



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH &
SENIOR SERVICES**

Family Care Safety Registry

**Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2024**



FAMILY CARE SAFETY REGISTRY

Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2023

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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

Unprecedented Demand in FY 2024

Fiscal Year 2024 proved to be another challenging and successful year for the FCSR. After handling a substantial increase in the number of registrations and background screenings received in the prior two fiscal years, the Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR) experienced ongoing growth in demand for its services in 2024. With a tremendous upswing in utilization numbers that came without warning two years ago, the FCSR was able to fill several additional positions by the end of calendar year 2022. As new team members continued to be trained and become proficient at their work, the high volume of registration and background screening requests were handled quickly and efficiently. During fiscal year 2024, processing times remained at two days or less, and frequently as quick as same-day service. This means providers utilizing the FCSR experienced quick lead times, from a background screening perspective, making it easier to quickly place caregivers into much-needed roles in a variety of care settings for children, seniors 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. With customer service being a major strength of the FCSR, team members are given the opportunity to highlight their own customer service experiences, teaching and fostering hospitality among their peers and leadership. Confidence and optimism are charging the way in Fiscal Year 2025, with hospitality and innovation being cornerstones of the team's philosophy and daily work!

The following pages offer a detailed description of the FCSR and its Fiscal Year 2024 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

24 years in existence

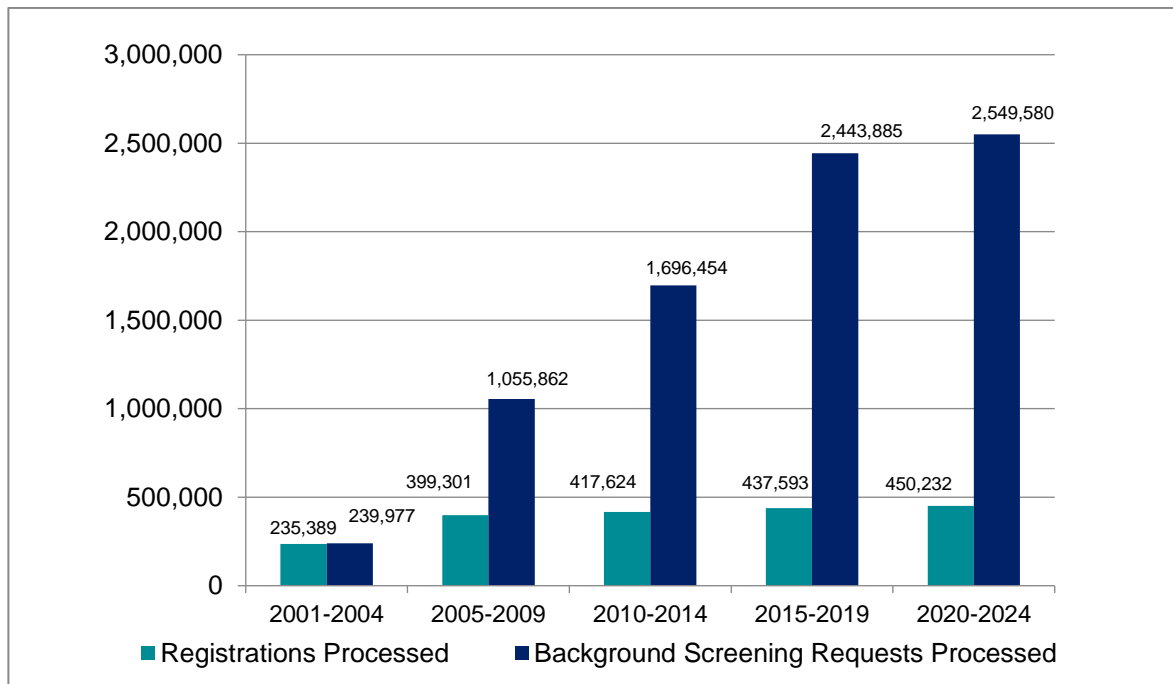
The FCSR maintains a database of caregivers who are required by law to register within 15 days of hire. The caregiver's demographic information, including name, address, social security number and date of birth, is entered into the FCSR Background Screening and Employment Eligibility System (FCSR-BSEES). 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.

