ON THE MOVE:
Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network

Sonoma County On The Verge Cohort Report to First Five Sonoma County

JANUARY 2020
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .......................................................... 2  
Creating the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network ................. 3  
   Building the Network: On The Verge Family Strengthening Initiative ................... 4  
   Network Members: Family Resource Center Profiles ............................................ 6  
Challenges Facing Families in Sonoma County ........................................ 9  
Five Protective Factors Model for Family Strengthening .......................... 11  
Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network  
   Protective Factors Framework ............................................................... 13  
   Protective Factor: Parental Resilience ....................................................... 14  
   Protective Factor: Social Connections ....................................................... 17  
   Protective Factor: Concrete Supports in Times of Need .................................. 20  
Roadmap for Implementation .................................................................. 23  
Conclusion ......................................................................................... 26  
   Participant List ....................................................................................... 26  
Appendices ......................................................................................... 27  
   Appendix A:  
      A Literature Review of Family Resource Centers ........................................... 27  
   Appendix B:  
      Sonoma County Strengthening Family Network Protective Factors  
      Shared Outcomes Framework ..................................................................... 32  
   Appendix C:  
      Potential Funding Sources for Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network .... 35
Executive Summary

Family Resource Centers are a proven prevention strategy for addressing many of the challenges that face families. In Sonoma County, Family Resource Centers are critical partners in building resiliency in families as our community continues on the path to long-term recovery after several years of devastating wildfires.

In 2018, First 5 Sonoma County invested in the On The Verge Family Strengthening Initiative, with the intention of creating the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network, an alliance of local Family Resource Centers. The Network's goal would be to actively strengthen the partners' efforts to mitigate long-term negative impacts of the 2017 North Bay wildfires and the 2019 Kincade Fire on young children in our community.

On The Move, a community organization dedicated to developing and sustaining emerging leaders, launched Sonoma County On The Verge in July 2018, a year-long, cohort-based program focused on developing leaders' skills, cultivating interdependent, cross-systems teams and creating innovative community solutions to long-entrenched problems. On The Move convened a cohort of leaders from four Sonoma County Family Resource Centers including Corazón Healdsburg, El Verano Family Resource Center-La Luz Center, McDowell Family Resource Center, and Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County—Vía Esperanza Centro de Educación
with the purpose of developing a network built on common language, knowledge and family strengthening practices, trauma-informed strategies, collective impact, and shared data.

Over the course of a year, the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network created a shared framework using the Five Protective Factors Model to capture their collective efforts and impacts on Sonoma County families and the greater community. Through rich discussion and innovative thinking, Network partners have built a strong commitment to share resources and best practices, develop network-wide evaluation metrics and to work together to strengthen their combined capacity to empower families and neighborhoods to heal and flourish.

This report was made possible through generous funding from First Five Sonoma County. On The Move is grateful for their vision and ongoing contribution to keeping children in Sonoma County safe and healthy.
The October 2017 North Bay wildfires were the most destructive and devastating disaster that Sonoma County has ever experienced. The fires destroyed 5,300 homes in Sonoma County and damaged 7,776 more structures, displacing over 100,000 people. Thousands of families lost homes, property, essential documentation, pets, and in some tragic cases, loved ones to the wildfires.

There are also hundreds of thousands of residents who, although they may not have lost their home, were profoundly impacted. The grief from the loss and destruction of homes, businesses and entire Santa Rosa neighborhoods continues to be felt by the victims’ teachers, friends, classmates, co-workers, relatives, and the community at large. Health and mental health providers report that signs of traumatic stress are common among local children, youth and adults throughout the county, and are manifested in a broad array of cognitive, behavioral and emotional symptoms and varying severity, from mild depression to nightmares to memory impairment.

In support of long-term recovery after the 2017 wildfires, in 2018 First 5 Sonoma County granted Responsive Grants Funding to On The Move to significantly grow the capacity of local family support programs. On The Move’s goal was to found the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network, an alliance of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) that would actively build collective impact and strengthen the partners’ efforts to mitigate long-term negative impacts of the wildfires on young children.

Clearly, the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network is a critical player in Sonoma County’ long-term recovery after several years of community-wide catastrophes. Given the current focus in California on building local resilience and creating county-wide prevention strategies, the

Forecasted high winds and the sparking of the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County on October 23, 2019 caused widespread Public Safety Power Shutoffs and city and county Public Safety evacuations. The mandated evacuation order encompassed the largest area the county had ever seen, with over 200,000 residents under evacuation by Sunday, October 27. By the time the Kincade Fire had been 100% contained on November 6, 78,000 acres had burned and 374 structures, 174 homes and 11 commercial buildings were destroyed in Northern Sonoma County.

The Network FRCs quickly responded to families’ needs during and after the Kincade Fire:

» Corazón Healdsburg was and continues to be the hub for assistance for families affected by the Kincade Fire.

» Since early November, 5,500 households have applied for assistance through Corazón’s Unity and Community Fund. Corazón has distributed $175,000 so far in cash, gift cards, hotel vouchers and rental assistance to over 900 families and have raised a total of $525,000 in donations from over 1,000 individual donors.

» Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County quickly mobilized its staff to assist in the fire relief efforts. Funders were contacted for potential assistance and a public call was made for donations to assist fire survivors. Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County has been on the frontline of the Kincade Fire disaster relief efforts by supporting the first food distribution giveaway in cooperation with the ROC Resource Center and Catholic Charities, distributing over $60,000 in gift cards to support the basic needs of those impacted.

1 First 5 Sonoma County Responsive Grants Fund: Addressing the Long-term Impacts of the North Bay Wildfires on Young Children, January 2018.
Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network is an essential tool for the development of the Sonoma County Prevention Plan by the local Child Abuse Prevention Council and Child Welfare Department. In SB 436, recently enacted in California, FRCs were defined as a strategy for addressing the need for secondary prevention interventions within communities. In order to highlight the work already happening in the community, and to share what benefits a strong FRC Network can have in Sonoma County, leaders in the prevention planning were, and continue to be, encouraged to consider utilizing the FRCs as effective partners to be included in the county-wide prevention plan.

Building the Network: On The Verge Family Strengthening Initiative

Creating real change in communities is an ongoing struggle, especially following a large-scale disaster. FRC leaders must work across systems, engaging in managerial, advocacy and leadership activities across the commercial, public and social sectors. Cross-organizational partnerships are the backbone of the FRC’s ability to provide a broad spectrum of services and require leaders to negotiate complex relationships that may involve shared program outcomes, staff, space and funding. Given FRCs’ deep roots within their communities, staff members tend to be very diverse in age, education, and experience, requiring that each leader have excellent coaching and communication skills. Not only must FRC leaders be highly skilled in many technical areas, but they must also be deeply integrated into their communities in order to establish trust, understand needs, and leverage resources.

In partnership with S.H. Cowell Foundation and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, On The Move has implemented the On The Verge Family Strengthening Initiative to build the field of family support in California since 2014. The Initiative has brought together cohorts of new and emerging leaders in the family strengthening field from twelve different California communities to develop skills, cultivate interdependent, cross-systems teams and create innovative community solutions to long-entrenched problems.

The On the Verge cohort was joined by Joni Thacher, who is a key player in coordinating Sonoma County Human Services’ efforts to understand and implement the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). FFPSA will allow funds previously dedicated to serving families already in the foster care system to be used to fund evidence-based strategies to prevent entrance into the foster care system. This connection is critical to the sustainability of the project as, once adopted in California, this may increase funding that can be dedicated to supporting FRCs to implement evidence-based programming with fidelity. Joni has been carrying the work of the Sonoma County FRC Network into conversations with county leaders and advocating that the FRCs not be discounted in their contribution to this work.

During their On The Verge year, each cohort works collaboratively to define community needs on specific issues and makes public presentations to the larger community while simultaneously strengthening their relationships with one another and the community. Vergers then choose and implement a community-based project that allows participants to grow individually and work collaboratively towards real solutions. Through their shared projects, Vergers have affected deep change in communities across California.

First 5 Sonoma’s investment in the On The Verge Family Strengthening Initiative in July 2018 allowed On The Move to convene a cohort of leaders from four Sonoma County FRCs including Corazón Healdsburg, La Luz Center, McDowell Family Resource Center, and Vía Esperanza Centro de Educación with the purpose of developing a network built on common language, knowledge and family strengthening practices, trauma-informed strategies, collective impact, and shared data.

In early On The Verge Sonoma County cohort meetings, it became immediately clear that the four FRCs approach their work with significantly different service strategies, measurement tools, and language that is highly specific to their individual communities. This lack of common ground initially created a
challenge to the shared goal of identifying areas of overlap and potential synchronicity.

In order to create and use a shared language and guiding frameworks for the four FRCs, OTM staff first had to work with representatives from each FRC to understand existing program and evaluation strategies. After collecting and sharing information on FRC service delivery and outcome tracking methods, the group then examined a number of potential frameworks to organize their common work. Ultimately, the FRCs decided to utilize the Protective Factors Framework as a starting point in selecting shared outcomes and indicators. The Protective Factors Framework, a much researched and documented family support model, provided the FRCs an opportunity to capture and organize their very diverse and extensive menu of services and outcomes into a common language to which all groups could agree.

