

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RELEASED APRIL 2025



stcharlescountykids.org

OVERVIEW

The Community and Children’s Resource Board of St. Charles County (CCRB) periodically conducts a community needs assessment to understand the economic, physical health, educational, and mental health strengths, needs, and gaps of children and families living in St. Charles County. This information is used to support the CCRB’s community planning, funding decisions, and broader decision-making processes.

In 2024, CCRB contracted with Cynthia Berry, Ph.D. of BOLD, LLC to conduct the 2023 community needs assessment that included the following components:

- *CCRB-Funded Program Assessment Report: St. Charles County Youth in 2023*
- *St. Charles County Youth Data – Analyzing Community Trends from 2004 to 2021-2023*

This Executive Summary was created to provide a high-level overview of the findings from these two extensive reports. Data sources used in this summary can be found in one of the above reports.

Copies of the reports can be found at www.stcharlescountykids.org.

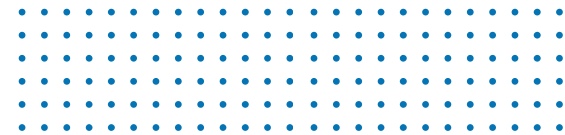


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Key Findings

In 2023, the children of St. Charles County experienced a mix of positive developments and emerging challenges. The Community and Children's Resource Board of St. Charles County (CCRB) played a crucial role in supporting the well-being of children, with **81% of K-12** St. Charles County students benefiting from at least one CCRB-funded prevention service. Additionally, **12.5% of all County children** were served through a CCRB-funded direct service program, such as counseling, crisis intervention, or outpatient psychiatric treatment.



This impressive reach highlights our community's commitment to **fostering a supportive environment** for our youth.

Overall, the data reveals several positive changes in the behavioral/mental health, economic, physical health, and educational well-being of children and families over the past two decades, including:

- Decreased cases and rates of substantiated child abuse and neglect
- Lower rates of youth admissions to substance use treatment
- Lower poverty rates
- Fewer cases of infant mortality
- Increased high school graduation rates

The data also reveals areas needing closer attention.

Emerging concerns center around:

- Youth self-injury, suicide ideation, and suicide
- More intense levels of youth mental health concerns
- Recent rise in juvenile law interactions
- Cost-burdened households
- Provider staffing challenges



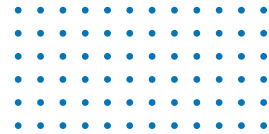
The data from the Program Assessment has highlighted a potential gap that should be monitored by CCRB. Approximately 3.7% of children in the County received CCRB-funded therapeutic mental health services, which is much lower than the estimated 10-12% of children with a serious emotional disorder who may need such service.

To ensure ongoing support for children and families across the County, it is essential for the CCRB to continue funding a **comprehensive range** of readily accessible mental health and substance use treatment services.

By addressing these emerging concerns and building on our success, our community can work towards a **brighter future** for our children.



Community Indicators



Community indicators provide valuable insights into past trends, current realities, and future directions, aiding decision-making for CCRB, funded programs, and the broader community. Although CCRB funding does not directly address all the indicators in this report, these indicators reflect the interplay between the behavioral/mental health, economic, physical health, and educational factors affecting the well-being of St. Charles County's youth. They offer an objective measure of the effects of CCRB's and our community's sustained investments. The CCRB has been tracking these indicators since its founding in 2004.



Behavioral & Mental Health

Behavioral and mental health indicators provide insights into the prevalence of mental health issues, access to services, and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at supporting young people's mental health.



Strengths

- Substance use admissions
- Behavior harmful to the child
- Neglect offenses
- Substantiated cases and rates of child abuse and neglect

Youth admissions for substance use treatment decreased by 57%, representing just 3.6% of admissions for youth and adults. Rates for other indicators continue to decline.