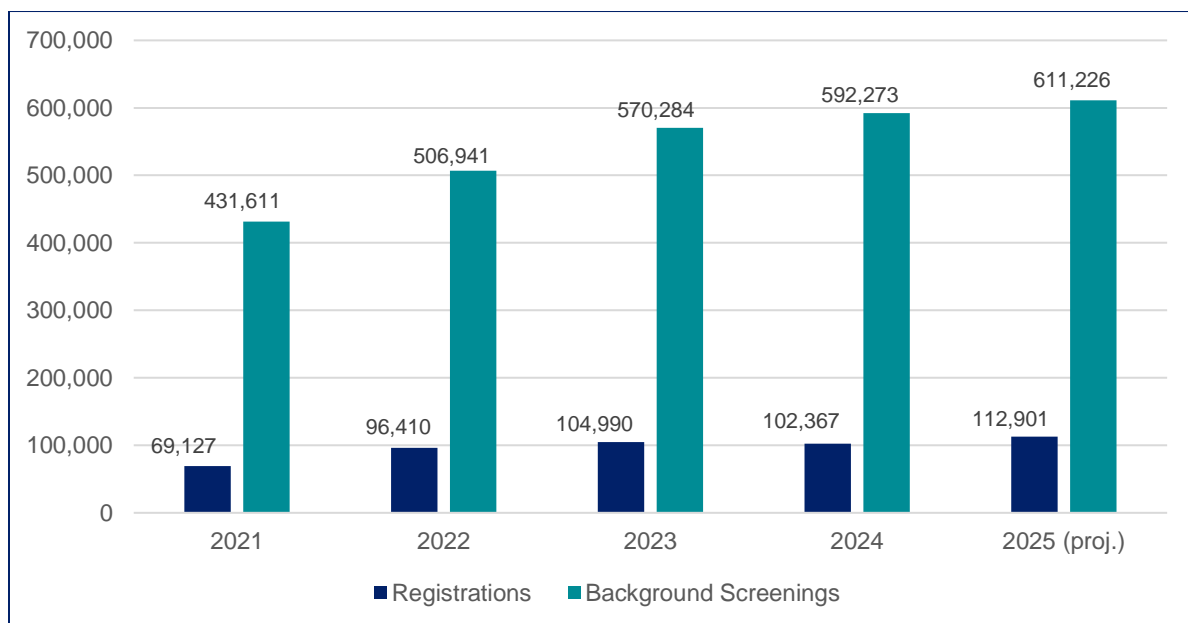
The FCSR is a request-driven system, meaning that information is provided to employers only when they contact the FCSR. The FCSR is not authorized to initiate contact with employers or regulatory agencies to alert them of a change in the background of an individual or to enforce registration or background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

From Jan. 1, 2001 to June 30, 2024, the FCSR processed 1,996,399 caregiver registrations and conducted 8,196,819 background screenings. During the first 24 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 4. During FY 2021, demand for FCSR services decreased somewhat due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated decreases in hiring activity among 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 32% increase in employer background screening requests and a 33% increase in registrations processed (FY 2020 to FY 2024).

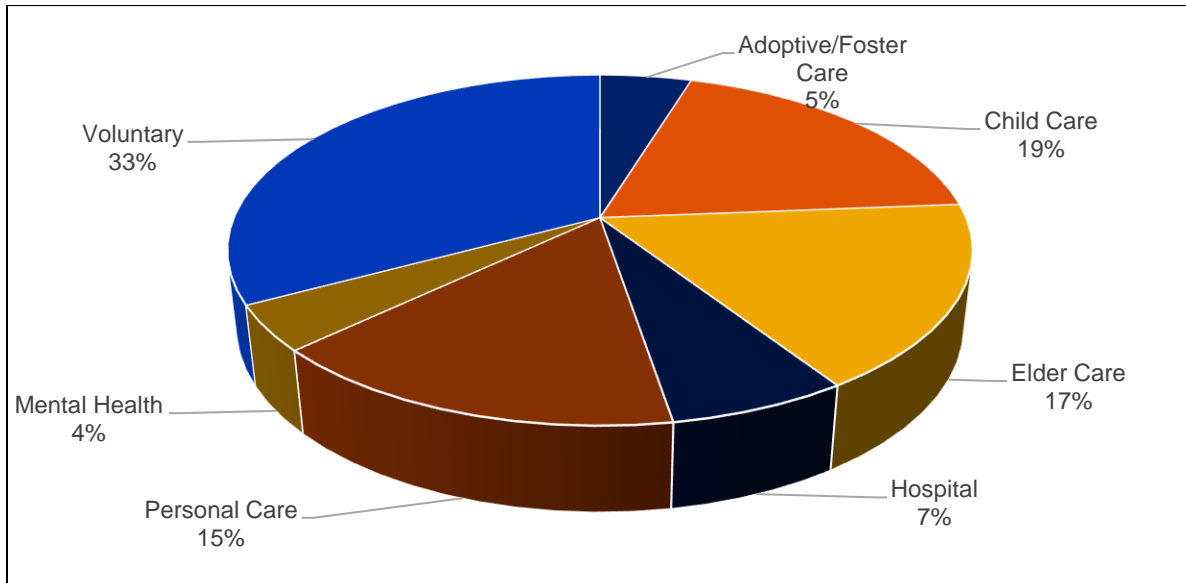
FCSR Activity – Registrations and Background Screenings FY 2001 – FY 2024



