



Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network

2025 Annual Network Survey

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Key findings

The Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network (MN CFRN) was launched in 2022. In early 2026, Wilder Research distributed an online survey to 29 counties or collaboratives who were active in the MN CFRN in 2025. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) across Minnesota receive this survey annually, which aims to track changes and growth in the network over time. A total of 23 counties or collaboratives completed the survey (a response rate of 79%).

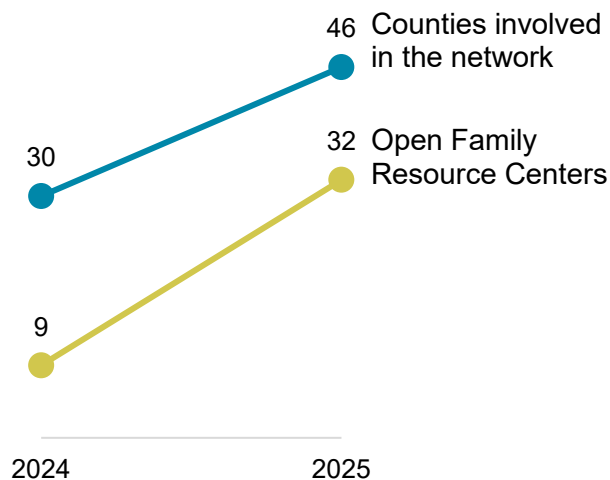
When a single mother was asked what the most valuable part of her experience was, she said, 'How smooth the process was and the consistency of communication. [The FRC] followed through and stayed connected. [They were] honest and straightforward, no barriers. It was almost like a miracle, it was my last hope and I had nowhere else to turn.'

– FRC staff

The Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network is growing.

- The number of counties involved in the MN CFRN has **grown from 30 counties in 2024 to 46 counties in 2025**—totaling over half of all counties in the state of Minnesota.
- In 2025, **members of the MN CFRN opened 23 new FRCs**. In total, 32 FRCs were open in 2025 compared to just 9 in 2024.

Counties involved in the MN CFRN and open FRCs in 2025



- Out of 23 counties and collaboratives involved in the MN CFRN, over half (12) were in the **implementation stage**. Nine were in the **planning stage** and three were in the **pre-implementation stage**.
- Nearly all open FRCs have a Parent Advisory Council (22 out of 24).

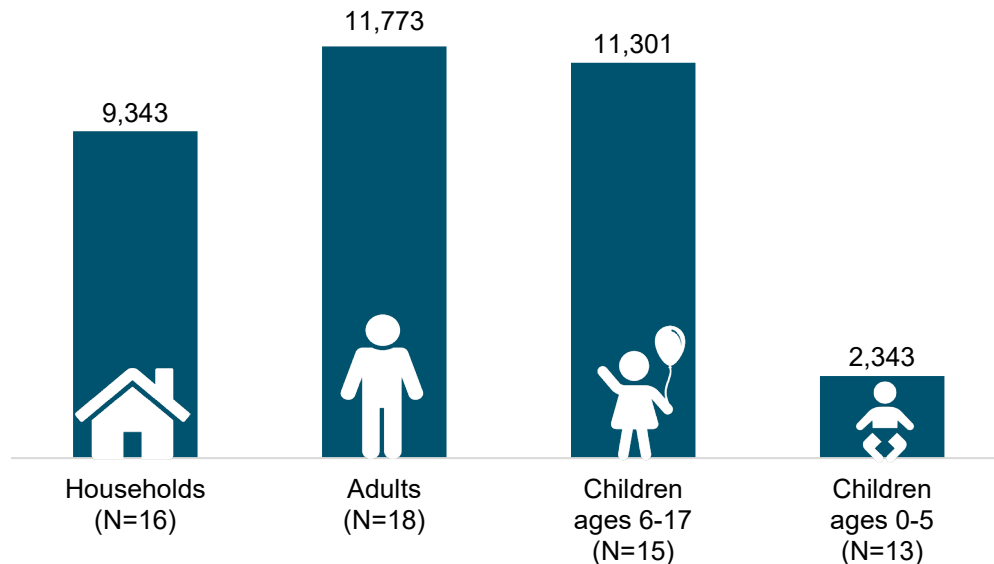
Family Resource Centers are working to expand staffing and hours of operation.

