



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SENIOR SERVICES**

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Family Care Safety Registry

## **Annual Report Fiscal Year 2023**



# **FAMILY CARE SAFETY REGISTRY**

*Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2023*

## **Table of Contents**

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>FCSR OVERVIEW</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FCSR OPERATIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOLL-FREE CALL CENTER</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LEGISLATIVE AND OPERATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS</b>	<b>7</b>

### **PURPOSE**

The FCSR serves as a central resource for background screening information maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).





## **Executive Summary**

### *New records set in FY 2023*

Fiscal Year 2023 proved to be a challenging, but exciting, year for the Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR). After handling a substantial increase in the number of registrations and background screenings received in the prior fiscal year, the FCSR experienced unprecedented demand for its services again in 2023. While the tremendous upswing in utilization numbers came without warning, by the end of calendar year 2022, the FCSR was able to fill several additional positions. As the new team members were trained and became proficient at their work, the high volume of registration and background screening requests were handled quickly and efficiently. By the middle of the fiscal year, processing times returned to two days or less. This means that providers utilizing the FCSR began to experience quicker lead times, from a background screening perspective, making it easier to place caregivers into much-needed roles in a variety of care settings for children and senior and disabled adults.

The FCSR continues to plan for the future of both the background screening and Good Cause Waiver programs, providing ongoing opportunities for emerging leaders to develop and hone their skills now. Further, the FCSR is embarking on a project that will enhance the way the public and care providers interact with the internet-based FCSR background screening system. More information on these technological innovations will be available in the FY 2024 Annual Report. Confidence and optimism are charging the way in Fiscal Year 2024, with innovative developments on the horizon!

The following pages offer a detailed description of the FCSR and its Fiscal Year 2023 operations.



## **FCSR Overview**

*Established in 2001*

Many employers of caregivers are required to obtain background screening information for licensure, regulatory or contracting purposes. Employers, such as child care centers, schools, home care providers and nursing homes, often have difficulty recruiting and maintaining skilled staff, and delays in obtaining background screening results affect their ability to assess the suitability of job applicants and to hire and retain staff. Similarly, families can be faced with difficult decisions when hiring someone to help care for a child, elderly or disabled person, whether it is locating a child care provider or finding a caregiver to provide services in their private home. The caregiver often has unsupervised access to these most vulnerable family members. The family may have limited time to form an opinion about the suitability of a caregiver and may have little or no opportunity to make inquiries into their background. Several state agencies collect information that can assist the employer or family with making a hiring decision. However, it can take anywhere from several days to several weeks to request and receive background screening information from separate agencies. In response to these needs, the FCSR was created.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), in coordination with the Departments of Public Safety, Social Services and Mental Health, established the FCSR in January 2001 in accordance with the Family Care Safety Act (§210.900 *et seq.*, RSMo). The FCSR serves as a central resource for background screening information maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and DHSS. Those wishing to hire a caregiver may obtain background information by contacting the FCSR via the toll-free call center (866-422-6872) or the internet (<http://health.mo.gov/safety/fcsr/>). Background information reported by the FCSR includes name-based (open) Missouri criminal records, the Missouri sex offender registry, substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, the DHSS Employee Disqualification List, the DMH Employee Disqualification Registry, and child care and foster parent license denials, revocations and suspensions.

The FCSR became operational Jan. 1, 2001. It utilizes an internet-based interface to streamline the process of obtaining background information from the various state agencies. Employers may apply for a user ID and password in order to request background screening information via the internet, and all employers may elect to receive results electronically. In addition, the FCSR's toll-free call center allows callers to receive immediate responses to background screening inquiries, as often as needed, at no cost. The call center is available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with occasional adjustments to the hours based on the volume of calls, registrations and background screening requests.