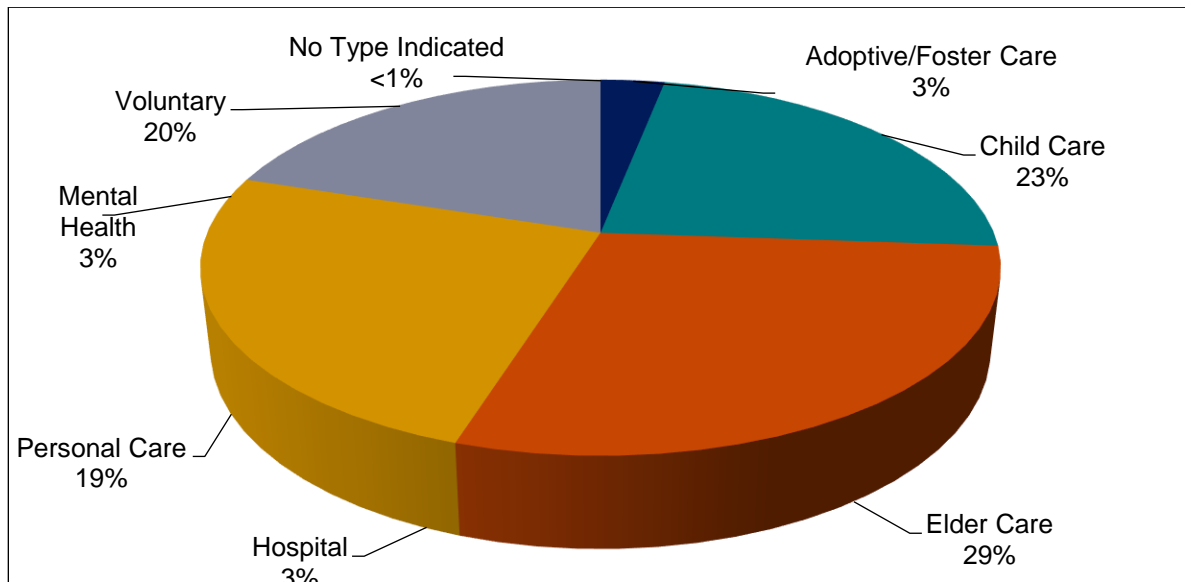
FCSR Activity – Yearly with 2025 Projections FY 2021 – FY 2025



