



California Family  
Resource Association  
*Strong Families. Strong Communities.*



## **Family Resource Center Budget Request FY 23-24**

**We request \$75 million one-time General Fund to enable Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to continue their vital work increasing family stability and preventing children who face multiple risk factors from entering the child welfare system, thereby strengthening the safety net for California's most marginalized communities.**

This funding would match the level approved by the Assembly and State Senate in last year's Joint Legislative Budget Proposal, with accommodation for an additional two years to ensure a stable and strengthened FRC network. (\$25M each FY 23-24 through 25-26). Unfortunately, the allotment was not adopted in the final negotiated budget, leaving Family Resource Centers as a vital, yet unfunded element of the state's safety net.

**Given their pre-existing ties embedded in the community, Family Resource Centers have an enhanced relevance this year as:**

- California seeks to increase **Community Supports** in lieu of over-reporting families of color to Child Protective Services, and
- CDSS prepares for the **Community Pathway** envisioned in California's Five-Year Prevention Plan, paving the way for the state to draw down federal Family First Prevention Services (FFPSA) funding.

### **How would the requested funding be used?**

Funding would be administered by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) within the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

**90% - Support children and families through investment in Family Resource Centers**

**10% - Support the FRC network through administration, accountability, & technical assistance**

Funding and support for approximately 200\* Family Resource Centers and FRC networks throughout the state and based on the highest needs, reaching more than 250,000+ children and families over three years. With this funding,

- FRCs could continue delivering services or expand activities within the communities where they are already trusted partners.
- FRCs could continue partnering with families to reduce child abuse and neglect, which significantly saves government resources by reducing referrals to Child Protective Services (CPS) and subsequent Child Welfare programs, netting a **365% return on investment for every dollar spent**<sup>1</sup>
- FRCs could collect more data on outcomes related to supporting marginalized families.

\*Note: There are currently approximately 500 Family Resource Centers statewide, but in order to ensure sufficient impact the request is to fund an estimated 200 FRCs each year based on the highest need.

<sup>1</sup> OMNI Institute. (2021). *Return on investment of a family resource center to the child welfare system: Westminster Family Resource Center, Orange County, CA.* Submitted to National Family Support Network, Washington, D.C.

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## **How do Family Resource Centers help bolster California's safety net?**

### **Reduced Child Abuse and Entries into the Child Welfare System**

Funding for FRCs can stabilize their impact in child abuse prevention through activities and opportunities that address the research-informed Family Protective Factors<sup>2</sup>, such as:

- **Attachment:** pre-natal supports, Mommy and Me classes, home visiting
- **Parental Resilience:** service brokering, goal-driven case management
- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** parenting classes, call-in lines
- **Social & Emotional Competence of Children:** early education, play groups, therapy
- **Parental Social Supports:** support groups, parent leadership development, civic engagement
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need:** drop-in material assistance, navigation of public benefits

### **Increased Family Economic Stability**

With poverty being a major driver of family stress, economic and concrete supports have been found to reduce the risk of child abuse by helping families to address basic needs and provide environments for children to thrive<sup>3</sup>. With resources for their core services, FRCs can provide a critical link for families to access such support, acting as a trusted broker, addressing linguistic and cultural barriers, and offering as-needed drop-in assistance. Further, reduced familial stress is also correlated to reduction in child abuse and domestic violence.

## **How do Family Resource Centers provide Community Supports to reduce over-reporting families of color to Child Protective Services?**

According to Casey Family Programs, *"FRCs are distinct in that they are uniquely community-focused, are driven by family needs, and offer a multitude of programs and resources...FRCs also are designed to help stabilize families before a crisis reaches a level requiring CPS intervention, or a child's placement in out-of-home care."*<sup>4</sup>

And according to a report commissioned by the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention, *"FRCs go beyond traditional social service entities by taking on broad community change efforts. In an entrepreneurial spirit, FRCs embrace an asset development approach to community change, honoring community strengths while addressing very real needs and/or social injustices through resident engagement."*<sup>5</sup>

## **How do Family Resource Centers factor into California's preparations for FFPSA?**

The Five-Year Prevention Plan proposed by CDSS and awaiting federal approval envisions Family Resource Centers as a part of the Community Pathway that would help the state screen, assess and provide Evidence Based interventions to build family strengths while providing a trusted space where community members feel safe to interact. However, operational county Comprehensive Prevention Plans are not likely to be fully implemented for another 2 to 3 years. State investment in FRCs now will ensure that they are stable and fully operational as a critical resource to counties when they are ready to contract for services.