## **FCSR Operations**

### *23 years in existence*

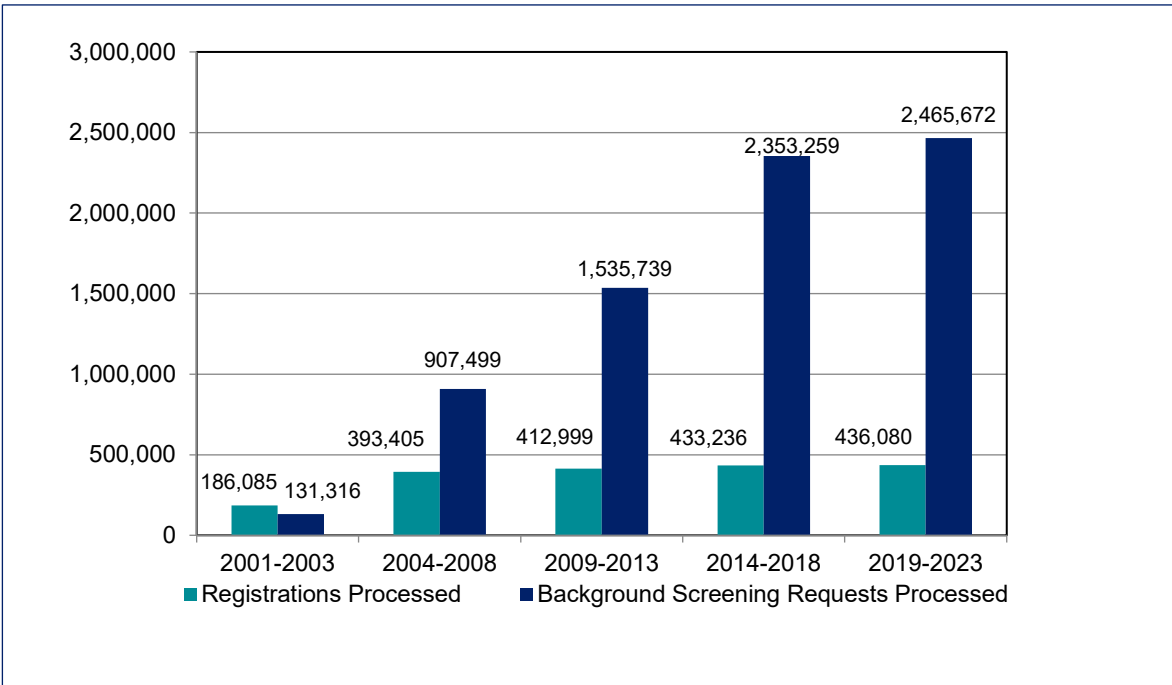
The FCSR maintains a database of caregivers who are required by law to register within 15 days of hire. The caregiver's demographic information, including name, address, social security number and date of birth, is entered into the FCSR Background Screening and Employment Eligibility System (FCSR-BSEES). As part of the registration process, a background screening is conducted using an electronic interface to search criminal history, the sex offender registry, the child abuse/neglect registry, the DHSS Employee Disqualification List, the DMH Employee Disqualification Registry, and child care and foster parent licensure information. The result of the background screening reflects real-time information from these electronic files. A registration notification provides the caregiver with initial background screening results.

After registration is complete, employers may contact the FCSR via the toll-free call center, the internet, facsimile or mail, to obtain a background screening on registered caregivers, at no cost to the requester. A current background screening is obtained using the computerized interface each time a request is received. This means if information is added or deleted from the electronic files by an interfaced agency (DHSS, DESE, DMH, DSS, MSHP), the addition or deletion will be reflected in the results reported. Written notification of the background screening results is sent to both the requester and the caregiver, both of whom may elect to receive results electronically. The caregiver's notification includes the name and address of the inquiring employer.