Mixed Results

- Juvenile law violation referrals
- Substance use offenses
- Truancy
- Runaway/absent from home
- Children entering/re-entering state custody
- Psychiatric service utilization for children

Juvenile law violations show progress with a 61% reduction from 2004 to 2022. However recently, the rate has begun to increase.

Other indicators also show long-term decreases with short-term trends indicating an increase in incidents.



Concerns

- Suicide and self-injury
- Violent juvenile offenses
- Abuse and custody offenses
- Out-of-home placements

Providers report the top mental health issues with youth are anxiety and emotional dysregulation.

Concerns are more acute, and youth are spending more time in treatment.

Community Indicators



Economic

Economic well-being indicators are essential for understanding the financial health and stability of a community, providing insights into economic conditions and guiding policy decisions.



Strengths

- Poverty rate
- Free/Reduced lunch enrollment
- Food insecurity

The substantial decrease in youth poverty and food insecurity could reflect the success of existing economic and social programs.



Mixed Results

- Youth homelessness

Public schools reported a recent uptick in the number of youth who are homeless.



Concerns

- Cost-burdened households

Trends indicate increased financial and family stress which heightens the risk of homelessness.



Physical Health

Physical health well-being indicators help identify health trends within a community. By addressing these indicators, communities can implement preventive measures that improve overall health outcomes.



Strengths

- Infant mortality
- Births to teens

The County rates for infant mortality and teen births remains lower than the Missouri rates.



Mixed Results

- Child deaths
- Violent deaths, ages 15-19

All rates have decreased since 2004, but rates have fluctuated in the past five years.

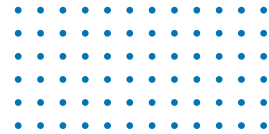


Concerns

- Infants born with low birth weight

The percentage of low-birth-weight infants born in the County increased from 6.4% to 7.4% during 2017-2021.

Community Indicators



Education

Education indicators are essential tools for assessing the performance and effectiveness of education systems. This data helps illustrate the local educational landscape, highlighting areas of strength and identifying opportunities for improvement.



Strengths

- High school graduation rate
- High school dropout rate
- In-school suspension (ISS) rate

The County's graduation rate is higher than the state average and dropout and ISS rates declined.



Mixed Results

- Disciplinary incidents
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS) rate
- MAP testing proficiency

All rates have improved since 2004, but recent data show negative trends, warranting further research.



Concerns

- Student attendance
- 8th grade ELA proficiency (MAP test)

Student attendance and 8th grade proficiency have decreased, indicating ongoing challenges.

Child neglect offenses decreased 47% since 2004.

Births to teens dropped 70% since 2004.



94% of youth had adequate access to food in 2022.

In 2022, 94% of youth graduated high school.

CCRB Prevention Services

CCRB funds multiple prevention programs, the majority of which are delivered in a school setting. Prevention services focus on proactively addressing mental, emotional, and behavioral health challenges among students and youth. These programs aim to promote healthy development, prevent the onset of mental health issues, and reduce risk factors for negative outcomes such as substance use, child abuse and exploitation, violence, academic failure, and emotional distress.

Key Findings

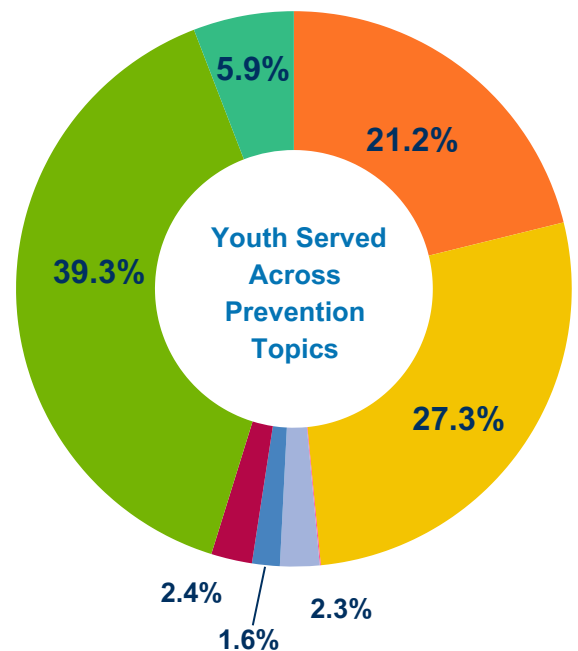
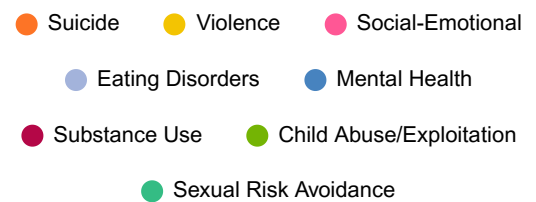
Ten CCRB-funded prevention programs reached 89,742 youth through prevention programs in 2023 (data includes some duplication.)

