

Family Resources Report 2023-24

Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)
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From the period of: September 2023 to August 2024
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Background

Family Resources supports faculty members, staff, and students at the University of Manitoba as they navigate through the challenges of balancing work and study life with family care responsibilities. The main services provided are client support and resource navigation within the UM institution as well as to external community organizations.

Family Resources was established in October of 2022 and is part of the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), reporting to the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs). The Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) is the point of contact at the University for family care-related matters.

Overview

Family Resources assists clients on a variety of family care topics. Additional programming stands to support the UM community with the goal to provide relief and aid in reducing some barriers and challenges to achieving academic and professional success. Outreach is done through various modes of communication via information booths, presentations, e-newsletters, and social media. The FRC has worked jointly with other units and faculties on family-friendly projects and initiatives. A couple of new projects were launched within this reporting year which are the UM Babysitter Directory and the Adult Companionship Services Directory. The mission continues to keep current inventory and secure future breastfeeding/lactation-friendly spaces. The new Family-friendly University Committee was conceptualized and launched this year with a mandate to promote a family-friendly campus culture. The Family Resources webpage was updated and information was added on the Join our academic community webpage on relocation support.

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Programs and Services

Client support

From September 2023 until August 2024, the inquiries primarily focused on the following topics:

- General questions about the UM and its services
- General questions about Family Resources and its services
- Childcare search assistance
- Relocation support
- General health and wellbeing

Family Resources refers clients to known and established services and programs within the University. Additionally, we lean on external community organizations to broaden the supports that are provided to clients. For other inquiries that are outside the scope of Family Resources, clients can choose to grant permission for their inquiry to get referred to another unit or department.

Family-friendly Programming and Events

Family Resources makes a conscious effort to reach out and collaborate with faculties/schools/units on family or child-friendly events on the Fort Garry campus. In the past, the FRC has worked jointly with Human Resources, Physical Plant, Bruce D. Campbell Farm & Food Discovery Centre, International Centre, Faculty of Science, among others.

Maintenance of digital directories

The UM Babysitter Directory and the Adult Companionship Services (ACS) Directory serves as digital platforms that lists student information for the UM community to hire for babysitting and companionship services.

Webpage maintenance and digital/social media

The FRC works with the Provost Office's Communications Coordinator to maintain, brainstorm, and develop content for the Family Resources webpages and digital/social media accounts. Family Resources, along with the Provost Office, have e-newsletters that are distributed on a regular basis as well as social media accounts on Instagram.

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Outreach to faculties/units/departments

The FRC promotes the Family Resources programs and services in various ways through meetings, presentations, monthly open house events, and information booths.

Support/discussion groups

Family Resources is hosting a support group for parents and caregivers of children with disability, led by Dr. Christine Stewart, Professor of Women and Gender Studies. The group meetings are held at the Student Wellness Centre and is open to students, staff, and faculty members.

On-site drop-in hours and monthly open houses

Family Resources has an open-door policy and welcomes all drop-in visitors. To ensure that the FRC is available, clients can either book a one-on-one appointment or drop by during the monthly open house which usually occurs every last Wednesday of the month from 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Programming Highlights

The **New Faculty Relocation Support** is a partnership with the HR Client Services – Immigration team to ensure a smooth transition for the newly hired faculty member and other academics. Relocation support includes assistance with the housing accommodation search, navigating the education and early childhood learning system in Manitoba, referrals to community organizations, and more.

The **Childcare Program Search and Waitlist Assistance** service began in April 2024, offering help to parent faculty members, support staff, and students with entering their information onto multiple childcare program waitlists. This service aims to save the client time and effort allowing them to focus on achieving academic success and work/life balance. In addition to this, the FRC provides those who have signed up for this service with regular monthly monitoring of available childcare spaces, as indicated on the Manitoba Child Care Search online tool.

The **Event Childminding Program** is a service available to faculties/units looking to host an event on the Fort Garry campus and wish to provide their event participants with childminding services. This has proven to be beneficial to parents and caregivers who would not otherwise have been able to attend the event, due to lack of childcare options.

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Started the **Parents/Caregivers of Children with Disability Support Group** in April 2024 led by Dr. Christine Stewart, Professor, Women and Gender Studies, Faculty of Arts. The support group is open to all faculty members, support staff, and students. The meetings are held in-person at the Student Wellness Centre.

