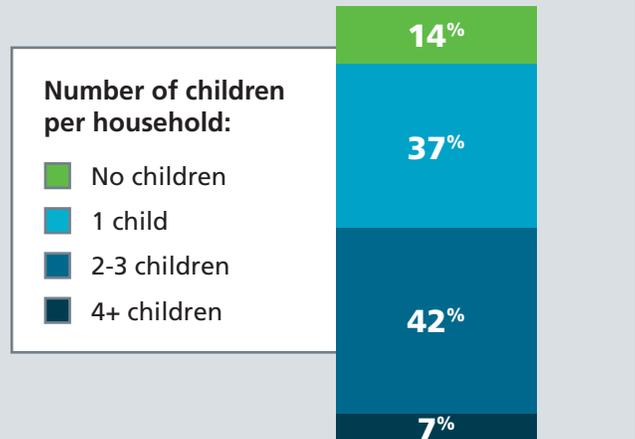


Family Composition among New Families Served by FRCs

Most families served by the FRCs continue to represent single-parent households. In 2024, more than half of the new families served were from single-parent households (55% or 7,364) versus two-parent households (27% or 3,566); 3% of the families were from multi-generational or multi-parent households, and 15% were missing this data.



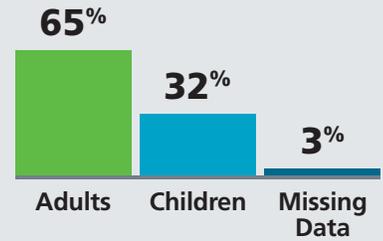
Of the 13,412 new families served in 2024, most had at least two or three children (42%) or only one child (37%) in the household. Some families had four or more children (7%) and 14% (1,934) did not have any children in the household.



Family Members Served by FRCs

In 2024, the FRCs served a total of 31,484 individual family members, 19,578 (62%) of whom were new to the FRCs.

Among the total number of family members served in 2024, 20,498 (65%) were adults aged 18 and over, and 10,119 (32%) were children under the age of 18. Data on age was missing for 3% of family members served in 2024.



Characteristics of Adults and Children Served by FRCs

Among the 20,498 adults served by the FRCs in 2024:

- 40% identified as white
- 42% identified as Hispanic/Latine
- 76% identified as female

Among the 7,400 children served in 2024 for whom the following data was available:

- 7% (517) had DCF involvement
- 5% (338) had court involvement

Among the 10,119 children served by the FRCs in 2024:

- 40% were identified as white
- 29% were identified as Hispanic/Latine
- 43% were identified as female

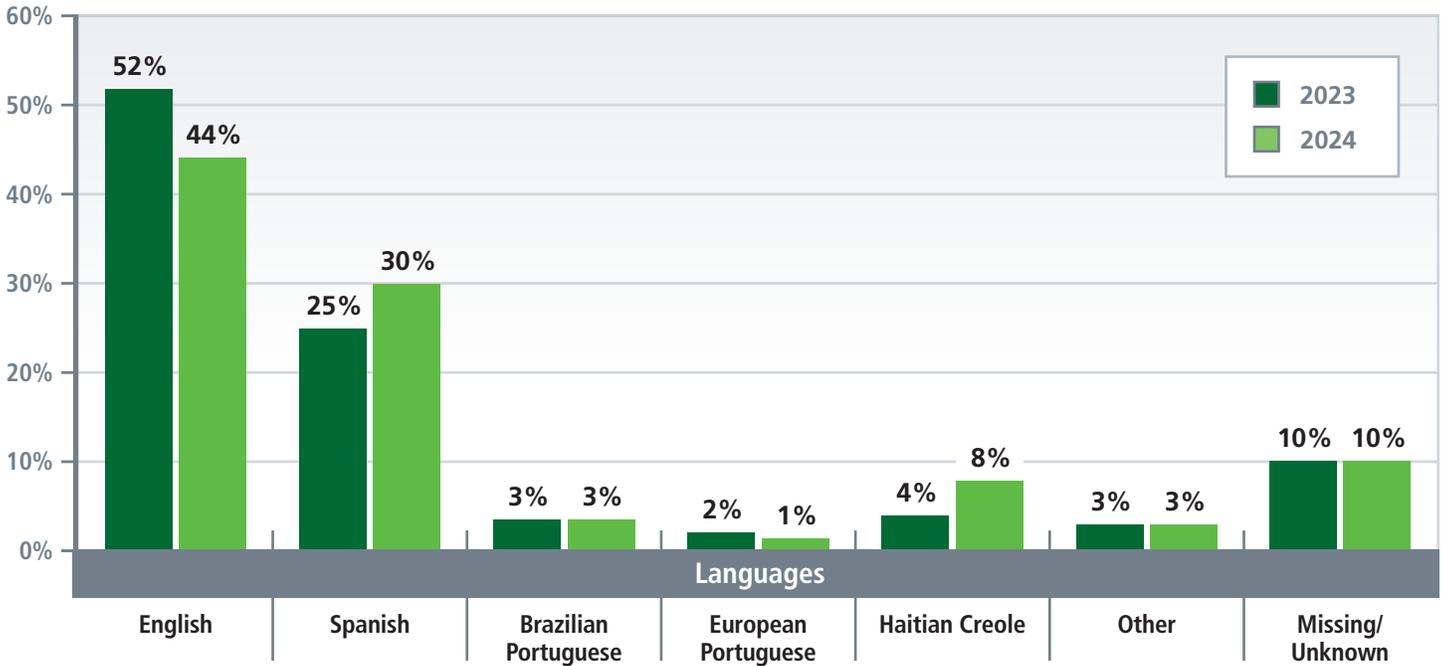
Among the 5,467 school-age children for whom the following data is available:

- 69% (3,792) were enrolled in school
- 26% (1,405) had an IEP/504 plan



Primary Language Spoken by Adults and Children Served by FRCs

The number of adults who spoke a primary language other than English increased in 2024 compared to 2023. For example, in 2023, 25% of adults spoke primarily Spanish, and in 2024, that increased to 30%. Also, in 2023, only 4% of adults served by the FRCs primarily spoke Haitian Creole; in 2024, that number increased to 8%. Conversely, 52% of the adults served in 2023 primarily spoke English, and in 2024 this reduced to 44% of adults.



Needs of New Families Seeking FRC Services

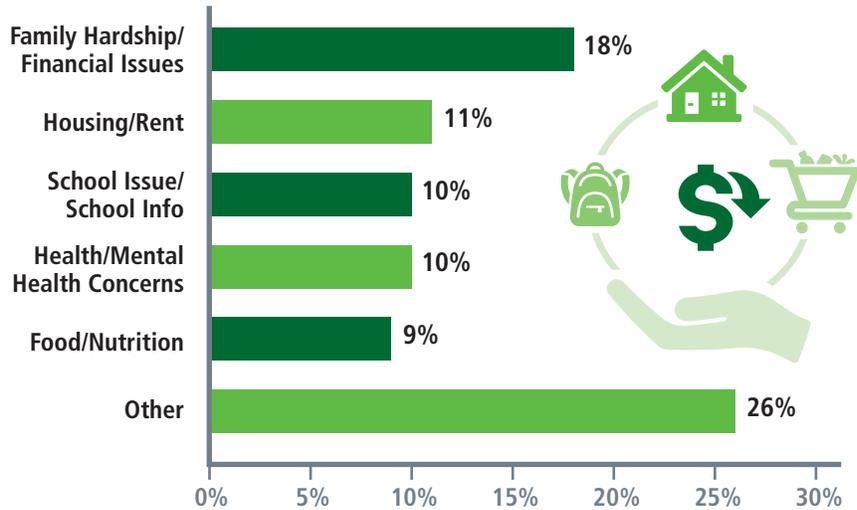
In 2024, new family members sought FRC services for a range of reasons.

The most common reason indicated for seeking FRC services was "other" (26%), which mostly included diapers, clothing, and other basic needs and material goods.



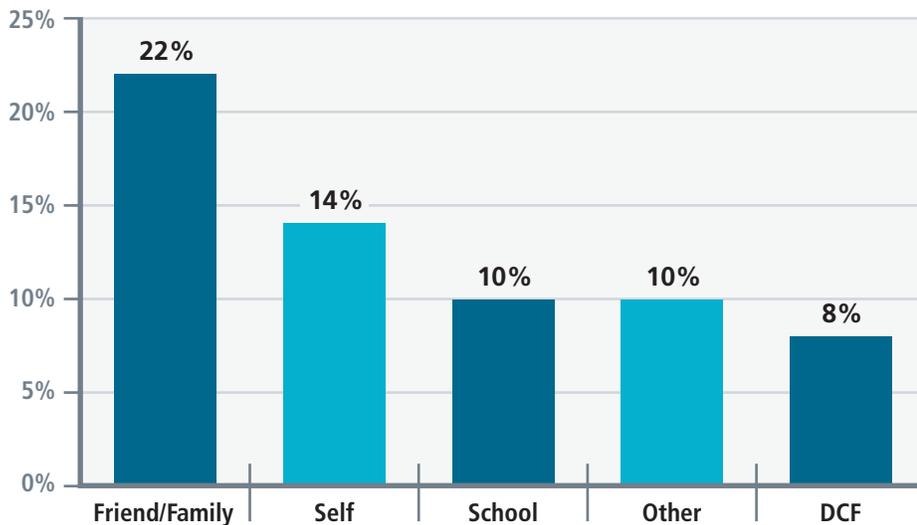
Note: Some families had more than one reason for seeking services.

