



Snohomish County

**FAMILY RESOURCE  
CENTER REPORT  
2022**

BACKGROUND, CONSIDERATIONS, AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

## Contents

<b>I. Background and History</b> .....	2
<b>II. Methodology</b> .....	4
<b>III. Recommendations</b> .....	6
<b>IV. Conclusion</b> .....	7
<b>V. Acknowledgements</b> .....	8

***“Family Resource Centers are a warm and welcoming place in the community where family members can access formal and informal supports to promote their health and well-being, not only in times of need but as a regular part of day-to-day life. FRCs provide multiple services and resources to diverse families and children, increase protective factors, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.”***

FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

## I. Background and History

According to the National Family Support Network, Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are the most typical kind of family support and strengthening program. They are known by many different names across the country and most commonly as Family Support Centers here in Snohomish County. The umbrella term for these centers utilized nationally and in newly minted Washington State legislation is Family Resource Centers which is the term that will be used throughout this document.

Nationally, FRCs share a number of characteristics in common in that they are community/place-based that serve as welcoming and inclusive sites where families can receive an array of services and opportunities to meet their needs to build resiliency. They utilize a multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered approach. They are reflective of the community served and build communities of peer support.

Some FRCs serve the general population while others serve a specific target population but all share these common characteristics while customizing services to the communities in which they are located. All provide the majority of their services at no cost and serve all members of their identified service population.

The goals of FRCs include:

- To support families to be strong, healthy, and successful;
- To contribute to building a strong and health community; and
- To reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect by building the research-based Strengthening Families Protective Factors which include **parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social connections, social and emotional competence of children, and concrete support in times of need.**

The key principles of the family support practice utilized by the FRCs are:

1. Staff and families work together in relationship based on equality and respect;
2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members – adults, youth, and children;
3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities;
4. Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identifies and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process;
6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
7. Staff work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development;
8. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities including planning, governance, and administration; and
9. ***Programs are flexible and continually response to emerging family and community issues.***

The critical importance of this last principle in action will be discussed further below.

The services most commonly offered in conformance with these principles include acting as a community hub, coordinating community events, providing information and referrals, parenting support, youth programming, and parent leadership development activities. The full menu of services offered by a given FRC is characteristically much larger.

Thus, FRCs are defined not only by their services but also by physical characteristics, approach, and service delivery practice.

There is a growing body of research highlighting the effectiveness of FRCs on a number of measures despite the challenges associated with the unique and individualized array of services each provides to meet the need of the community in which it is based. Some of the key outcomes include:

- Enhance parenting skills;
- Foster the health development and well-being of children, youth, and families;
- Prevent child abuse and neglect;
- Increase school readiness;
- Connect families to resources;
- Develop parent and community leadership; and
- Promote family economic success.

FRCs have their roots in the Settlement Houses which provided acculturation services, skill building, and social advocacy for newly arriving immigrants the late 1800s, ensuring the successful integration of these newcomers into community. Over time, additional associations and programs that came into being, forming the foundation for the current family support movement include establishment of the Parent Teacher Association, Head Start, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the ARC of the United States to name a few. Today's network of FRCs was founded in the 1980s and is now comprised of more than 3,000 centers nationwide.

While there is no dedicated federal funding to support these critical centers, individual states began funding FRCs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 2020-2021 Legislative Session, under the sponsorship of Representative Carolyn Eslick, Washington State passed HB 1237 to define Family Resource Centers. In 2021, the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families commissioned a landscape study of FRCs with the aim to "better understand the approaches, availability, services, supports, stability, and capacity of FRCs." In the 2021-2022 session, the Washington State operating budget included a \$5,000,000 grant proviso to assist emerging, established, and evolving FRCs with fulfillment of their critical functions in communities statewide based on recognition that the function of FRCs is consistent with the State's 10 Year Poverty Reduction Plan.

Here in Snohomish County, FRCs began in the early 1990s and, recognizing their importance to the well-being of families and community, the Snohomish County Council began dedicating funding to support FRCs with General Fund dollars in the 1993 budget. For the three decades since that time, the Snohomish County Council has maintained a consistent commitment to funding FRCs with General Funds, Marriage License Fees, 1/10 of 1% Chemical Dependency and Mental Health Sales Tax, and most recently, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. While the importance of FRCs in the readiness, response, recovery, and resiliency in the face of disaster has not been a particular focus of national attention, it has repeatedly been demonstrated by the critical role they played in the Snohomish County response to the SR 530 Flooding and Mudslide Incident and most recently in the pivotal role they have played in the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Snohomish County's network of FRCs is an essential component of our county's resiliency as well as the resiliency of individual cities and communities throughout the County.