Project Highlights

The **UM Babysitter Directory**, in collaboration with the RFHS Family Centre, was created in November 2023 and connects families within the UM community with student babysitters offering support through casual babysitting services. Babysitting services include engaging the child or children in thoughtful play activities and possibly some light housekeeping or meal preparation. The directory serves as a digital platform, listing available babysitters and for clients (families) to post job opportunities. It is available to all faculty members, support staff, and students.

The **Adult Companionship Services (ACS) Directory**, in collaboration with Centre on Aging and the Age-friendly University Committee, was launched in April 2024 and connects adults/caregivers within the UM community with student service providers offering support through companionship services. Companionship services include engaging in meaningful activities with clients like accompanying them on outings or appointments, playing cards, or fixing light snacks or coffee. The directory serves as a digital platform, listing available service providers and for clients to post job opportunities. It is available to all faculty members, support staff, students, and members of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA).

Family Resources continues to work with Brandy Usick, Executive Director, Student Engagement & Success to maintain current inventory and determine possible locations to establish breastfeeding/lactation-friendly spaces at the Fort Garry campus. In October of 2023, the Student Wellness Centre opened its doors to the UM student community and has positioned itself to be a breastfeeding/lactation-friendly space for all students, staff, faculty members, and visitors of the University. A space on the 5th floor in the UMSU University Centre has received funding to be renovated and transformed into a breastfeeding/lactation-friendly space which can be used via key card access.

With the help of the Centre of Teaching and Learning, two **Family Resources videos** were produced to be used for marketing and promotional purposes. One was a short 1:27 minute video which is now posted on the Family Resources internet page and the other is a longer 5:00 minute video to use during outreach presentations.

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Outreach and Event Highlights

- Family Resources assisted the team at the Bruce D. Campbell Farm & Food Discovery Centre with planning and coordinating the **Halloween Pumpkin Carving Event** at the Farm in October 2023. The event was open to the public. Some faculty members and staff were in attendance along with their young children who participated in pumpkin carving and other craft activities.
- Family Resources helped Human Resources to resurrect the **Take Our Kids to Work Day** in-person event in November 2023. The last in-person TOKTWD event happened in 2019.
- Family Resources assisted the team at the Bruce D. Campbell Farm & Food Discovery Centre with planning and coordinating the **Santa on the Farm** event in December 2023. The event was open to the public. Some faculty members and staff were in attendance accompanied by their young children who participated in taking photos with Santa, the hot chocolate bar, and holiday craft activities.
- The FRC presented to the **centralized HR Consultants group** in April 2024 to highlight the programs and services of Family Resources and discussed ways we can support one another in our work.
- The first Family Resources information booth was set up at the **Age-friendly University Showcase** which took place in the UMSU University Centre in May 2024. The showcase brings awareness to the various academic and non-academic programs, services, opportunities, and initiatives available to the older demographic at the University of Manitoba.
- Co-hosted a **UM Babysitter Directory Q & A session** via Zoom with the Family Centre Coordinator in May 2024. Students, staff, and faculty were in attendance. It was an opportunity for them to ask questions (and give feedback) on the directory. We received positive feedback regarding the initiative as well as the babysitters.
- Family Resources assisted Physical Plant (Facilities) with planning and organizing children's programming for **Campus Beautification Day** in May 2024. A neighboring school and daycare were invited and participated in the festivities at the Fort Garry campus.
- The second information booth was set up at the two-day **Academic Support Staff Conference** in May 2024.

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- The FRC presented at the **Fellows in Equity, Anti-Oppression, and Social Justice program meeting** to increase awareness of Family Resources and supports available for graduate and post-graduate students in June 2024.
- Family Resources assisted the Office of the Vice-President Indigenous team with the coordination of the **Honouring our Indigenous Campus Community** event in June 2024.
- The third information booth was set up at the two-day **New Faculty Orientation** in August 2024.
- The fourth information booth was set up at the **Extended Education Student Orientation** in August 2024.

Family-friendly University Committee (FFUC)

The **Family-friendly University Committee (FFUC)** was established for students, staff, faculty members, and other academics who have family care responsibilities. The FFUC aims to enhance the University community through initiatives that foster a family-friendly campus culture. This committee had its first meeting in September 2024. The committee is being led by Dr. Brandy Usick, Executive Director, Student Engagement & Success and Francene Perehinec, the Family Resource Coordinator.

Key Changes

The original **Child Care page** was amalgamated with the **Family Resources page** through the efforts of the Family Resource Coordinator, Communications Coordinator for the Office of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic), and the manager of Assessment, Communication, & Outreach from Student Engagement & Success. This was after receiving authorization from the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) and Office of the Vice-Provost (Student Affairs).

