

States Support Families through the Pandemic by Leveraging Family Resource Centers

In the current pandemic crisis, families with children have been heavily impacted. Two of their greatest expressed needs are parenting support and access to resources. Addressing these two needs is the existing core work of every one of the more than 3,000 Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in 31 states and the District of Columbia.

Uniquely positioned to be of support in these challenging times, these community or school-based welcoming hubs of support, services, and opportunities for families have continued to operate on the front lines, even when almost everything else had shut down. FRCs are very aware of their particular critical importance at this time, as family stress and isolation are highly correlated with the likelihood of child abuse.



Leveraging Networks of FRCs

FRCs have stepped up to help even more during the pandemic, and their dedicated frontline efforts have not gone unnoticed. Recognizing that FRCs have been uniquely positioned to be of support, states are leveraging and further investing in Networks of FRCs both through the pandemic and beyond.



Alabama

In May 2020, the AL Department of Human Services allocated an additional \$1.5M for the network of 16 FRCs through a mix of TANF and state dollars. Moreover, FRCs were added as an ongoing line item in the state budget for the first time. The AL Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention/Children's Trust is also investing its increased allocation from the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program to bring 10 more FRCs into the network.

California

In April 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom provided \$3M in COVID emergency relief funds for FRCs "to provide emergency services and supplies to children and families most at need and as soon as possible," including material items, assistance with isolation needs, parenting resources, and staff time to help link families to other state and federal supports such as food and housing. This new state funding is groundbreaking in California because FRCs have typically been funded only at the county level. The funds were allocated to the California Family Resource Association, which successfully implemented a rapid response grant program. The governor's budget for 2021-22 proposes additional funding for FRCs through support for child welfare services and the implementation of a navigator model for developmental services.





Colorado

Recognizing that FRCs have long-standing, trusted relationships with families and their communities, in April 2020, the state government leveraged the 32 members of the Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) to distribute a \$3 million delivery of infant supplies from FEMA for families experiencing poverty and not able to find resources to meet their basic needs. Philanthropy also pitched in, with the Denver Foundation providing critical needs funding to help FRCA members serve the most vulnerable in their communities, and the Gates Family Foundation augmenting emergency response capacity for FRCs in rural areas.

Maryland

Maryland has committed \$3.3M (\$330,000 per year for the next 10 years) to open up to 3 new Family Resource Centers annually in underserved and unserved regions of the state. The Maryland Family Network is administering the process of setting up the new FRCs to add to its existing network of 24 centers.

Utah

Utah State Representative Dan Johnson (R) led the successful effort in February 2021 to obtain \$2.9M in TANF funding to support the work of the 11 Family Support Centers and 17 crisis and respite nurseries that are part of the Utah Association of Family Support Centers. This was in addition to \$900,000 in CARES Act funding he secured in July 2020 to provide additional center staff time to support more families in crisis, hazard pay for staff, mindfulness training to support staff, community outreach activities related to COVID-19, technological improvements to serve families virtually, and supplies to keep facilities sanitized and safe.



“Supporting Family Centers is the right thing to do.”

- Rep. Dan Johnson

Vermont

In the Fall of 2020, the state legislature and the VT Department of Children and Families worked together to provide \$1.7M in CARES Act funds for the 17 Parent Child Centers across the state. The centers' continuing to provide their eight core services during the pandemic was featured on local television.



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