- Among FRC county-wide initiatives that provided budget information, the average annual budget was **\$277,880**. For individual FRCs, among those that provided budget information, the average annual budget (secured and in-kind) was **\$250,022**.
- On average, open FRCs had **2.2 FTE staff** (funded by the FRC and in-kind, overall), compared to 1.3 FTE in 2024.
- **Over half of FRCs provided at least 21 hours of services per week** (16 out of 24 FRCs), including 6 that provided more than 40 hours of services per week. In 2024, among the eight open FRCs that provided information, just two provided services for at least 21 hours per week.

Family Resource Centers are serving parents, caregivers, and children of all ages.

- Open FRCs reported **serving over 9,000 households (duplicated) in 2025**.

Households, adults, and children served by open FRCs in 2025 (duplicated count)



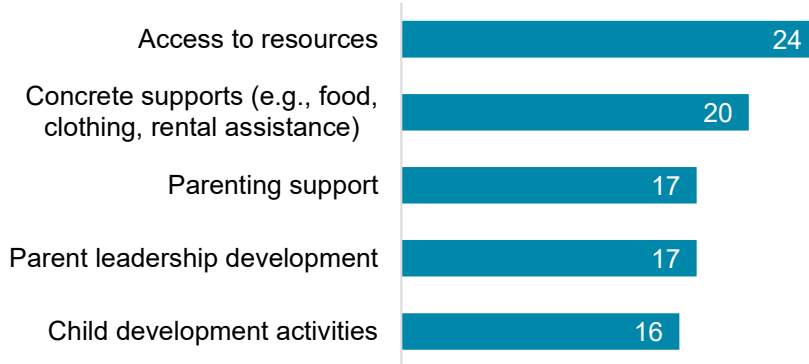
Note. Some FRCs provided duplicated counts, so households and individuals who engaged with the FRC multiple times would be counted each time they were served.

- Nearly all open FRCs reported serving parents and caregivers; most FRCs reported also serving infants, toddlers, children and youth.
- FRCs reported providing tailored services to specific populations, including single-parent households; families with specific racial, ethnic, or cultural identities; and immigrant families.
- Most often, open FRCs served communities of 2,500 to 50,000 people.

Family Resource Centers are providing a wide range of services and supports.

- All open FRCs are providing families with access to resources through enhanced information and referrals, and many provide services to help families meet their own needs, offer parenting support, nurture parent leadership, and support healthy child development.

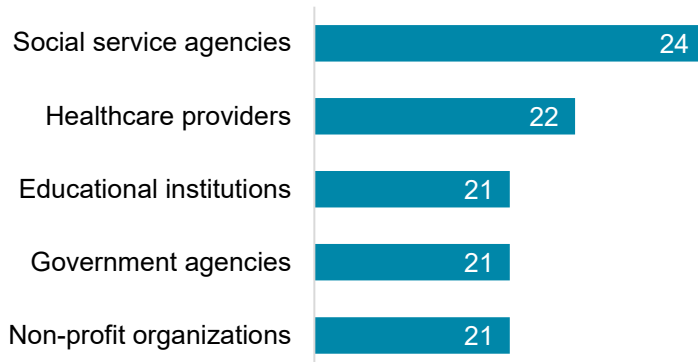
Top 5 services offered by open FRCs in 2025 (N=24)



Family Resource Centers are collaborating with a wide variety of service system partners.

- All or nearly all FRCs have partnered or collaborated with social service agencies, health care providers, educational institutions, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Organizations FRCs have partnered or collaborated with in 2025 (N=24)



Family Resource Centers are facing complex implementation and sustainability challenges.

Some FRCs are facing challenges reaching or serving families and experiencing low attendance at events and activities. Additionally, some FRCs reported having insufficient capacity, resources, staffing and funding to provide necessary services, as well as challenges identifying long-term funding sources.

Family Resource Centers are already having a positive impact on families, network members, and the service delivery system.