After gaining an understanding of the cohort members’ level of familiarity and comfort with key concepts, it was determined that the group would focus on ensuring all members had a clear and practical understanding of the Protective Factors and the use of trauma informed strategies when working with families and children. This shared understanding would help the cohort to conceptualize their work individually as FRCs and collectively as a network. Early in the process OTM staff invited an expert from Comprehensive Youth Services of Fresno, an On The Verge partner organization, to provide an in-depth overview of the practical application of trauma-informed strategies and the Protective Factors. Both trainings were exceptionally well received and provided the group a strong grasp on the use of the Protective Factors in their work, as well as helping them to develop systems to ensure supports are in place to assist people to cope with past trauma. Additional trainings focused on the FRC leaders themselves to deepen skills and promote self-care to avoid secondary trauma.

Two self-assessment tools guided the founding work for the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network. The FRC capacity assessment was used to gauge the overall understanding of key concepts that need to be in place in order to ensure effective service delivery. The On The Verge Leadership Skills Assessment provided an understanding of the areas of strength and possible growth related to personal, interpersonal and professional skills of individual leaders.

Through a facilitated process, the On The Verge cohort then worked to apply the Protective Factors to create a collective framework that would organize shared strategies and lay the foundation for commonly held outcomes. Given the FRCs specific strengths and areas of synchronicity, the group decided to focus on three of the five Protective Factors as a starting point for developing shared language and evaluation methods. The group utilized the Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service (FRIENDS) National Resource Center to identify potential outcomes and indicators related to the three protective factors that were chosen as the focus of the group. Once these outcomes and indicators were chosen, the group mapped all existing Sonoma County FRC services to the selected outcomes and indicators.
Network Members: Family Resource Center Profiles

Family Resource Centers help mobilize families to successfully respond to challenges and improve the well-being of children, youth, families and communities. By acting as a hub for the family support and safety net systems that exist within a community, FRCs foster community connections, improve access to resources and empower families to become self-sufficient.

Sonoma County is home to four self-identified Family Resource Centers:

### Corazón Healdsburg

**SERVING:** Healdsburg

**MISSION:**
Our mission is to bridge the racial and economic divide in Northern Sonoma County. Corazón offers programs to improve health and well-being for all who live and work in our area through innovative partnerships and community driven programming. Working with youth and their families, Corazón aims to break cycles of poverty and improve quality of life for those we serve.

**KEY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS:**
- **Comunidad:** Creating dynamic cultural events for community members to gather together under the mutual language of celebration, food, and dance.
- **La Voz:** Working to strengthen the Latino voice in Healdsburg, ensuring that resident opinions, needs and desires are heard by the community at large.
- **El Centro:** Our Family Resource Center is a hub for Corazón programs and a drop-in center for residents to seek assistance from bilingual staff.

**LONG-TERM RECOVERY EFFORTS:** Corazón Healdsburg has utilized its Healdsburg Free Store and Unity and Community Fund to help lead recovery efforts in Northern Sonoma County after both the 2017 and 2019 fires.

### La Luz Center—El Verano Family Resource Center

**SERVING:** Sonoma Valley

**MISSION:**
Our mission is to help families connect to services and navigate resources to meet the academic, social, emotional and overall needs of our students.

**KEY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS:**
- **Mental Health:** Bringing together a wide range of mental health services through a variety of forms in order to provide alternative services for families.
- **Case Management:** Providing one-on-one support services to our families to identify their potential needs. The Family Navigator develops relationships with the school and with partners in order to best serve families.
- **Parent and Community Engagement:** Promoting opportunities for parents to be involved in their child’s school and community while at the same time addressing issues that impact families.

**LONG-TERM RECOVERY EFFORTS:** La Luz Center launched a Fire Relief Support program and fundraising campaign after the 2017 fires, which has provided emergency aid, relief and services to individuals impacted by the fires. Currently, La Luz Center is operating the Building Trades Training Program and has graduated 90 individuals with basic construction skills and trade certifications, creating job opportunities and a pool of labor to assist in rebuilding our community.
McDowell Family Resource Center

SERVING: Petaluma Area

MISSION: The McDowell Family Resource Center (FRC) serves the many low-income and vulnerable families at McDowell Elementary School and is now expanding to support families throughout Petaluma City Schools. We work toward successful community integration of parents and children, and encourage all parents’ active, informed participation in school and community life.

KEY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS:
- **Resource and Referral**: Connecting school families to health, employment, food, housing and immigration resources
- **Adult Education**: Building skills through English as a Second Language courses, tutoring for naturalization and high school diploma and equivalency and career technical education
- **Parent Child Education**: Support families through positive parenting and child development classes and ongoing play groups

LONG-TERM RECOVERY EFFORTS: McDowell Family Resource Center provided gift cards, supplies, rental assistance and support in completing fire-relief applications.

Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County—Vía Esperanza Centro de Educación

SERVING: Santa Rosa

MISSION: Vía Esperanza Centro de Educación, a program of Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, aims to close the achievement gap and revitalize the community by partnering with local organizations to engage families in the early and ongoing education of their children, strengthening family resilience, and improving health outcomes.

KEY STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS:
- **Adult Basic Education**: Build skills through English as a Second Language courses, GED tutoring, and computer classes.
- **Parenting and Child Development**: Support families through positive parenting and child development classes and ongoing play groups.
- **Health and Wellness**: Encourage family health through group-based outdoor exercise programs.
- **Support Groups**: Build resiliency through adult counseling and support groups.

LONG-TERM RECOVERY EFFORTS: CAP Sonoma utilized funds from Redwood Credit Union and the Northbay Fire Relief Fund in order to provide financial assistance to families, and is participating in Sonoma County’s Rebuilding our Community Long Term Recovery Group. Vía Esperanza implemented a series of emergency preparation workshops at its Cook Middle School location to help prepare Spanish speaking families for a disaster.

Across Sonoma County FRCs, organizational structures and program implementation vary. All FRCs have clearly articulated mission and vision statements that are reflective of local cultures and current political and environmental climates.
Staffing also varies across FRCs. Three have only one full-time dedicated staff person, while the fourth FRC operates with four full-time staff members and an intern. Only two of the four FRCs have at least one employee partially dedicated to grant writing and monitoring, and this person also support grant writing and monitoring for the parent organization.

Outside of fire recovery efforts that reach a broader swath of the community, all four FRC member organizations focus their work on low-income, Latino families who tend to be isolated by language, geography, and opportunity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRC</th>
<th>Target Community</th>
<th>% Latino</th>
<th>% English Learners</th>
<th>% Low-Income</th>
<th>School Community</th>
<th>FRC Participants</th>
<th>School Community</th>
<th>FRC Participants</th>
<th>School Community</th>
<th>FRC Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corazón Healdsburg</td>
<td>Healdsburg Unified School District</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Luz</td>
<td>Sonoma Valley Unified School District</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDowell</td>
<td>McDowell Elementary School</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vía Esperanza</td>
<td>Cook Middle School (relocated 8/19 to Lewis School)</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Latinos, who make up 24.9% of Sonoma County’s population, have the lowest score on the Human Development Index, 4.27, and lag far behind in education and income. Low educational attainment impacts life expectancy in ways less obviously linked with health. It both causes and is caused by low socioeconomic status, circumscribes career options, results in low-wage jobs and limited benefits, and often results in families living in neighborhoods with poorer schools and higher crime, all of which contribute to chronic stress that can lead to irreparable damage to the body’s circulatory system.²

Creating and expanding sustainable organizational systems offers a significant opportunity for growth across all FRCs. Only one FRC reports that most of their programs are documented in a manual that would support sustained operations through staff turnover, management change, etc. The other FRCs report that few or very few of their programs are documented. Half of the FRCs report that few operational policies describing hiring procedures, job descriptions, supervision, grant management, data collection and evaluation procedures are documented. While the remaining two FRCs report that very few or none of their operational policies are documented.

Finally, data collection and use presents an additional opportunity for community supported growth and development. All FRCs use some form of data collection and management software, although only two use the same system, Salesforce. However, even for those using the same system, build out and data collection points vary as do analysis and data usage. As they continue to work together, the FRCs would benefit from either a single data management system or technical assistance to create common data collection metrics within existing systems. In response to their work through On the Verge, the FRCs are well-positioned to receive technical assistance to identify, adopt and begin using one or more common data collection tools such as the Protective Factors Survey.

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² A Portrait of Sonoma County, 2014.
Challenges Facing Families in Sonoma County

The needs of children and families in Sonoma County are great, especially during this time of significant uncertainty for many families. FRCs and other organizations that provide family strengthening services are key supports for both local families and the community at large.

The 2017 North Bay wildfires had tremendous impacts on the communities served by the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network, in particular families served by La Luz Center in Sonoma Valley and Via Esperanza in Santa Rosa, and more recently families served by Corazón Healdsburg after the Kincade Fire in 2019. Immediately following the disasters, these families experienced evacuations, destroyed homes, mass displacement, and critical basic needs for food, water, shelter and financial assistance. For residents who already experience poverty and marginalization from their community, the effects of the disasters have been particularly dire and urgent. As the disasters unfolded, other impacts became apparent, which require long-term recovery efforts. While FRCs offer programs and services for all community members regardless of race or ethnicity, those in the Sonoma County Network predominantly serve and are served by the Latino community.