Most Common Reasons New Family Members Sought FRC Services in 2024



In 2024, friends and family were the most common referral source for new families served by the FRC (22%), further demonstrating the sense of community created by the FRC network. The other main referral sources included self-referrals (14%), schools (10%), and DCF (8%). Other referral sources include human services (7%), health/mental health provider (7%), and the courts (5%), among other less frequent sources.

Most Common Referral Sources for New Families Served by FRCs in 2024



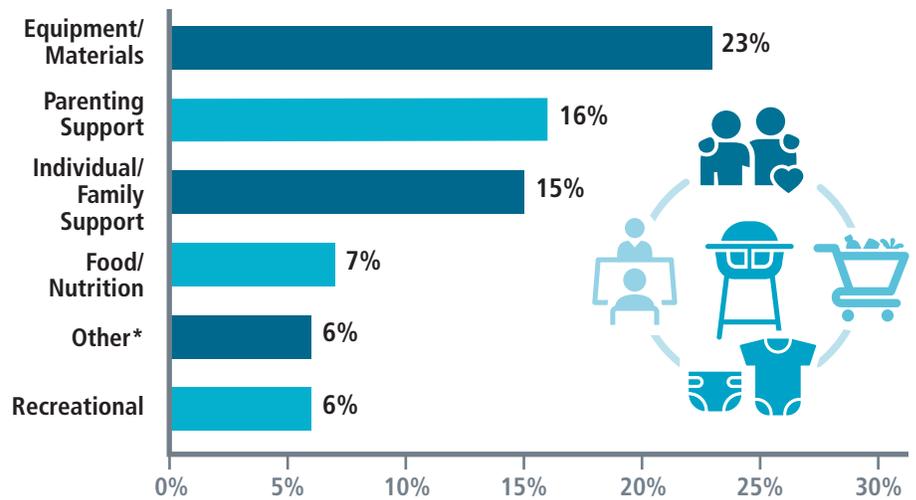
FRC Services and Supports to Families in 2024

In 2024, the most common services provided by FRCs were for equipment or materials (23%), such as car seats, clothing, diapers, furniture, baby items, and toiletries.

Other common services included parenting support (16%), individual or family support (15%), food/nutrition support (7%), recreational activities (6%), and other* supports (6%).

Family members served by the FRCs are provided with an opportunity to complete a service satisfaction survey. Of the 1,270 family members who rated their satisfaction with services, **97% said they were satisfied with the services provided by the FRC.**

Most Common Services Provided by FRCs in 2024



*In 2025, the process for collecting data on services provided to families and attendance at events will be changing to include more nuanced categories and will remove the "other" category. Services and attendance typically recorded in "other" will become new discrete categories for reporting.

In 2024, across the FRC network, the number of unique days of service was split relatively evenly between **family members who received only one day of service (13,220)** and **family members who received two or more days of service (15,362)**. Some family members (4,662) had six or more days of service.

