

# Family Resource Centers Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Education | February 2022



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## Overview

For nearly three decades, Tennessee Family Resource Centers (FRCs) have served as welcoming hubs for myriad social service and mental health supports within their local education agency (LEA)



and community. Tennessee Family Resource Centers engage schools and community stakeholders to identify barriers hindering the social, personal, physical, and academic well-being of students. Through a coordinated system of support, FRCs empower students and families by providing high-quality services. Over the years, FRCs in Tennessee have led efforts to transform accessibility to critical supports in real-time, address chronically out of school, empower families through early intervention, and engage communities. They have served hundreds of thousands of students and families and remain steadfast in their commitment to empowering families, serving as a critical relationship between school and home.

Recognizing the barriers to school success facing many students, the Tennessee General Assembly authorized the establishment of FRCs in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-2-115 and gave FRCs the power to: “maximize the potential learning capacity of the child by ensuring that school environments and neighborhoods are safe and socially enriching, that families are strong and able to protect children and meet their foundational needs, and that children are physically healthy, emotionally stable, socially well-adjusted, and able to connect with enriching opportunities and experiences in their schools and communities. To enable children to attain the most benefit possible from the time they spend in educational settings, the family resource centers shall focus on providing information to families about resources, support, and benefits available in the community and on developing a coordinated system of care for children in the community to effectuate this.”

## ***Funding***

In the 2020-21 school year, the department allocated \$3.05 million to fund FRCs in 79 districts representing 54% of Tennessee public schools. Each FRC site receives an annual fixed award of \$29,611.65. The district is required to provide a minimum match of \$20,388.35. FRC guidelines require each FRC to collaborate with community partners in the planning, development, and support of a coordinated service delivery to strengthen families’ ability to support the academic and life success of children.

After an initial expansion in the early years of the program, the number of Tennessee FRCs has remained stagnant for the past two decades. Opportunity exists to target any expansion efforts to Tennessee’s economically at-risk or distressed counties without any current FRC presence, which represents 13 counties and 23 LEAs. Funding one FRC for each LEA in these counties at the current award level would result in a 22% annual increase (approximately \$681,000) in the current state allocation level for the FRC program.

## **Goals and Evaluation**

FRCs share a unified goal: to assist families through information and training. Additionally, FRCs help families learn to resolve problems through the collaborative efforts of many disciplines within the community—educational, social services, business, mental and physical health. The programs respect the strengths of families and build on them rather than focus on their weaknesses. FRC goals, objectives, and strategies fall within one or more of the following domains and are accomplished through direct services, referrals, and/or community partnerships:

- Attendance
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Mental Health
- Family Support
- Family Training
- Family Engagement
- Academic Support

*“As I begin my 27<sup>th</sup> year leading an FRC, the work remains exciting as it exhibits a “win-for-all” approach where families are encouraged, essential needs are met, childhood development and educational skills are demonstrated, and community partners are involved in the process to make stronger connections and thereby form a more accepting and cooperative group of citizens for our community.”*

*—Peggy Jackson, Haywood County Schools  
FRC Director*

## **Operational Organization**

The FRC director is responsible for the overall operation of the programs, services, and activities of the FRC. The director also leads the supervision of staff, interns, and/or volunteers assisting with day-to-day operations. They are strategic in their approach to ensure measurable goals are established to direct the operation of the FRC. The goals are related to the needs and challenges identified by the FRC advisory council and endorsed by the district.

Each FRC is required to have an advisory council that assists the FRC director in setting program and service priorities each year. Typical advisory councils are composed of parents who are potential consumers, representatives of state agencies that serve children and families, local non-profit social service organizations, philanthropic groups, and community-based family support service providers. FRC advisory councils have the authority and responsibility to develop and maintain a needs-based plan of operation relevant to the schools and community it serves.

# Impact Summary

Since 1993, family resource centers across Tennessee have served as welcoming hubs for social service and mental health supports. FRCs are the conduit to connect families with a coordinated system of support through direct and referred services fueled by community partnerships and contributions.

In 2020, Commissioner Penny Schwinn established a full-time FRC Coordinator position to ensure the provision of specialized programmatic support and oversight to centers. This allowed for the launch of tailored professional learning, technical support, a state advisory council, the revision of operating guidelines, and a new mission and vision statement to guide the work.