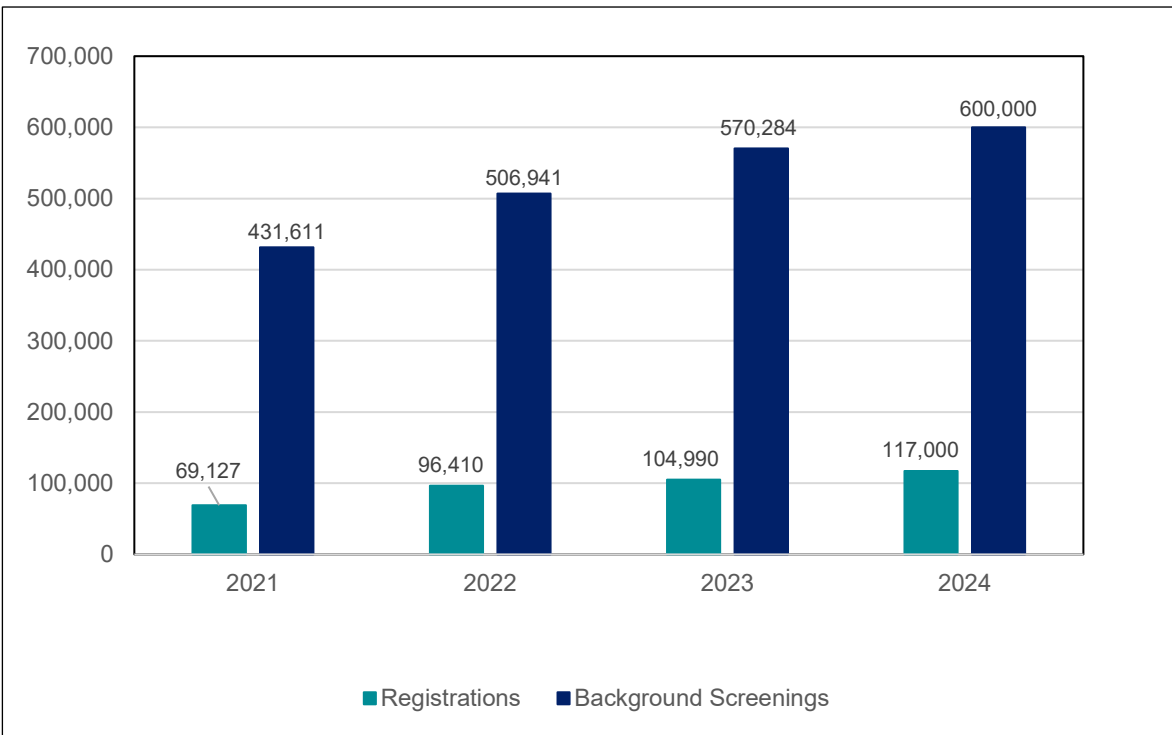
The FCSR is a request-driven system, meaning that information is provided to employers only when they contact the FCSR. The FCSR is not authorized to initiate contact with employers or regulatory agencies to alert them of a change in the background of an individual or to enforce registration or background screening requirements.

From Jan. 1, 2001 to June 30, 2023, the FCSR processed 1,854,939 caregiver registrations and conducted 7,390,204 background screenings. During the first 23 years of operations, the FCSR has processed a dramatically increasing number of background screenings, and an increasing but somewhat steady number of registrations, as shown in the **FCSR Activity** graph at the top of page 3. During FY 2021, demand for FCSR services decreased somewhat due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated decreases in hiring activity amongst providers. However, a marked increase in demand for FCSR services began in FY 2022, as the pandemic became less of an influence on hiring activity, and due to the closure of the Background Screening Investigation Unit (BSIU) at the Department of Social Services – Children's Division (DSS-CD) on July 1, 2021. Closure of the BSIU, along with economic and social factors affecting hiring and background screening demand, have resulted in a 27 percent increase in employer background screening requests, along with a 36% increase in registrations processed and a 32% increase in call center contacts (FY 2020 to FY 2023).