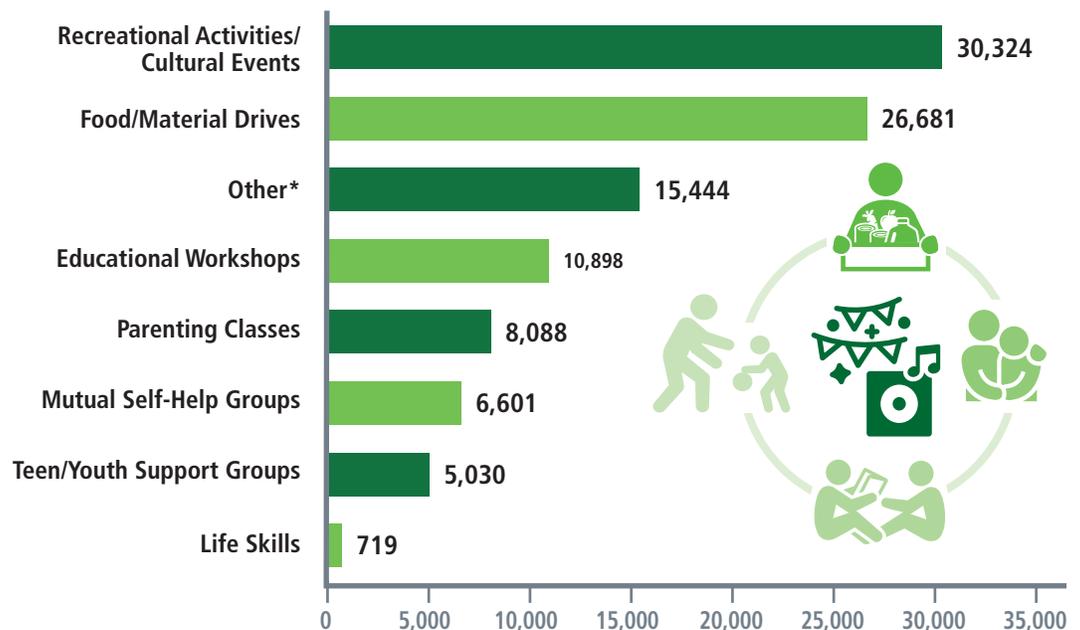


Attendance at FRC Events in 2024

In 2024, attendance* was highest at **recreational activities and cultural events**, followed by **food and material drives**.

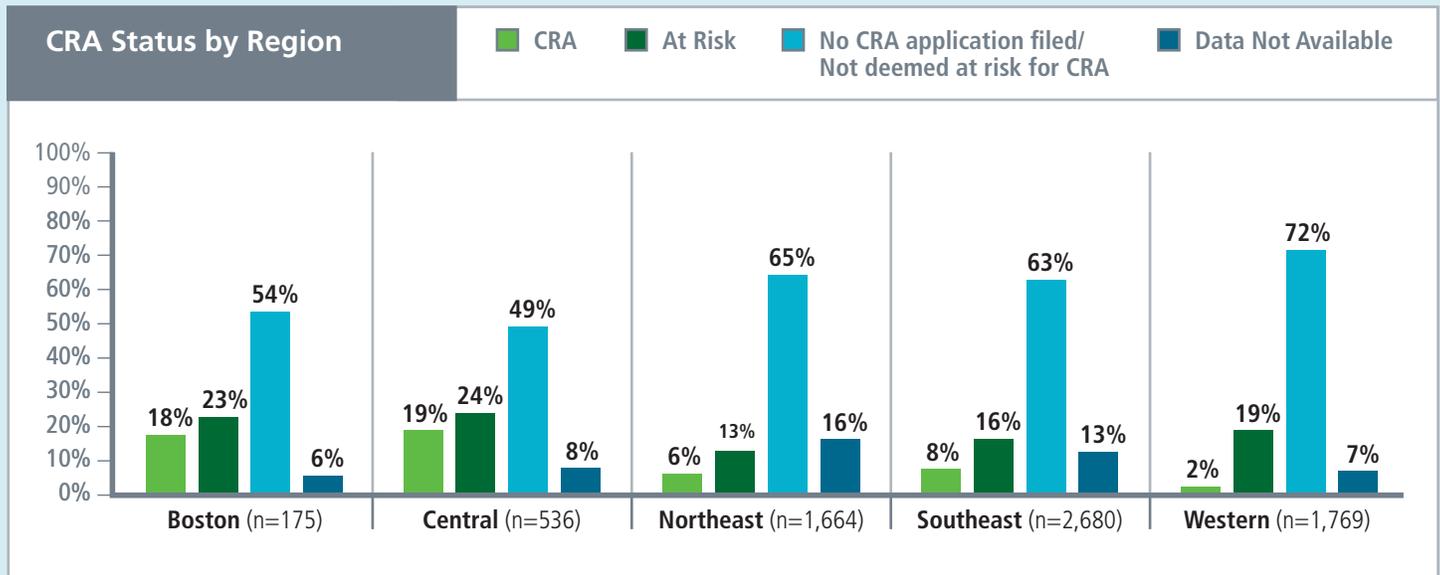
*In 2025, the process for collecting data on services provided to families and attendance at events will be changing to include more nuanced categories and will remove the "other" category. Services and attendance typically recorded in "other" will become new discrete categories for reporting.