Acknowledging that our County's resiliency is strengthened by public and private agencies working in partnership with families to become more preventative, responsive, flexible, family-focused, strengths-based and holistic, the Snohomish County Human Services Department and Community Foundation of Snohomish County have a long-standing collaboration through which FRCs are jointly funded, supported, and certified. Community Foundation of Snohomish County commissioned a study of the Snohomish County FRC network by the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance in 2018. In response to the recommendations in that study, Snohomish County and Community Foundation of Snohomish County collaborated to develop the local FRC certification process critical to the legislation championed by Rep. Carolyn Eslick to create a statewide process to establish the FRC network and to receive funds from the State of Washington.

Recognizing this long and critical history of FRCs in Snohomish County in both incorporated and unincorporated areas, under the leadership of then-Chair Councilmember Stephanie Wright, the Snohomish County Council requested that the County Executive direct Department of Human Services staff to work with Council staff to conduct an analysis of current Family Resource Center locations and develop a recommendation and plan to equitably distribute funds to entities providing the services of a Family Resource Center. That analysis and recommendations are provided below and on the following pages.

## II. Methodology

The methodology applied to conduct this analysis utilized socioeconomic variables available through the American Community Survey data provided by the United States Census Bureau. The method provides individual rankings for each index listed below for Snohomish County zip code tabulation areas. (Please note that the zip code tabulation areas do not line up exactly with the United States Postal Service zip codes). The methodology is based on the methods utilized by the Centers for Disease Control for its Social Vulnerability Index and the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities map. However, slightly different calculations were used due to a smaller number of geographic regions included in the Snohomish County map.

- **ACS data used for each index:**
  - Diversity Index: % of persons who are persons of color and/or Hispanic/Latinx
  - Unemployment Index: % of population 16 years and over, in the labor force who are unemployed
  - Limited English Proficiency Index: % of persons who Speak English “Less than Well”
  - Families in Poverty Index: % of families with related children of the householder under 18 years in poverty
  - Educational attainment Index: % of population 25 years and over with less than a high school diploma
  - Housing Burden Index: % of households paying more than 30% of their income towards rent and utilities
  - Family Median Income Index: median income for family households
- **Other data included in the map on the following page:**
  - Family Resource Center Locations
  - Council District and Zip Code Tabulation Boundaries
  - Total Population
  - Population Density (population per square mile)
- **Ranking:**
  - For each zip code tabulation area, the percentile rank was generated for each variable. Zip codes in the top 20% (i.e., at the top 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of values) were given a value of 1 to indicate higher need. Those not within that range were given a score of 0. A total index score is provided based on the sum of all variable rankings.