DISTINCT NEEDS FOR LATINO COMMUNITY:
Sonoma County’s Spanish-speaking and immigrant populations were particularly impacted by the fires. Undocumented community members expressed fear in accessing shelters and resources due to a heightened sense of anxiety under the current administration and political environment. Additionally, the resulting crisis surrounding housing and employment has particularly impacted the Latino community. Latinos in Sonoma County face major challenges: from well-being and housing to health insurance and income, Latinos trail the County average in all major indicators. The struggles are many: four in ten Latino adults lack high school diplomas and typical Latino worker earns only about $21,695, which is far below the poverty line for a family of four. More than half of housing units in these neighborhoods are rented, and the average size of households living in rental housing is among the county’s highest, suggesting overcrowded living conditions. Adults must direct the majority of their time and energy to securing the basics—essentials like nutritious food, medical care, and a place to live. The struggle to stretch low wages far enough to make ends meet and to navigate the daily challenges of life in high-poverty neighborhoods exacts a high cost: the chronic stress of insecurity causes excessive wear and tear on the heart and blood vessels, weakens immunity, frays relationships, and erodes psychological health. The effects of prolonged poverty, particularly in the early years, on children’s well-being are grave and generational.

A STAGGERING HOUSING CRISIS:
Before the 2017 wildfire disaster, an affordable housing crisis already loomed in Sonoma County. Housing prices were unaffordable for low- and middle-income residents, and the pace of new construction for affordable housing units had fallen far behind the County’s population growth. Between 2000 and 2015 the percentage of Sonoma County residents spending more than 30% of their income on housing jumped from 44% to 57% with Black and Latino families being considerably more cost-burdened than the rest of the population. Additionally, as of 2017 (two years into the 2015–2023 housing cycle), 70% of necessary home building permits were issued for above moderate-income units while only 9–13% of necessary permits were issued for very low, low or moderate income units. These existing challenges, coupled with the fires destroying thousands of homes and structures, has compounded the housing crisis. This challenge particularly impacts disenfranchised community members including Latinos, who are less likely to be accepted into an increasingly competitive rental market.

LOST WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT:
In a largely agrarian community, harvest season, which has proven to also be fire season, is the time of year when many workers make the bulk of their family’s income for the year. Many wine and hospitality industry employees lost weeks of income during the

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3 Bay Area Equity Atlas, 2017. [https://bayareaequityatlas.org](https://bayareaequityatlas.org)
2017 and 2019 fires, and others lost their jobs entirely. This has particularly impacted the Latino population, who make up a large percentage of the agriculture and hospitality industry workforce.

PUBLIC CHARGE AND IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT:
As changes in immigration law and enforcement have continued to evolve, the immigrant community has grown increasingly fearful of being deported and separated from their families. Many families are constantly living in fear, which impacts their capacity to feel safe when accessing various social and public services, including mental health support. According to a recent Urban Institute report about one in seven (13.7%) adults in immigrant families reported that they or a family member did not participate in—meaning they did not apply for or dropped out of—a non-cash benefit program in 2018 out of fear of jeopardizing future immigration status. Among adults in low-income families earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level, this rate was one in five (20.7%).

LIMITED ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES:
Regardless of immigration status, Latinos constitute the largest group of uninsured in the United States—more than half of California’s 2.9 million uninsured are Latino. Without adequate health insurance, Latino community members, especially monolingual Spanish speakers, are not able to afford the limited services available to them. When it comes to mental health, Latinos are less likely to receive care for depression and are even less likely to receive quality care for depression, compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Among Latinos with a mental disorder, less than one in eleven contacts a mental health specialist, while fewer than one in five contacts a general health care provider. In addition, among Latino immigrants with mental disorders, fewer than one in twenty uses services from a mental health specialist, while less than one in ten uses services from a general health care provider.

In addition to those listed above, the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network members have identified the following specific challenges they see every day in their work with families:

- **Lack of Parenting Support**: Long waiting lists keep parents with young children from enrolling in needed parenting classes.
- **Lack of Preparation for Community Participation**: Many parents do not have the language, basic education, or leadership skills to fully participate in school, work, and community.
- **Language**: Ensuring all information is available in bi-lingual formats is essential to meeting parents’ needs.
- **Lack of Community Gatherings**: Families need community spaces and activities that are led by and for the community itself.
- **Segregated Systems**: Segregation based on language, race, and economics in school, churches, and neighborhoods divides communities and creates inequity in educational and career opportunities.
- **Program Schedules**: Working parents need services offered with flexible scheduling that allow for the limited time available to parents for attending appointments.
- **Lack of Awareness**: Isolated parents do not access services because they don’t know they exist or how to find them.
- **Financial Needs**: Parents with low-education and low-English literacy are not able to earn enough money to cover the high costs of living, leaving them feeling that they do not have control of their lives.
- **Eligibility Misperceptions**: Incorrect information and fear about eligibility requirements for services and supports keeps many families from accessing the resources available to them.

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4 Urban Institute From Safety Net to Solid Ground Initiative—Brief: One in Seven Adults in Immigrant Families Avoided Benefit Programs in 2018.

Five Protective Factors Model for Family Strengthening

Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) 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 five key Protective Factors:

- **Parental resilience**: Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma
- **Social connections**: Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development**: Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development
- **Concrete support in times of need**: Access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges
- **Social and emotional competence of children**: Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

Using the Strengthening Families Framework, states are shifting policy and practice to help programs and providers working with children and families to take everyday actions that support parents to build their Protective Factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems. In California, 88% of FRCs report using the Five Protective Factors Framework to guide programming. Further information about the Strengthening Families Framework, the Five Protective Factors and the role of FRCs can be found in Appendix A: Literature Review of Family Resource Centers.

CSSP outlines the infrastructure necessary to apply Strengthening Families at national, state, system/agency, and programmatic levels to shift policy and practice to support children and families’ health and well-being. There are five core functions of implementation across all settings: 1) building a foundation to advance and sustain the efforts; 2) building partnerships with parents; 3) deepening knowledge and comprehension of the protective factors; 4) changing systems, policies, and practices to reflect a protective factors approach; and 5) ensuring accountability.
In Sonoma County, the Strengthening Families initiative is currently applied in a variety of disciplines, organizations, and programs. Strengthening Families is known to guide the work of the following organizations, each of which informs and supports FRC services in unique ways:

- **Early childhood education programs and non-profit organizations** (Community Child Care Council—4Cs, Community Action Partnership, Early Learning Institute)
- **Maternal Child Adolescent Health Field Nursing program** (Sonoma County Department of Health Services—Public Health)
- **Professional development opportunities** (Sonoma County Office of Education, Child Care Planning Council, Upstream Investments, First 5 Sonoma County)
- **Parent and child education and support programs** (Child Parent Institute, North Bay Regional Center, Community Action Partnership, various elementary schools and family resource centers, La Luz, Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce)
- **Child welfare programs and interventions** (Sonoma County Human Services Department—Family, Youth, & Children’s Services)
- **Health care** (community health clinics, Sonoma County Department of Health Services—Behavioral Health, Kaiser Permanente, Drug Abuse Alternatives Center)

In partnership with FRCs, Sonoma County organizations integrate varying degrees of Strengthening Families philosophies and practices. A deeper evaluation of current partnerships between Sonoma County FRCs and nonprofits embracing the Strengthening Families Framework would offer opportunities to build a network of FRCs that operate as a hub for social services with a holistic community focus.

To monitor the impact of Strengthening Families efforts in building family resiliency in Sonoma County, First 5 encourages the use of the Protective Factors Survey (PFS) by agencies. Currently, over 40 states are using the PFS with participants in home visiting, parent education, child maltreatment prevention, and family support programs. Locally, Family, Youth and Children’s Services programs, the Home Visiting Collaborative, Triple P providers, and several First 5 grantee programs have been early adopters of the tool. Data collected from 2014–2016 indicates that across providers and programs participants demonstrated an overall improvement related to each of the Five Protective Factors. Concrete Supports were consistently the lowest score, with females demonstrating the lowest pre-assessment scores and also the most significant increase in post-assessment scores. Across all five Protective Factors, participants interacting with providers offering services rooted in the Strengthening Families Framework improved their knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Five Protective Factors in their daily lives.
Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network Protective Factors Framework

After conducting a program and practice review of the Network’s current strategies and opportunities, it became clear that, while partner FRCs all contribute to all five Protective Factors, there was significant strength and capacity across the Network in three areas: Parental Resilience, Social Connections and Concrete Support in Times of Need. In order to create a solid foundation for shared outcomes data collection, analysis and program development, the Network will focus on these three Protective Factors for the next two years before creating additional frameworks for Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development and Social and Emotional Competence of Children.

In order to measure the Network’s impact on the development of families’ Protective Factors, partners utilized the FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Outcome Accountability Guide (https://www.friendsnrc.org/evaluation-toolkit) to guide the selection of shared outcomes and indicators for prevention programs. In this section of the report, we will provide an in-depth description of the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network Protective Factors Framework and the partners’ intention for program development.

A detailed summary chart that illustrates the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network Protective Factors Framework can be found in Appendix B of this report.
Parental Resilience

How families manage stress and function well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.

Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience—the flexibility and inner strength to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life’s ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children. This can help children learn critical self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect; physical and mental health problems; marital conflict; substance abuse; domestic or community violence; and financial stressors can reduce a parent’s capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children. Conversely, community-level protective factors, such as a positive community environment and economic opportunities, enhance parental resilience.

All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supportive caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed. All of these qualities strengthen their capacity to parent effectively, and they can be nurtured and developed through concrete skill-building activities or through supportive interactions with others.6

Sonoma County Network partners have identified two critical obstacles to the development of Parental Resilience among Sonoma County parents:

1. Lack of Parenting Support:
   Long waiting lists keep parents with young children from enrolling in needed parenting classes and coaching support.

   While all four FRCs partner with other Sonoma County organizations to offer support groups, individual counseling, coaching, workshops, and family literacy and child development courses, there are long waiting lists across Sonoma County for parenting courses including AVANCE, Triple P Positive Parenting and Pasitos Playgroups, as well as for individual and group-based mental health services that are key to families’ ability to nurture their children.

2. Lack of Preparation for Community Participation:
   Many parents do not have the language, basic education, or leadership skills to fully participate in school, work and community, which contributes to a sense of hopelessness and inability to effect change in their own lives.

   According to the U.S. census data, Sonoma County’s Latino population was 132,197 in 2015, making up over 26% of the county’s inhabitants. The California Department of Finance projects that the Hispanic population will become the ethnic majority in the country by 2050. More than a third (38%) of Latino adults do not speak English well and only half (56%) of Latino adults over age 25 have high school diplomas. For those Latinos who do graduate high school, only a quarter (25%) completed the necessary criteria to continue with a four-year university program.7

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Interventions to Build Parental Resilience

In response to these obstacles, Network FRC teams incorporate key values and program opportunities that help parents to build their resilience and their belief in themselves as parents and capable decision-makers, including:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY SUPPORT VALUES</th>
<th>PROGRAM STRATEGIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued</td>
<td><strong>Parenting Support and Education:</strong> Increase parents’ capacity to nurture their children through support groups, individual counseling, coaching, workshops, family literacy and child development courses and peer support conferences</td>
</tr>
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<td>Honor each family’s race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills</td>
<td><strong>Parent Leadership Development:</strong> Build personal capacity through hands-on projects, parent advisory councils coaching, and leadership courses and conferences</td>
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<td>Use and value a trauma-informed model across programs</td>
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<th>CAP–VE</th>
<th>Corazón</th>
<th>La Luz</th>
<th>McDowell</th>
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Participants know how to manage child behavior in a nurturing and effective manner

Participants have an increased sense of control and ability to bring change in their lives

**Shared Indicators:**

- Participants feel more in control of their lives
- Participants are more able to accomplish what they set out to do
- Participants are more able to solve their own problems
- Participants value and engage in educational opportunities for themselves and their children

**Shared Outcomes:**

- Participants know the importance of noticing and encouraging their children’s positive behaviors
- Participants understand the importance of developmentally appropriate supervision and routines for their children

**MEASURING PARENTAL RESILIENCE**
Recommendations for Program Development in Support of Parental Resilience

While Network partners are actively implementing a number of resiliency-promoting strategies and approaches, they will focus on building their individual and collective capacity in:

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<tr>
<th>ROLES FOR PARTNERS AND PARENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jointly pursue funding to expand evidence-based parenting education courses, including AVANCE, Triple P Positive Parenting and Pasitos Playgroups. To fill gaps, develop and offer one-time parenting workshops that focus on specific parenting and communication skills that can help parents manage stress and nurture their children.</td>
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The Network should build stronger relationships with organizations including Child Parent Institute, Community Child Care Council, and Early Learning Institute to offer a robust, culturally relevant parenting education program to isolated families, especially those involved in the child welfare system, supported by joint outreach and co-located class offerings.

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<th>EXPANDED PARENTING EDUCATION OFFERINGS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Work across the Network to build regional opportunities for expanded coursework and learning opportunities around English Language Development, GED and High School Equivalency preparation and civic leadership so that parents gain the confidence and skills they need to engage more fully and advocate for their family’s and community’s needs.</td>
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School districts, adult education programs, and Santa Rosa Junior College will all play lead roles in building out course offerings in each community. In addition, the FRCs could draw on On The Move’s Parent University leadership development model to create structured parent leadership courses and internships opportunities.

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<th>SKILLS-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Partner with resources in the community that help families manage stress and deal with crises, including programs that offer family-to-family help for personalized, sustained support, as well as services such as mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, and self-help support groups. Additional training of FRC staff is needed to enable FRC staff to provide resources to help parents understand the causes and effects of stress, teach parents concrete skills to prevent stress, and link parents with resources for stress management.</td>
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The Network should work to build stronger collaborative relationships with organizations including Humanidad, Latino Service Providers, Verity, Raízes Collective, Hanna Institute, SOS Community Counseling, YWCA of Sonoma County, Buckelew Programs, and Petaluma People Services Center that will provide capacity building for FRC staff and direct connections to services for families.

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<th>TRAUMA-INFORMED WELLNESS SUPPORT</th>
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School districts, adult education programs, and Santa Rosa Junior College will all play lead roles in building out course offerings in each community. In addition, the FRCs could draw on On The Move’s Parent University leadership development model to create structured parent leadership courses and internships opportunities.
PROTECTIVE FACTOR:
Social Connections

Develop positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support.

Friends, families, neighbors and community members provide parents with emotional support, problem solving skills, parenting advice, and concrete assistance. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to “give back”, an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

Parents with a network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support such as transportation or occasional child care. In other words, a positive community environment—and the parent’s ability to participate effectively in his or her community—is an important protective factor. Additionally, research has shown that parents who are isolated and have few social connections are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Social connections support children in multiple ways. A parent’s positive relationships give children access to other caring adults, a relationship-level protective factor that may include extended family members, mentors, or other members of the family’s community. Parents’ social interactions also model important relational skills for children and increase the likelihood that children will benefit from involvement in positive activities (individual-level factors). As children grow older, positive friendships and support from peers provide another important source of social connection.

Network partners have identified three critical obstacles to the development of Social Connections among Sonoma County parents:

1. **Language**: Ensuring all information is available in bilingual formats is essential to meeting parents’ needs.

   Public systems across Sonoma County continue to struggle to provide critical updates, benefits information and regular communication in Spanish for the 38% of Latino resident adults who do not speak English well. During the fires and public safety power outages, emergency updates and alerts often came in English only. Agencies like the Red Cross, which organized the emergency response, did not have translators. That meant a significant segment of the population wasn’t getting critical information about the deadly fire, or access to resources to help with recovery. Outside of disaster response, Spanish-speaking parents report ongoing frustration that they are not able to access some County services or to fully engage in their children’s schools because information, newsletter and forms are only provided in English.

2. **Lack of Community Gatherings**: Families need safe, affordable and culturally responsive community spaces and activities that are led by and for community members.

   While stigma and a lack of bilingual resources discourage many Latinos from seeking out formal services, many Latinos desire to find healing through community and cultural expressions—such as art, food, music, dance, writing, and shared experiences. Currently, only limited cultural arts activities are accessible financially, linguistically, and geographically to Latino families.

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3. **Segregated Systems:** Segregation based on language, race and economics in school, churches and neighborhoods divides communities and creates inequity in educational and career opportunities.

In Petaluma and Santa Rosa, the evidence of segregation is striking: While students in Petaluma City Schools are 35% Latino and 37% low-income; McDowell Elementary School’s student population is 87% Latino and 93% low-income. Likewise, students in Santa Rosa City Schools are 54% Latino and 58% low-income, while students in Southwest Santa Rosa are 84% Latino and 86% low-income. As a subgroup, Latinos in Sonoma County are far behind in terms of education and income: nearly 44% of Latino adults did not complete high school, and their median earnings are only about $21,500, which is below the poverty line for a family of four.9, 10

**Interventions to Build Social Connections**

In response to these obstacles, Network FRCs teams incorporate key values and program opportunities that help parents to build relationships and engage in mutual support:

**FAMILY SUPPORT VALUES**

- Support families to value, build, sustain, and use social connections
- Model an inclusive environment
- Demonstrate mutual support in parenting and other issues
- Promote community engagement and participation

**PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

**Community Building Events:** Celebrate culture through regular social gatherings and special events that bring families together.

**Peer Support:** Promote connections through support groups, peer coaching, skill sharing, mentoring, and interactive workshops and parenting classes.

