

Organizational Background

Established in 2003, Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) is the lead Community-Based Care agency for Florida Judicial Circuits 3 and 8. PSF is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that is contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to deliver comprehensive child welfare services to children who are victims of abuse and neglect. PSF also prioritizes prevention by working with at-risk families to prevent child abuse and to decrease the risk of children entering the out-of-home care system. We do this through incredible partnerships, grants and donations, and a small portion of our budget.

It is our mission at PSF to enhance the community's ability to protect and nurture children by building, maintaining, and constantly improving a network of family support services. A hallmark of PSF's system of care is our belief that child abuse is preventable. We have found that by providing resources and supports to families in need on the front end, many can avoid reaching the crises that lead to formal child welfare involvement. This belief is the foundation of our Resource Center Model.

PSF currently has a network of five Family Resource Centers (FRCs), three of which are in Gainesville. Our FRCs provide an easily accessible, non-stigmatizing place for community members to seek needed services and supports. Our FRCs are often seen as a "one-stop-shop" for local resources, ranging anywhere from clothing closets and food pantries to financial literacy for adults and afterschool/summer programs for children.

Our FRCs also collaborate with more than 80 community partners. This allows us to provide free on-site and referral-based services with the goal of removing barriers to service provision for historically underserved communities. Using the research-based Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, all services and supports provided through the FRCs are tied to one of five protective factors (Concrete Supports, Family Functioning & Resiliency, Parenting & Child Development, Social Connections, and Social & Emotional Competence of Children) which research shows reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect and improve child outcomes when present in families ([Strengthening Families | Center for the Study of Social Policy \(cssp.org\)](#)).

PSF's Resource Center Model is nationally recognized by other states seeking to replicate a similar framework. To date, PSF has either visited or had visitors from 19 states, with the goal of sharing our model and learning what is happening in primary prevention across our Nation (Please see Appendix A for details as to the evolution of our RC Model). Over the years, we have had the support of Casey Family Programs, who continues to provide technical support as well as utilizing our expertise in other communities. As an active member of the National Family Support Network (NFSN), staff are certified as part of NFSN's nationally adopted Standards of Quality for Family Resource Centers. We are also part of a Florida Network, along with the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, who funds a network of Resource Centers in that area. Our membership, as part of the State and National networks, provides many opportunities for staff development and peer learning.

In 2019, PSF became 1 of 9 awardees of a highly competitive, multi-year grant through the Children's Bureau, a federal agency organized under the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, with a focus on improving child abuse prevention, foster care and adoption. These funds are being used to evaluate, refine, and expand our Model to Lake City (this site opened in March 2021). Grant funds **may not** be used to support daily operations of the Gainesville FRCs; however, we will use the results of our evaluation to further refine our Model. Some of the evaluation tools that are being implemented through this grant include:

- Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool for Community-Based Programs
- Collaboration Assessment Tool
- Family Resources Scale
- Perceived Stress Scale
- Strengths and Difficulties Survey
- Protective Factors Survey

The use of these tools, along with the support of an independent evaluator, Dr. Robin Perry (see Dr. Perry's Bio, Appendix B), will allow us to measure the impact of our FRCs at a family and individual level, whereas historically we have measured success using community-level outcomes, such as a decline in counts of verified child maltreatment by zip code. We anticipate final results by September 2024, with semi-annual reports occurring over the next three years. We also plan to use two of these tools, the Protective Factors Survey and the Perceived Stress Scale, to help measure the impact of our proposed program. For a summary of our FRC Evaluation Plan, including the two tools we plan to use for this project, please see Appendix C.

Target Population

The program will target several historically underserved communities within Alachua County. These include the communities served by our three Gainesville FRCs: Library Partnership Resource Center (Northeast Gainesville; 32601 and 32609), SWAG Family Resource Center (Southwest Gainesville; 32607 and 32608) and Cone Park Library Resource Center (East Gainesville; 32641). As part of service expansion, several other high-risk Alachua County communities, with needs supported by local data (e.g., child abuse, poverty, unemployment), have also been identified to participate with the program through the provision of on-site family support services similar to those provided through the FRCs. Please note, while our focus is on serving families, the services and supports offered through our program are available to all community members, with the understanding that children and families thrive when they are part of a safe and supported community.