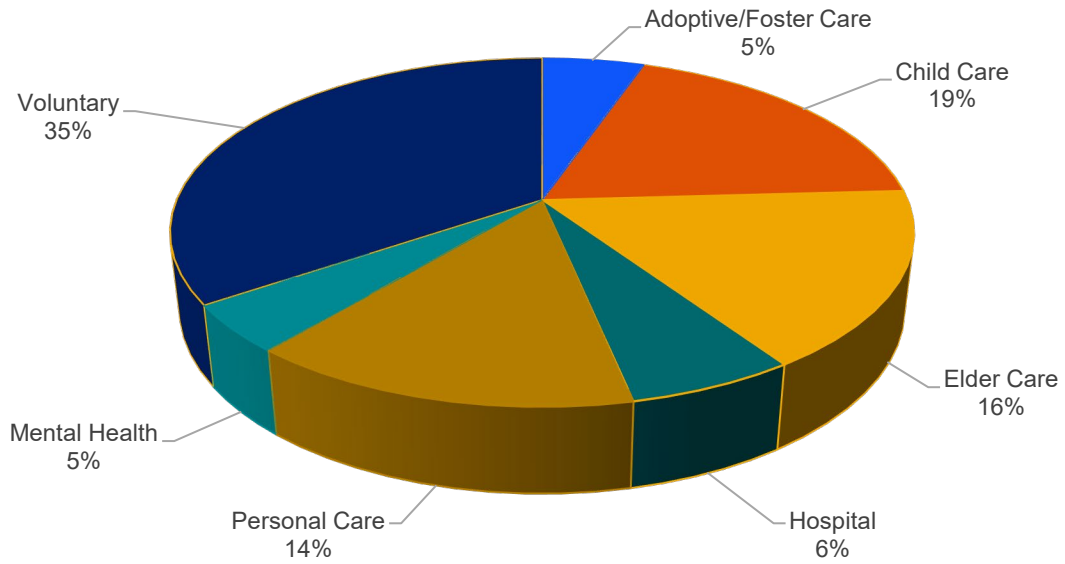
## FCSR Activity – Registrations and Background Screenings FY 2001 – FY 2023



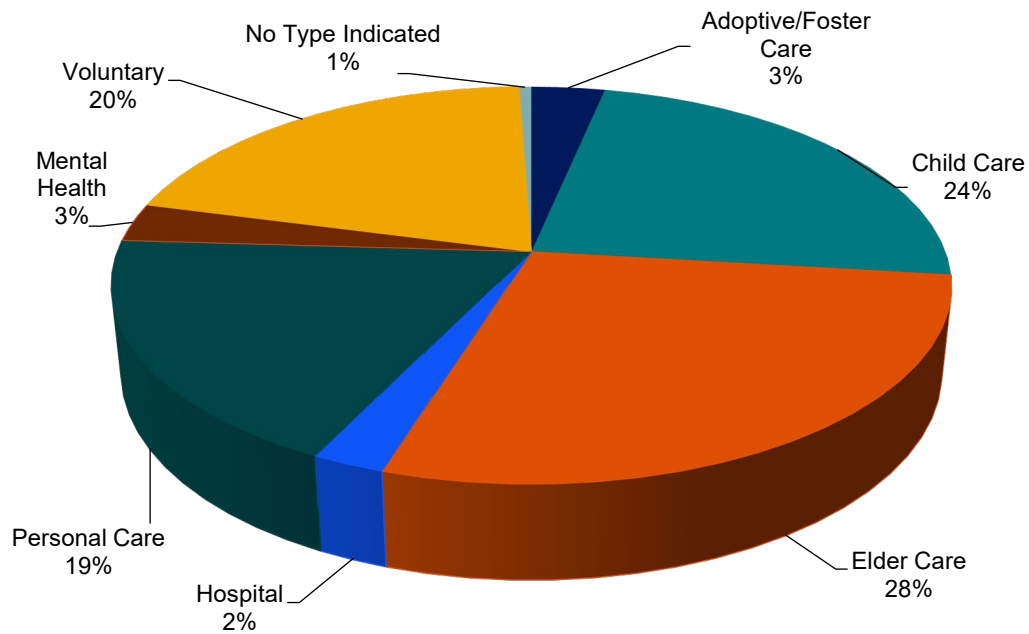
## FCSR Activity – Yearly with 2024 Projections FY 2021 – FY 2024