Ninety percent of CCRB-funded prevention programs reported meeting or surpassing their projected outcomes and client impact in 2023.

In 2024, the CCRB began collecting school-level data to understand where each prevention service was delivered. This more granular data will help facilitate stronger service delivery coordination moving forward.

Recommendation

Collecting data regarding the perception of effectiveness and satisfaction with CCRB-funded school-based prevention services could enhance community relationships and service effectiveness.

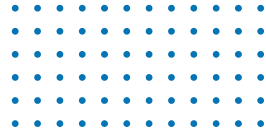


81%

OF SCHOOL-AGED YOUTH
ATTENDED A CCRB-FUNDED
PREVENTION PROGRAM



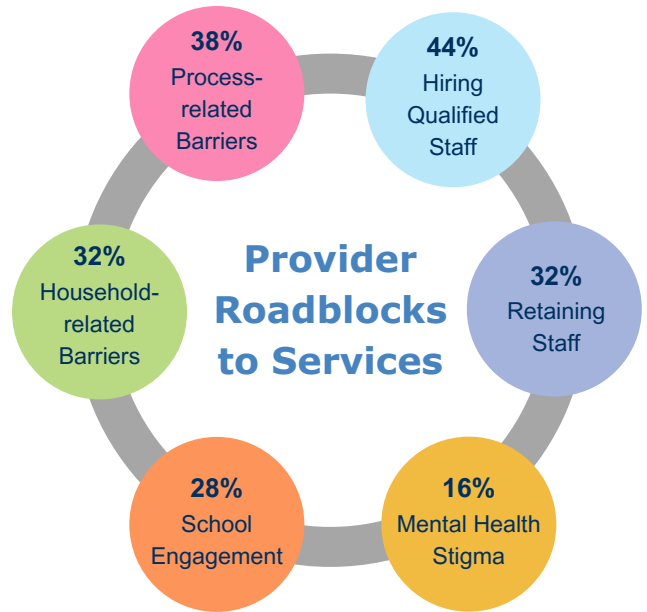
CCRB Direct Services



CCRB funds a wide array of direct services for children. These interventions and support are provided directly to the young person, and sometimes their families. Services can improve overall mental health and well-being for youth, reduce symptoms, and help them develop coping mechanisms when faced with challenges. By addressing the unique needs of each young person, services aim to foster resilience, promote positive development, and ensure that youth have the tools they need to navigate life's difficulties successfully.

Key Findings

The CCRB provided funding to 51 direct service programs in 2023, which impacted 11,552 youth. Overall, programs saw positive changes amongst those served. Areas of concern include substance use among youth, child abuse and neglect, and housing for St. Charles County youth.



Partner Insight



Anxiety, emotional regulation, social skills, and depression were the most often reported concerns with youth served.



Mental health-related symptoms were more acute and take longer to treat, which impacts caseloads and waitlists.

Recommendation

Collecting school-level data will support CCRB efforts to allocate services equitably and appropriately across County school districts and individual schools, ultimately improving service delivery coordination.

