



# Family Connects Chicago 2024 Report

## Supporting All Chicago Families + Newborns

Family Connects Chicago 2024 Report

Prepared for the Chicago Department of Public Health,  
MICAH (Maternal, Infant, Child & Adolescent Health) Bureau



# Table of Contents

*About this report.....3*

*Terms used in this report.....4*

*Letter from CDPH & the MICAH Bureau.....5*

*About Family Connects Chicago.....6*

*Why was Family Connects created?.....9*

*How is FCC working with Chicago communities?.....10*

*How we're making a difference.....14*

*How you can get involved.....16*

*Where to learn more.....17*





# About this report

*This report is designed to explain the purpose and importance of the free Family Connects Chicago program.*

It can serve as a tool for learning how FCC supports and addresses the needs of people across our city; getting the word out about FCC in your community; or helping your loved ones get the care they deserve.

# Terms used in this report

## “Woman” vs. “Birthing person” vs. “Mom/mother”

This report describes the experiences and outcomes of pregnant and postpartum **“women” and “moms/mothers.”** CDPH recognizes that not all people who have been pregnant or given birth identify as a woman, and we acknowledge the diversity of gender identities among those who may become pregnant or give birth.

This report intentionally uses the terms **“woman,” “birthing person/people” and “mom/mother”** interchangeably based on the narrative and definitions used in the data sources. Additionally, the use of **“women”** is used to underscore the specific vulnerabilities and gender-related challenges faced by individuals identified as female at birth. Notably, this usage is not meant to disregard or silence those who identify differently but aims to focus attention on societal disparities linked to gender assignment at birth.

## “Hispanic” vs. “Latinx”

CDPH acknowledges that multiple terms can describe the Hispanic population, including Latino/Latina or Latinx.

[A 2023 study of U.S. adults](#) with Hispanic or Latino origins found that 52% preferred the term **“Hispanic,”** 29% preferred **“Latino,”** and 4% preferred **“Latinx,”** 15% had no preference. While we know that **“Hispanic”** is the most preferred term, CDPH has used **“Latinx”** throughout this report because it was the term used to collect data.



# Supporting all Chicago families and newborns

## Welcome to the Family Connects Chicago 2024 report!

Family Connects Chicago is one of the most important resources available to Chicago families. Our program offers a free nurse visit to every family with an infant born at an FCC partner hospital. During this visit, birthing parents and infants get a checkup, and the entire family has the opportunity to get answers to important questions, talk about any issues and get connected to resources from diapers to mental health care. We're keeping Chicagoans healthier from the moment they're born, with the goal of reducing our city's maternal and infant mortality rates.

The Family Connects program is just one of the many ways our city is focusing on health equity. Not all families or communities have the same access to healthy food; good healthcare; neighborhood safety; clean air and water; and other factors that determine how healthy you are. With Family Connects, everyone gains equitable access to newborn care — everyone is offered a nurse visit and free resources to help their families thrive. This early care is crucial to reducing our city's mortality rates.

This support is important for every Chicago family, particularly our Black residents. Black women are less likely to receive essential reproductive health services, which impacts the perceived health needs of Black women. You can read more about these disparities in this report.



[Click here to listen to the Healthy Chicago podcast episode about steps you can take to keep you and your newborn safe and healthy at home.](#)

Family Connects' capacity to serve Chicago families is only growing. In 2024, we added two new partner hospitals, bringing our total number up to 11. We're now within reach of working with every Chicago birthing hospital in 2025. Beyond our home nurse visits, FCC created six Community Alignment Boards (CABs), representing six regions of our city, so we can communicate with hospitals and community groups to understand what residents really need. You can read more about CABs and their work in this report.

Our success depends on working together, and together, we can achieve incredible results and lower mortality rates for Chicago's birthing parents, newborns and families. "We always say that one organization can't do it all," Laura Leon, co-director for Sinai Community Institute's CAB, told us. "In order to provide all the services needed for our families, it's important to engage partnerships."

And in Chicago, we're all proud partners.

**MICAH Bureau**  
**(Maternal, Infant, Child & Adolescent Health)**  
**Chicago Department of Public Health**

# About Family Connects Chicago



*The first few weeks with a baby can be an overwhelming time for any family. With a newborn to care for, a birthing parent recovering from childbirth, and partners and other family members adjusting to their new roles, a lot of questions can come up. [Family Connects Chicago](#) is here to help.*



## What is Family Connects Chicago?

Family Connects Chicago is a free, in-home nurse visit available to families that live in Chicago and deliver babies at participating hospitals, including foster parents, adoptive parents, families experiencing a loss, and families who already have other children. The goal of the program is to improve the health and happiness of birthing people, newborns, and their families in every community. FCC gives all participating families the support to confidently care for their babies, themselves, and their families.