The HR Client Services – Immigration team went through some staffing transformations in April 2024 and now consists of new members (consultant and assistant) which led to the working partnership to experience some minor changes with regard to the referral process. A new section was added to the UM's Join our academic community page which features relocation support resources for new faculty hires.

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The RFHS Family Centre went through a staffing change and now has a new Family Centre Coordinator. Family Resources will continue to strive to work jointly with the RFHS Family Centre to provide a seamless approach to the client intake process for the UM community of students, staff, and faculty members. The UM Babysitter Directory is now under the full care of the FRC.

Performance Indicators

- From September 2023 to August 2024, a total of 233 cases were opened. This is 87 cases more compared to the total from last year. This could be attributed to the increase in outreach efforts from Family Resources and word-of-mouth from former clients. (see Appendix – Table 1.0)
- Of the 233 cases: 13% were undergraduate students, 9% were graduate students/post-docs, 23% were staff, 26% were faculty members, 20% were departments on behalf of an individual, and 9% were from the ‘other’ category which consists of researchers, visiting scholars, the general public, and the media. The largest percentage continues to be requests for support from faculty members and departments, but now with the expansion of Family Resources being also available to staff and students, there is potential for these numbers to shift in the upcoming reporting year. (see Appendix – Figure 1.0)
- The top 5 categories of inquiries are as follows: child care, family health and well-being, Family Resources in general, relocation supports, University of Manitoba in general, and other. (see Appendix – Table 2.0)
- The highest-ranking category is child care. Most of the clients requesting child care support are requesting for assistance with searching for child care spaces. Some clients have mentioned that they only prefer the daycare that is situated on the Fort Garry campus, citing convenience as essential. When clients are presented with available alternative options, these options are sometimes turned down for two main reasons, the desire to have a space at the Campus Children’s Centre (for its distance to the UM buildings on campus) or financial limitations, as in, they are willing to wait for a space at a government-funded childcare program for the regulated \$10 a day child care fee. Other situations occurred where a childcare non-profit centre had space available, but there were no children on the client list that fit the age group and/or the location of the program. Most of the spaces that become readily available are home daycares and privately funded daycares. Most of these programs are not able to provide subsidy, nor do can they follow the government regulated \$10 a day child care fee. The UM Babysitter Directory was developed as a way to provide a form of relief for parents and

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caregivers of the UM community, who are required to attend class or a work event in-person and do not have alternate child care options. The directory serves as a way to temporarily receive some relief when in a bind. Since its inception, it has received positive feedback from the parent and caregiver users of the directory.

- The UM Babysitter Directory had 124 students apply and has 38 active babysitters. A total of 344 individual requests were received to complete the disclaimer form to receive a link to access the directory. A total of 178 individuals joined the private Teams channel where the directory file is currently being housed, all ranging from students, staff, faculty members, and other academics such as heads of departments.
- The second highest ranking category is relocation support. This is an indication of the successful partnership with HR Client Services – Immigration team with regard to the referral process and promoting Family Resources during the initial stages of communication with the newly hired faculty member. A second way that the Family Resources receives referrals is through the faculty itself. The faculty will contact the FRC to refer a potential hire and the FRC will reach out to the candidate to discuss relocation.
- Of the 233 cases: 40% were about child care, 8% were about family health, 4% were about Family Resources, 26% were about relocation support, 6% were about the UM, and 16% were on other topics that were not enough to constitute their own category. (see Appendix – Figure 2.0)
- Of the 233 cases: 173 cases were closed, 9 were referred to other units, 11 were abandoned by the client, and 40 remain open. (see Appendix Table 3.0)
- The Adult Companionship Services Directory had 34 students apply and 31 are active service providers. A total of 14 requests for services were received from the UM community. The services are available to students, staff, and faculty members, as well as members of the public (as long as they have a connection to someone at the University who could fill out the form on their behalf).
- The Family Resources internet page has been viewed 5,671 times and the intranet page has been viewed 809 times, to date. The bi-monthly e-newsletter currently has 115 subscribers. The social media account (Instagram) currently has 112 followers. (see Appendix Table 4.0)

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Testimonials/Quotes

“Family Resources has been an invaluable companion in the process of adapting our family to life in Winnipeg. Finding childcare was our biggest challenge and Francene was very diligent in helping us identify the best options and in following up to make sure we got the space we needed. Thank you for all your help and support.”