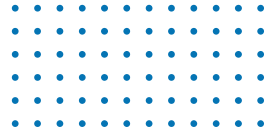
94%

OF PROGRAMS MET OR SURPASSED OUTCOMES



12.5%

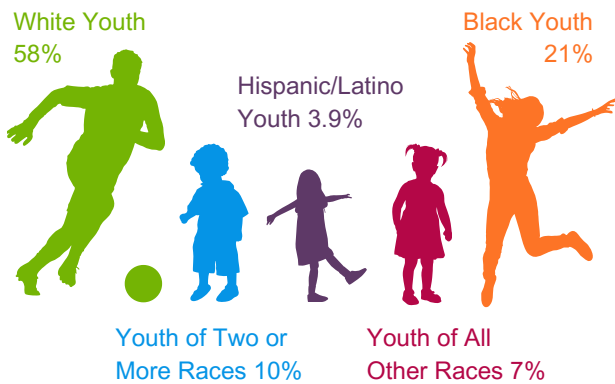
OF YOUTH RECEIVED CCRB-FUNDED DIRECT SERVICES



Demographics

Understanding the demographics of St. Charles County is essential to gaining valuable insights into the community and for tailoring services to meet the needs of residents. In 2022, there were 92,296 youth under the age of 18 in the County, making up 22.3% of the total population of 413,803. The County is predominately White, with Black or African American, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino populations contributing to the County’s cultural diversity.

Direct Service Racial Distribution



Geographically, St. Charles County has 15 ZIP codes. The data revealed strong service utilization in densely populated ZIP codes while less populated ZIP codes showed more limited service engagement.

Programs serving youth are over- or under-represented in certain areas, potentially reflecting service availability or demand.

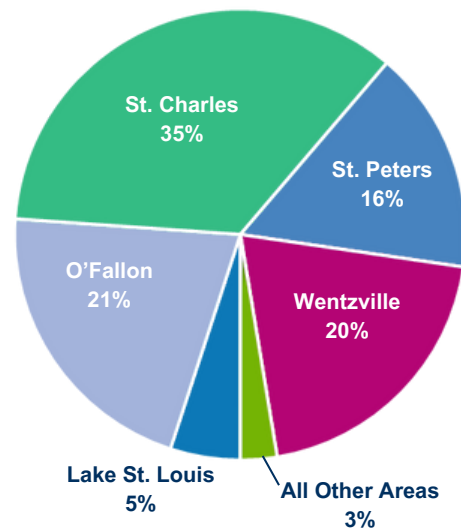
Populations

Across all CCRB-funded direct service programs, the **gender breakdown** among youth clients closely aligned with St. Charles County’s population distribution.

The **racial breakdown** of youth clients showed a more diverse representation than the general population.

White youth were consistently underrepresented across most service types, while Black youth were significantly overrepresented in nearly every direct service category.