Registrations by Caregiver Occupation FY 2024



FCSR Background Screening Requests by Caregiver Occupation FY 2024





Toll-Free Call Center

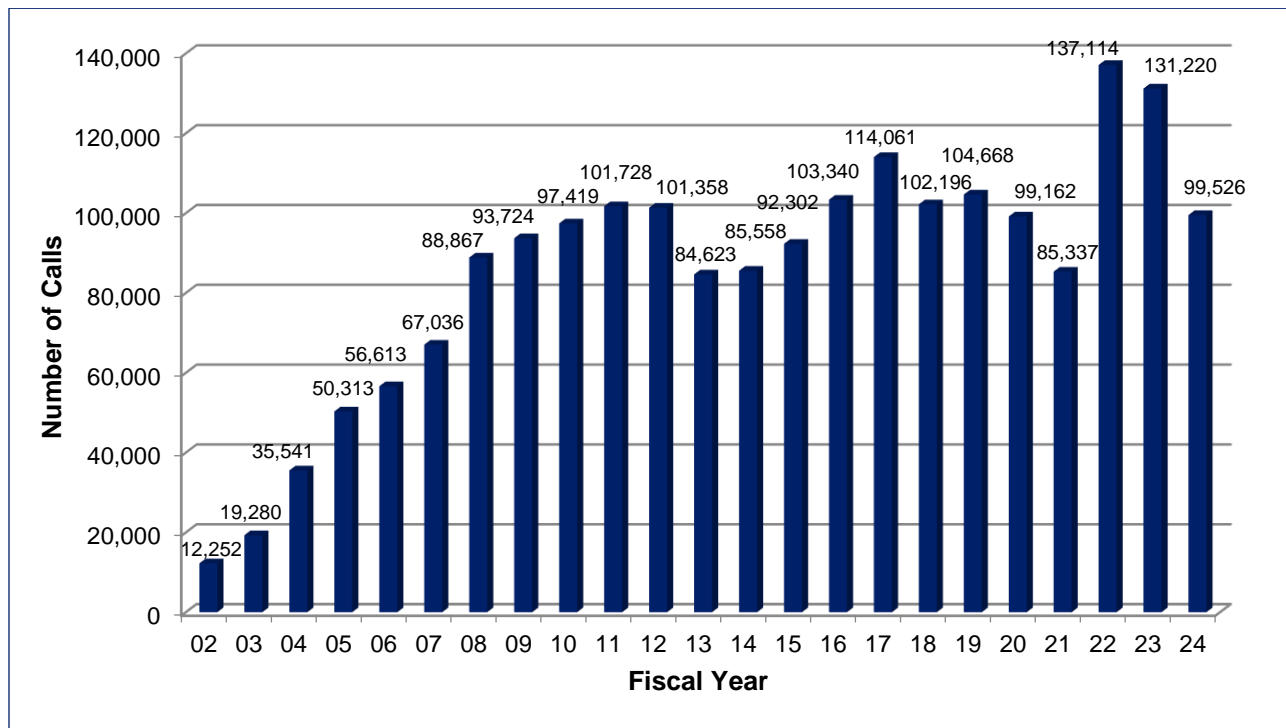
Nearly 100,000 calls in FY 2024

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” (18 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 99,526 calls via the toll-free call center in FY 2024. While the 2024 call volume reflects a decrease from FY 2022 and 2023, the overall trend continues upward, as illustrated in the chart below.

The chart 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 2024





Legislative and Operational Enhancements

Technological enhancements planned within the next few years

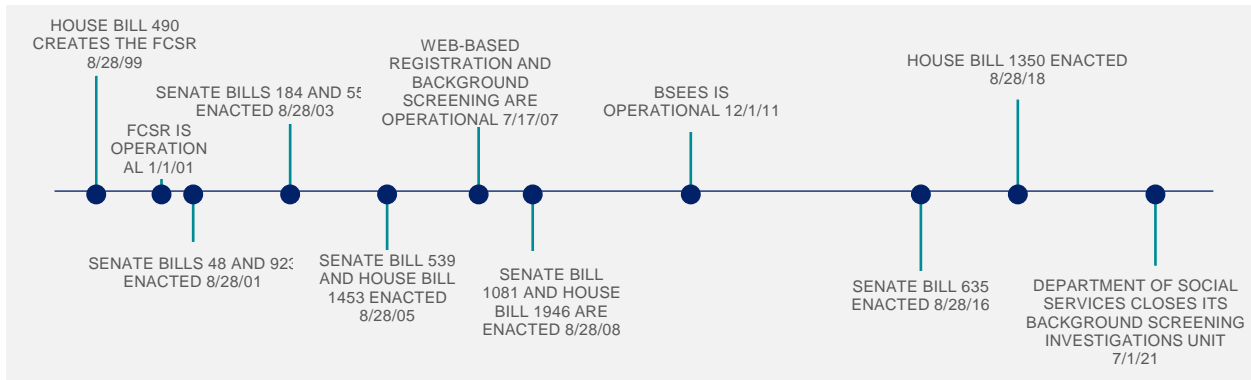
In FY 2008, the FCSR implemented an internet-based application designed to allow individuals to register online, paying with a debit or credit card. The Web Registration project was developed in collaboration with the Office of Administration—Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) and was implemented 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 88 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 ensure that the BSEES system functions efficiently within current and evolving requirements.

Within the next several years and subject to the availability of funding, the FCSR hopes to embark on a new technology project in collaboration with ITSD’s Enterprise Architecture Office. This project will further enhance the online experience for 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, view the status of registrations or background screening requests, and the steps or items needed to complete the process. Individual users and business users would 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.





Challenges and Recommendations

Potential exists to decrease postage expenditures

CHALLENGE

Postage costs remain high as many needs compete for general revenue funding.

Current statute requires the FCSR to provide background screening results in writing to registrants. It does not require that registrants provide an email address for the purpose of these notifications, resulting in unnecessary use of ink, paper and postage. Although the FCSR has made significant strides in reducing the number of screening result letters that must be printed and mailed by encouraging providers and registrants to receive them electronically, fiscal year 2024 postage expenses amounted to \$73,959. In FY 2024, 166,676 registration and background screening notification letters had to be printed, prepared and mailed, requiring the annual equivalent of one FTE.

RECOMMENDATION

Amend section 210.909, RSMo to require registrants to submit a valid email address to the FCSR. Stipulate that notifications to registrants will be provided via electronic format. Further stipulate that registrations and background screenings may be processed without an email address, but no registration or background screening notifications will be sent to registrants without an email address, i.e., no hard copies will be mailed.

Because approximately 69% of printed letters go to registrants, this legislative change could reap more than \$51,000 in postage cost savings, and could free up .69 FTE time to be dedicated to other important tasks.