Respondents (n=15) identified a range of **family and community member impacts**:



Providing assistance accessing benefits (n=7)



Providing concrete supports (n=6)



Stabilizing families in crisis (n=5)



Offering hope and empowerment (n=5)

Respondents (n=22) also identified the following **benefits of their involvement** in the MN Community & Family Resource Network:



Opportunities to learn from other organizations' experiences and approaches (n=10)



Expanded knowledge through trainings and technical assistance (n=8)



New relationships and connections (n=6)



Improvements to service delivery (n=4)

Respondents (N=16) shared the following **impacts their FRC has had on the service delivery system** in their county or collaborative:



Stronger relationships with community partners (n=8)



Expanded range of resources available to families (n=7)



Flexibility and efficiency of service delivery (n=4)

The MN CFRN's growth and progress will continue to be tracked through upcoming Annual Network Surveys, with the next administration planned for January 2027.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Background..... | 1 |
| The Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network..... | 1 |
| The Annual Network Survey..... | 1 |
| Findings | 2 |
| Open and planned Family Resource Centers in Minnesota..... | 2 |
| Characteristics of overall Family Resource Center initiatives..... | 5 |
| Characteristics of open Family Resource Centers..... | 6 |
| Successes and impacts..... | 10 |
| Challenges | 14 |
| Resources and supports needed from the Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network | 17 |

Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Open and planned FRCs in the MN CFRN in 2025 | 2 |
| 2. Counties involved in the MN CRFN and open FRCs in 2025..... | 3 |
| 3. Minnesota counties involved in the MN CFRN and open FRCs in 2025 | 4 |
| 4. Entities responsible for leadership and administration of overall FRC initiatives..... | 5 |
| 5. Number of households, adults, and children served by open FRCs in 2025..... | 7 |
| 6. Average number of hours of services and programs provided per week by open FRCs in 2025..... | 7 |
| 7. Age groups served by open FRCs in 2025..... | 8 |
| 8. Special populations served by open FRCs in 2025 | 8 |
| 9. Services offered by open FRCs in 2025..... | 9 |
| 10. Organizations FRCs have partnered or collaborated with in 2025..... | 10 |

Background

The Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network

The Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network (MN CFRN) was launched in 2022 through the Association of Minnesota Counties with philanthropic support. The purpose of the MN CFRN is to help counties develop, launch, and implement Family Resource Centers (FRCs) that are rooted in community needs and shaped through collaboration between local partners and government agencies. In 2025, the MN CFRN transitioned to be housed at Wilder Research.

What is a Family Resource Center?

FRCs are welcoming, community- or school-based hubs where families can easily access support, connection, and opportunity. Rooted in a proven, strengths-based model, FRCs tailor services to local needs, elevate community leadership, and reduce the footprint of government while strengthening partnerships with local organizations. With more than 3,000 centers nationwide – some serving families for decades – FRCs offer an effective, family-centered approach that helps communities thrive.

The Annual Network Survey

In early 2026, an online survey was distributed to 29 counties or collaboratives who were active in the MN CFRN in 2025. This survey is an annual survey of FRCs across Minnesota that aims to track changes and growth in the network over time (the “Annual Network Survey”). Each survey administration, network members are asked to share information about the previous calendar year. The survey has been administered twice, focused on calendar years 2024 and 2025. This report focuses on data collected in the 2025 survey; data from the 2024 survey is referenced throughout but was reported separately. A total of 23 counties or collaboratives completed the survey, for a response rate of 79%; this response rate was very similar to the response rate for the 2024 survey (78%). Findings from the survey are summarized below.

Limitations

Because not all members of the MN CFRN participated in the survey, these findings are not complete or representative of the experiences of the entire network or each individual member of the network and should be interpreted with this context in mind.

Additionally, some references to data from the 2024 Annual Network Survey are offered throughout the report to provide some insight into how the MN CFRN may be changing over time. However, because a different number of counties or collaboratives participated

in each survey (18 in 2024, compared to 23 in 2025) and the composition of counties or collaboratives who participated in the survey is not the same from year to year, these comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

Findings

Open and planned Family Resource Centers in Minnesota

Respondents were asked about the current status of FRCs in their county or collaborative. Network members reported being in a range of stages of FRC planning and development. In total, 12 out of 23 counties or collaboratives said that they had at least one open FRC in 2025. In total, respondents reported 27 open FRCs across the 12 counties or collaboratives (Figure 1). In 2024, respondents reported just eight open FRCs across three counties or collaboratives. Most often, counties or collaboratives opened their FRCs in community-based settings.

