



# NATIONAL LEARNING BRIEF

Mobile Family  
Resource Centers  
(FRCs)



# MOBILE FRC LEARNING BRIEF INDEX

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# THE NATIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

The National Family Support Network (NFSN) exists to strengthen and elevate Family Resource Centers and the state and regional networks that support them.

For more than a decade, NFSN has served as the national connector for the Family Resource Center field, advancing quality standards, research and evaluation, leadership development, training for family support professionals and organizations, and shared learning across communities nationwide. Through collaboration and collective action, NFSN helps ensure that Family Resource Centers remain trusted, community-rooted hubs of support for families.

Today, NFSN's work is focused clearly and intentionally on Family Resource Centers and FRC Networks as essential infrastructure for strong communities.

We support the field by:

- Connecting state and regional networks into a coordinated national movement

- Providing high-quality standards, trainings, and professional development
- Advancing research, evaluation, and data-informed practice
- Strengthening leadership, capacity, and sustainability
- Amplifying the voice and impact of Family Resource Centers nationally

Family Resource Centers are not isolated programs. They are part of a national network of practice and partnership. NFSN exists to ensure that this network is unified, supported, and positioned to help families thrive.

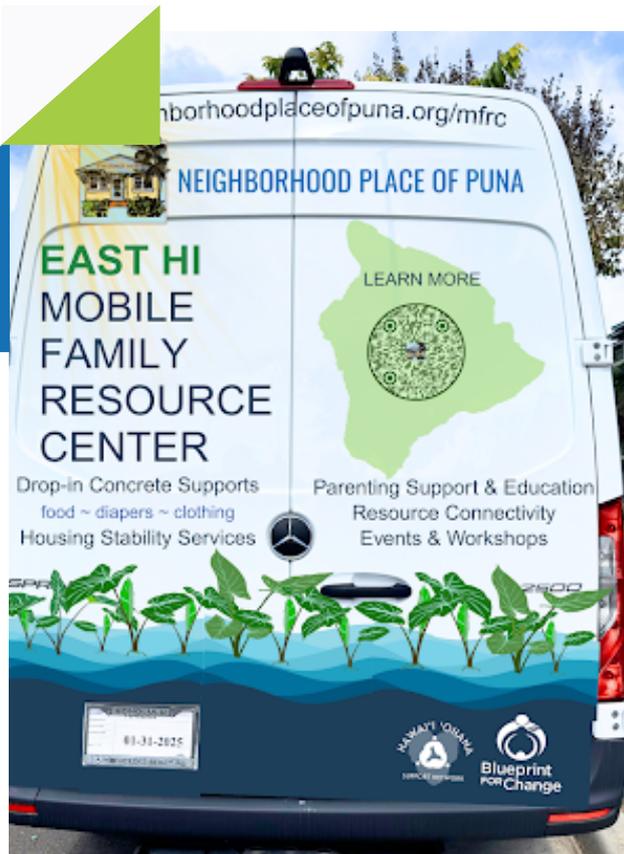
By strengthening connections across states, advancing quality standards, and equipping leaders with the tools and knowledge they need, NFSN helps translate local, community-rooted work into coordinated national impact. When FRCs are connected and supported as a field, families everywhere are better served.

This is how a field becomes unified, aligned, and capable of sustained impact.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Mobile Family Resource Centers** are emerging as an effective, comprehensive and scalable strategy for strengthening families in rural, frontier and historically underserved communities. Mobile FRCs, operating under the same evidence base as traditional brick and mortar family resource centers (FRCs), offer prevention services directly where families live, learn, work, worship and gather through a mobile unit.



This national brief synthesizes insights from the 2025 Mobile FRC Learning Cohort hosted by the National Family Support Network, along with multi-state case studies, national research, and implementation data. It highlights emerging mobile FRC models, strategies for program development and community engagement, operational considerations, sustainability approaches, and key lessons learned. The brief is intended for policymakers, philanthropic organizations, state leaders, FRC networks, local FRCs, and national partners working to shape the next generation of prevention and community-based family support.

Across the cohort sessions, states presenting on mobile FRCs consistently emphasized the transformative potential of mobile FRCs: deeper trust-building, increased service access, reduced transportation barriers, and the ability to integrate essential supports such as parenting programs, emergency and food security assistance, educational workshops, health and wellness services, and connection to economic opportunities.