- Dr. Ricardo Mantilla, Associate Professor, childcare search assistance

“Working with Francene on the UM Babysitter Directory was a fantastic experience. Her dedication and collaborative spirit were key in bringing our vision to life. We’ve created something really valuable for our parent community, and I’m so glad we got to work on this together!”

- Melissa Melo, former RFHS Family Centre Coordinator, UM Babysitter Directory

"Francene and the HR Immigration team were absolutely invaluable in helping me and my family navigate our relocation from the UK to Manitoba. They provided a wide range of resources, including guidance on local schools and child care options, which made our transition so much easier. Francene even took the time to meet with us one-on-one on Teams and also to communicate to schools on our behalf, to address our specific needs. Their support was fantastic, and we truly couldn't have settled without their help."

- Dr. Setor Kunutsor, Professor, relocation support

“The Event Childminding Program was such a nice accommodation to offer to new international students with children. We know many of them come with their families and there is a list of uphill challenges with navigating life as a new international student, compounded with bringing a young family to Canada. We were so happy to offer this service so students felt there was one less barrier to attend the important learning and could focus on their orientation program without distractions. Many parents expressed their heartfelt gratitude at the service offered and were thankful they could leave their children in a safe place. It was very easy to set up and Francene had everything organized for us so we knew it would be a successful event!”

- Crystal Stewart, International Centre, Event Childminding Program

“Francene is an ideal collaborator for university projects. For example, when presented with an idea for an adult companionship directory, she was quick to understand the potential importance of the service and also quick to get started on developing the directory. Throughout the efficient process to implement the directory she worked

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diligently and was always thoughtful in seeking and incorporating input from all those involved. The way Francene accomplishes projects should serve as a model of how to make the UM more age-friendly.”

- Dr. Michelle Porter, Director, Centre on Aging, Adult Companionship Services Directory

“Honouring our Indigenous Campus Community (HOICC) is a way to recognize the tireless efforts and exceptional achievements of the inspiring people whose contributions are making the university a better place for everyone. Francene volunteered her time to help at the event. She assisted Elders, Knowledge Keepers and family members of the honourees by greeting them, helping them to their seats, bringing food and drinks to elderly, and always doing so with a smile. We also appreciate her help with the set up and clean up to make it a beautiful day for all the guests and honourees. Her assistance at the event did not go unnoticed and our office would be happy to have her be part of the event again next year.”

- Kayla Lariviere, Engagement Lead, Office of the Vice-President Indigenous, unit collaboration

“The development of the Adult Companionship Services (ACS) Directory went quickly and smoothly thanks to Family Resources who immediately embraced the idea and provided expertise to make it happen. Modeled after their successful UM Babysitter Directory, Francene [and others] put the ACS Directory in place in “record time.” Once I suggested the idea, she took it from there. It was great experience working with Francene. The idea of matching adults in need of companionship with student service providers is a wonderful resource for the UM community.”

- Dr. Bill Kops, Age-friendly University Committee and UMRA member, Adult Companionship Services Directory

“I believe that Francene’s activities of keychain and bracelet making during Pride Week was truly a hit! I recall a lot of the staff and faculty members participated and had a lot of fun. We hope it will be done again this year as we are looking forward to it!!!”