**MEASURING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

- Participants know how reliable, safe friends, family, and neighbors can provide their families with support when they need it
- Participants know their personal needs for support
- Participants have mutual support networks of friends, family, and neighbors
- Participants are willing to share their skills and resources with the community
- Participants refer other parents to helpful resources

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9 A Portrait of Sonoma County, 2014.
10 California Department of Education 2018 School Dashboard.
## Recommendations for Program Development in Support of Social Connections

### Roles for Partners and Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREATE EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BRIDGE SOCIAL DIVIDES</th>
<th>Leaders from City Recreation Departments, arts organizations, and churches with bilingual congregations should work alongside FRCs to create opportunities for intergenerational, intercultural activities including service projects, sports leagues, cultural events and community gatherings where people of all backgrounds are welcomed. FRCs should also engage with On The Move’s La Plaza Project to expand the project’s cultural arts and mental health programming outside of Santa Rosa.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leverage relationships with schools, cultural arts organizations and local recreation departments to sponsor community service, sports and outdoor activities for parents, including fathers, that bring families together in settings where they can form organic relationships. Create special outreach activities for fathers, grandparents, and other family members to ensure that relationships between families extend further than children and youth.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BUILD NEW MUTUAL SUPPORT MODELS</strong></td>
<td>Parent leaders should facilitate efforts to identify urgent, solvable problems, engage their peers and design solutions like clothing exchanges, food pantries, or childcare cooperatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage parent leaders in creating solutions to the challenges they and other families face. Formal and informal systems that encourage parents to help each other raise their children have worked for generations in countless communities around the world. When the network of experienced parents grows and the depth of their experiences increases, they are able to creatively solve parenting problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FORM STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES</strong></td>
<td>Several Sonoma County organizations, including Latino Service Providers, the Center for Wellbeing and St. Joseph Health System currently implement successful promotores programs to address physical and mental health issues. FRCs should work alongside these organizations to gather knowledge on best practices, align efforts and recruit and train local promotores who will focus on building Social Connections within the FRCs’ target populations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement Promotores de Salud programs, also known as community health worker programs, to form lasting, trusted relationships with communities by bridging language and culture to create connections, provide education, and increase access to services for individuals, families, and communities. By drawing on the expertise and networks of trained community leaders, FRCs will be able to create new connections for isolated families.</td>
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PROTECTIVE FACTOR:
Concrete Supports in Times of Need

Increase access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing, and health care is essential for families to thrive. Families whose basic needs are met have more time and energy to devote to their children’s safety and well-being. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, lack health insurance, or face a family crisis, their ability to support their children’s healthy development may be at risk. Families whose economic opportunities are more limited may need assistance connecting to social service supports such as housing, mental health support, substance abuse, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits.

Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports also may help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.11

Network partners have identified three critical obstacles to the development of Concrete Supports among Sonoma County parents:

1. **Program Schedules:** Working parents need services offered with flexible scheduling that allow for the limited time available to parents for attending appointments. All four FRCs and some other community organizations are able to offer a range of adult education courses in the evenings, but almost no direct services are available to families during the evening or weekends when working parents are able to participate. Limitations in staffing, school facility restrictions, and partner availability make it next to impossible to accommodate parents who work during the regular work day, and much less those who work more than one job to make ends meet.

2. **Lack of Awareness:** Isolated parents do not access services because they don’t know they exist or how to find them. Degree of acculturation, language, and immigration status all directly affect access to care. Recent immigrants (in Sonoma, 42% of Latino residents are foreign born) are more likely to be isolated from mainstream society and to be unfamiliar with the U.S. healthcare system, a situation that may interfere with obtaining appropriate and timely care. While the positive media coverage of the FRCs’ efforts in disaster recovery is beginning to increase awareness of resources among many disconnected families, long waiting lists often deter parents from doing the hard work of finding the services they need.12

3. **Financial Needs:** Parents with low-education and English literacy are not able to earn enough money to cover the high costs of living, leaving them feeling that they do not have control of their lives. The cost of living in Sonoma County is very high, at 78% higher than the US average (as of 2019). Comparatively, California’s cost of living is 69% higher than the US average. 44% of all Sonoma County households and 49% of Latinos with 1 or more child live below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.13

4. **Eligibility Misperceptions:** Incorrect information and fear about eligibility requirements for services and supports keeps many families from accessing the resources available to them. Over the last two years, the immigrant community has grown increasingly fearful of being deported and separated from their families, as changes in immigration law and enforcement have continued to evolve. Many families are constantly living in fear, which impacts their capacity to feel safe when accessing various social and public services, including mental health support.14


12 A Portrait of Sonoma County, 2014.

13 First 5 Sonoma 2019 Community Indicators Snapshot.

14 Urban Wire: With Public Charge Rule Looming, One in Seven Adults in Immigrant Families Reported Avoiding Public Benefit Programs in 2018. [http://www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)
Interventions to Build Concrete Supports

In response to these obstacles, Network FRC teams incorporate key values and program opportunities that help parents to find and connect to concrete supports in times of need:

Recommendations for Program Development in Support of Concrete Supports in Times of Need

### ROLES FOR PARTNERS AND PARENTS

#### EXPAND ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RELEVANT MENTAL HEALTH AND CRISIS SERVICES

In order to successfully access, navigate and utilize Concrete Supports like housing assistance and food programs, families must also address the traumatic stresses that lead to poor mental health. FRC partners should work alongside mental health providers to find new language and non-clinical strategies to address Latinos’ mental health that acknowledge and integrate cultural values and build on the cultural strengths of the Latino community while empowering the community to heal.

The mental health and cultural arts providers collaborating at La Plaza at Lincoln Elementary School have created a new culturally relevant wellness strategy for Latinos by creating community, belonging and self-esteem through cultural experiences that promote self-expression, resiliency and hope. La Plaza improves access to trauma-informed mental health support by integrating proven, community-based, peer-to-peer strategies in a “Center” model, in which community members access trauma-informed care in a safe, familiar and inclusive space. FRC partners should work with La Plaza leaders to create new opportunities for culturally-focused wellness activities at their FRC sites.

#### EXPAND EFFECTIVE FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS PROGRAMS ACROSS THE NETWORK

While each FRC offers some economic development supports to families, including career-related training, English and GED courses, and benefits eligibility screening and application assistance, more needs to be done to lift Latino families out of poverty. In response to the rebuilding efforts after the 2017 Sonoma County Wildfires, La Luz Center developed successful construction training programs and small business microlending opportunities that should be replicated across the network as funds allow. However, to make any of these services accessible to immigrant families, the Network should ensure that all families are well informed about changes in public charge and immigration regulations by developing outreach strategies and forums that build trust and reduce stress, anxiety and confusion so that families can access the help they need.

Sonoma County Health Services will be a critical partner to FRCs as they work to develop and expand their Family Economic Success Programs. County staff can provide a wealth of information, support in navigating systems and accessing funding sources for supporting FRC staff time and in providing co-located, direct service to families.
**FAMILY SUPPORT VALUES**

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Build community connections to increase access to services
- Recognize families’ abilities to develop skills and tools to meet their own needs

**PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

**Mental Health Therapy:**
Meet the expressed mental health needs of the whole family through individual counseling and in-home services.

**Immigration Support:**
Empower parents with knowledge and legal resources to navigate the immigration system.

**Basic Needs Support:** Meet community members’ immediate financial needs through crisis management, emergency financial assistance, food distribution, and connections to housing.

**Legal Services:**
Help families to navigate the justice system through court accompaniment and connections to legal services.

**School-based Youth Programs:**
Empower students through school readiness and success programs

**Civic Engagement:**
Advocate for systems change that supports long-term family stability.

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**MEASURING CONCRETE SUPPORTS**

**Shared Outcomes:**

- Participants understand their finances and set goals.
- Participants know where they can access economic assistance, clothing, food, health care, and shelter when needed.
- Family Resource Centers have effective relationships with partner organizations.

**Shared Indicators:**

- Participants know how to manage family life to promote self-sufficiency, safety, and stability.
- FRCs participate in ongoing collaborations with other organizations.
- FRCs create new partnerships regularly to meet client needs.
- Most participants are connected by the FRCs to other organizations.
Roadmap for Implementation

In order to build a sustainable, dynamic family strengthening movement with the power to more deeply integrate Protective Factors for the community’s most vulnerable families, the Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network recommends the following four action priorities. These action priorities will only be feasible if additional funding is committed.

**Priority 1: Develop Formal Structure for Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network**

To engage more partners and community resources in the Network’s shared work, FRC leaders will develop a formal structure, purpose, and work plan with which to recruit, engage and build collaboration with other family support organizations. Fortunately the vast majority of Sonoma County public and nonprofit organizations are connected to at least one of the FRC founding partners, creating an initial tie to the sustainable work of the Network.

An important first step for Network formation will be to complete a Network-wide program assessment to help review current practices, understand what is working and what is not, and move forward towards a more robust family strengthening field. Three national organizations, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the National Network of Family Support and Strengthening Networks, and FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, have each developed program assessment tools for the field of family support and strengthening. These three assessments are designed to help programs reflect on their practices, measure quality, affirm strengths, and identify concrete strategies to improve practice. The Network will select at least one of these tools to be completed by each member organizations to assess individual and regional areas of strengths and areas for growth.

To build and sustain the Network, it is critical that local funders, including First 5 Sonoma, invest in the infrastructure of the collaboration by funding both staff time and expert facilitation to guide the emerging process.
Priority 2: Build the Network’s Capacity for Measuring Collective Impact

Currently, the Network FRC partners report varying capacities for data collection, tracking, analysis and application. To measure their collective impact and determine areas for program development and expansion across the Network, FRC partners have identified a four-step process to build their joint evaluation expertise.

First, each FRC site will dedicate staff time to assessing its own learning needs around evaluation and to engage in training in such topics as participatory, community-driven data collection strategies; data analysis; and the use of data in program planning and program implementation. Network FRC partners will need additional financial resources to underwrite both staff and trainer time.