Attendance at FRC Classes, Groups, and Events in 2024



Children Requiring Assistance (CRA) in the FRC Network

At the time of service from an FRC, there were 6,824 children aged 6-17 (i.e., eligible by age to be a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA)) in 2024. Of those, the FRCs indicated that 481 (7%) had a CRA application filed and 1,156 (17%) met the guidelines for being at risk for CRA; 4,401 (64%) neither had a CRA application filed nor were deemed at risk for CRA, and 786 (12%) were missing data on CRA status.



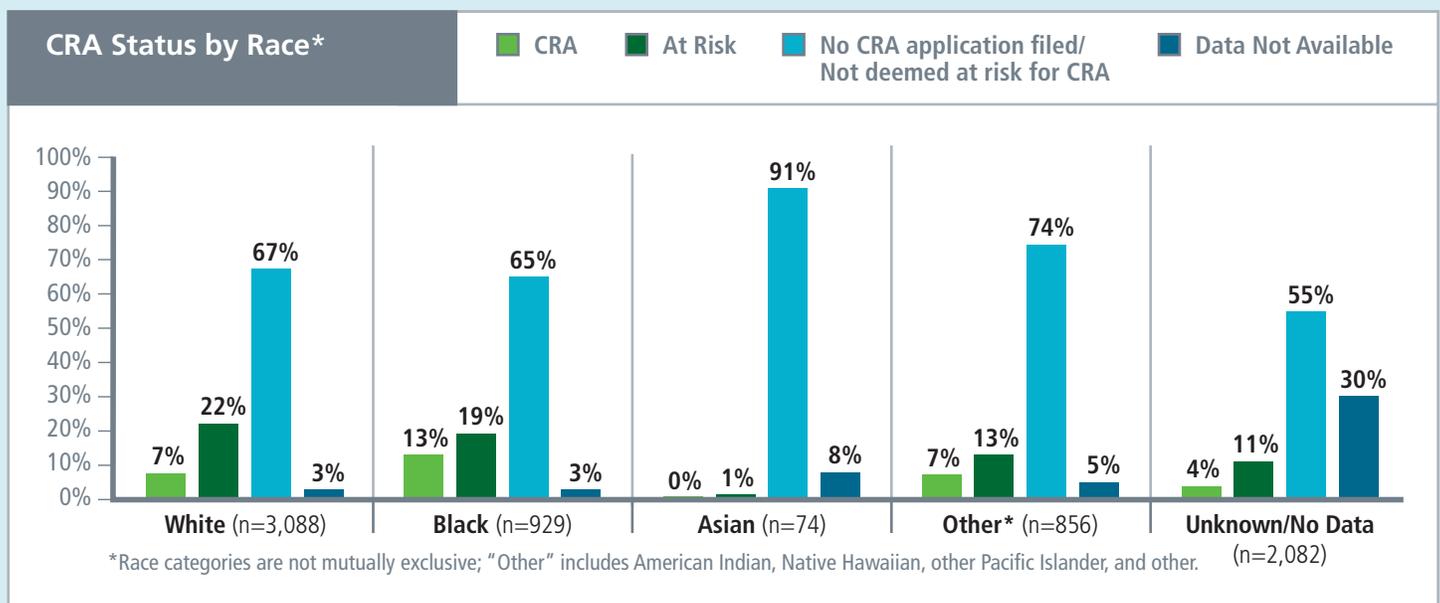
The proportion of male and female children with or at risk of CRA was comparable:

- Male: CRA 7%; at risk 19%
- Female: CRA 7%; at risk 15%



The proportion of Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/non-Latine children with or at risk of CRA was also comparable:

- Hispanic/Latine: CRA 8%; at risk 19%
- Non-Hispanic/Non-Latine: CRA 8%; at risk 18%