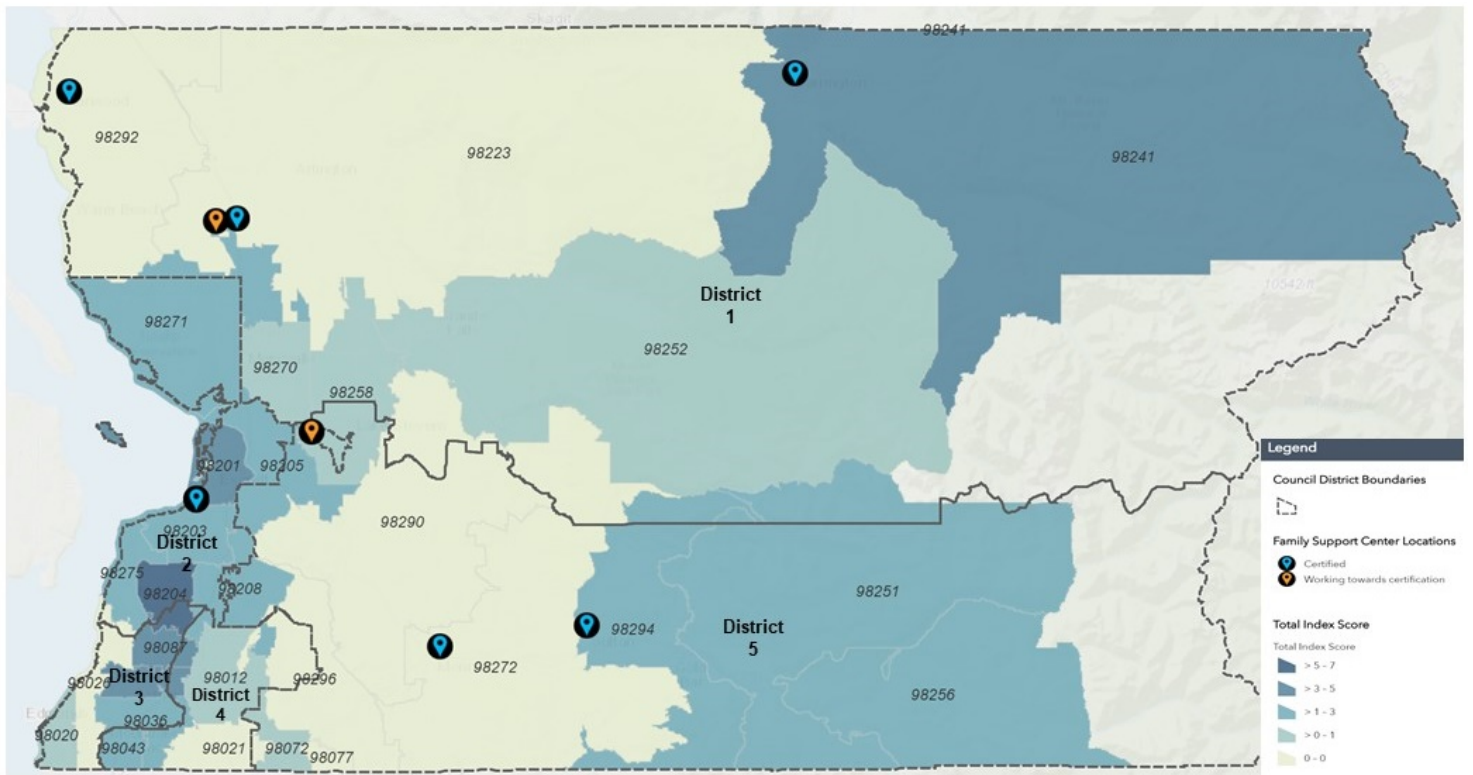
An interactive map may be found at:

<https://snoco-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bf0b444c80a74155bd4c12e0558ea62e>

Clicking on a zip code tabulation area of the map will generate a pop-up with the following information:

<b>Zip Code Tabulation Area Data</b>	
Total population	Poverty Index Score
Population Density	Education Index Score
Diversity Index Score	Housing Burden Index Score
Unemployment Index Score	Total Index Score
LEP Index Score	

A static depiction of the map is provided below as is a table of current FRCs:



Agency	Family Support Center Name	City	Status
Volunteers of America Western Washington	VOA Sky Valley Community Resource Center	Sultan	Certified
Volunteers of America Western Washington	VOA-Arlington Community Resource Center	Arlington	Certified
North Counties Family Services	Darrington Family Resource Center	Darrington	Certified
Community Resources Foundation	Community Resource Center of Stanwood Camano	Stanwood	Certified
Take the Next Step	Take the Next Step	Monroe	Working toward certified
Lutheran Community Services NW	Everett Community Resource Center	Everett	Certified
Lutheran Community Services NW	Familias Unidas Latino Community Resource Center	Everett	Certified
Linc NW	The Center at North Marysville	Marysville	Working toward certification
Volunteers of America Western Washington	Lake Stevens Community Resource Center	Lake Stevens	Working toward certification

### III. Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, the following recommendations have been developed by Human Services Department staff in consultation with Executive Office, Council staff, and with the concurrence of the Community Foundation of Snohomish County.

**Recommendation 1: Align the designation of FRCs with criteria established by Washington State in response to HB 1237**

As noted above, Snohomish County and Community Foundation Snohomish County have developed and implemented a FRC certification process as a prerequisite for designation of a center as a Family Resource Center and receipt of County and Foundation operational funding. Review of alignment between the local process and new state requirements has shown that there is one local criterion which is not aligned. Recognizing that FRCs are community/place-based, there are currently two centers that are co-located in Everett which, under the State criteria, would be classified as a single center. The first recommendation is that designation by the County and Foundation be aligned with the State criteria and that these two centers be certified and funded as a single, comprehensive, Family Resource Center.