- Srushti Ariwala, Events & Recruitment Coordinator, Pride Week event

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Appendix

Figure 1.0 – Clients – September 2023 to August 2024

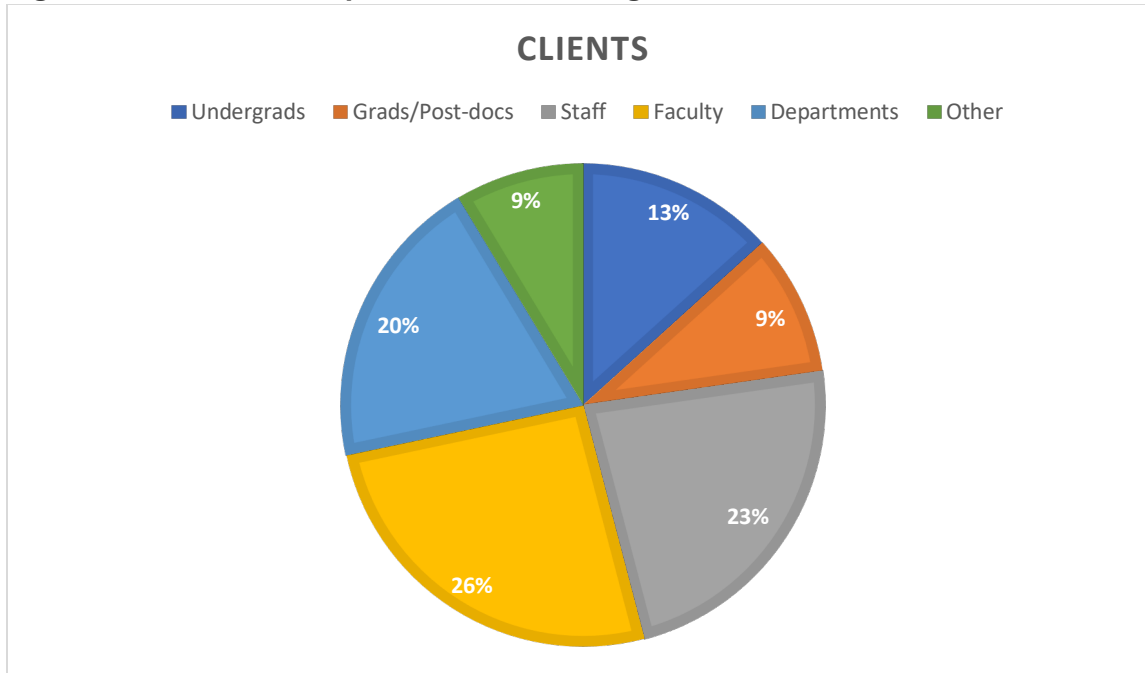


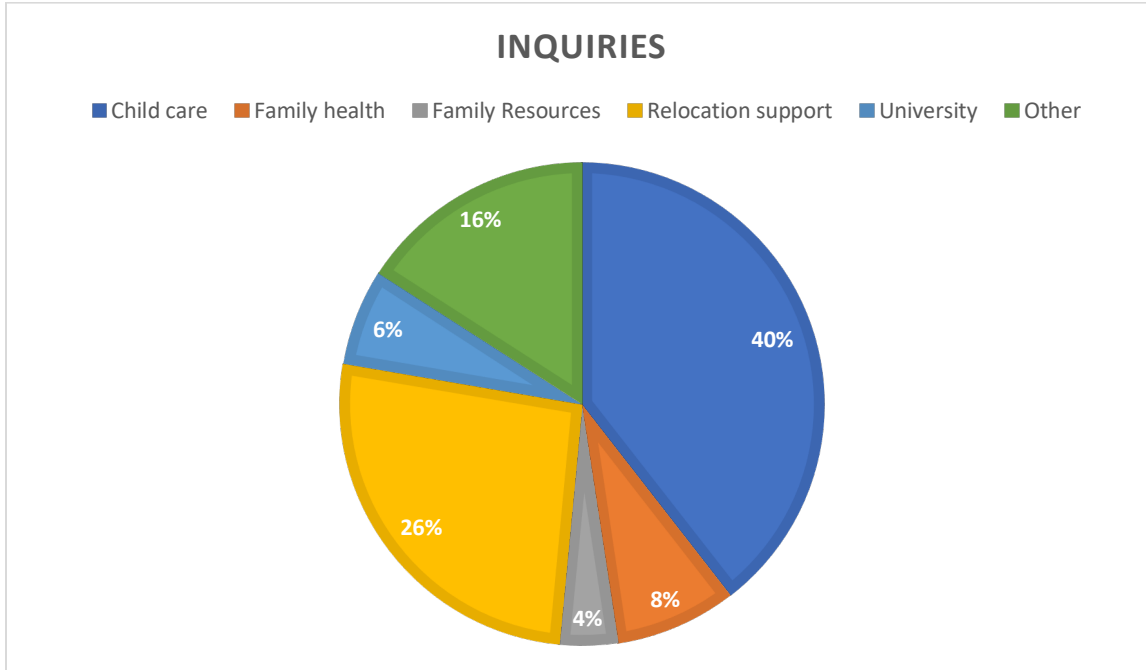
Table 1.0 – Clients – September 2023 to August 2024

Undergraduate students	31
Graduate students or post-docs	22
Staff members	54
Faculty members	60
Departments	46
Other*	20
TOTAL	233

* 'Other' includes researchers, visiting scholars, the general public, and the media

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Figure 2.0 – Inquiries – September 2023 to August 2024



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Table 2.0 – Inquiries – September 2023 to August 2024