## Registrations by Caregiver Occupation FY 2023



## FCSR Background Screening Requests by Caregiver Occupation FY 2023





## Toll-Free Call Center

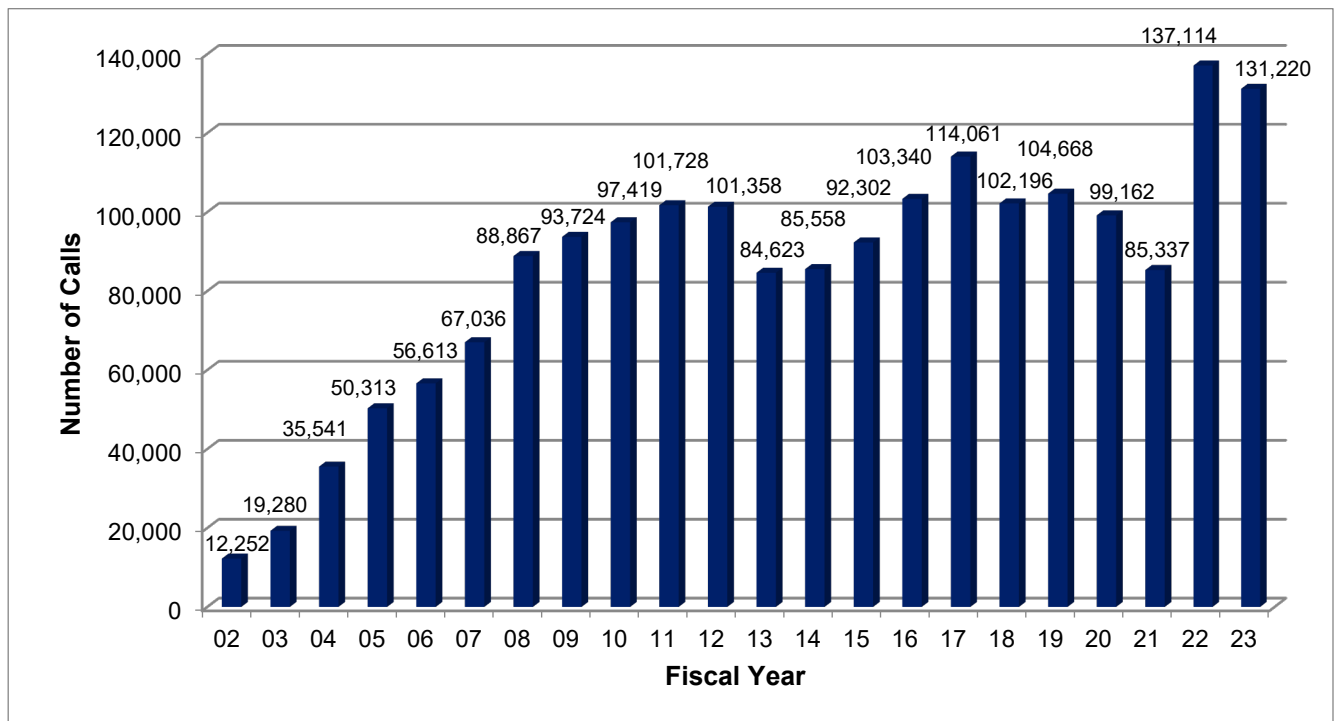
*More than 131,000 calls in FY 2023*

As required by §210.903, RSMo, the FCSR operates a toll-free call center (866-422-6872), so that organizations or families seeking to employ caregiver(s) may request and obtain background screening results over the telephone. When the FCSR is fully staffed, 20 “operators” (19 FTEs) will assist callers by providing background screening results, explaining the results and assisting the caller with other questions and resources, as needed. In addition to the registrations and background screening requests received via internet, mail and facsimile, the FCSR received 131,220 calls via the toll-free call center in FY 2023. While the 2023 call volume reflects a decrease from FY 2022, the overall trend continues upward, as illustrated below. Ongoing, overall increases in call volume reflect factors previously noted, such as the resumption of more normal volumes of caregiver hiring activity after the COVID19 pandemic and the closure of the BSIU in the DSS-CD.