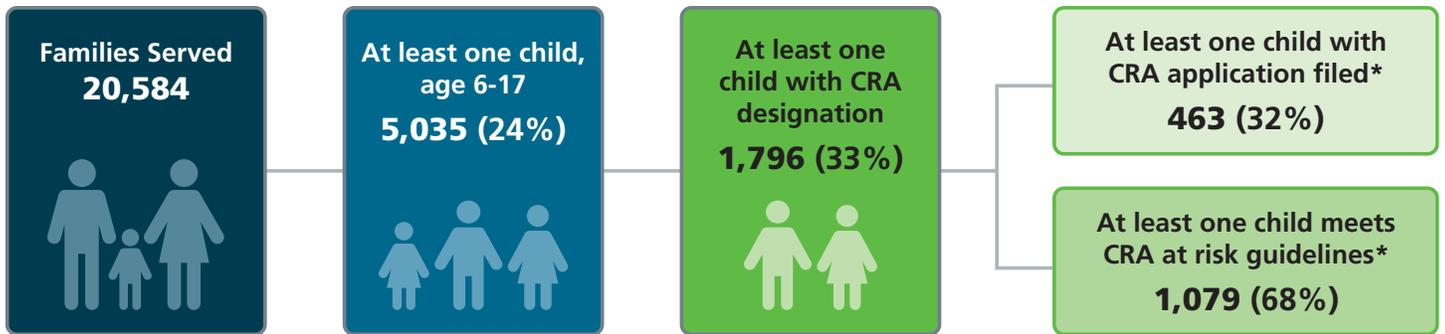


Families with Children Requiring Assistance

Because a family may have more than one child with or at risk of a CRA, and the family is the unit served by the FRCs, this analysis explores the distribution of families with CRA needs across the FRC network.

In 2024, there were 20,584 families served, 24% (5,035) of which had at least one child ages 6-17 years old, making them age-eligible for CRA.

Of those 5,035 families, 33% (1,796) had at least one age-eligible child that met a CRA designation, 68% of which were deemed at risk for CRA, and 32% that had a CRA application filed.



*Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive; families may have multiple children with different CRA statuses

Regionally in 2024, the Boston (24%), Central (29%), and Western (24%) regions had the **largest proportion of families with at least one child who meets CRA at risk guidelines**. The Boston (19%), Central (23%), and Southeast (10%) have the **largest proportion of families with at least one child who has a CRA application filed**.



Spotlights: Strengthening Families and Communities in 2024

Showcase new openings in 2024

The Springfield FRC moved to a new, more accessible, and larger location, holding a ribbon-cutting celebration in February 2024.



Collaborations with Schools and Courts

- **The Holyoke FRC**, the Springfield DCF Supervisor/ Diversion worker, and the region's Community Support Manager met with the Chicopee Public Schools to discuss the work that the Holyoke FRC is doing in the Holyoke Public school. Chicopee is interested in implementing similar interventions in their schools.



- A mother was referred to the **Salem FRC** by the court as the daughter was not attending school. After the intake was completed, it was clear that there were a lot of needs in the home, making attendance a low priority. The single mom of five, a domestic violence survivor, was being evicted because the landlord's daughter was moving into the apartment. Despite being provided notice, she was unable to secure an apartment within her budget. The FRC staff helped the mom apply for RAFT funding assistance, look for available apartments, and create a list of priorities. She secured an apartment and utilized RAFT funds to pay for the first and last months' rent, and the family was able to stay in the same town, allowing them to remain enrolled in the same schools. The FRC staff continues to work with the family to determine the next level of need.

Spotlights: Strengthening Families and Communities in 2024

Fatherhood Engagement

- One participant from the **Lawrence FRC's** "Nurturing Fathers Program" shared how the program helped him to be a better father for his two children. He attended and graduated from the 13-week class eager for assistance as he struggled with his teen daughter and learned to be more patient in his role as a father. He always came prepared for discussion with questions, and overcame many challenges, including an overnight work schedule, to complete the program.

- At the **New Bedford FRC**, the Nurturing Father's Program and Parenting Journey had a significant positive impact on several families. One of the fathers completed the Nurturing Fathers Program and, as a result, was successfully reunited with his children after being separated from them for around 10 years.

Despite the physical distance, as his children live in Hawaii, he now maintains contact with them through regular calls and video chats. In addition, two mothers who completed the Parenting Journey reunited with their children and secured apartments by utilizing the center's resources to improve their situation and finally achieve stability.



FRCs Continue to Provide a Safe Space for Families

- In January, the City of Chelsea referred a woman to the **Chelsea FRC** who was a new immigrant to the country, street homeless, and a victim of a recent crime. The FRC helped the woman secure a safe place to stay for the weekend and provided several needed material items to her. She was ultimately able to stay with a friend temporarily and continued to work with the FRC to secure long-term housing.

- One member of the youth support group at the **Lawrence FRC** was very disengaged and quiet and had a hard time socializing. The group leader planned one-on-one time to engage and intentionally greet him; with consistency, they were able to build trust and rapport slowly. Now when he comes to the group, he talks with others, is more social, and will ask to play board games.