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<sup>2</sup> Friends. (2021). *Protective factors surveys*. FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. [Protective Factors Surveys | Friends NRC](#)

<sup>3</sup> Weiner, D. A., Anderson, C., & Thomas, K. (2021). *System transformation to support child and family well-being: The central role of economic and concrete supports*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>4</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2019, June 20). *Do place-based programs, such as family resource centers, reduce risk of child maltreatment and entry into foster care?* <https://www.casey.org/family-resource-centers/>

<sup>5</sup> J. Sherman & Y. McQuaid. (2017). *Family Resource Centers: Vehicles for Change, Volume II*; the California Office of Child Abuse Prevention.

## **Why do Family Resource Centers need state funding?**

**Access to government supports for the most marginalized families often relies on a community infrastructure that lacks stable funding: Family Resource Centers (FRCs).** As trusted, culturally appropriate, human-touch partners for families, FRCs address needs proactively, preventing intervention from the child welfare and criminal justice systems, and promoting community well-being. ***But all too often, FRCs serve as an unrecognized element the safety net – with each FRC scrambling to resecure its own existence each year.***

In many cases, the patchwork of government and private grants upon which FRCs rely are narrowly defined and time-limited. In fact, stable, ongoing funding is rarely available for those features of FRCs that make them such trusted community partners, including their welcoming environments, availability to help all families and individuals, open-ended drop-in supports and parent leadership development programs.

**Furthermore, funding prevention through FRCs is not only good for California’s children and families, but doing so also makes economic sense.**<sup>6</sup> The cumulative economic impact in California for the 56,684 substantiated survivors of child maltreatment and 100 child fatalities in 2021 added up to a **\$22.6 billion**, and studies have shown that every dollar spent on prevention services through FRCs bring back a 365% return on investment to the child welfare system<sup>6</sup>.

## **Are Family Resource Centers effective?**

Research on the effectiveness of Family Resource Centers, throughout California, include:

- A Casey Family Programs report showing a 45% reduction in cases of child abuse and neglect, and significantly lower rates of child maltreatment investigations.<sup>4</sup>
- A September 2021 study at the Westminster Family Resource Center in Orange County, California, finding direct child welfare savings of \$3.65 for every \$1.00 spent on prevention services through the FRC.<sup>7</sup>
- A 2020/21 study of FRC supports to families at Pathways to Hope for Children in Shasta County, finding that families demonstrated statistically significant increases in parent hope, affect, and flourishing, and approximately 90% of parents made progress towards their identified goals and reported high levels of hope.<sup>8</sup>
- An external evaluation of the Birth & Beyond program in Sacramento, finding that comprehensive home visiting services provided through a network of FRCs reduced the risk of substantiated child abuse and neglect complaints in participating families.<sup>9</sup>
- A 2018 report by FRC providers UpValley Family Services and On the Move in Napa Valley, showing how their close connections allowed them to quickly identify families in need, mobilize community resources and logistics, and provide material support in the wake of the 2017 fire.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Safe & Sound. (2020). The economics of child abuse: A study of California. Safe & Sound. Safe & Sound (safeandsound.org)

<sup>7</sup> OMNI Institute (2021). Return on Investment of a Family Resource Center to the Child Welfare System: Westminster Family Resource Center, Orange County, CA. Submitted to National Family Support Network, Washington, D.C.

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson-Stowe, J., Hellman, C.M., Muilenburg-Trevino, E.M. (2022). Pathways to hope for children: An assessment of the impact of program services on parent hope, well-being, and relationship with their children. The University of Oklahoma Hope Research Center.