Potential partner communities may include the following locations:

- Pine Ridge Community Center, Northwest Gainesville (32653/32605); Tracey Hickmon, Black on Black Task Force
- Village Green Apartments, Northeast Gainesville (32609); Devin Tucker, VP of Community Impact/Fairstead
- The Gainesville Bridge/The Vineyard, East Gainesville (32641); Amy Raburn, Executive Director of Gainesville Bridge
- Greater Bethel AME Church, East Gainesville (32641); Reverend Ron Rawls
- Alachua Branch Library, City of Alachua; Ross Woodbridge, Branch Manager
- High Springs Branch Library, City of High Springs; David Fuller, Branch Manager

Each of the identified sites has stated an interest and willingness to participate with the program by providing PSF with use of building space for service provision and/or collaborative efforts to meet community needs. We have partnered with many of these locations in the past to share information and resources, as available. Not all sites will be selected for program participation. This will be dependent on several factors including community needs, accessibility to those in need, service utilization, and program/staff capacity. Additional locations may also be identified as part of program planning and implementation and may change throughout the course of the program. When seeking potential partner sites, we will also consider local schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and other existing after-school and summer programs, along with other established sites that are familiar to those we wish to serve (e.g., churches, libraries, businesses).

With many similarities between the target communities, we anticipate the population demographics to be similar to those served by the Gainesville FRCs. During 2020, our Gainesville FRCs served more than 20,500 visitors: 7,120 at Library Partnership (LP), 9,996 at SWAG Family Resource Center (SWAG FRC), and 3,777 at Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC). Due to the COVID -19 pandemic, the number of visits was lower than the previous year with more than 28,500 visits occurring in 2019. Of the individuals served in 2020, 64% identified as African American/Black, 16% identified as Caucasian/White, 5% as Hispanic/Latino, and 2% as Multiracial. Less than 2% identified their race as Asian or Other. Additionally, 60% of visitors were female and 29% male (11% are undisclosed or other), with 9.5% of visitors over the age of 65; 27% ages 46-64; 31% ages 18-45 and 26% under the age of 18. Although the racial demographics of our visitors differ from Alachua County Census data (American Community Survey, 2019), FRC visitor demographics are representative of the

surrounding communities most frequently served by our Gainesville sites. The demographic discrepancies seen between Alachua County and the FRCs are also a reflection of the income, education, and need-based disparities often experienced by historically underserved populations within Alachua County, some of the same communities served by the FRCs and through the proposed expansion of family support services.

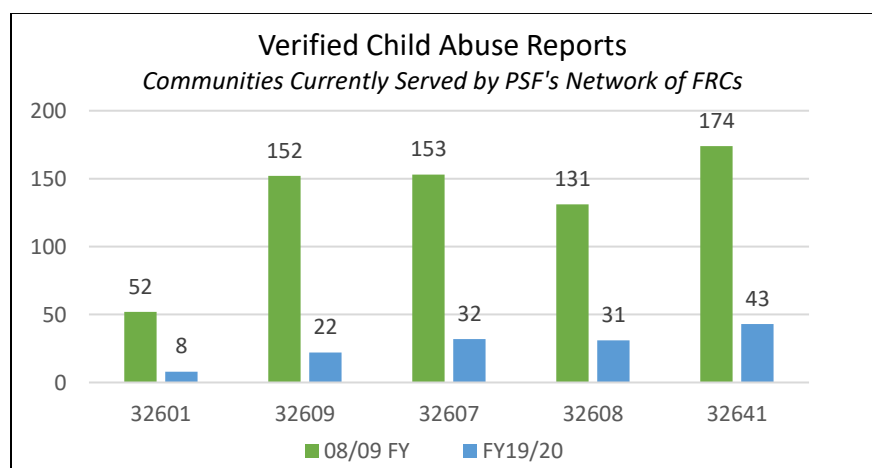
Community Needs

As illustrated by Table 1 below, our target communities are representative of the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Restrained, Employed) population, where many individuals have limited-income jobs, but due to day-to-day living expenses such as childcare, transportation, and utility costs find it difficult to make ends meet. In addition, many of the families residing within these communities are single-parent households with limited outside resources and support. The target communities also include a population of low to very low-income individuals who are currently unemployed. This is where we often find the greatest and most chronic needs.