## How does the program work?

Families who deliver babies at participating hospitals are automatically connected with an FCC team member, who signs them up for an in-home visit. During that visit, nurses check on birthing parents, infants, and the whole family, and help them get tools and services.



[Learn more about Family Connects Chicago](#)



[Learn more about keeping your Chicago family safe and healthy](#)

## About Family Connects Chicago

# After moms give birth:

## Family Connects gets in touch to schedule your visit

You do not have to do anything in advance to schedule your visit—an FCC team member will come see you during your hospital stay or call you after you get home to see if you would like an in-home visit, and find the best time for you and your family.

## A nurse comes to your home

A nurse will come to your home for a physical checkup on the baby and birthing parent, and talk about support and resources for your whole family. Prefer to have your visit somewhere else? You can do that too—your nurse will come wherever is best for you.



## Your family gets support with whatever you need

Your visit is a safe space for you to get the care and support you need. Your nurse is there to provide care, answer your questions, and connect you to community resources that will ensure you and your family have everything you need to be happy and healthy.

Family Connects is also here to support families through the tragedy of infant loss. You are still eligible for a nurse visit if your family [has experienced such a loss](#); your nurse can help you connect with resources like the Illinois stillbirth certificate for bereaved families. Know that you are never alone.



[See a Family Connects Chicago home visit](#)



## Participating hospitals

*Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center*

*Advocate Trinity Hospital*

*Humboldt Park Health*

*John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County*

*Mt. Sinai Hospital Chicago*

*University of Chicago Medical Center*

*Roseland Community Hospital*

*Rush University Medical Center*

*St. Anthony Hospital*

*Swedish Hospital*

*UI Health*



See an up-to-date list  
at [onechifam.org/familyconnects](https://onechifam.org/familyconnects)



## About Family Connects Chicago

# Why was Family Connects Chicago created?

CDPH launched the FCC program after speaking with hundreds of medical and community leaders across Chicago.

They told us that:

- 1 **We need to better reach families with newborns who are not connected to care**
- 2 **We need to make our available services more family-centered**

Today, Family Connects works to do just that.



## Helping families + infants get equitable care

Families and infants need a lot of support in the first weeks and months after bringing baby home. But access to that support isn't always equitable.



96%

of FCC families say **they needed education and/or other resources** in the first few weeks of their infant's life



7%

of new mothers participating in FCC say they felt symptoms of postpartum depression like **sadness, anxiousness, or feeling overwhelmed**

4x  
maternal  
mortality

Black women in Chicago are four times more likely to **die from pregnancy-related causes** than non-Black women.

3x  
infant  
mortality

The rate of death in the **first year of life for Black babies** in Chicago is three times higher than the rate among non-Black babies.

Family Connects nurse visits focus on physical, mental, and emotional health—and connecting ALL families with the resources they need to thrive.

## About Family Connects Chicago

# How is FCC working with Chicago communities?

**Family Connects Chicago works with six Community Alignment Boards (CABs) throughout the city.** They help us connect families with FCC services, learn about families' needs, and identify policy changes that could help us better serve families. In 2023, the CABs made big strides in these areas. And they helped FCC add our program to more Chicago birthing hospitals.

**By dividing our city into six community areas, each with its own Community Alignment Board, we can learn about and best meet the needs of families and infants in specific Chicago communities.**

Our CABs help us understand which families need more or different support and resources. They help us react quickly to these needs and correct neighborhood-level inequities. Most importantly, our CABs help us do better for all Chicago families and infants, no matter where they live.

## FCC Community Alignment Board Regions

### Region A and B: Sinai Chicago

**Humboldt Park Health**  
**St. Mary**  
**Rush University Medical Center**  
**John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County**  
**Mt. Sinai Hospital Chicago**  
**UI Health**  
**St. Anthony Hospital**