Second, Network leaders will engage the help of an expert evaluator to develop data collection and tracking tools and protocols to measure their collective impact on family outcomes. The consulting evaluator will assist the Network in determining how and if to adopt and or adapt the evidence-based Protective Factors Survey, developed by FRIENDS National Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention. FRCs will engage parent leaders in a facilitated process to ensure that data collection tools and protocols are culturally relevant and connect directly to families’ wants and needs.

Third, with the support of a strong web of community partners, the FRC network will collect demographic, participation, and outcomes data related to their three priority Protective Factors over the course of 18 months. During this period, staff and the project evaluator will engage in fidelity review activities to ensure uniformity in evaluation activities across Centers and adjust tools and protocols as needed.

Finally, at the end of the initial 18 month data collection period, the Network will engage its full membership in reassessing program needs, given evaluation findings. More detail is provided in Priority 3 below.

Priority 3: Share and Adopt Evidence-Based Practices in Response to Evaluation Findings

It is the Network’s intention to share and adopt evidence-based practices to increase protective factors that lead to more positive outcomes for families and children in Sonoma County. Using evaluation findings to guide its efforts, the Network will work with multiple partners from faith communities, cultural groups, mental health providers, family strengthening organizations, schools and neighborhoods to identify opportunities to implement evidence-based practices that increase access to underserved families, increase the quality of family support services, promote interagency collaboration, and build the family strengthening field across Sonoma County.

In order to fully implement these new programs and strategies, Network leaders will work together to identify and access sustainable funding sources that will allow their partnerships to flourish and grow.
In the aftermath of the Sonoma County wildfires in 2017 and 2019, it has become more clear than ever that continued adversity, loss, and trauma have taken a devastating toll on many Latino families and children who are struggling to recover from the emotional, financial, and physical impacts of the disasters. Now more than ever, it is critical that funders invest in critical strategies to build Protective Factors for Sonoma County families.

Over the next three years, Network leaders will use their collective strength to better leverage funding opportunities and advocate for the creation of permanent funding strategies to address family needs. A preliminary list of potential funding partners is included in Appendix C to this report.

While a wide array of potential funders exists, there is a need for a collective investment with a champion investor providing backbone funding and resources support. Some of the most successful FRC networks developed under the leadership and investment of a government funder willing to braid funding with nonprofits to create a well-supported sustainable network with the capacity to commit to long-term outcomes. To achieve a cohesive and sustainable FRC network in Sonoma County, a champion or a collaborative of champion funders will need to commit sustained resources to developing systems model that will provide integrated county-wide services.

Within Sonoma County, the Upstream Investments initiative offers preliminary infrastructure to support an integrated FRC service model. Commissioned by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in 2009, Upstream Investments provides training, technical assistance and backbone support to community agencies to increase and improve the implementation of evidence-informed practices intended to support healthy family development. Through a well-established network of community partnerships, Upstream may be well-positioned to support the buildout of a data-driven FRC hub that links and measures outcomes across community partners.
Conclusion

Family Resource Centers are a proven prevention strategy for addressing many of the challenges that face families. In Sonoma County, Family Resource Centers are critical partners in building resiliency in families as our community continues on the path to long-term recovery. First 5 Sonoma County’s essential investment in the Sonoma County Family Strengthening Network is an important first step towards building the capacity of the family strengthening field in the region. This investment is representative of the vision and values of First 5 Sonoma County’s commission members and agency leadership and will yield returns in the form of healthy, thriving families for years to come.

On the Verge Cohort Participant List

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Literature Review of Family Resource Centers

Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are community-based hubs of innovation that deliver services, foster relationships, and advocate for family-friendly policy change to create healthy, equitable communities. The roots of FRCs extend back to the settlement houses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that offered adult education, employment resources, health services, after-school recreation and vocational training. Founded with the belief that any initiative to improve social welfare should come from indigenous neighborhood leaders and organizations, settlement houses became permanent fixtures, with nearly 400 stretching across the country in 1918 (Blank). Today, a similar body of work is carried forward by Family Resource Centers. This literature review will examine working definitions of a Family Resource Center, best practices and guiding principles for FRC operations, demonstrated benefits of FRCs and the opportunities and challenges to evaluate FRC operations and outcomes.

What Is an FRC?
FRCs support family and community health through well-being services, growth and development opportunities for all ages, civic engagement and community development initiatives (Sherman and McQuaid). Key Components of Family Resource Centers: A Review of the Literature examines two distinctly different definitions of Family Resource Centers. The first focuses on the necessity and value of FRCs as service providers. Through this lens, FRCs are valued for the individual programs and services they provide to individuals. The second definition defines FRCs more broadly in terms of the philosophy that underlies the centers’ work with and through families. Services are offered, but are only one piece of a whole family, whole community approach. Authors note that in focusing only on the services provided by an FRC, community is a fragmented group of isolated individuals, rather than a tightly knit web of families, individuals and systems (Pampel and Beachy-Quick).

In support of the latter definition, the Colorado General Assembly defines FRCs as “providing comprehensive, intensive, integrated and collaborative state and community-based services” (Pampel and Beachy-Quick). FRCs are untied by a common philosophy made up of core characteristics that inform services offered, populations served and prioritized community outcomes. While FRCs exist across the country in rural and urban settings, no two are exactly alike. In fact, one of the great strengths of FRCs is that they act as “incubators for innovative ideas and programs within their local communities” (Vehicles_for_Change_II.Pdf). Much like their predecessors, the Settlement Houses, FRCs are designed by and for the community they exist in. They offer programs and services tailored to the unique needs of the families and individuals they serve. Yet, common characteristics and guiding principles govern FRC planning and implementation regardless of their location.

Guiding Principles
Throughout the literature, seven key components of FRCs emerged:

» Safe neutral spaces that include a diverse population in programs and services
» Family centered, collaborative relationships between staff and families
» Focused on community transformation, reciprocity and asset development
» Evidence-informed, strengths-based approach to service delivery
» Focus on prevention and long-term growth
» Coordination of multiple services
» High-quality staff training and coaching

FRCs are safe neutral spaces that reflect local culture. While much of the attention and program planning naturally goes towards families with the greatest needs, the healthiest FRCs will attract a wide clientele (Hardy and Darlington). Strong, healthy relationships are critical to achieving positive outcomes through FRCs. The best FRCs realize that they cannot successfully operate with a vertical top-down approach. As much benefit as participants may...
receive from programming and experienced staff, they can also receive through horizontal relationships with peers that identify with their current circumstances.

FRCs are family centered, family strengthening and collaborative across staff and families. Family perspectives must drive goal setting for the center, family and individual. Studies show that FRCs have the greatest positive outcomes when family members are viewed as colleagues and are invited to participate in planning and scheduling services (Pampel and Beachy-Quick). Creating deep family-staff collaboration has the potential to equalize power and interrupt notions of a top-down paradigm.

FRCs focus on community transformation, reciprocity and asset development. To achieve the best outcomes for a community, FRCs are often the backbone of collaboration across sectors and organizations, pulling together unique participants to achieve a common goal. All participants in an FRC both give to and receive from common efforts. FRCs are not merely a source of service delivery, they are nimble agents preparing and uniting communities to initiate change.

FRCs have an evidence-informed, strengths-based approach to service delivery. The ABCD Toolkit offers strategies to personalize collective impact theories in ways that FRCs embody through magnifying individual strengths to unite individuals, families and institutions sharing common physical assets (WhatIsAssetBasedCommunityDevelopment.Pdf). By helping families identify special skills, personal interests, reliable sources of support, and areas of past and current success, a strength-based approach instills a sense of efficacy among families. In so doing, individual assets increase, are shared and expand.

FRCs focus on prevention and long-term growth. Deeply interwoven with the other characteristics of an FRC, prevention and growth over time change the community’s focus from reactive to proactive. This mentality stretches across programs, but is most easily identified in parenting programs. Evidence-informed parenting programs have been found to have positive cognitive, social and emotional outcomes for the children of participating parents. These outcomes extend well beyond the time a family is participating in programming, positively impacting family members for decades (Pampel and Beachy-Quick).

FRCs coordinate services across peers, neighbors and communities. People exist in and cannot be separated from their social environment (Jack). Studies empirically support that programs involving peer support in community settings have better client outcomes that programs treating clients in isolated environments (Pampel and Beachy-Quick). They increase confidence, allow for idea sharing and create social support structures where none previously existed. These effects are magnified when FRCs adopt a holistic service model that meets multiple needs across varied populations in a community setting.

Finally, FRCs need high-quality staff training and coaching. FRCs employing trained professionals have been found to produce better outcomes than those staffed primarily by volunteers (Layzer, Goodson, Bernstein, and Price). However, it is not uncommon for individuals having received services from an FRC to eventually become dedicated employees with a wealth of experiential knowledge. For this reason, FRCs need to embrace creative thinking while providing ongoing opportunities for professional development to increase staffs’ ability and capacity to implement evidence-informed programming with fidelity.