This brief is intended to support national momentum toward developing a replicable Mobile FRC Model that states and communities can adapt to local need, while maintaining fidelity to the National Family Resource Center model and the National Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support.



# 1

## NATIONAL CONTEXT & PURPOSE

**Family Resource Centers (FRCs)** FRCs are welcoming community hubs where families can access supports both in times of need and as part of everyday life. FRCs, both place-based and mobile, provide parenting resources, foster connections among families, and link families to community services and resources. FRCs have demonstrated strong, evidence-backed improvements

in child safety, parental well-being, economic stability, and community resilience. According to studies conducted across the country, FRCs outcomes show: a \$4.93 return on investment for every dollar invested; a 63% reduction in child abuse cases; 50% fewer foster care placement; 26% lower investigation rates; and improvements in protective factors, family functioning, and social connectedness. These outcomes form the foundation for extending FRC services into mobile delivery models.



The purpose of the Mobile FRC Learning Cohort was to explore how mobile models address the geographic and systemic inequities that limit families' access to upstream supports. In many regions, especially rural, frontier, agricultural, tribal, or isolated areas, brick-and-mortar FRCs are not feasible due to cost, distance, population distribution, and workforce limitations.

Mobile FRCs offer a flexible, community-centered, and cost-efficient strategy to ensure that families who cannot travel long distances or who have limited access to reliable transportation can still receive the full range of FRC services. States also reported that mobile models help reduce stigma, increase engagement, and strengthen trust by bringing services into familiar community spaces such as libraries, schools, parks, food distribution sites, and faith-based gathering places.

This brief supports the advancement of a national mobile model by documenting learnings that can help guide FRC Networks, state agencies, philanthropic partners, FRCs and community-based organizations interested in launching or scaling mobile approaches.



## The Mobile Family Resource Center learning series was strengthened by the generous participation of:



*Connections Family Resource Center (Virginia)*



*ETC Family Resource Center (Louisiana)*



*Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network (Hawai'i)*



*Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Vermont)*



*New Jersey Office of Family Support Services (New Jersey)*



*Polk County Family Resource Centers (Minnesota)*



*York School District One's Parenting Partnerships and Family Resource Center (South Carolina)*

We extend our sincere appreciation to all presenters who generously shared their expertise and practical insights throughout this learning series. Their leadership demonstrated how mobile Family Resource Center models expand access, build trust, and strengthen impact by meeting families where they are.

In addition, we thank the Community Opportunity Map (COM) Team at Casey Family Programs for highlighting how mapping tools support strategic outreach, partnership development, and data-informed planning. Additional resources are included in Section 11 of this brief to support mobile communities in leveraging the COM tool to advance their work.

We are deeply grateful for the collaboration and commitment shown by all contributors in advancing mobile Family Resource Centers nationwide.

# FRC DEFINITION

## Federal Recognition of Family Resource Centers

In 2024, Congress established the first federal statutory definition of Family Resource Centers through the Supporting America's Children and Families Act, which reauthorized Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. This milestone formally recognizes Family Resource Centers as a key prevention strategy for strengthening families and communities nationwide.

The description below reflects the federal definition while translating the statutory language into clear, practice-oriented terms used by the field.

## Family Resource Center Definition

A Family Resource Center is a community- or school-based hub that connects families with support, services, and opportunities. FRCs are grounded in an approach that is:

### 01 Multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered

Supporting both children and adults while building on family strengths.

### 02 Responsive to community needs and interests

Shaped by the voices and priorities of the families they serve.

### 03 Accessible

Providing supports at no or low cost to ensure all families can participate.

### 04 Community-building

Fostering peer support and social connections that reduce isolation and stress for families.

# 2

## KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Across states and presenters, several key themes surfaced that hold true across diverse models and regions:

01

### Trust-building comes before data collection.

Programs emphasized that requiring intake forms or demographic data too early can deter participation. Mobile FRCs often begin with presence, relationship-building, and low-barrier activities before moving families into deeper supports.

04

### Light-touch evaluation is possible—and valuable.

Even when programs collect minimal personal data, they can still measure impact through attendance counts, program participation logs, partner-provided data, and stories of impact.