Child care	40%
- Childcare search assistance	
- UM Babysitter Directory	
- Campus Children’s Centre	
- Request to book the Event Childminding Program	
- Child and youth programs	
- Child care support while on research leave	
Family health and well-being	8%
- Counselling services	
- Family going through a life event	
- Family members with mental health challengers	
- Family members with physical conditions/disabilities	
- Older adult isolation and loneliness resources	
- Coparenting resources	
- International adoption process	
- Single parent resources	
Family Resources programs and services, in general	4%
- Family Resources internet/intranet page navigation	
- Craft supply donations to Family Resources	
- Mobile lending libraries	
- Adult Companionship Services Directory navigation	
- Universities requesting information Family Resources	
Relocation support	26%
- Housing accommodation search	
- Elementary and high school information	
- Childcare and children/youth programs	
- MB healthcare coverage	
- UM health and dental plan	
- Transportation	
- English language training for spouse	
- Job opportunities for spouse	
- Recruitment and relocation allowance (policy and procedure)	
- How to find a family doctor/walk-in clinic	
- Moving process assistance and agreements (CAUBO)	
- Tax and notary services at the UM	
University of Manitoba, in general	6%
- Maternity leaves	
- Bereavement leaves	
- Balancing study/work with family care responsibilities	
- Breastfeeding-friendly spaces on campus	
- UM family policies	
- Recreation services	
-	
Other	16%
- Request to post or share a UM event	
- Request for Family Resources to present at a meeting	
- Request for an interview or comment from the media	
- Request for project collaboration	
- Request for on-campus event assistance	
- Request to join email distribution list	
- Job prospects at the UM	
TOTAL	100%

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Figure 3.0 – Status of Cases – September 2023 to August 2024

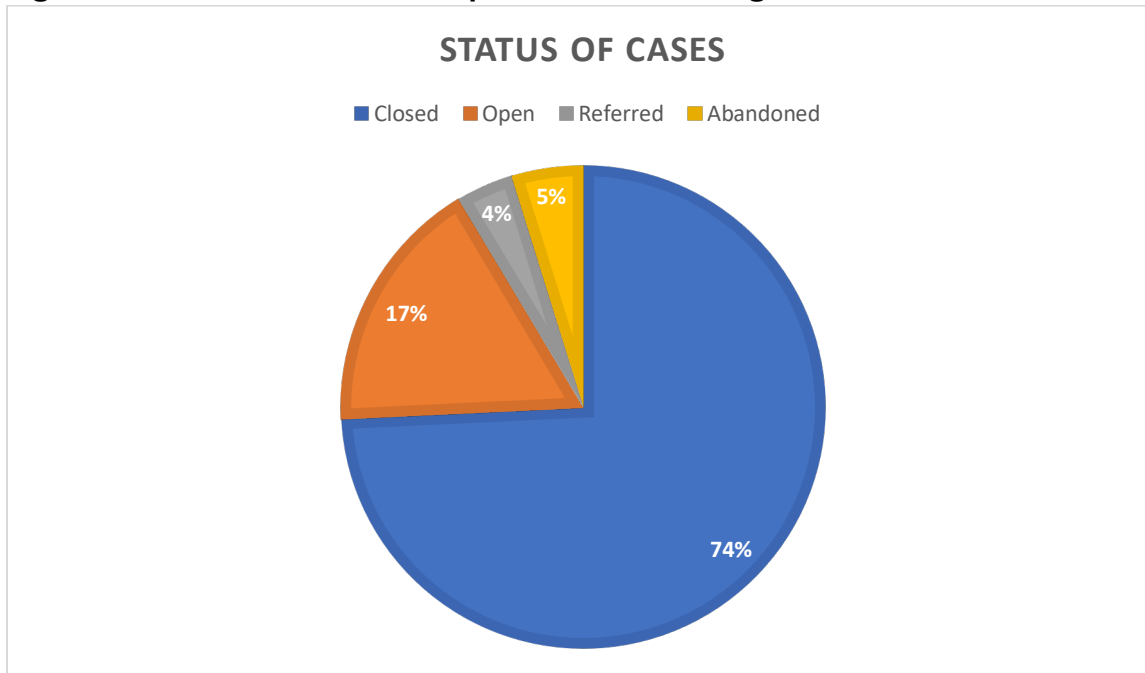


Table 3.0 – Status of Cases – September 2023 to August 2024

Closed	173
Open	40
Referred to other units	9
Abandoned by client*	11
TOTAL	233

* *Abandoned* are cases where the client has no longer stopped responding even after multiple attempts of a follow-up

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Table 4.0 – Analytics of webpages, e-newsletter, and social media, to date

Internet page	5,671 views
Intranet page	809 views
E-newsletter	115 subscribers
Social media	112 followers