## Statewide Impact:

*100 FRC site locations in*

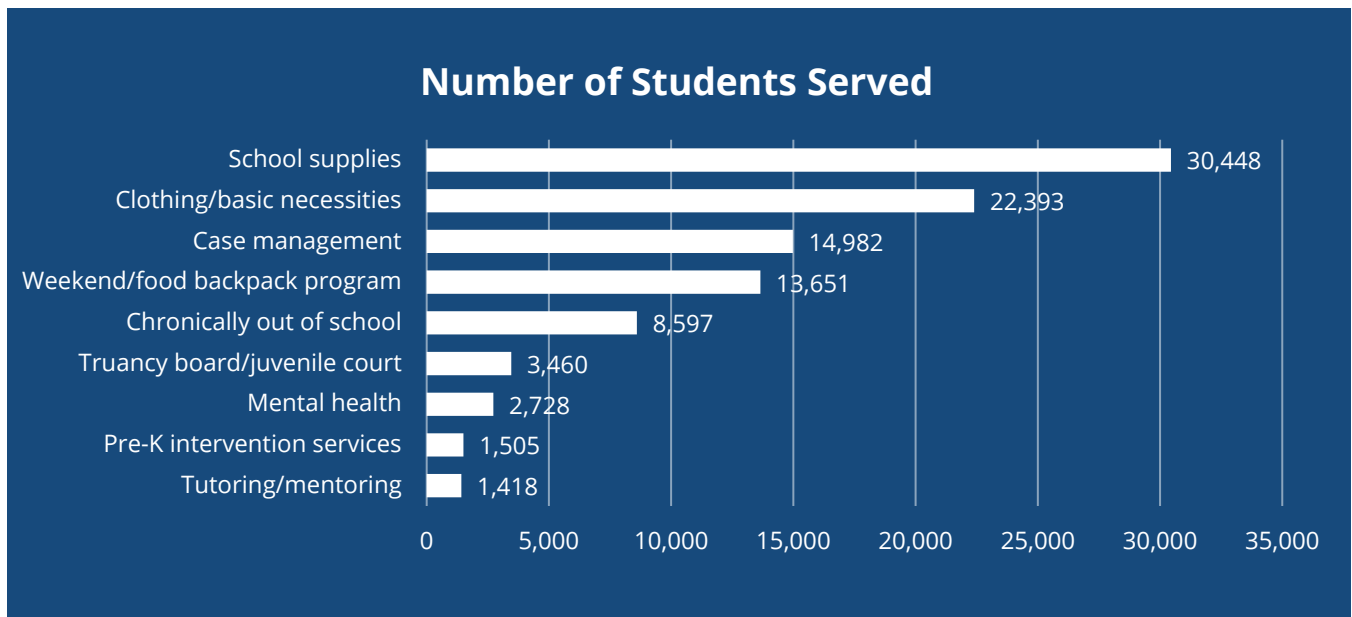
*79 school districts across*

*65 counties.*

*54% Public schools served*

## Direct Services

FRCs tailor their supports and services to the specific needs of the students and families in their community. When possible, services are provided directly by the FRC in order to remove access barriers for families receiving those services. While each FRC's direct service offerings are unique and aligned with community-specific programmatic goals, the nine represented in the chart below are the most common and represent some of the most significant needs of Tennessee students.<sup>i</sup>



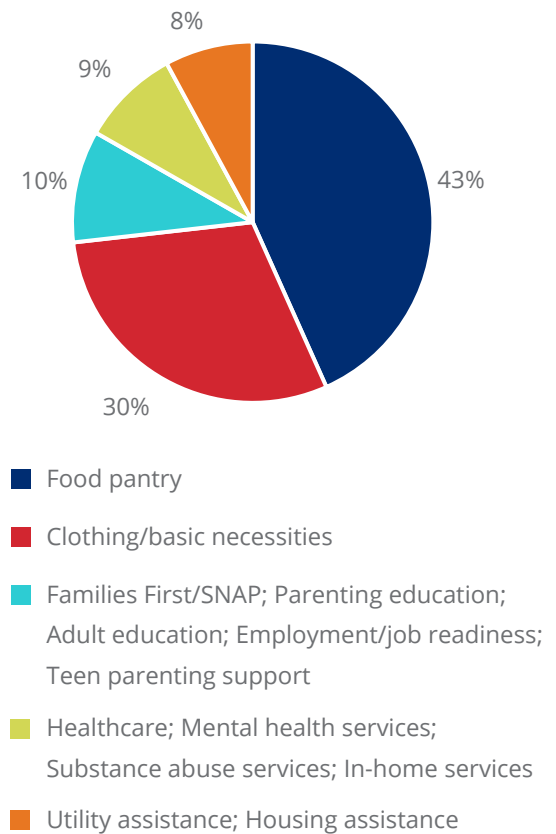
## Referrals

FRCs work in unison with community providers to provide a consistent continuum of wrap-around supports for families through referrals for services. This tailored approach ensures families receive access to critical supports that cannot be provided directly by the FRC. Over 49,000 referrals were made for students and families last year.