07

### Mobile FRCs reduce access disparities.

Several communities reported that families who had never visited a traditional center engaged readily once services were brought to their neighborhoods, workplaces, or local gathering spaces.

02

### Flexibility is essential.

Mobile models must be adaptable. Families' schedules, community rhythms, weather conditions, and partner availability drive successful deployment. Fixed schedules rarely succeed without ongoing adjustment.

05

### Workforce considerations matter.

Mobile FRC staffing varies widely—from volunteer-driven models to fully staffed units. States emphasized the importance of cross-trained teams, bilingual staff, flexible scheduling, and community cultural knowledge.

03

### Partnerships are the foundation of mobile FRC success.

Schools, libraries, housing authorities, local nonprofits, and early childhood programs serve as trusted anchors. These partners help with in-kind support, outreach, co-location, marketing, and community visibility.

06

### Sustainability requires diversified funding.

Similar to traditional FRCs, Mobile FRCs rely on blended funding streams, including philanthropy, local government, school district funds, community grants, and federal prevention dollars braided together.



# 3

## STRATEGIES & APPROACHES

Mobile FRC strategies vary widely depending on community need, geography, and available partnerships. Common approaches include:

- ✓ Multi-service mobile units that integrate health screenings, food distribution, early childhood play spaces, learning labs, and resource navigation.
- ✓ School district partnerships where mobile units visit schools weekly, coordinate with family liaisons, support students and caregivers, and link families with community-based resources.
- ✓ Library and community center hubs that serve as anchor points for Mobile FRCs programming, resource distribution, and connection to local supports.
- ✓ Volunteer–staff hybrid models in communities with limited workforce capacity, leveraging parent leaders, faith communities, retirees, or local ambassadors.
- ✓ Mobile outreach connected to major community events such as food drives, community festivals, health fairs, cultural celebrations, or school registration days.
- ✓ Specialized thematic approaches such as mobile preschool readiness activities, workforce development coaching, financial education, and social capital–building activities.
- ✓ Leverage mobile unit as a “pop-up” or satellite FRC rather than a standalone facility—creating a welcoming space, reducing stigma, and building trust as a first access point into FRC services.



# 4

## DATA COLLECTION & EVALUATION

Mobile FRCs are uniquely positioned to collect meaningful, actionable data without requiring formal intake during early engagement. States shared several successful methods:



### ATTENDANCE TRACKING

Attendance tracking using QR codes, partner sign-in sheets, or volunteer counts.



### DATA SHARING

School-based data sharing agreements to track student participation and family engagement without requiring families to self-report.



### USE OF DASHBOARD

Use of geographic equity dashboards such as the Child Opportunity Index to identify high-need neighborhoods and track access equity over time.



### FORMS, SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

Light-touch surveys, parent feedback forms, and post-event questionnaires.



### EVALUATION

Story-based evaluation where staff collect narrative examples of improved stability, connection, or well-being.



### ALIGNMENT WITH SYSTEMS

Alignment to existing statewide FRC data systems, such as protective factor surveys, family assessments, and case management databases for families engaging in deeper services.

Evaluation also focuses on measuring reach, access, trust-building, and early indicators of family stability, which are key components of upstream prevention.



# 5

## OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Launching and operating a mobile FRC requires intentional planning across logistics, staffing, vehicle management, and partner coordination. Key operational considerations include:

### VEHICLE SELECTION

Options include retrofitted RVs, buses, vans, and modular units.

### RETROFITTING STRATEGIES

Such as cooling, heating, seating, storage, play areas, learning stations, generator access, and technology integration.

### VEHICLE COMPLIANCE

Including vehicle insurance, licensing requirements, and maintenance schedules.

### STAFFING MODELS

Such as bilingual staff, cultural navigators, social workers, family advocates, parent leaders, or volunteers.

### SCHEDULING APPROACHES

That align with school calendars, seasonal needs, cultural events, and community rhythms.

### USE OF LOCAL HUBS

Such as school, health and wellness clinics, libraries, parks, food pantries, community centers, and housing authority sites to extend reach beyond the mobile unit.

### SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Accessibility considerations, ADA compliance, and child-safe environments.

States emphasized that mobile units function best when paired with strong partner coordination and consistent community presence, not as isolated programs.