**Recommendation 2: Develop a two-phase FRC creation plan**

As shown above, the current analysis of community vulnerability was based on review of data elements at the zip code tabulation area level. The recommendations for the 2023 budget will be based on this analysis. While tabulating this data, it was noted that the same analysis can be performed at the more detailed Census Tract level which can pinpoint communities with high vulnerability within zip code tabulation areas. It is therefore recommended that the higher-level analysis for this budget note be considered the “Phase I” analysis and that at Census Tract analysis be conducted as the “Phase II” analysis to inform further recommendations for the 2024 budget process.

**Recommendation 3: Identify geographic areas for the creation of Phase I FRCs**

Based on this Phase I analysis, the methodology above clearly demonstrates that there are no FRCs in Council Districts 3 and 4 and that these districts have a number of zip code tabulation areas that have a high degree of social vulnerability. Therefore, it is recommended that at least two centers be funded in the 2023 budget to serve these two districts. The centers funded would then begin the process of becoming locally and State certified FRCs eligible for further funding from the County, the Foundation, and the State.

**Recommendation 4: Establish a methodology for certified FRCs and entities that have been fulfilling the functions of a certified FRC during the pandemic to receive local American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to continue their recovery and resilience work and for new centers to apply for ARPA funds as a foundation for applying to become new Phase I FRCs**

Given the critical role that certified FRCs and those entities that have been fulfilling the funding of an FRC in communities where no FRC exists have played and continue to play in disaster response, recovery, and resiliency, it is recommended that each currently certified FRC receive an allocation of ARPA funds to continue this critical community work. It is further recommended that the County issue a Request for Proposals for new comprehensive and special populations centers to serve Districts 3 and 4 as a precursor to participating in the local and State FRC certification processes. Information about the local certification process may be found at <https://www.cf-sc.org/support/family-support-centers-certification/>. The standards and process were developed through a collaborative process by Snohomish County Human Services Department, Community Foundation of Snohomish County, and the Family Support Center Network of Snohomish County. State certification processes have not been finalized.



## **Recommendation 6: Create parity between local funds allocated to FRCs with the funding allocated to Senior Centers**

Snohomish County has an established methodology for providing operational support funding to senior centers throughout the County. Under this methodology, comprehensive, full-service centers receive \$75,000 annually. Smaller, specialty centers receive \$23,000 and centers operated by other jurisdictions receive half the amount of comparable non-profit centers but not less than \$15,000. It is recommended that FRC funding be brought into parity with this funding for senior centers. This would raise the funding level for each existing, certified center from approximately \$43,000 in General Funds, Marriage License Fee Funds, and Chemical Dependency/Mental Health Sales Tax Funds combined to \$75,000 for certified centers and \$23,000 for centers seeking certification. It is anticipated that the net impact of this recommendation in 2023 would be an increase from \$340,470 to \$600,000 annually for all certified centers and centers current seeking certification which are anticipated to be certified in 2023 (and assumes the acceptance of recommendation 1. above). Should this recommendation be approved, we anticipate that budget discussions would be needed to determine how the three fund sources might be blended in 2023 to increase the total contribution by \$259,530. Further, it is recommended that the funding for both types of senior centers and FRCs be examined to potentially establish new funding amounts for future years.

## **IV. Conclusion**

According to the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, “Whether they need help paying their bills, support enrolling in food benefit programs, a place to get to know their neighbors, or to develop skills to handle the challenges of parenting, individuals in Snohomish County seek out their local Family [Resource] Centers.” The further recognized that FRCs serve as, “the bedrock of family and social support in their communities and they design their many services to meet the unique needs of their clients.” Snohomish County and Community Foundation of Snohomish County staff have further attested time and again to the critical role played by FRCs in times of crisis, delivering essential services to mitigate suffering and support recovery to thousands of families at a speed that cannot be matched by the public sector.

As outlined in this report, Snohomish County’s FRCs are committed to providing the facilities and programming to continue filling this need, contributing to the overall resilience of our county and its diverse communities.

Implementation of the above recommendations will move Snohomish County toward the fulfillment of the vision articulated by then-Chair Wright and the Snohomish County Council in requesting that the County Executive direct Department of Human Services staff to work with Council staff to conduct an analysis of current FRC locations and develop a recommendation to plan to equitably distribute funds to entities providing the services of a Family Resource Center.

The Human Services Department and Community Foundation of Snohomish County wish to thank the Executive and Council for the opportunity to develop these recommendations for consideration with the goal of enhancing the FRC network in our county to the benefit of us all.

## V. Acknowledgements

This report is the product of many hours of work by a number of contributors. These include:

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*... and, with special acknowledgement of the network of dedicated Family Resource Centers serving Snohomish County*