### Total Number of Referrals

Food pantry	<b>21,217</b>
Clothing/basic necessities	<b>14,649</b>
Utility assistance	<b>2,642</b>
Healthcare	<b>2,145</b>
Families First/SNAP	<b>1,563</b>
Parenting education	<b>1,468</b>
Mental health services	<b>1,323</b>
Housing assistance	<b>1,228</b>
Adult education	<b>1,066</b>
Employment/job readiness	<b>709</b>
In-home services	<b>526</b>
Substance abuse services	<b>341</b>
Teen parenting support	<b>117</b>
Other	<b>212</b>

### Distribution of Referrals



## Partnerships and Contributions

FRCs work directly with key community stakeholders to identify needs and increase access to social services and mental health supports to meet those needs. Each FRC advisory council maintains a diverse membership to encourage strong relationship and awareness building across the community and identify

### Statewide Impact:

**\$8,029,466** In-Kind Contributions

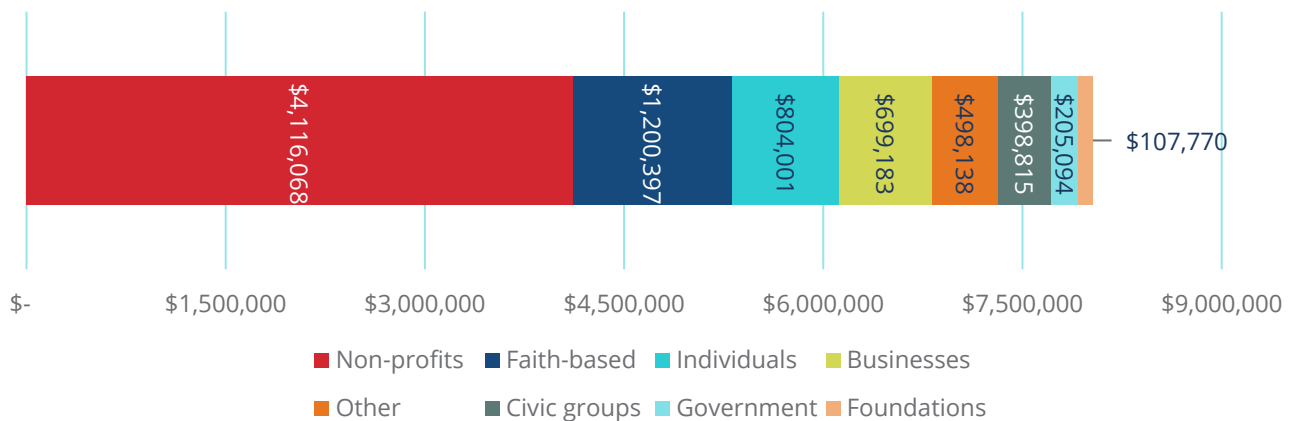
**\$2,223,086** Monetary Contributions

**2,888** Community Partnerships

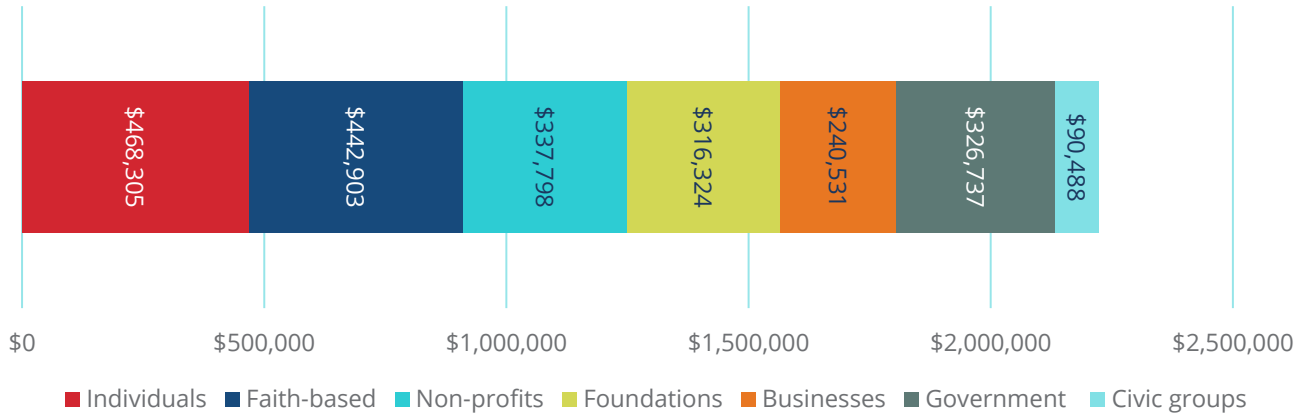
where partnerships and resources are most needed. The work of each FRC is accomplished in tandem with these stakeholders to identify specific ways organizations can offer direct support (through services and both monetary and in-kind contributions) and ensure an effective continuum of services are provided to students and families.

The funds awarded to each FRC by the department represent only a fraction of the total budget of each center. Budgets are determined based on local need and the remainder of needed operating funds are raised by each FRC director through solicitation of grants, contributions, and in-kind donations.