Zip Code/City	Population	Poverty Rate	Children Under 5 In Poverty	Unemployment Rate	Single Mother Families
32601	21,000	40%	24%	5%	30%
32609	22,000	24%	11%	7%	31%
32607	30,000	32%	6%	5%	27%
32608	41,000	32%	19%	5%	23%
32641	15,000	30%	13%	9%	44%
32605	27,000	16%	6%	3%	18%
32653	16,000	11%	40%	4%	19%
High Springs	1,808	15%	Unknown	17%	11%
Alachua	7,680	15%	18%	6%	15%

Blue selections are currently served by PSF's Family Resource Centers
 Source: Casey Family Programs' Community Opportunity Map
www.casey.org/community-opportunity-map

While we have seen a significant reduction in the number of verified child abuse reports within the communities surrounding our Gainesville FRCs, these communities continue to have some of the highest rates of child maltreatment within Alachua County, accounting for nearly half of all verified child abuse reports (see below). This is not unexpected, since risk factors associated with a family's environment and community must be taken into consideration. These risk factors include concentrated poverty, unemployment, crime, limited access to resources, and residential instability (Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org).



2020
 Verified Reports -
 Communities Served by
 Our FRCs
136

Verified Reports -
 All of Alachua County
278

Community Collaborations

Even before our flagship site, Library Partnership Resource Center, opened in 2009, PSF understood and respected the importance of community collaborations. The need to develop a strong support network within the community is ingrained as part of our Resource Center Model, helping to make it successful. In Gainesville, our FRCs collaborate with more than 80 partners from across all five sectors (Public, Business, Philanthropy, Community, and Nonprofit) to

provide a wide range of free services and supports to our patrons. For a list of many of our Resource Center partners, see Appendix D. With a shared responsibility for strengthening local families, our partners provide free on-site and referral-based services, also allowing Resource Center staff to benefit from their knowledge and expertise. In turn, the FRCs provide space and staff support for on-site services, help to screen and connect patrons to appropriate resources, and help patrons to overcome some of the barriers to successful service implementation (e.g., transportation, computer/phone access, document collection, completion of applications/referrals). We continually engage our partners through resource sharing, invitations to participate in special events, shared staff development opportunities, quarterly meetings, and more.

“Making the shift to prevention requires a community response; it means identifying and engaging the community network and leveraging resources to build a new system.”

-Capacity Building Center for States

<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/cbc/strengthening-families-infographic-cp-20124.pdf>

Project Description

FRC Service Examples (Varies by Site)

- Emergency Food Pantries
- Food Distribution Days
- Clothing Closets
- Job Boards
- Resume Assistance
- Employability Training
- Financial Literacy Classes
- Parenting Resources
- Social Service Referrals
- Mental Health Outreach
- Resource Navigation
- Diapers/Baby Items
- Hygiene Items
- Computer Use
- Faxing/Copying
- Homework Help
- Afterschool Enrichment Activities
- Violence Prevention Programs
- Summer Camps
- Adult Scholarships (Education/ Employment)
- Community Dinners
- Parent-Child Activities
- Health/Resource Fairs
- Special Events

The primary goal of the Family Resource Center/Community Navigator Program is to build caregiver protective factors, thus reducing the risk of child abuse/neglect, decreasing entries into the child welfare system, and improving outcomes for children and families through the provision of family support services. Our service array (see left) is catered to the communities being served and is designed to address current needs including generational poverty, unemployment or under-employment, financial literacy, academic performance of children/youth and community violence, among others.