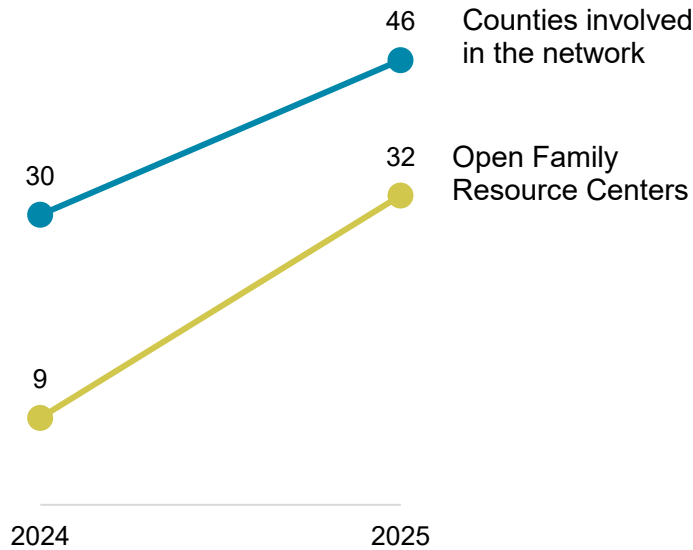
When asked about their plans to open FRCs in the future, five out of 23 counties or collaboratives said they are planning to open an FRC. In total, respondents reported 26 planned FRCs across the five counties or collaboratives (Figure 1). Most often, respondents plan to open FRCs in community-based and library-based settings.

1. Open and planned FRCs in the MN CFRN in 2025 (N=23)

| FRC Setting | Open FRCs | Planned FRCs |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Community-based FRCs | 17 | 13 |
| Mobile FRCs | 4 | 3 |
| School-based FRCs | 3 | -- |
| Library-based FRCs | 2 | 7 |
| County/city facility-based FRCs | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 27 | 26 |

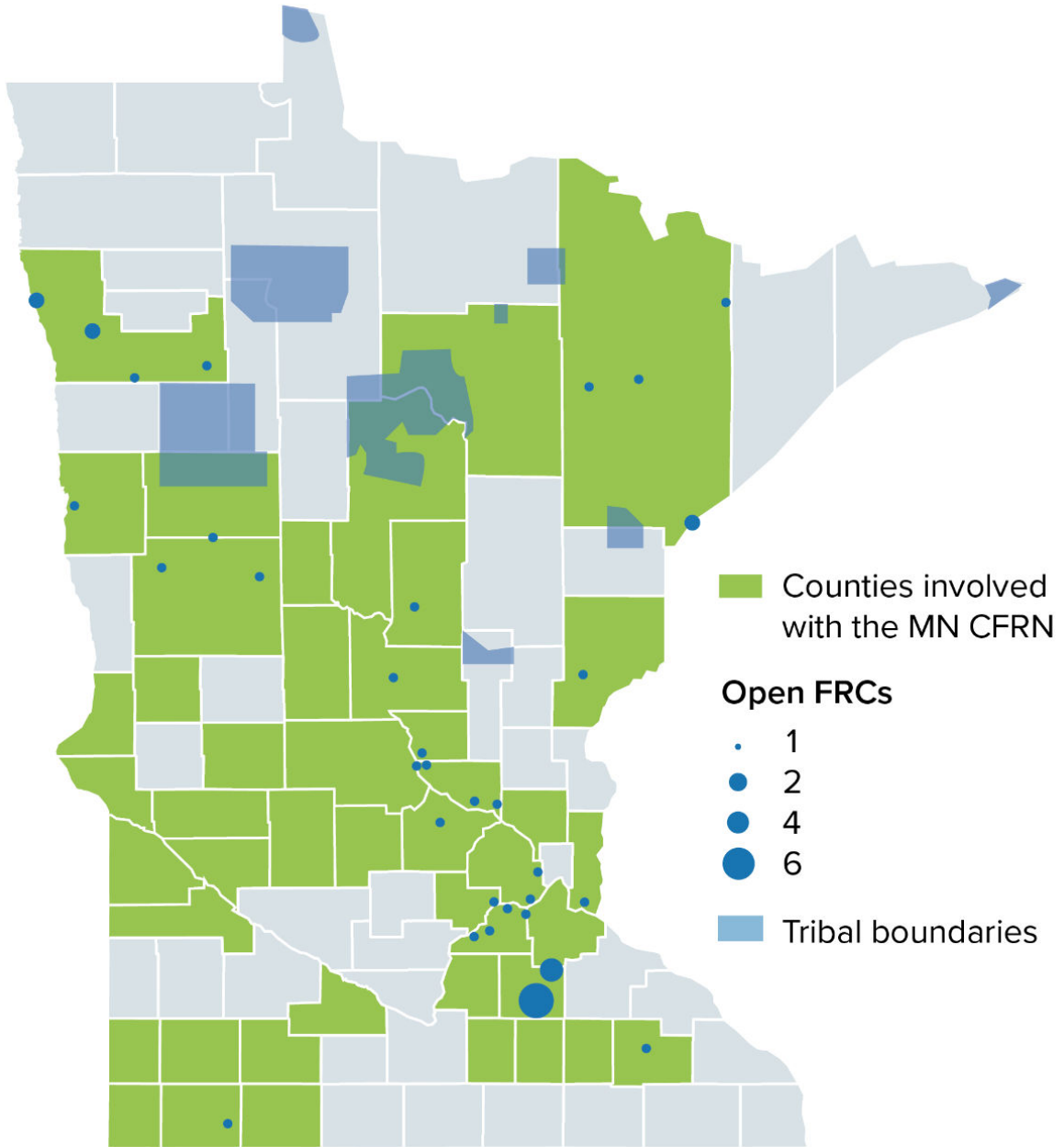
However, not every member of the MN CFRN was able to participate in the Annual Network Survey. From administrative data, we know that the number of counties or collaboratives involved in the MN CFRN and the number of open FRCs is even greater. The number of counties involved in the MN CFRN has grown from 30 in 2024 to 46 in 2025, and the number of open FRCs has grown from 9 in 2024 to 32 in 2025 (Figure 2). Over half of all counties in Minnesota are involved in the MN CFRN (Figure 3).