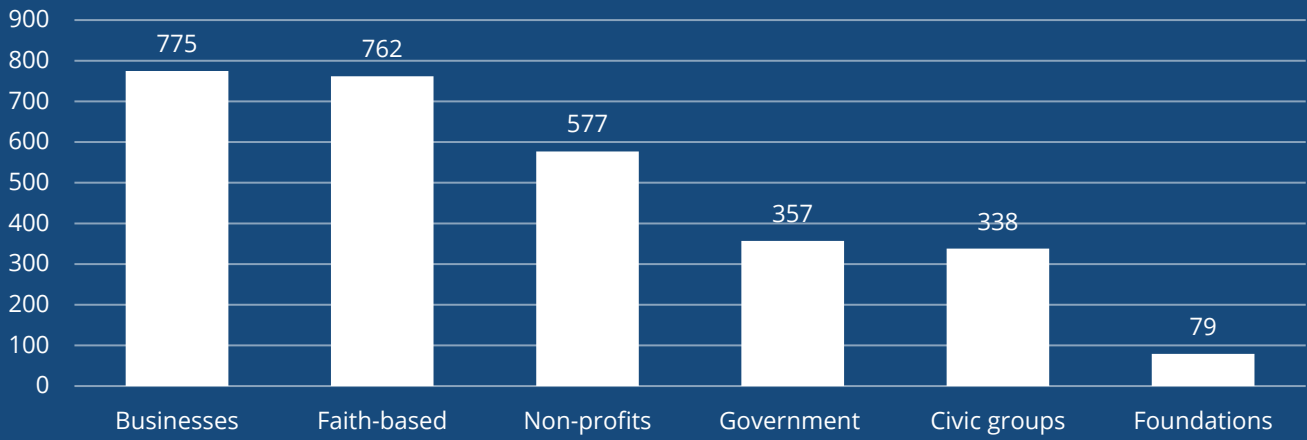
### Local In-Kind Contributions



## Local Monetary Contributions



## Number of Partnerships





# Program Outcomes

Family Resource Centers are required to submit annual SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals for at least three of the seven domains listed below based on the needs in their community. The percentage of FRCs with an established SMART goal in each domain is listed below.

Attendance	62%
Family Support	58%
Collaboration and Partnerships	55%
Family Engagement	52%
Academics	33%
Mental Health	27%
Family Training	25%

## Percentage of FRCs with a SMART goal in each domain

Each May, FRCs provide an evaluation of their progress and outcomes toward each goal to the department and highlights are detailed below. The goals established by each FRC and the diverse strategies they implemented yielded significant increases in student attendance rates and academic progress.

## Academic Support

Family Resource Centers work in tandem with their school and/or district to develop programmatic efforts to support academics. The educational strategies provided by FRCs include facilitating tutoring sessions, summer learning experiences, after-school programs, and mentorship programs.

### District Highlights:

- **Franklin County:** 66% of students who participated in consistent tutoring showcased academic improvement by at least five points in two or more subjects.
- **Bristol City** increased reading resources through pre-k and summer bus books programming by 250 students.



Lebanon Special Schools drive-thru event

## ***Attendance***

Family Resource Centers serve as a critical partner with the school and family to support consistent school attendance. FRCs provide a multitude of services to address or eliminate barriers to consistent attendance including provision of basic needs, referral coordination for social services, mental health, and/or health care, employment assistance, and case management. FRCs also support district awareness efforts about the importance of daily attendance.

- **Hawkins County** reduced the chronic absenteeism rate for students experiencing homelessness by nearly 18% through concentrated support initiatives.
- **Henry County** implemented targeted case management services and improved the elementary attendance rate by 50 students.
- **Johnson County** decreased their chronically out of school rate by 4.2% through consistent case management efforts.

### **#GetYourSelfieToSchool – Chester County**

Chester County FRC launched the *Get Your Selfie to School* campaign at West Chester Elementary with the goal of improving attendance. Each month, students earned special prizes for attendance accomplishments and received “brag tags” for perfect and improved attendance. This effort increased family awareness about the importance of attendance and was an exciting celebration for both staff and students.

As a direct result of this initiative, West Chester Elementary reduced its chronically out of school rate from 8.1% to 6.3% last school year, while the rates for the district and state increased to 14.7% and 15.5% respectively.<sup>ii</sup>

## ***Collaboration & Partnerships***

Family Resource Centers are uniquely positioned to effectively meet the needs of students and families by serving as the unifying conduit between the school and community.

- **Pickett County** provided 68,000 pounds of food to families in need in partnership with their local food bank.
- **Trenton Special Schools** increased their monetary contributions by 23% allowing for the expansion of services and students and families served.

## ***Family Engagement***

Family Resource Centers offer engagement opportunities to families through a variety of activities and programs. Research is clear that meaningful opportunities to engage families will have a positive impact on youth, including improved academic achievement, decreased disciplinary issues, improved parent-teacher and teacher-student relationships, and enhanced school environment.<sup>iii</sup> Engagement efforts include in-person and virtual programming and events, marketing, and specific grassroots canvassing.

- **Haywood County** held family engagement opportunities focused on forming a love of literacy for K-4 grade students. 168 families received learning kits designed to encourage daily at-home reading.
- **Lebanon Special Schools** hosted Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) learning opportunities where 1,854 students and 360 families participated.
- **Cole FRC – Metro Nashville** hosted monthly virtual events with an average attendance of 30 parents/guardians. The events provided attendees with critical strategies and tips for successful partnerships in their child’s academic, social, personal, and physical wellbeing.