<sup>9</sup> Applied Survey Research (2019) Birth & Beyond 2018-19 Annual Report, Submitted to First 5 Sacramento.

<sup>10</sup> Twitchell, A., Abdo, A., Hughes, S. (2018). The role of UpValley Family Centers and On the Move in the local response to the 2017 Napa County wildfires: Lessons in disaster recovery.

**Have Family Resource Centers ever successfully utilized state funding?**

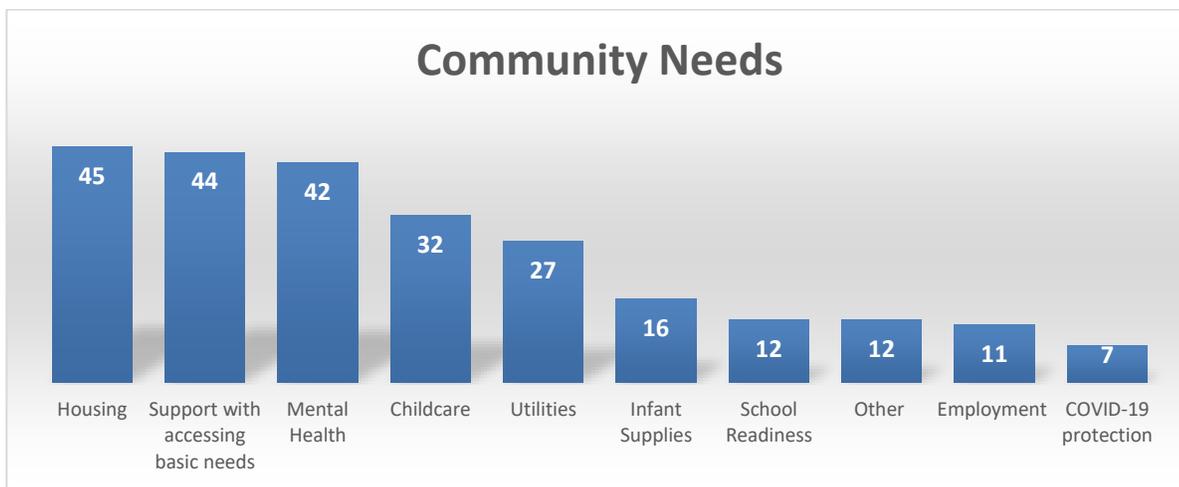
One-time funding was allocated for Family Resource Centers to provide critically needed aid during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the short-term allocations included:

- 117,569 individuals served in 54 counties in only 10 weeks amid the onset of the pandemic
  - o Included 6,401 foster family beneficiaries and 2,756 Indian Tribe beneficiaries
  - o Comprehensive services provided for, on average, \$24 per individual<sup>11</sup>
  - o Services to 265,000 individuals through 53 counties in the second tranche of funds

**What would Family Resource Centers do with state funding?**

A survey of the FRCs statewide conducted by the California Family Resource Association provides important information about the consequences for families and communities due to the loss of COVID Relief funding for FRCs with no replacement in the State budget. Impacts include:

- A decrease in the number of services and support offered to the community.
- Therefore, fewer families would get the basic needs that they need the most.



**Now is the time for California to sustain this essential strand in our safety net, enhance Community Supports needed to reduce over-reporting families of color to CPS, and prepare for the Community Pathway envisioned by CDSS in their plans to implement FFPSA.**

**Please join us in supporting California’s families by investing in Family Resource Centers.**

**Contact**

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<sup>11</sup> Note: Does not account for braiding the COVID-19 funding with funding and support from other services, agencies

*The Child Abuse Prevention Center is a state and national training, education, research and resource center dedicated to strengthening children, families and communities.*

*The California Family Resource Association is a statewide membership association of FRCs and FRC Networks that work together to bring children, families and communities to the forefront of policymaking in California.*

*The California Alliance of Child and Family Services is a statewide membership organization representing community-based organizations serving children and families through prevention services, behavioral health, foster care and juvenile justice.*