

FOCUSING ON ACTION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES SELF-ASSESSMENT NORTHSTAR FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

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The Strengthening Families Self-Assessment (SFSA) Process

The purpose of the SFSA process was to evaluate the NorthStar Family Resource Center (NSFRC) practices, programs, and services based on the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Framework. The NSFRC's SFSA team consisted of 3 direct service staff members, 2 community collaborators from partner organizations, and 3 community ambassadors who utilize services and programs at the NSFRC. Team members individually completed a survey related to the implementation of each protective factor at the NSFRC. Team members then came together for critical discussions to assess survey results and develop action items to address any gaps in programs, services, or Family Resource Center practices. Updates for implementing action items will be provided on a semi-annual basis, covering their respective six-month reporting period. This report covers the time between January through June of 2023. Plans have been categorized into four key themes and are summarized in this report. The key themes are:



- **Theme One:** Develop new NSFRC programs to provide additional services to patrons.
- **Theme Two:** Expand and strengthen community relationships to address community issues and access helpers for the FRC.
- **Theme Three:** Increase engagement with, and supports for, caregivers, with a targeted focus on fathers, single mothers, and youth experiencing difficulties.
- **Theme Four:** Build capacity to connect with non-English speaking and marginalized groups through accessing local resources, staff training, and connecting with local churches.

Action items were developed while discussing the team's Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool results and are listed in this report with their associated protective factor, however, action items may overlap with another protective factor or theme. Some action items may also rely on the completion of other action items, such as the need to establish a Parent and Community Advisory Council before the involvement of council members can be addressed. NSFRC staff, community partners, and community ambassadors will work collaboratively to make the best use of available resources to complete action items and improve services and programs at the NSFRC.

Core Meanings of the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Protective Factors

1. 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.

2. Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, and spiritual support.

3. 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.

4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.

5. Parental Resilience

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

1 Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2015). Core Meanings of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

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The contents of this project do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau.

NSFRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEMES



THEME ONE: DEVELOP NEW PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SERVICES TO PATRONS.

Concrete Supports Action Item: NSFRC will explore, in collaboration with the Columbia County Public Library and other partner agencies, the possibility of implementing computer and technology classes on site.

Concrete Supports Action Item: Continue efforts at securing an on-site food pantry at NSFRC and explore the feasibility of facilitating regular food distribution to families while ensuring there is support (community, food, volunteers, etc.) to implement food distribution in an efficient manner.

Action Item Update: NSFRC continues to work closely with the Columbia County Public Library on the on-site story walk. There are also plans to implement computer and technology classes and utilize the seed library.

Action Item Update: NSFRC receives regular bread donations from Panera every Tuesday. Two to three volunteers assist with this weekly. They have established an emergency food pantry. They have submitted an application to Farm Share but are waiting for approval. Efforts to create a procedure for a full food distribution have been initiated.



THEME TWO: EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES AND ACCESS HELPERS FOR THE FRC.

Parental Resilience Action Item: NSFRC will work on establishing co-located services, as determined appropriate, with DCF/Hope Florida to be provided at the Family Resource Center.

Parental Resilience Action Item: NSFRC will continue to pursue efforts and expand collaborations with higher learning institutions to solidify relationships that lead to interns and volunteers serving a functional role at the Family Resource Center.

Action Item Update: Since February, staff from DCF Hope Florida has been co-located at NSFRC on Tuesdays from 9am to 1pm. Since May, Meridian, our community mental health center has been tabling on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 9am to 12pm. NSFRC continues to explore other potential co-located services.

Action Item Update: Two young people were hired through CareerSource FL Crown to assist with summer enrichment programming. NSFRC continues to work with Florida Gateway College for routine volunteers, collaborating with them to secure a work-study resource on a regular basis. An intern from Saint Leo University has been providing assistance to patrons since January. NSFRC has been awarded funds through United Way of Suwannee Valley to support homework help during the 2023/2024 school year.

NSFRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEMES



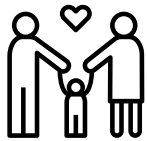
THEME TWO: EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES AND ACCESS HELPERS FOR THE FRC.

Concrete Supports Action Item: NSFRC will be more proactive at a community level; perhaps sponsoring/coordinating an event to bring partners together (in a positive and constructive manner) to address the unmet needs of individuals and families adversely impacted by the lack of affordable housing and homelessness issues.