2. Counties involved in the MN CFRN and open FRCs in 2025



Ten counties or collaboratives said they have already, or plan to, create their own FRC network (defined as two or more independent FRCs with a backbone entity to leverage and coordinate the collective impact of its members).

3. Minnesota counties involved in the MN CFRN and open FRCs in 2025



Characteristics of overall Family Resource Center initiatives

Leadership

Respondents were asked which entities were responsible for providing leadership to their overall FRC initiative, and who was the administrator for their initiative. Some counties or collaboratives reported more than one leadership entity. Most often, County Human Services provided leadership to the overall FRC initiative (14 out of 23 counties or collaboratives surveyed); County Human Services also most often held responsibility for the administration of the initiative (Figure 4). This is consistent with the leadership and administration structure that counties and collaboratives reported in the last Annual Network Survey in 2024.

4. Entities responsible for leadership and administration of overall FRC initiatives (N=23)

| Entity | Leadership | Administration |
|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| County Human Services | 14 | 10 |
| Community Partner Agency/Nonprofit | 8 | 8 |
| Community Action Program (CAP) | 5 | 3 |
| County Public Health | 5 | 3 |
| Community Collaborative | 5 | 3 |
| Contracted Partner | 2 | 0 |
| School District | 1 | 0 |
| Other | 1 | 0 |

Note. Ns total more than 23 because counties or collaboratives could select more than one entity who was responsible for leadership or administration of their initiative. The county or collaborative who selected “Other” for the entity responsible for leadership of their overall FRC initiative specified that parents and volunteers provided leadership.

Stages of development

Respondents were also asked to reflect on their overall FRC initiative’s current “stage of development.”¹ Out of 23 counties or collaboratives who responded to the survey:

- Nine counties or collaboratives said they were in the **planning stage**, conducting data collection, identifying partners, and securing a location.
- Three counties or collaboratives said they were in the **pre-implementation stage**, working on staffing, implementation planning, with a plan to open within 90 days.
- Twelve counties said they were in the **implementation phase**, with an open location, and available programming and activities (compared to six counties in 2024).

¹ Counties or collaboratives could select more than one stage of development.

Budget information

Budget information was provided by a smaller subset of counties or collaboratives. Sixteen counties or collaboratives shared their “secured funding” budget information, and 10 shared their “in-kind” budget information. Throughout this report, “in-kind” is defined as support in the form of donated staff time, supplies, space, or other items provided to the FRC by partner agencies, community/civic groups, volunteers, or donations. Counties who did not provide these data or indicated “0” were excluded from the analysis.

Across the FRC initiatives who provided this information (including open and planned FRCs), the average budget (secured and in-kind) was \$277,880. The total budget (secured and in-kind) was \$4,446,074.

Twenty counties or collaboratives provided information about the sources of funding for their overall FRC initiative. Sources of funding included:

- Private foundation grants (n=15)
- State government funding (n=9)
- In-kind donations (n=9)
- Local government funding (n=9)
- Individual donations (n=5)
- Federal government funding (n=3)
- Corporate sponsorships or donations (n=2)
- Earned income (e.g., fees for services; n=1)
- Other (n=1)

Characteristics of open Family Resource Centers

Respondents were asked to answer questions about each of their FRCs that were open at the time of the survey. In total, respondents reported information about a total of 24 open FRCs.