- At the **Great Barrington FRC**, the clinician began seeing a 16-year-old with Down Syndrome in September 2023 for some trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy around trauma from dogs that resulted in a significant and debilitating fear of dogs. The teen's mother had tried to get support for him from other sources but was not able to because of his Down Syndrome condition. Using desensitization therapy, the clinician began to slowly introduce him to dogs and the youth began to do his own work at home by watching shows about dogs. The FRC arranged for him to meet with the FRC director's dog Finn and they became fast friends. By the end of the visit, the youth asked his mom if they could get a therapy dog! He also made plans to meet his high school's therapy dog to form a bond and relieve some of his anxieties around school.





Summary

The Massachusetts Family Resource Center network supports families and communities across the Commonwealth by providing access to various resources, services, events, and programming. Since opening in 2015, the FRC network has served as a critical resource to more than 86,000 families in need of assistance.

Basic needs remain paramount for many of the families served by the FRCs, and the FRCs continue to respond to the myriad challenges faced by the families and communities they serve. FRCs also serve as a critical resource in crisis situations for both families and communities, such as through the emergency support they have been providing for new arrivals.

The FRCs are an important resource for families with children requiring assistance (CRA). About a third of the families served in 2023 who had a child age-eligible for CRA had at least one age-eligible child that met a CRA designation, 68% of which were deemed at risk for CRA, and 32% that had a CRA application filed.

FRCs continue to work closely with agencies and service providers in their communities to ensure families are getting the support they need. In 2024, the FRCs also continued to focus on initiatives for engaging fathers and providing safe spaces for families to thrive.

For more information on a particular FRC, including address, hours of operation, and services available, please visit

www.frcma.org.

Recommended Citation:

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Table A1: Families Served by and Sources of Referrals to FRCs (January–December 2024)

	Western										Southeast-Cape Cod- the Islands										Boston		Northeast						Central				ALL FRCs		
	Amherst	Abol	Great Barrington	Greenfield	Holyoke	North Adams	Pittsfield	Springfield	Ware	Westfield	Attleboro	Barnstable	Brockton	Fall River	Martha's Vineyard	Nantucket	New Bedford	Plymouth	Quincy	Trautman	Boston	Chelsea	Everett	Frammingham	Lawrence	Lowell	Lynn	Salem	Fitchburg	Gardner	Southbridge	Worcester			
Number of families participating	293	816	322	544	775	373	418	415	244	103	320	984	837	594	263	246	577	1,368	590	640	1,018	1,102	1,627	748	1,359	890	1,176	469	620	172	291	390	20,584		
Number of new families participating	155	354	176	298	549	197	276	339	182	87	297	644	651	322	89	158	360	904	206	453	714	924	919	451	852	671	808	362	423	122	187	282	13,412		
Referral Sources for New Families																																			
Friend/family	26	83	16	73	169	4	122	138	47	22	17	140	200	67	22	42	92	63	5	117	31	381	144	20	351	107	343	59	71	7	10	16	3,005		
Self	25	36	11	56	167	16	27	29	28	11	30	14	49	73	30	27	29	223	25	86	46	107	93	54	150	44	221	13	59	15	47	63	1,904		
Other state or human/social service agency	20	49	12	42	42	7	40	40	19	11	19	56	96	27	13	45	45	111	24	44	20	74	42	73	98	100	79	78	63	16	17	42	1,464		
School	29	63	9	12	95	97	12	10	11	10	54	156	45	44	26	10	36	32	53	28	11	105	72	30	47	43	18	98	49	8	44	22	1,379		
DCF	20	23	49	17	31	28	25	75	30	5	24	45	15	41	1	1	87	71	10	40	40	41	30	17	23	33	22	34	78	16	28	36	1,036		
Mental health/Health provider	14	32	17	9	18	32	9	24	29	2	21	7	57	28	8	24	9	41	13	31	29	125	118	10	19	30	34	49	28	54	23	29	973		
Social/Print media	11	63	4	11	6	2	19	6	10	6	17	55	15	8	1	9	30	40	4	63	5	12	58	2	129	36	46	28	27	5	10	45	783		
Court	3	9	0	6	1	14	4	4	7	5	8	11	48	30	0	0	22	13	65	20	6	3	2	2	62	32	16	25	35	13	7	30	503		
Community agency	0	5	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	3	28	1	1	0	0	34	2	0	0	2	1	88		
Mass211	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	1	1	1	8	3	3	2	4	0	0	0	41		
Faith based organization	2	6	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	34		
Other	21	74	5	17	9	4	24	35	16	8	19	66	57	22	5	18	38	141	6	69	20	56	81	5	135	78	102	60	34	8	12	48	1,293		