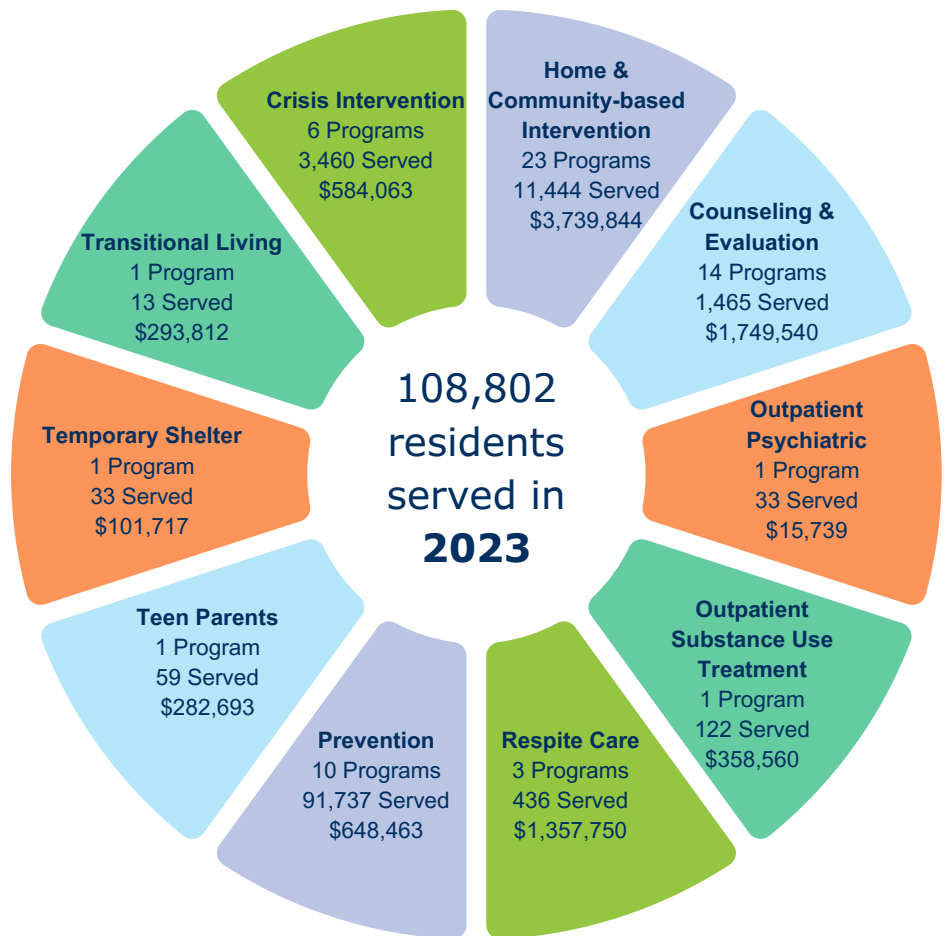
Percentage of Youth Served by Area in St. Charles County



The Bottom Line

Since its founding, CCRB has been committed to improving the lives of children and their families by strategically investing in effective and quality mental health and substance use treatment services.

The data shows CCRB's long-term **investments** have allowed the community to build and sustain a comprehensive system of services for children and families, giving them the opportunity to realize a better tomorrow.



The numbers reported include all youth, caregivers, and professionals served by CCRB-funded programs. Some duplication across programs occurs.



\$9.1M
invested in
61 programs

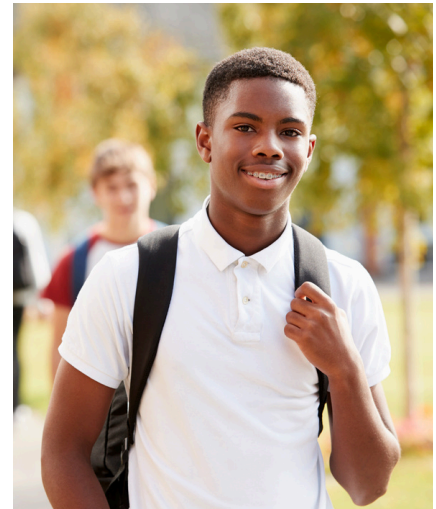


Conclusion

For over 20 years, the Community and Children's Resource Board of St. Charles County (CCRB) has significantly supported the County's youth through various mental health-related programs. While there have been **improvements** in youth mental health, economic stability, physical health, and educational outcomes, challenges like **youth self-injury** and **intense** mental health issues are growing.

To further promote the well-being of St. Charles County's youth, CCRB should collect school-level data for direct services and school-based prevention programs to gauge **service effectiveness**, satisfaction, and **unmet** student mental health needs. CCRB should also examine **disparities** in service utilization to ensure equitable access across different groups and areas, and ensure youth have access to therapeutic mental health services.

Continuing to provide high-quality, effective services that promote resilience and healthy development remains crucial. By focusing on these overarching goals, the CCRB can support all youth in **navigating** life's challenges and **thriving** in a supportive community. Embracing these goals will empower the community to foster a brighter future for all youth, helping them reach their potential in a nurturing environment.





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