## ***Family Support***

Family Resource Centers offer a variety of opportunities that support both students and their families. Direct services, referrals, and collaborative programs with community partners are responsive to the specific needs of each community and include supports such as rent and utility assistance, provision of clothing, school supplies, and hygiene items, and partnerships to offer eye exams and dental care. Additionally, it includes summer feeding and weekend backpack programs.

- **Oak Ridge** addressed food insecurity through weekend backpack programs and mobile food pantries. The initiative served 1,079 students—a 60% increase compared to the previous year.
- **Paris Special Schools** increased the number of families served by 25%.
- **Union County** supported 564 families.
- **White County** served 745 students and 450 families.

### ***Statewide Impact:***

***5,778 Home visits conducted***

***5,298 Parents served through parenting skills classes***

## ***Family Training***

Family Resource Centers offer opportunities for families to strengthen their parent support network and learn additional tools to support their child academically, socially, and personally. FRCs develop their training and education programs tailored to specific community needs.

- **Hancock County** hosted basic parenting skill courses for over 80 parents and guardians. In partnership with the district's school resource officers, all attendees of the car seat safety class received a new car seat.
- **Greenville City** worked with homeless families by providing critical case management services. Through this effort, 40% of participating families secured employment, housing, and became financially stable.

## ***Mental Health***

Childhood and adolescence are important times for social and personal development, and schools play a role in academic and nonacademic supports for students. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness:<sup>iv</sup>

- One in five U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- One in six U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14

Family Resource Centers offer a variety of services to address the mental health needs of students and families such as case management, school-based mental health services, and early intervention programs.

- **Dyer County** coordinated efforts to ensure students and families have access to mental health services, which resulted in a referral increase of 76% for students and 50% for families.
- **Loudon County** increased awareness and improved the distribution of resource and referral information for mental health services by 176%.
- **Stewart County** increased referrals to mental health supports for families by 62%
- **Wilson County** offered professional development opportunities for school staff to bring awareness to and address adverse childhood experiences. 98% of participants indicated an increase in content knowledge at the conclusion of the trainings.

# COVID-19 Pandemic Response District Highlights

## **Purposity**

Tennessee first lady Maria Lee's Tennessee Serves initiative has partnered with tech nonprofit Purposity to streamline how Tennesseans can serve individuals, families, and students in need.<sup>v</sup> With the free Purposity app, Tennesseans can now see the needs of neighbors in real time and can choose to meet those needs directly from their phone. After a need is met, most items will arrive on the recipient's doorstep in 24-48 hours.

*“Purposity came at just the right time for our county during this pandemic. It has been an amazing asset to Bledsoe County.”*

*—Karen Nunley, Bledsoe County Schools  
FRC Director*

“Purposity empowers Tennesseans to meet the tangible needs of neighbors without leaving home,” said Tennessee first lady Maria Lee. “Our state has endured tremendous hardships this year at the hands of natural disasters and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Whether it’s a need in your own backyard or in another county, Purposity is one way to know exactly what a neighbor needs and how to help.”

In collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education, Family Resource Centers served as the collaborative partner in districts for Purposity.<sup>vi</sup> To date, more than 1,000 needs have been posted and met through the app.



“Students in Manchester City Schools have benefited greatly by the partnership between Purposity and first lady Maria Lee. Purposity provides a very easy, affordable, and tangible way for individuals to offer support for students across the state and we appreciate the incredible support given to our children,” said Dr. Joey Vaughn, Director of Schools, Manchester City Schools.

## ***Hunger Hotline – Monroe County***



Driven by personal experiences with hunger as a student, Monroe County FRC Director Shannon Wheeler knows firsthand the barriers families face in accessing food assistance. This insight inspired the development of a hunger hotline for students and families.

While families could always call the main FRC phone line for assistance, many were facing food insecurity for the first time during the pandemic. Nearly 500 requests from both students and families have been made through the hotline.

When asked if she planned to continue the hotline, Wheeler said, "It is hard to keep up with at times, especially on weekends and nights, but I wouldn't go back to life without it because it has reduced the pressure on families and students in a really meaningful way." Wheeler also secured free advertisement for the line in a local newspaper. "Our families have so many stressors, many we can't help with, but this is an easy solution, and no family should go without food," she said.

## ***Wellbeing Teams – Morgan County***

Morgan County FRC established Wellbeing Teams to identify and respond to the unique needs of their school communities. Wellbeing Teams met the foundational needs of students and families through the provision of clothing, school supplies, hygiene products, and food. They also ensured older students could privately request items of need via a survey accessed through QR codes on posters in hallways and bathrooms. Once a student completed the survey and identified items they needed, a Wellbeing Team member would discretely place the item(s) in the student's locker. Further, the Wellbeing Team gathered specific requests to fund nearly 100 needs through the Purposity App.