Concrete Supports Action Item: NSFRC will explore a possible collaboration with the United Way Homeless Coalition and the Florida Department of Children and Families to develop a formal strategy (including short- and long-term plans) for addressing the lack of affordable housing and homelessness issues impacting families in Columbia County.

Action Item Update: In February, NSFRC organized the Partner Networking Fair. They maintain regular meetings with the Columbia Children's Partnership Council and are in the process of merging with the Resource Center Advisory Council. Additionally, NSFRC Manager Dr. Phil Mobley, serves on the United Way Homeless Coalition Board, and staff are actively building relationships with homeless coordinators and outreach workers at United Way.

Action Item Update: Although the NSFRC manager sits on the United Way Homeless Coalition Board, no formal strategy has been created at this time.



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH, AND SUPPORTS FOR, CAREGIVERS, WITH A TARGETED FOCUS ON FATHERS, SINGLE MOTHERS, AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES.

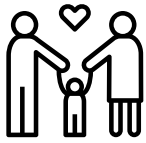
Social Connections Action Item: NSFRC will work on developing an annual summit focused on reclaiming the community's youth and males that will include workshops targeted towards parents and young men and feature successful athletes and professionals from this area with the goal of developing mentorship programs and support groups.

Parental Resilience Action Item: NSFRC will explore opportunities for structuring caregiver and parent support groups with topics including parenting issues, education, and father and mother-specific groups for engagement and support.

Action Item Update: NSFRC is still developing this event while working to increase support from the community. There have been efforts to connect with fathers at a May Parent Advisory Council introduction dinner (hosted in May) and the Back2School Bash. Additionally, efforts are ongoing to engage with fathers during Homework Help.

Action Item Update: In May, NSFRC hosted a Parent Advisory Council introduction dinner to establish support from the community, but this group has not yet started. The FRC manager is working to find a suitable curriculum and a leader for these support groups.

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THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH, AND SUPPORTS FOR, CAREGIVERS, WITH A TARGETED FOCUS ON FATHERS, SINGLE MOTHERS, AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES.

Parental Resilience Action Item: NSFRC will create a Parent Advisory Council within the next 12 months.

Knowledge of Parenting Action Item: NSFRC will explore the possibility of developing and integrating the use of informal parenting cafes as a support for parents and for enhancement of their child development and parenting knowledge and skill set.

Knowledge of Parenting Action Item: NSFRC will explore opportunities and assess the feasibility for securing additional staff and/or other resources (including the training of staff and volunteers) to expand programming that enhances supports for parents related to increasing/promoting knowledge of parenting and child development topics.

Action Item Update: In May, NSFRC hosted a Parent Advisory Council introduction dinner to establish support from the community, but this group has not yet started.

Action Item Update: The FRC manager is working to identify a well-matched leader for this knowledge of parenting and child development programming.

Action Item Update: The FRC manager continues to have one-on-one discussions with parents in need. Retired teachers have been recruited to support youth during homework help, utilizing their expertise to engage with the children's caregivers on child development issues. Foster Care/Adoption PRIDE classes are hosted at the FRC for 9 weeks to license new foster and adoptive parents.

NSFRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEMES



THEME FOUR: BUILD CAPACITY TO CONNECT WITH NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS THROUGH ACCESSING LOCAL RESOURCES, STAFF TRAINING, AND CONNECTING WITH LOCAL CHURCHES.

Social Connections Action Item: NSFRC will make a deliberate effort to connect with and ask for involvement from places of worship that serve marginalized populations.

Resilience Action Item: NSFRC will develop a strategy of engagement to connect with non-English speaking populations by exploring what resources exist for interpretation assistance through local agencies and congregations.

Social and Emotional Action Item: NSFRC will increase staff and community partner training to better address and explore means to better support the needs of children, youth, adults, and families impacted by the effects of child maltreatment and chronic substance abuse/addiction and the needs of youth and young adults within the LGBTQ+ community.

Action Item Update: In February, in recognition of Black History Month, NorthStar honored 'Unsung Heroes,' African Americans over the age of 90. Many faith leaders were present to honor their parishioners. The FRC manager has met with faith leaders on many occasions to discuss community needs, including an Uplift Columbia County event held in May.

Action Item Update: Three local translation services have been identified to assist with translation, one of which also helps with the distribution of community flyers among non-English speaking households.

Action Item Update: Staff received training in January with an Introduction to LGBTQ+ Inclusion Webinar, followed by a De-escalation training in February. Additionally, NorthStar provides monthly meeting space for a local LGBTQ+ group.

THE NORTHSTAR FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

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