

Position Statement

For 2022 Session

Proposal

Issue:

Family Resource Centers: Community based response for upfront primary and secondary prevention work through strategic, structured community engagement and activities.

Implementation Strategy:

Partner with DHS, Tribes, and Community Providers, Philanthropic partners, and individuals with lived experience to develop a strategic plan to implement a pilot of 15 Family Resource Centers in Minnesota in various communities representing tribal, metro, urban and Greater MN. The development of FRCs will include robust community engagement, planning, development, evaluation over a 3 year period. This would include initial funding to support the planning and development phases and on-going state support to help sustain an FRC Network. The long-term sustainability plan would include:

- Leveraging of IV-E Prevention Services funding through the Family First Prevention Services Act
- TANF funding
- Statewide investment in prevention supports at the intersection with child welfare
- Reinvestment of state, federal and local fiscal resources saved from deep end services back into growing and sustaining the availability of Family Resource Center.

The long term goal is a state-wide network, with each site focused on the specific needs of the communities where they are embedded. Intentional and planful efforts will be made to address the unique cultural needs of a community by including cultural liaisons/navigators within the FRC sites to increase access to culturally specific services and supports. In addition, Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) would be coordinated to oversee and drive FRC programming at each of the FRC sites. PACS would be made up of community members especially parents with lived expertise with accessing child welfare and other social services.

Ultimately, the goal is development of sustainability for community based FRCs operated by non-profit agencies in collaboration with local, county and state public and private partners.

Systemic Priority Alignment (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- **Equity**
- **Integrated Services**
- **Fiscal Framework**

From the GARE Toolkit (See www.racialequityalliance.org): What are the racial equity impacts of this particular decision? Who will benefit from or be burdened by it? Are there strategies to mitigate unintended consequences?

Comments: Family Resource Centers provide a community or school-based welcoming hub of support, services and opportunities for families, located in a central, easily accessible location. Having access to multiple services in a one stop location promotes integrated service delivery and reduces barriers to service access for families. Stigma to accessing services can be reduced by locating FRCs in community locations such as libraries, schools, existing non-profits, etc., further addressing equitability in services. BIPOC families and those living in poverty are often over-represented in the child welfare system. Research on FRCs through the National Family Support Network identify the following results, which also impact equity for families:

- 63% reduction in child maltreatment reports (therefore likely resulting on long term costs savings in terms of the need to staff these positions, and more critically, allowing for service delivery further upstream from how these are utilized today)
- 50% reduction in out of home placements (Making this simple, for every \$100,000 in placement costs an agency has, imagine a reduction in this cost down to \$50,000.00).
- 26% reduction in community level child maltreatment assessments

Relevant Committee (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- **Adult Services**
- **Behavioral Health**
- **Children's Services**
- **Equity**
- **Healthcare**
- **Modernization**
- **Policy**
- **Self-Sufficiency**

Why: FRCs target services to assist families with children, birth to age 17 and transition age youth, by providing access to services either directly or through referrals. Goals include enhancing parenting skills, promoting healthy development and wellbeing of children, promoting family economic success, and reducing social isolation by promoting community support and connections.

Rationale/Background:

Across the country, Child Welfare jurisdictions partner with, leverage, and fund Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to provide support for families along all points of the prevention and intervention continuum. Family Resource Centers are community or school-based welcoming hubs providing support, services, and opportunities for families, utilizing an approach that is multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered. Through use of inclusive community engagement strategies, FRCs reflect and are responsive to community needs and interests and ultimately driven by a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which is comprised of community members with lived expertise. This aides in meeting families' needs by reducing barriers to services such as transportation, childcare, and knowledge of and access to resources. Through the connections to FRCs, research shows increased peer support for families to develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress. This is especially critical in these continued pandemic times where lack of connection, social isolation, and mental health challenges are significant.

FRCs focus on the five universal family strengths identified in the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). The Strengthening Families framework is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs, and communities in building up the five key protective factors (Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of parenting and child development, Concrete support in times of needs; and Social and emotional competence of children) to support families to be strong, healthy and successful; contribute to building a strong and healthy community and reduce child abuse and neglect. Attached is a one-page document from the National Family Support Network that speaks to "What is a Family



What is a Family
Resource Center 3-2

Resource Center":

Serving families holistically helps prevent involvement in child welfare systems, generating substantial economic savings. In the 38 states where FRCs have been implemented, there have been significant decreases in child maltreatment reports, investigations, and out of home placements. On average, for every \$1 invested in FRCs, there is a \$4.93 social return on investment and a \$3.65 savings for the child welfare system. In Utah, it is estimated each substantiated child maltreatment costs approximately \$830,000 over the victim's lifetime. Providing connections and supports to families can help reduce the impact of intergenerational poverty. With services provided in the communities who also help guide the FRC implementation through parent advocacy boards, services can be tailored to meet the most needed services.

Typically, FRCs focus on the following goals:

- Enhance parenting skills
- Foster the healthy development and well-being of children, youth, and families
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Increase school readiness
- Connect families to resources
- Develop parent and community leadership
- Engage males and fathers
- Support healthy marital and couples' relationships
- Promote family economic success



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