### ***Statewide Impact:***

***82% of FRCs increased service levels and expanded offerings in response to the pandemic.***

Wellbeing Teams knew that beyond tangible essentials, there was also a need for social and wellness supports. This led to the creation of remote learner care baskets that included notes from classmates and the placement of lawn signs at the homes of remote learners to express positive affirmation and encouragement. Teams also referred students requesting social emotional support to staff members or mental health providers.

## **Community Fridge – Cole Elementary, Metro Nashville Public Schools**

Cole Elementary FRC of Metro-Nashville Public Schools recently launched a community fridge<sup>vii</sup> program to address food insecurity in response to the pandemic. This innovative opportunity evolved through a partnership with a Vanderbilt University medical student in coordination with the Nashville mayor's office.



"Cole has always been built on a foundation of reaching to the community," said principal Chad Hedgepath. "It made perfect sense for us to participate. The bottom line is it helps families. That's what we're all about."

## **Family Resource Fridays – Hamilton County**

Hamilton County FRC turned its attention to outreach innovation to ensure their community retained access to services during the pandemic. They developed a district-wide, comprehensive website to be a one-stop-shop to improve access to services and supports. During the academic year, the website averaged 250 visitors each week.

They also developed weekly bite-sized video segments highlighting different community partners and information on how to access their services. These videos were shared through social media and amplified through the hashtag #FamilyResourceFridays, with an average view rate of 2,000 per video.

**170**

wireless hotspots  
provided to virtual  
learners

*Coffee County*

**2500**

food boxes  
distributed at drive-  
thru events

*Glenclyff FRC*

**212**

students given  
individualized virtual  
support services

*Roane County*

# Appendix

*Strategic Framework*

*Timeline*

*Program Descriptions*

*Site Map*



# Tennessee Family Resource Centers

## Mission

Tennessee Family Resource Centers **unlock potential**.

## Vision

Tennessee Family Resource Centers unlock potential by serving as a resource and support hub. FRCs proactively **engage** with their communities to **empower** students and families, bridging gaps to ensure they **evolve** together through connected systems of support unique to each community.

## Three “E’s” for FRCs

**Engage** schools and community stakeholders to identify barriers hindering the social, personal, physical, and academic well-being of students

**Empower** students and families by providing high-quality services

**Evolves** as leaders in districts servicing as a hub of effective social service and mental health supports

## Strategic Framework

### Families

**Develop an interconnected and consistent approach that responds to the mental health and wellbeing needs of students and families.**

Focus Areas:

- Family support
- Family wellbeing
- Family sustainability

### Readiness

**Develop an integrated approach that ensures a pathway to prosperity for every student and family.**

Focus Areas:

- Chronically out of school
- Literacy
- Academic, college & career supports

### Communities

**Develop programs and partnerships targeted to unlock the potential of students, families, and schools.**

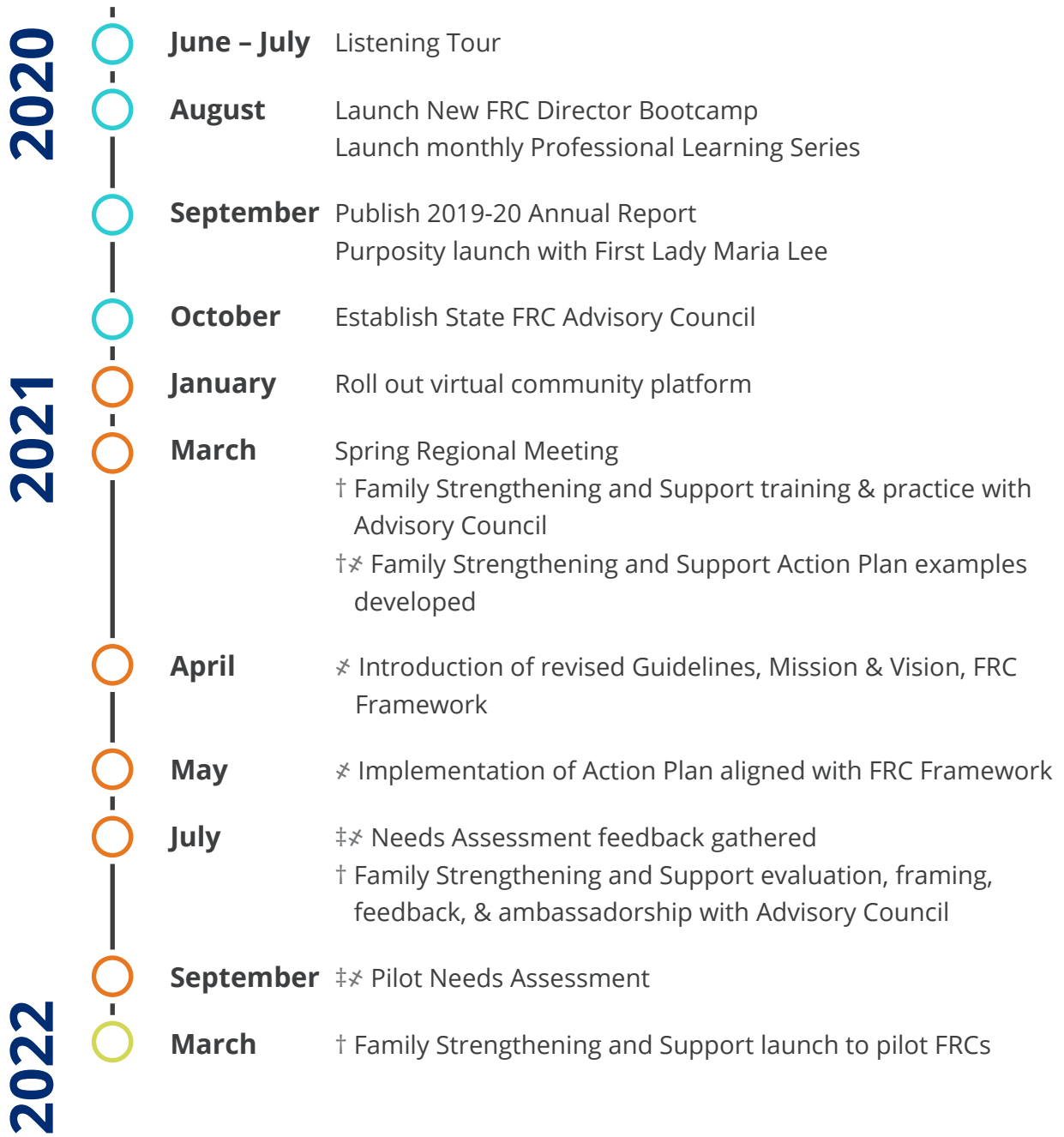
Focus Areas:

- Student & family engagement
- Resilient school community
- Community partnerships

# Tennessee Family Resource Centers

## Continuously Improving to Better Support Districts

Family Resource Centers' redesign and expansion efforts support the *Best for All* strategic plan to provide local education agencies the capacity to increase their efforts to ensuring real-time support is in place for students.



# Tennessee Family Resource Centers

## Program Descriptions

**Action Plan:** Supports programmatic implementation and ensures alignment with the FRC strategic framework identified in the Guidelines. School districts provide measurable objectives and mid/end of year outcomes to the department through this document on a recurring basis throughout the year.

**Advisory Council:** During the 2020-21 school year, the State Coordinator established a State FRC Advisory Council comprised of FRC directors, directors of schools, district supervisors, and state agency partners to review and revise the FRC guidelines and evaluate existing FRC practices. The Advisory Council established an FRC mission statement, vision statement, strategic framework, and revised body of guidelines.

**Annual Report:** LEAs are required by T.C.A. § 49-2-115 to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) to the department outlining the outcomes of programmatic efforts. During the 2020-21 school year, the department worked in conjunction the Advisory Council to revise the APR, ensuring the work of FRCs is effectively captured through appropriate data collection.

**Family Strengthening & Support:** The National Family Support Network's Family Strengthening & Support training is designed to be used as a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice. The training creates a common language across different kinds of family strengthening and family support programs such as Family Resource Centers and child development programs.

**Guidelines:** Revision of FRC Guidelines is required at least every three years by T.C.A. § 49-2-115. The revised guidelines established a vision and mission for Family Resource Centers in Tennessee.

**Listening Tour:** During the summer of 2020, the State Coordinator connected with 96% of FRCs during a virtual listening tour to better understand their needs and determine how the department could fully support their work.

**Needs Assessment:** Conducted biennially as required by the Guidelines to provide critical feedback through the identification of key strengths and areas of deficiency related to the strategic framework. In partnership with the Advisory Council, a pilot universal needs assessment is planned for fall 2021.

**New FRC Director Boot Camp:** Launched in 2020, these virtual, one-hour monthly meetings provide new FRC Directors with the strategies, tools, and best practices needed to ensure their pathway to success during the critical first three months of the school year.

**Professional Learning Series:** Monthly professional development opportunity for all FRC personnel to broaden knowledge and establish a strong community of practice. This series equips attendees with best practices and strategies to support students and families and fosters connection among FRCs.