### Region C: Everthrive Ill.

**Roseland Community Hospital**

### Region D: Everthrive Ill.

**University of Chicago Medical Center**  
**Advocate Trinity Hospital**

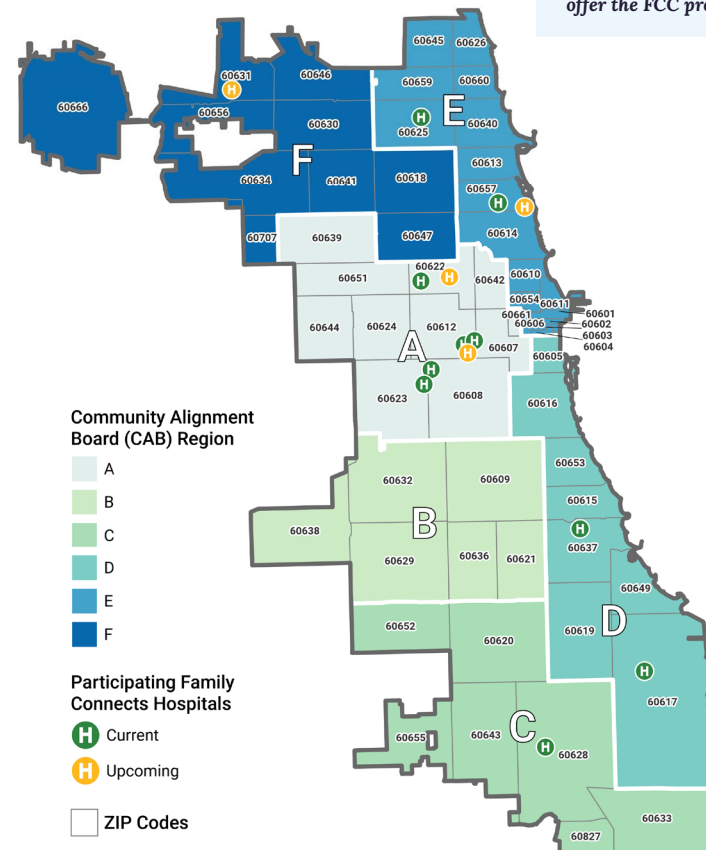
### Region E: Everthrive

**Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center**  
**St. Joseph**  
**Swedish Hospital**  
**Northwestern**

### Region F: Metropolitan Family Services

**Resurrection**

**Bold:** Denotes current hospitals that offer the FCC program



About Family Connects Chicago

## Inside our Community Alignment Boards

FCC's six Community Alignment Boards (CABs) are made up of dozens of people working to improve the lives of Chicago families.

Meet two of them.

**Hailey Steele, Birth Equity Manager, Everthrive Illinois**  
**Laura Leon, co-director for Sinai Community Institute CABs**

In their leadership roles, Hailey and Laura work to manage and maintain their Community Alignment Boards. They hear from colleagues, delegate organizations, and community groups and members, then use what they've learned with FCC nurses to help offer families more and better services.

**“The home visit is just one piece of the puzzle,” Hailey says.**  
“Everything that has to do with trying to improve or change the systems families have to navigate comes from Community Alignment.”

For example, an Englewood family needed mental health counseling, but the wait list at their local provider was too long. Hailey reached out to partners about availability, and to the provider about the wait list. This collaboration ensured the family got care quickly, and that Hailey understood where more mental health resources were needed.



**“ The home visit is just one piece of the puzzle.”**

—Hailey Steele, Everthrive CAB

About Family Connects Chicago

## Inside our Community Alignment Boards

Laura, Hailey, and their CAB teams are constantly paying attention to which organizations and people need help, who's able to offer help, and how they can connect the two.

*“ We look at leveraging the strengths and the connections. Families' time is limited; they have their hands full trying to take care of themselves and their baby.”*

Laura and Hailey say mental health support and baby items like cribs and carseats are among the most requested resources in their communities. The Chicago Department of Public Health can help with some of these requests, while others are outsourced to CAB partners like faith organizations and nonprofits.

Success is measured in big and small ways. Laura says it makes her day when Sinai's CAB connects a family with a needed resource—like the time she worked with a pastor to get a double stroller to a mom with twins. In the long term, Laura says, **Family Connects is about building a system to help a mom have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.**



—Laura Leon,  
Sinai Community Institute CABs

About Family Connects Chicago

# How is FCC working with Chicago communities?

Family Connects and our community partners connect families with resources that go far beyond immediate healthcare needs. That includes support for daily living, like food, shelter, and transportation, as well as childcare plans.

*In 2023, FCC nurses provided 4,418 need-based referrals to 898 families based on needs identified during their free home nurse visit.*



Source: FCC Salesforce Database.



**“When you bring your partners together, you can work as a team to improve things.”**

—Laura Leon,  
Sinai Community Institute CABs

Hear what Chicago families say about FCC:



Naja E., mother of 2



Paola A., mother of 3

# How we're making a difference

Two new hospitals joined the Family Connects Chicago program in 2024; 10 hospitals participated in 2024, up from eight in 2023. And four more have committed to joining in 2025.