The chart below shows the number of contacts with the toll-free call center since such data became available in FY 2002.

## Call Center Activity

*FY 2002 – FY 2023*







## **Legislative and Operational Enhancements**

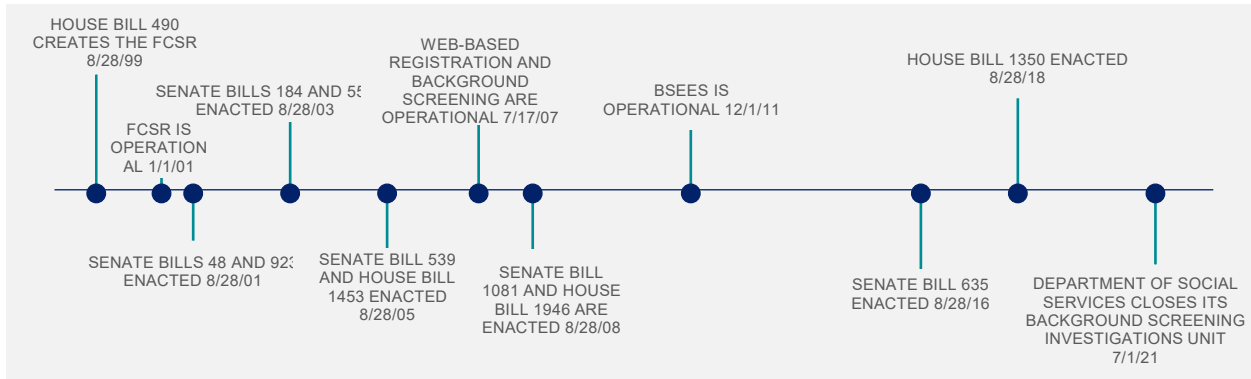
### ***Technological changes on the horizon in 2024***

In FY 2008, the FCSR implemented an internet-based application designed to allow individuals to register online, paying with a debit or credit card. The Web Registration project was developed in collaboration with the Office of Administration—Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) and was implemented July 17, 2007. With 97 percent of registration requests currently arriving via the internet, benefits include improved customer service and response time. Also in 2007, the FCSR began accepting background screening requests via the internet, with 87 percent of such requests now received in this manner. Web-based background screening is available to providers (employers) who are eligible to utilize the FCSR. The benefits of receiving background screening requests via the web have been similar to those of receiving registrations online.

A major technology project implemented in 2011 and 2012, known as the FCSR-Background Screening and Employment Eligibility System (BSEES), made it possible to modernize the registration and background screening functions by rolling several separate web-based and obsolete mainframe systems into one comprehensive, web-based background screening system. BSEES is used by the public for registration purposes, by employers for background screening and Good Cause Waiver confirmation requests, and by FCSR team members for registration, background screening, Good Cause Waiver and appeal functions. In Oct. 2010, the DHSS Division of Regulation and Licensure (DRL) was awarded a grant through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which required enhanced automation, greater speed, exploration of a more intensive background screening process, and a more robust linkage with the MSHP—Criminal Justice Information Services Division. The grant, entitled “Nationwide Program for National and State Background Checks for Direct Patient Access Employees of Long-term Care Facilities and Providers,” partially used to fund the development of BSEES, ended Sept. 30, 2016. Ongoing maintenance and enhancements keep the BSEES system in working order.

Beginning in FY 2024, the FCSR will embark on a new technology project in collaboration with ITSD’s Enterprise Architecture office, to further enhance the online experience of the public, including individuals registering with the FCSR, and providers/employers utilizing the background screening service. Planned elements, to be explored, designed and implemented, include functionality that will allow registrants and business users to manage their own profiles, as well as view the status of registrations or background screening requests, including the steps or items needed to complete the process. Individual users and business users will have a new way of accessing the BSEES system, via a centralized portal, allowing them to navigate to other state agency systems with which they interact.

Changes in FCSR responsibilities have resulted from the passage of legislation and other events. The timeline below illustrates the legislative and operational milestones affecting the FCSR since its inception.



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