Strengthening Families and Protective Factors Overview (Sonoma County Human Services Department)

In addition to a shared set of guiding principles, in recent years FRCs have adopted a common language based on the Strengthening Families Approach and the Protective Factors Framework that was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect. Strengthening Families identifies five protective factors that are critical to the development of healthy children in healthy environments. Today, Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors are applied nationwide across sectors including early childhood, education, child welfare, corrections, health care, mental health, and other social services that are utilizing an assets-based approach to encouraging family resiliency and well-being using the five protective factors (Brown-Harper). The Strengthening Families Approach is an evidence-informed initiative that grew out of a two year study examining quality early childhood
education programs’ effectiveness, and review of existing developmental research addressing child abuse and neglect prevention (Brown-Harper). The research demonstrates that the five protective factors identified in this pivotal report correlate with lowering child abuse and neglect in early childhood settings. The five protective factors to safeguard families and children against risk include:

1. Parental resilience
2. Social connections
3. Knowledge of parenting and child development
4. Concrete support in times of need

The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework: Branching Out and Reaching Deeper, describes the expanded application across sectors. The Strengthening Families is now being implemented in multiple key areas including: early care and education, child abuse and neglect prevention, home visiting, public education, corrections, and child welfare (Brown-Harper). Seven key concepts provide the foundation of the Strengthening Families approach. They include the following ideas (Brown-Harper):

» A two-generational approach is essential, underscoring that “each of the five protective factors is inextricably linked to healthy development and well-being for both parents and their children”

» Cultural considerations need to be accounted for that influence parenting behaviors, belief systems, values, expectations, and relationships with children

» A strengths-based approach holds the understanding that all families have assets and competencies

» Informing parents about the biology of stress “is critically important in forging relationships and creating environments that support the development of resilience in children and parents”

» The resilience theory points to the capacity for families to cope, adapt, overcome, and grow to meet life’s challenges despite adversity. Developing resilience ultimately makes families stronger and more resourceful to surmount future challenges

» A focus on well-being, especially those with life situations with cumulative risk factors, is important for the healthy development of children and families

» The nature of risk and protective factors includes recognizing that families are impacted not only on an individual level, but also on relational, community, and societal levels that influence their health and outcomes

These seven principles are integrated in the Strengthening Families and Protective Factors Framework in addition to acknowledging the interwoven relational and societal complexities that influence child and family well-being and health. Protective and risk factors are present in individual, relational, community, and societal domains of the social ecology (Brown-Harper). Focusing solely on individual-level factors will not ensure the health of children and families (Brown-Harper). A holistic view of the context that creates resiliency or negative outcomes beyond the individual is key to understanding the “structural deficiencies in our society” that impact families (Brown-Harper). The Strengthening Families approach considers the social ecological association with risk factors alongside the social determinants of health, the conditions or circumstances in society that have a greater chance to produce poor outcomes (i.e. systemic racism, lack of educational attainment, no or sub-standard health care options, few opportunities to gain economic resources, unsafe neighborhoods). Applying the Strengthening Families Approach and the Protective Factors Framework across FRC work helps mitigate the multifaceted, interconnected, systemic challenges that many families face.

Benefits of Family Resource Centers
Both within and across communities, evaluations of FRC outcomes are challenging. The inherent nature of an FRC is that it is responsive to the needs of the community it exists in. Meeting these needs in ways that are deeply impactful requires an FRC be flexible and nimble, adapting to challenges and community needs with unique and varied programming. While this increases the opportunities for positive outcomes it also makes cross-organizational outcome evaluation challenging. However, acknowledging that challenge, there are
still several evaluations of FRCs that stand out.

An evaluation of FRCs in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania demonstrated that families in communities with FRCs whose operations aligned with the Strengthening Families Framework had a significantly lower rate of verified child maltreatment (Wulczyn and Lery). The evaluation examined community-level risk factors including social determinants of health, potential for collective efficacy and availability of family support centers. Generally, communities with active FRCs were already made-up of low-income households in areas with few community resources. Households had fewer adults per child, more unemployment and more residential instability than neighboring communities. However, after accounting for levels of social disadvantage and population size, within Allegheny County areas served by FRCs had fewer child maltreatment investigations (Wulczyn and Lery). Notably, the study showed that the benefits were to the community, not necessarily the individual. It mattered more that a community had an active FRC than that an individual or family attended FRC programming.

The Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers (ANFRC) offers additional data to support the efficacy of FRCs. The ANFRC requires member resource centers to demonstrate compliance with 25 quality measures to remain in good standing as a member FRC. Member FRCs demonstrated that clients had improvements in indicators including juvenile arrests, cases of child abuse and neglect, and high school graduation rates. Centers maintaining fidelity to the 25 quality measures also reported improved staff motivation, community awareness of services, collaboration with other community resource centers and access of participants to support services (Pampel and Beachy-Quick) (ANFRC_White_Paper_-_Feb_2011__1_.Pdf).

In a significantly larger study of 260 FRCs nationally, Layzer et al. (Layzer, Goodson, Bernstein and Price) report significant benefits to parenting practices, social emotional development of youth, and family functioning in communities with FRCs. There were little to no improvements in the areas of physical health, mental health and economic self-sufficiency. However, the authors note that these results are impacted by the diversity of services offered and received across communities.

Additional Considerations for Implementation

CSSP outlines the infrastructure necessary to apply Strengthening Families at national, state, system/agency, and programmatic levels to shift policy and practice to support children and family health and well-being. FRCs are critical components of this larger infrastructure offering opportunity, relationship and space to initiate and expand the five core functions of implementation: 1) building a foundation to advance and sustain the efforts; 2) building partnerships with parents; 3) deepening knowledge and comprehension of the protective factors; 4) changing systems, policies, and practices to reflect a protective factors approach; and 5) ensuring accountability (Brown-Harper). The ability of FRCs to bring lasting change to communities is built on the principles of Collective Impact (CI). Deep, authentic CI requires players from multiple sectors to work as a community to target resources to change a prioritized outcome. Among other critical components for success, CI movements require a backbone organization. This organization serves as the hub for all other organizations involved in the work and often offers resources including staff and space to facilitate the larger CI work. In the past, FRCs have often been seen as outlying participants in CI work. They were organizations that in their ability to be flexible and nimble were not considered key players in the larger work. Family Resource Centers: Vehicles for Change, Vol II recommends a change to this model. A Differential Response (DR) model sits the FRC at the center of community change. Rather than the FRC being defined by the services it might offer, in a DR model the FRC is defined by the relationships it facilitates within the community: Health and Dental, Education, Human Services, Economic Development, Civic Engagement, Community Development, Law Enforcement and Public & Mental Health (Sherman and McQuaid). Strong relationships across sectors makes the FRC an ideal leader for community change through Collective Impact.

Funding models for FRCs vary widely, but in support of the DR model, Stanislaus County, CA stands as an example of collaborative funding that has been embraced in several California counties, Colorado and Alabama. Stanislaus was an early adopter of mandated standards of operation for FRCs. Standards were developed and adopted by the community of partners that would provide services through the FRC. The result was a unified system of operation
across county FRCs and braided funding that included County as well as private funding. Twelve years post-inception the formula was still being implemented (Sherman and McQuaid). In other states established standards for FRC operations have led to an influx of state and county funding to support ongoing work and model scaling.

Ongoing Evaluation
This literature review has addressed some of the challenges surrounding FRC evaluation. FRCs implement programs which offer opportunity for ongoing outcome evaluation, both local evaluation and scaled evaluation. However, evaluating a single FRC as a holistic “program” introduces challenges that are ingrained in the very nature of an FRC as a flexible, innovative, nimble organization. Evaluating multiple FRCs only exacerbates these challenges. Key Components of Family Resource Centers suggests several best practices to help mitigate the challenges of evaluating an FRC or an FRC network (Pampel and Beachy-Quick):

» An evaluation plan should be created by and reflective of the community that is actively involved in FRC operations;

» Participant feedback is critical and should be used to guide evaluation efforts;

» While tracking the number of participants is typically considered an output, tracking the number of participants and especially repeat participant in peer support groups may be considered an outcome measure;

» Creativity is key. Creativity should be encouraged as outcomes are defined and even more so as strategies to measure outcomes are defined;

» Staff performance must be linked to family outcomes. While it is far from the sole determinant of family outcomes, strong staff performance has been linked to high quality FRC outcomes.

In one form or another, Family Resource Centers have long been woven into the fabric of Western society. They are sources of community, education, health and wellness, and political advocacy. With a focus on fostering family health through asset identification and support, most FRCs have embraced a common language rooted in the Strengthening Families and Protective Factors framework. Even as individual center models differ from this framework, they embrace a common goal to foster hope and well-being in the lives of the community they inhabit. Through innovative funding, nimble operative practices and a commitment to high quality evidence-informed staff training and program selection, FRCs are an untapped opportunity to unite communities to change policies, social environments and individual lives.