*We're now within reach of working with every Chicago birthing hospital in 2025.*



**“I’m trying to improve the healthcare system so pregnant people can have everything they need without stigma or fear.”**

—Hailey Steele, Everthrive CAB



## 2023 Results



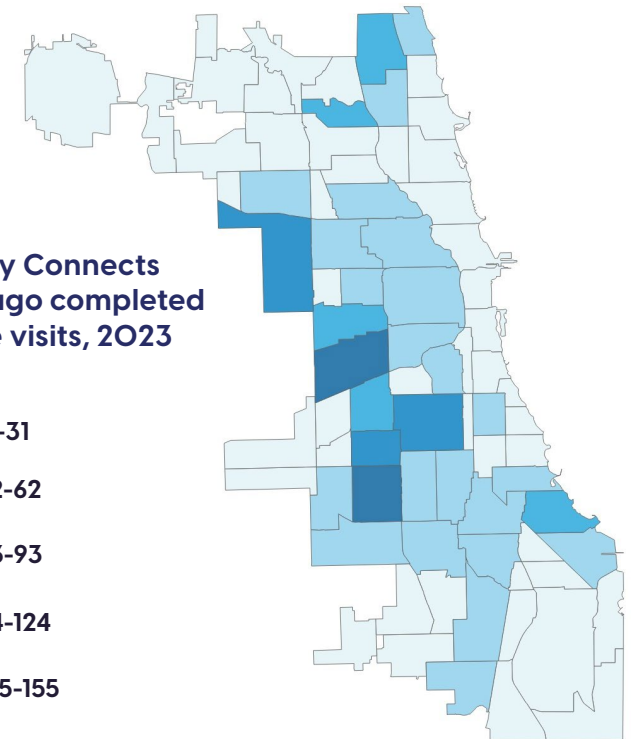
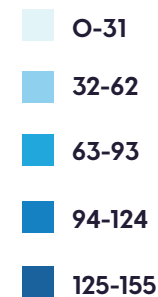
# 2,649

Nurse Visits

# 77

All Chicago Community Areas Served

Family Connects Chicago completed home visits, 2023



# 2023 Results



**96%** of families told us Family Connects Chicago is helpful

**56%** of families offered an FCC visit decided to accept

**39%** of eligible families completed their free nurse visit



**81%**

of participants who completed an FCC visit identified as Latinx or Non-Latinx Black; 9% identified as white; 3% Asian; and 1% Other.

 **250+**

partner organizations collaborated with Family Connects Chicago to get out the word and provide care for families and babies throughout the city. They include schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, medical providers, universities, and more.

**92%** of families who responded to 30-day followup calls *went to a **checkup*** to make sure their baby was healthy.

**91%** went to a *maternal postpartum appointment* to check on the mom's health.

**86%** of families *needed referrals for community support*.

# How you can get involved



Family Connects Chicago automatically gets in touch with every new mom who gives birth at a participating hospital. But we need your help to connect with even more pregnant people across Chicago.

*By reaching more Chicago families, we can work toward healthier futures for everyone.*



## Talk to your loved ones about the program

Helping more people use FCC services starts with awareness. If a pregnant person knows about the program in advance, they can choose to give birth at a participating hospital. And when they're approached about the program after giving birth, they'll be ready and excited to talk.

**“Family Connects Chicago is a wonderful opportunity to create a universal newborn support system.”**

—Laura Leon,  
Sinai Community Institute CABs

**Reach out to us**

✉ [FCC@cityofchicago.org](mailto:FCC@cityofchicago.org)



# Where to learn more

Visit [onechifam.org/familyconnects](https://onechifam.org/familyconnects) for more details on joining the FCC program, what parents can expect during their nurse visit, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Get connected with more resources for your family at [onechifam.org/family-wellness](https://onechifam.org/family-wellness).

 [FCC@cityofchicago.org](mailto:FCC@cityofchicago.org)

 [@chipublichealth](https://www.instagram.com/chipublichealth)

 [facebook.com/ChiPublicHealth](https://facebook.com/ChiPublicHealth)

 [@chipublichealth](https://twitter.com/chipublichealth)

 [tiktok.com/@chipublichealth](https://tiktok.com/@chipublichealth)



 [Watch an overview of OneChiFam](#)



[onechifam.org/familyconnects](https://onechifam.org/familyconnects)

Family Connects Chicago 2024 Report

Prepared for the Chicago Department of Public Health,  
MICAH (Maternal, Infant, Child & Adolescent Health) Bureau  
Chicago, IL: City of Chicago; December 2024