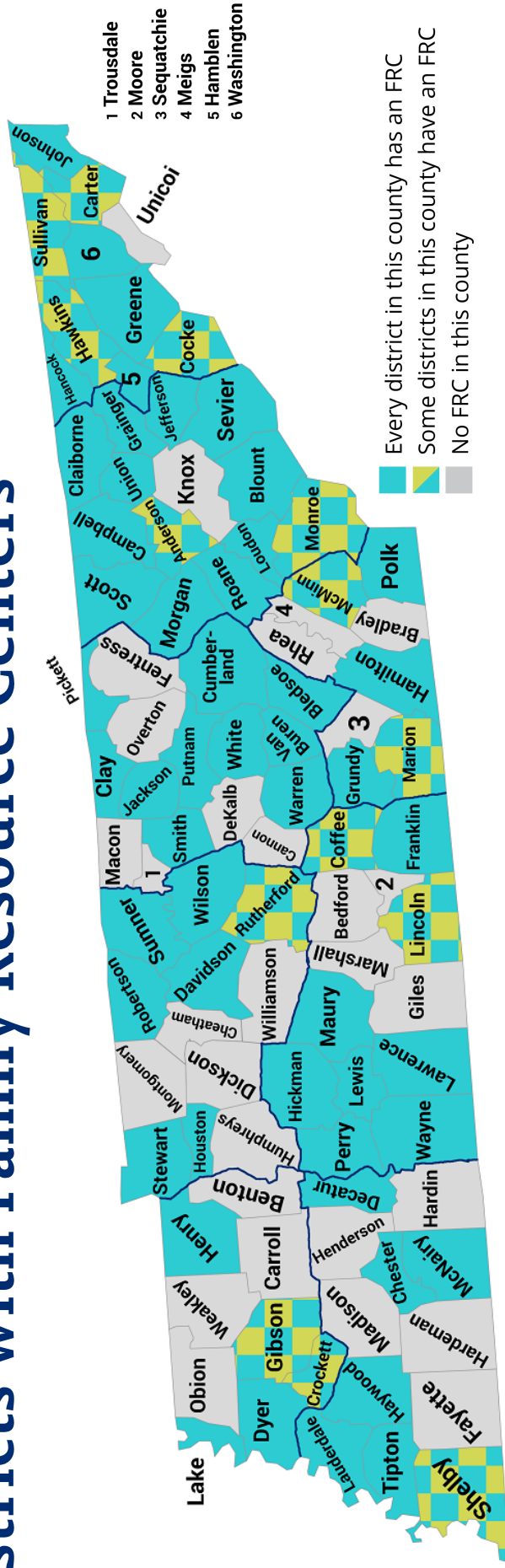
**Regional Meetings:** Provide a space of collaborative learning and networking across Centers of Regional Excellence regions. During the 2020-21 school year, an emphasis was placed on providing key trainings related to the implementation of best practices.

**Tennessee Serves Purposity App Partnership:** Tennessee first lady Maria Lee's Tennessee Serves initiative has partnered with tech nonprofit Purposity to streamline how Tennesseans can serve individuals, families and students in need. FRCs serve as an important conduit between these groups by posting needs on Purposity on behalf of students and families which are then fulfilled by donations through the app.

**Virtual Community Platform:** The FRC Community Channel was launched in Microsoft Teams to be a one-stop-shop for FRC directors to network, share resources, and access all relevant FRC resources from the department.

**Virtual Office Hours:** Monthly opportunity to provide continued technical assistance support and other guidance related to FRC programs.

# Districts with Family Resource Centers



## Northwest

Crockett Co.  
 Dyer Co.  
 Dyersburg City (Dyer)  
 Henry Co.  
 Humboldt City (Gibson)  
 Lake Co.  
 Paris SSD (Henry)  
 Trenton SSD (Gibson)

## Mid Cumberland

Houston Co.  
 Lebanon SSD (Wilson)  
 Metro-Nashville (Davidson)  
 Murfreesboro City (Rutherford)  
 Robertson Co.  
 Stewart Co.  
 Sumner Co.  
 Wilson Co.

## Upper Cumberland

Bledsoe Co.  
 Clay Co.  
 Cumberland Co.  
 Jackson Co.  
 Pickett Co.  
 Putnam Co.  
 Smith Co.  
 Van Buren Co.  
 Warren Co.  
 White Co.

## East TN

Alcoa City (Blount)  
 Anderson Co.  
 Blount Co.  
 Campbell Co.  
 Claiborne Co.  
 Grainger Co.  
 Jefferson Co.  
 Lenoir City (Loudon)  
 Loudon Co.  
 Maryville City (Blount)  
 Monroe Co.  
 Morgan Co.  
 Oak Ridge City (Anderson)  
 Oneida SSD (Scott)  
 Roane Co.  
 Scott Co.  
 Sevier Co.  
 Union Co.

## First TN

Bristol City (Sullivan)  
 Carter Co.  
 Cocke Co.  
 Greene Co.  
 Greeneville City (Greene)  
 Hamblen Co.  
 Hancock Co.  
 Hawkins Co.  
 Johnson City (Washington)  
 Johnson Co.  
 Kingsport City (Sullivan)  
 Washington Co.

## Southwest

Chester Co.  
 Decatur Co.  
 Haywood Co.  
 Lauderdale Co.  
 McNairy Co.  
 Millington Municipal (Shelby)  
 Shelby Co.  
 Tipton Co.

## South Central

Coffee Co.  
 Franklin Co.  
 Hickman Co.  
 Lawrence Co.  
 Lewis Co.  
 Lincoln Co.  
 Manchester City (Coffee)  
 Maury Co.  
 Perry Co.  
 Wayne Co.

## Southeast

Athens City (McMinn)  
 Grundy Co.  
 Hamilton Co.  
 Polk Co.  
 Richard City (Marion)



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- <sup>i</sup> All graphs: Compiled from annual report data supplied by family resource centers, May 2021.
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