We know that involvement with the formal child welfare system, especially cases involving the placement of children into out of home care, is not only traumatic for children and families, but is also costly to public systems. While it is difficult to place a number value on the impact of FRCs to children and families, there are studies available that demonstrate the Return on Investment (ROI) for FRC's based upon cost savings to child welfare and other public systems as the result of reducing the number of children requiring placement into out of home care. For example, a study conducted by the OMNI Institute, in partnership with the National Family Support Network (NFSN) and Casey Family Programs (CFP), on a well-established Family Resource Center in Teller County, Colorado found a “return of \$2.92 for every \$1 invested” in that program. An additional study conducted by the OMNI Institute on a network of FRCs in the urban area of Orange County, California, demonstrated the return of investment of 365%, with the child welfare system saving an estimated \$3.65 for every \$1 invested. The full reports can be found at www.omni.org/wfrc-roi-es.

PSF is seeking funding to help sustain our Gainesville Family FRCs and expand our reach to other high-risk, yet historically underserved communities within Alachua County. The proposed program will build upon the success of our existing Resource Center Model by allowing us to continue providing quality, place-based services through our three Gainesville sites; refining service provision at these locations to best meet community needs. Additionally, the

program will allow us to work with identified community partners to expand our reach to other historically underserved areas, including neighborhoods in Northwest, Northeast and East Gainesville, the City of Alachua, and the City of High Springs, along with the potential to reach other areas, as supported by need and relevant data.

A portion of the requested funds will supplement State and Federal dollars that have historically supported PSF's network of Family Resource Centers. With the loss of Title-IV-E child welfare dollars and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), PSF will lose the flexibility to use these funds to support "primary" prevention efforts through our FRCs. While the law supports the provision of evidence-based prevention services, the focus, as it applies to this proposal, will be on children and families who are at "imminent risk of entering foster care;" whereas the FRCs seek to reach families prior to their experiencing the crises that may lead to formal child welfare involvement (no imminent risk is required). This loss of funding, combined with increased costs related to children in out of home care, is causing a significant strain on PSF's overall budget; in turn, impacting our ability to maintain daily operations of our FRCs.

To further expand our reach within Alachua County, and take full advantage of existing community resources, we are proposing the addition of a Community Resource Navigator to our existing Resource Center team. This professional staff, with the support of other team members, will provide place-based, family support services within several high-risk, yet historically underserved, communities. At the time of this writing, six community partners, from within different high-need areas, have stated a willingness to donate use of space, to assist with community outreach efforts, and/or to act as community consultants for the program (see Target Population, page 4). Past experiences have highlighted the need adapt to changes in community need, service utilization and program capacity. As such, program outcomes will focus on the number of individuals served, as opposed to the number of communities served. This being said, we anticipate serving between three and six additional communities within the first year of the program. Our Cone Park Library Resource Center is located within an area (32641) that has been determined to need additional support, so this Resource Center Manager will also provide services and supports at alternative locations, as identified in our Target Population, above. Additionally, our Community Support and Outreach Coordinator, currently funded by a federal grant through the Children's Bureau through September 30, 2024, will help to provide support for the program, including development of a Community Outreach Plan, assessment of on-going community needs, and data collection related to our performance measures.

If funded, the Community Resource Navigator (CRN) will work within the target communities to help families meet their immediate needs (e.g., food, clothing, housing), identify strengths and potential areas for improvement (e.g., financial stability, employment, education, mental health), set obtainable goals, and connect the families with existing resources, both through our FRCs and our network of community partners. The CRN will also help patrons to navigate existing systems and overcome common barriers to service attainment and on-going self-sufficiency. In addition, the CRN will assist with community outreach efforts, recruit potential program participants, develop and grow partnerships, and continually assess community needs, adjusting the service array (and possible service locations) to best meet these needs. The CRN will report directly to the Resource Center Manager.