SOURCES
### Appendix B: Sonoma County Strengthening Family Network Protective Factors Shared Outcomes Framework

#### Protective Factor

**Parental Resilience**

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

#### Obstacles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of Parenting Support:</th>
<th>Long waiting lists keep Latino parents with young children from enrolling in needed parenting classes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Preparation for Community Participation:</td>
<td>Many parents do not have the language, basic education or leadership skills to fully participate in school, work and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Family Resource Center Interventions

- **Parenting Support and Education**: Increase parents’ capacity to nurture their children through support groups, individual counseling, coaching, workshops, family literacy and child development courses and peer support. (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)
- **Parent Recognition**: Honor parents’ strengths and efforts through special events, articles and photos in newsletter and outreach materials and public displays (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)
- **Parent Leadership Development**: Build personal capacity through hands-on projects, parent advisory councils coaching, and leadership courses and conferences (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)
- **Adult Education**: Build parents’ skills and confidence through literacy, English as a Second Language and high school completion courses (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)

#### Values in Action

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued
- Honor each family’s race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Use and value a trauma-informed model across programs

#### Shared Outcomes

| Participants know how to manage child behavior in a nurturing and effective manner |
| Participants have an increased sense of control and ability to bring change in their lives |

#### Shared Indicators

| Participants know the importance of noticing and encouraging their children’s positive behaviors |
| Participants understand the importance of developmentally appropriate supervision and routines for their children |
| Participants feel more in control of their lives |
| Participants are more able to accomplish what they set out to do |
| Participants are more able to solve their own problems |
| Participants value and engage in educational opportunities for themselves and their children |
### SOCIAL CONNECTIONS
positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSTACLES</th>
<th>FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER INTERVENTIONS</th>
<th>VALUES IN ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong> Ensuring all information is available in bi-lingual formats is essential to understanding parents’ needs.</td>
<td><strong>Community Building Events:</strong> Celebrate culture through regular social gatherings and special events that bring families together (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td>Support families to value, build, sustain and use social connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Community Gatherings:</strong> Families need community spaces and activities that are led by and for the community itself.</td>
<td><strong>Peer Support:</strong> Promote connections through support groups, peer coaching, skill sharing, mentoring, and interactive workshops and parenting classes. (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td>Model an inclusive environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segregated Systems:</strong> Segregation based on language, race and economics in school, churches and neighborhoods divides communities and creates inequity in educational and career opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate mutual support in parenting and other issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Building Events:</strong> Celebrate culture through regular social gatherings and special events that bring families together (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote community engagement and participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHARED OUTCOMES</th>
<th>SHARED INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants have mutual support networks of friends, family, and neighbors</td>
<td>Participants know how reliable, safe friends, family, and neighbors can provide their families with support when they need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants know their personal needs for support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants are willing to share their skills and resources with the community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants refer other parents to helpful resources</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## PROTECTIVE FACTOR

### CONCRETE SUPPORTS IN TIMES OF NEED
access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSTACLES</th>
<th>FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER INTERVENTIONS</th>
<th>VALUES IN ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Schedules:</strong> Working parents need services offered with flexible scheduling that allow for the limited time available to parents for attending appointments.</td>
<td><strong>Flexible, Bilingual Resource Centers:</strong> Increase access to community resources for all age levels through information and referral and co-located services (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td>Respond immediately when families are in crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Awareness:</strong> Isolated parents do not access services because they don’t know they exist or how to find them.</td>
<td><strong>Mental Health Therapy:</strong> Meet the expressed mental health needs of the whole family through individual counseling and in-home services (CAP, La Luz)</td>
<td>Build community connections to increase access to services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Needs:</strong> Parents with low-education and English literacy are not able to earn enough money to cover the high costs of living, leaving them feeling that they do not have control of their lives.</td>
<td><strong>Immigration Support:</strong> Empower parents with knowledge and legal resources to navigate the immigration system (Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td>Recognize families’ abilities to develop skills and tools to meet their own needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility Misperceptions:</strong> Incorrect information and fear about eligibility requirements for services and supports keeps many families from accessing the resources available to them.</td>
<td><strong>Basic Needs Support:</strong> Meet community members’ immediate financial needs through crisis management, emergency financial assistance, food distribution, and connections to housing (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Services:</strong> Help families to navigate the justice system through court accompaniment and connections to legal services (La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td><strong>School-based Youth Programs:</strong> Empower students through school readiness and success programs (CAP, Corazón, La Luz, McDowell)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Engagement:</strong> Advocate for systems change that supports long-term family stability (Corazón, McDowell)</td>
<td><strong>FRCs participate in ongoing collaborations with other organizations</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHARED OUTCOMES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants know how to manage family life to promote self-sufficiency, safety, and stability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participants understand their finances and set goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHARED INDICATORS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Resource Centers have effective relationships with partner organizations.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participants know where they can access economic assistance, clothing, food, health care, and shelter when needed</strong></td>
<td><strong>FRCs create new partnerships regularly to meet client needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most participants are connected by the FRCs to other organizations.</strong></td>
<td><strong>FRCs participate in ongoing collaborations with other organizations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Most participants are connected by the FRCs to other organizations</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Potential Funding Sources for Sonoma County Strengthening Families Network

Private Funding Sources:

Community Foundation Sonoma County (CFSC): CFSC currently offers nine competitive funding opportunities, which run through two cycles each year in the spring and fall. Of particular interest to family strengthening organizations are the Resilience Fund, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, Julia L. Grant Fund for Basic Human Needs, iRead Grants and regional offerings in Healdsburg and Sonoma Valley.

United Way of the Wine Country: United Way of the Wine country invests in five counties, including Sonoma County through United Way led programs and initiatives such as School Readiness Backpacks, Schools of Hope and Earn It! Keep It! $ave It! and through direct designations by donors.

SH Cowell Foundation: Cowell’s work is organized around a place-based grantmaking strategy that supports communities where residents, service providers, educators and civic leaders work together to improve the quality of life for children and families. Cowell funds projects that impact Families and Community; Education and Youth Development and is currently funding work in the Sonoma Valley.

Bank of America Charitable Foundation: The Bank of America Charitable Foundation partners with nonprofits that are removing barriers to economic success for vulnerable populations, including youth, working families, and those with barriers to employment, including the formerly incarcerated. In 2019, the Foundation issued two requests for proposals, one of which focused on investing in workforce development and education and families’ basics needs. The second request focused on affordable housing, sustainable development, strong business corridors, the arts and environmental investments.

Latino Community Foundation: The Latino Community Foundation invests in Latino-led organizations advancing education, health and safety, civic engagement, and youth leadership in communities across California through core operating grants and capacity building efforts, the Latino Giving Circle Network and its Latino Nonprofit Accelerator initiative.

Public Funding Sources:

First 5 Sonoma: My First Five agencies throughout the state support Family resource Centers as part of their overall strategy for supporting children ages 0–5.

Sonoma County Human Services Department: The Sonoma County Human Services Department strives to support the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families and the community. Family Resource Centers have the potential to touch Sonoma County residents at every life stage and can greatly increase the impact of Human Service dollars spent on supporting vulnerable community members.

County of Sonoma General Fund: Several cities and counties utilize their general funds to support Family Resource Center as a coordinated response to support prevention services in communities. The City/County of San Francisco invests over $11 million annually into their FRC Network in order to support the critical work.

Families First Prevention Services Act: California is currently working to realign its Child Welfare Services with the passage of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act in 2018. The Act prioritizes keeping families together and puts more money toward at-home parenting classes, mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment—and puts limits on placing children in institutional settings such as group homes. It is the most extensive overhaul of foster care in nearly four decades. Network partners should strategically prepare for the funding guidelines by adopting Evidence-Based Practices, especially those detailed in the California Child Welfare Clearinghouse. California SB-436, passed in October 2019, codifies FRCS in state law as one of the sources of child abuse prevention and family strengthening and should help to elevate FRCs in the implementation of the federal Families First Prevention Services Act.
Families First Transition and Support Act: These are special funds to that would provide states and territories with resources and funding flexibility to transition to Family First—enhancing support for parents and relatives who are struggling to care for their children. Allowable activities include: provide states with more time to develop the research base for prevention programs they want to use by delaying the 50% well-supported requirement; provide additional funds for State-directed research to develop interventions to meet Family First evidenced-based requirements, strengthen families, improve service delivery for youth victims of trafficking, and reduce inter-generational poverty; and boost funding for Regional Partnership Grants to allow more local and regional groups to address parental substance use and child well-being.

Sonoma County Children's Trust Funds (CTF): The purpose of the County CTF is to fund child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. The Sonoma County Children’s Trust Fund Advisory Committee makes funding recommendations to the county board of supervisors. The board of supervisors makes the final funding decisions. FRCs use CTF to support the strategies such as the coordinator for the FRC network (systems level work for FRCs), creating linkages for advanced funding through the network, mandated reporter training, and parental stress help-lines.

Mental Health Service Act Prevention and Early Intervention: Twenty percent of the money generated by Prop 63 goes to PEI programs that aim to reduce negative outcomes that may result from untreated mental illness: suicide, incarcerations, school failure or dropout, unemployment, prolonged suffering, homelessness, and removal of children from their homes. Each county’s mental health programs has a three-year plan, as well as annual updates for MHSA programs and expenditures. FRCs use PEI funding to support promotores community engagement programs; outreach, education, support, and early intervention to families dealing with mental illness; parent education; grief workshops for people experiencing traumatic loss; parent groups; resource and referral support and case management for families.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Funds: PSSF funds are intended to prevent maltreatment among at-risk families through the provision of community-based services for children and families that focus on family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification (subject and adoption promotion and support. FRCs leverage County PSSF funds to provide differential response services (through case management; aftercare services; training for adoption support to parents; parent education sessions on attachment issues; training for foster parents; and case management for children at risk of removal, or who are receiving child welfare services.
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