# 6

## PRAGMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Mobile FRC programming aligns with the traditional FRC model, with adaptations for mobility, access, and flexibility. Successful programmatic elements include:



**Early childhood development supports**, such as preschool readiness activities, parent–child playgroups, developmental screenings, and resource navigation.



**Health and wellness programs** such as blood pressure checks, breastfeeding support, mental health navigation, and substance use prevention materials.



**Parenting education** such as workshops, one-on-one coaching, family goal planning, and evidence-informed curriculum sessions adapted for mobile settings.



**Food access and nutrition supports** delivered through food staples, hygiene kits, diapers, culturally responsive food boxes, and nutrition education.



**Economic mobility programming** including employment coaching, resume assistance, financial literacy classes, and benefits navigation.



**Social capital–building** through peer support groups, cultural gatherings, intergenerational activities, and community celebrations.



**Tailored program support** for kinship and grandfamilies, immigrant families, and culturally specific groups through tailored outreach and culturally rooted programming.



# 7

## FUNDING, FUNDRAISING & SUSTAINABILITY

Funding strategies for mobile FRCs require creativity, diversified streams, and strong documentation of outcomes. States identified several effective approaches:



Philanthropic partnerships with foundations, local donors, corporate partners, and civic organizations such as Rotary.



School district funding and in-kind supports including maintenance, staff time, facilities usage, and equipment.



County or municipal prevention funds, public health dollars, community development allocations, and emergency assistance funds.



Federal funding streams braided together, such as Title IV-B, TANF, MIECHV, CCDF, Medicaid administrative claiming (in some states), and community development block grants.



Partnership-driven sustainability where multiple agencies share costs, resources, or staffing.



Resource-sharing across FRC Networks, including shared mobile units across multiple communities or collaborative regional models.



Sustainability planning includes ongoing evaluation, clear impact stories, data-informed decision-making, and long-term partnership development.

# 8

# COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & OUTREACH



Partnerships with schools (PreK–12), early learning programs, Head Start, and afterschool sites.



Collaboration with public libraries, which offer trusted, accessible, and welcoming anchor locations.



Engagement with housing authorities, community centers, and local government buildings.



Faith-based partnerships that support outreach, visibility, and community connection.



Presence at large community events, including cultural festivals, health fairs, and food distributions.



Co-design with parent leaders, kinship caregivers, culturally specific organizations, and grassroots partners to ensure relevance and trust.

When grounded in strong community partnerships, mobile FRCs become more than a vehicle, they become a trusted, embedded strategy that strengthens relationships, increases visibility, and expands meaningful access for families.

# 9 VALUE OF MOBILE FRCs FOR RURAL & UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Mobile FRCs provide unique value in communities where traditional service structures are limited or inaccessible. Key benefits include:

-  Eliminating transportation as a barrier by bringing services directly to remote or rural areas.
-  Increasing accessibility for families with nontraditional work hours, childcare limitations, or limited public transportation.
-  Building trust by meeting families where they are and reducing barriers that make formal service settings feel intimidating or hard to navigate.
-  Expanding prevention efforts upstream by ensuring families can access support before crises arise.
-  Offering a flexible and cost-effective strategy for rural and frontier communities with low population density where fixed-site FRCs may not be feasible.
-  Supporting tribal, immigrant, agricultural, and culturally specific communities through trusted partnerships and culturally responsive programming.



The field is clear: **Mobile FRCs** are a powerful extension of the FRC model that increases reach, equity, access, belonging, and visibility.

# 10

## ADVANCING A NATIONAL MOBILE FRC MODEL

The national field is ready for the development of a shared, replicable Mobile FRC Model that communities across the country can adapt and implement. This includes:



### Sustainability Playbook

Sustainability playbook with funding strategies, sample budgets, startup costs.

NFSN invites state leaders, FRC Networks, philanthropic partners, parent leaders, and national collaborators to co-create the next phase of mobile FRC development, ensuring that every family, regardless of geography, has access to upstream, community-rooted support.

### Core Components

Core components defining essential elements of mobile FRC service delivery.

### Fidelity Guidelines

Fidelity guidelines ensuring quality, consistency, and alignment with FRC Standards of Quality.

### Evaluation Frameworks

Evaluation frameworks that balance light-touch engagement with meaningful impact measurement.

### Implementation Tools

Implementation tools including staffing plans, scheduling templates, safety protocols, and partnership agreements.