Performance Measures

Quantity: How Much?	Year 1 Target
Number of visits to the Gainesville Family Resource Centers.	18,000 visits
Number of contacts made through the Community Navigation (remote location) program component.	750* contacts
Number of services/supports provided through our Gainesville Family Resource Centers.	20,000 services/supports
Number of services/supports provided through the Community Navigation (remote location) program component.	1,100* services/supports
Quality/Effort: How well are services provided?	Year 1 Target
% of participants who were satisfied with the support received.	85%
% of program participants who would recommend the program to others.	85%
Client Benefits: Is anyone better off?	Year 1 Target
% of program participants who increased one or more protective factor(s), as measured by the Protective Factor Survey, pre and post. Note: Only families receiving services for 30 days or more will complete the post survey.	80%
% of program participants, who report a decrease in perceived stress, as measured by the Perceived Stress Scale.	75%
% of program participants, receiving support through the Resource Navigators, who self-report improvement in one or more areas (Finances, Work/School-Adults, School-Early Learning-Children, Relationships or Health) following program participation.	75%
* Please note, these are our Year 1 baseline measures.	

Proposed Annual Budget

Expenditure	Requested Amount	Total Program Cost
Personnel/Salaries (Existing)	\$138,727	\$377,777
Personnel/Fringe	\$39,443	\$101,596
Facilities Costs	\$0	\$67,740
Contractual Services	\$2,160	\$17,380
Equipment	\$0	\$23,600
Supplies	\$0	\$13,500
Travel	\$2,136	\$8,336
Program/Services	\$0	\$83,000
Other	\$0	\$7,500
Total Direct Costs	\$182,466	\$700,429
Indirect Costs	\$9,123	\$103,658
Total Program Costs:		\$804,087
Requested Total:		\$191,589

Budget Justification

(for requested funds)

We are requesting funding for a minimum of two years to help promote program continuity and allow us to adequately measure program effectiveness and impact, especially as related to the expansion of services to additional high need communities through the proposed Resource Navigation program component.

A. Personnel/Salary –

Total: \$138,727

Resource Center Manager (1 FTE-Existing), Family Support Facilitator (1 FTE-Existing), Community Resource Navigator (1 FTE-New) will spend 100% of their time conducting program-related tasks, including but not limited to, Resource Center and remote-site operations, family and community engagement, face-to-face consultations with program participants, identifying and making connections with other community resources, hosting special events/outreach activities, assessing community needs, and collecting and reporting on performance measures.

B. Personnel/Fringe –

Total: \$39,443

FICA will be paid for all salaries: $\$138,727 \times .0765 = \$10,613$
Unemployment cost is $\$138,727 \times .03 = \$4,162$
Retirement for full-time employees: $\$138,727 \times .04 = \$5,549$
Health Insurance cost for full-time employees is the following:
 $\$531.08 \times 12 \text{ months} \times 3 \text{ positions} = \$19,119$

C. Contractual Services –

Total: \$2,160

Includes costs related to phone service for the three grant-funded staff (approximately $\$60 \times 12 \text{ months} \times 3 \text{ positions} = \1560).

D. Travel –

Total: \$2,136

The Community Resource Navigator and Cone Park Resource Center Manager are expected to travel to identified locations within Gainesville and Alachua County to consult with program participants, pick-up and deliver resources for participants, meet with program partners, and attend meetings and trainings. The agency reimbursement rate is 0.445 and not the Federal rate of 0.585.

The Community Resource Navigator will travel approximately 300 miles per month. $300 \text{ miles} \times 12 \text{ months} \times 1 \text{ position} \times .445 = \1602 .

The Cone Park Resource Center Manager will travel approximately 100 miles per month. $100 \text{ miles} \times 12 \text{ months} \times 1 \text{ position} \times .445 = \534 .

E. Indirect Costs –

Total: \$9,123

Includes administrative costs related to oversight and management of the program, including supervision of the three grant-funded positions, along with time allocated by finance, human resources, IT, and costs associated with rent, utilities, and equipment use. 5% of total Direct Costs. $\$182,466 \times .05 = \$9,123$.