Table A2: Services Provided by FRCs (January–December 2024)

	Western										Southeast-Cape Cod- the Islands										Boston		Northeast						Central				All FRCs	
	Athol	Athol	East Barnstable	Greenfield	Hopkinton	North Attleboro	Pittsfield	Springfield	Ware	Westfield	Athol	Barnstable	Brockton	Fair Haven	Martha's Vineyard	Nantucket	New Bedford	Plymouth	Quincy	Taunton	Boston	Chelsea	Lowell	Framingham	Lynn	Ware	Lowell	Lynn	Salem	Fitchburg	Greenfield	Southbridge		Worcester
Total number of services provided	3,593	9,478	3,823	5,649	2,372	4,732	2,494	1,741	1,963	599	660	5,075	4,325	3,667	3,610	909	4,718	12,976	3,303	2,325	2,506	11,309	12,841	4,045	6,454	3,206	3,445	7,579	3,208	1,452	2,232	12,665	148,954	
Types of Services																																		
Equipment/Materials	632	626	373	1,306	374	19	365	219	46	40	79	1,620	1,334	922	196	129	295	4,904	85	695	2,130	5,982	3,419	677	2,774	904	2,234	935	162	154	47	459	34,136	
Parenting	376	2,157	873	2,156	103	781	836	85	265	101	22	1,005	286	191	243	149	978	838	781	242	105	520	1,963	512	1,154	416	615	1,126	1,264	230	323	2,867	23,563	
Individual/Family Support	574	2,729	262	803	99	546	106	332	156	23	80	135	1,294	1,007	951	100	2,074	92	430	53	11	638	31	761	234	518	50	2,115	221	201	984	3,994	21,604	
Food/Nutrition	74	517	73	11	94	25	2	322	66	20	117	163	38	211	122	83	138	2,464	260	672	11	285	2,502	205	266	574	85	877	84	13	40	349	10,763	
Recreational	39	835	134	272	241	1,715	63	84	224	318	88	2	479	47	1	72	2	1,217	239	26	45	2,574	48	343	145	74	14	9	55	159	46	45	9,655	
Financial Assistance	939	106	238	581	47	15	41	4	726	7	37	919	76	101	366	103	124	969	270	105	13	32	2,231	13	85	23	49	177	37	335	15	293	9,077	
Health/Mental Health	295	77	113	47	52	7	316	18	34	2	89	310	271	119	274	77	215	1,510	708	126	50	172	992	473	488	206	209	225	21	25	42	524	8,087	
Education	412	1,121	231	25	54	772	119	11	52	1	18	673	36	112	355	28	282	113	122	34	59	60	323	283	39	156	19	220	179	51	142	410	6,512	
Housing	22	451	556	28	660	71	7	55	145	51	44	29	15	511	367	86	251	59	35	131	28	316	344	407	70	57	70	243	348	14	197	794	6,462	
CIA	133	95	213	138	166	39	509	32	115	11	38	27	129	174	440	34	88	502	157	38	30	169	195	168	52	140	15	717	166	32	106	1,552	6,420	
Employment	76	160	342	50	338	204	0	1	32	10	11	104	259	86	52	1	119	164	107	64	8	201	258	65	515	71	7	273	349	172	217	316	4,632	
Adolescent	9	15	185	2	49	45	101	550	33	3	11	0	4	69	10	10	42	8	15	100	6	217	19	86	86	19	32	201	75	11	11	337	2,361	
Legal	3	572	7	10	2	4	16	4	58	7	9	45	56	2	70	0	55	2	1	5	1	17	179	3	502	3	5	151	109	3	7	93	2,001	
Child Care	2	9	87	2	68	16	9	11	6	3	14	40	1	69	75	26	46	6	19	18	5	101	253	45	25	12	8	119	70	8	18	415	1,606	
Leadership	7	8	135	218	24	64	4	13	5	2	3	3	3	47	41	88	11	9	2	74	16	4	24	84	4	13	33	3	191	68	44	37	216	1,495
Other	0	0	1	0	1	409	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	126	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	30	0	0	0	0	1	580	