# 11

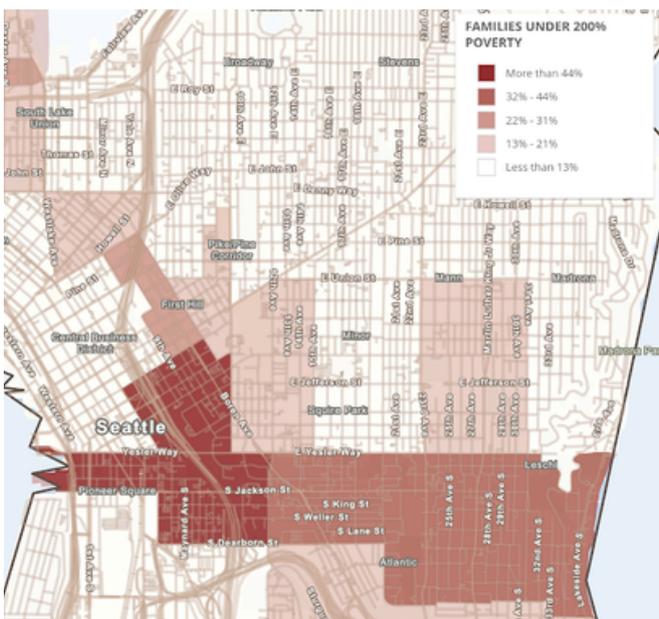
# COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY MAP

The [Community Opportunity Map \(COM\)](#) is a research-based tool from Casey Family Programs for using data to gain insight into the demographics and needs of the communities you serve, allowing you to better design programs and make decisions that effectively support children and families.

## The COM can help you:

- Tailor and target the services you offer around the strengths and needs of the communities you serve
- Showcase key data points in your grant applications
- Engage potential community partners in your work by using the data to show potential impact to children and families
- Empower residents to more effectively advocate for the resources and policies they need to thrive

## The Who, What, How of Planning a Mobile FRC using the COM:



**WHO** should we bring our mobile FRC to? Which neighborhoods and populations are we going to serve?

*Tip: Use the map layers to identify neighborhoods with the greatest need and the disaggregated data to understand where access gaps exist between different groups.*

# COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY MAP

## WHAT services should our mobile FRC provide?

*Tip: For the zip code or county you're planning on serving, review the indicators in each category such as housing, economy, education, accessibility, and child & family to understand what the needs are in that area.*

## HOW should we provide mobile FRC services? What staffing and partnerships are required?

*Tip: Review the demographic indicators to understand how to staff your mobile FRC to meet the needs of the communities you'll be serving and to guide you toward the kinds of partners you must have to meet the communities' needs.*

### Housing



125

Work Hrs/Week to Rent 2-Bed Home at Minimum Wage



56%

Home Ownership Rate



6%

Vacant Housing



17%

Resident Turnover



Cost-Burdened Households

45%

Cost-Burdened Renters

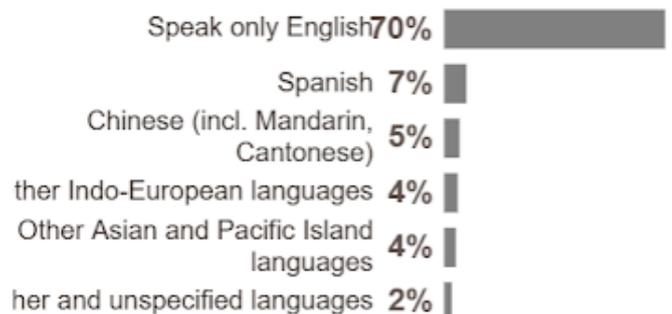


24%

Cost-Burdened Homeowners



### Languages Spoken in Household



Access the Community Opportunity Map by going to:  
[www.casey.org/community-opportunity-map/](http://www.casey.org/community-opportunity-map/)

# THANK YOU

NFSN invites state leaders, FRC Networks, FRCs, philanthropic partners, parent leaders, and national collaborators to co-create the next phase of mobile FRC development, ensuring that every family, regardless of geography, has access to upstream, community-rooted supports that advance child and family well-being.



NATIONAL  
**Family Support**  
NETWORK



[www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org](http://www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org)