Number of households and individuals served

Most open FRCs provided data about the total number of households, adults and children served in 2025 (Figure 5). In total, 9,343 households, 11,773 adults aged 18 and older, 11,301 children aged six through 17, and 2,343 children aged zero through five were engaged or served by the open FRCs in 2025. Please note that some FRCs provided duplicated counts, so households and individuals who engaged with the FRC multiple times would be counted each time they were served.²

² Among FRCs that provided data for each category, the number who provided duplicated counts were as follows: 10 out of 17 household counts, 7 out of 19 adult counts, 3 out of 14 child (age six through 17) counts, and 3 out of 13 child (age zero through five) counts.

5. Number of households, adults, and children served by open FRCs in 2025

| | Total number served | Average number served |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Households (N=16) | 9,343 | 584 |
| Adults (N=18) | 11,773 | 654 |
| Children (ages 6 to 17; N=15) | 11,301 | 753 |
| Children (ages 0 to 5; N=13) | 2,343 | 180 |

Note. Some FRCs provided duplicated counts, so households and individuals who engaged with the FRC multiple times would be counted each time they were served.

Staff structure

Twenty-one open FRCs reported staff funded by the FRC, and six open FRCs reported staff funded in-kind, through donations of staff time by other partnering agencies. On average, open FRCs had 2.2 FTE staff (funded by the FRC and in-kind, overall). In 2024, open FRCs reported an average of 1.3 FTE staff (funded by the FRC and in-kind, overall). FRCs had an average of 1.6 FTE staff funded by the FRC itself. Among the six open FRCs that had staff funded in-kind, they had an average of 2.0 FTE in-kind staff. The total number of FTE staff (funded by the FRC and in-kind, overall) ranged from 0.05 FTE to 10 FTE.

Weekly hours of programming

Respondents were asked how many hours, on average, their FRC is open per week to provide programs or services for families. The number of hours FRCs provided programs and services per week on average ranged from 4 hours or less per week to over 40 hours per week (Figure 6). Over half of FRCs provided at least 21 hours of services per week (16 out of 24 FRCs), including 6 that provided more than 40 hours of services per week. In 2024, among the eight open FRCs that provided information, just two provided services for at least 21 hours per week.

6. Average number of hours of services and programs provided per week by open FRCs in 2025 (N=24)

| Hours per week | Number of FRCs |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 4 hours or less | 2 |
| 5-10 hours | 3 |
| 11-20 hours | 3 |
| 21-40 hours | 10 |
| Over 40 hours | 6 |

Community and populations served

Respondents were asked about the size of the community served by their FRC. Most often, respondents reported their FRC served communities of 2,500 to 50,000 people (17 out of 24 FRCs). Four FRCs reported that they served communities of more than 50,000 people, and three FRCs reported that they serve communities of fewer than 2,500 people.

Respondents were asked which age groups were served by their FRC. Out of 24 open FRCs, nearly all reported serving parents and caregivers (23 out of 24 FRCs; Figure 7). Most FRCs reported serving infants, toddlers, children and youth. Fewer FRCs reported serving adult individuals (12 out of 24 FRCs).

7. Age groups served by open FRCs in 2025 (N=24)

| Age group | Number of FRCs |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Infants and toddlers (ages 0 up to 3) | 18 |
| Preschool-age children (ages 3 to 5) | 19 |
| School-age children (ages 6 to 12) | 21 |
| Youth (ages 13-21) | 21 |
| Adult individuals | 12 |
| Parents and caregivers | 23 |

Respondents were also asked whether their FRC served a list of special populations. Twenty out of 21 open FRCs served at least one special population (Figure 8). Most often, respondents reported that their FRC served single-parent households; families with specific racial, ethnic or cultural identities; and immigrant families. It was also common to serve young parents and children with special needs.

8. Special populations served by open FRCs in 2025 (N=21)

| Special population | Number of FRCs |
|--|----------------|
| Single-parent households | 20 |
| Families with specific racial, ethnic or cultural identities | 19 |
| Immigrant families | 18 |
| Young parents (ages 24 or younger who are pregnant or parenting) | 17 |
| Children with special needs | 16 |
| Military members or veterans | 12 |
| Other | 3 |
| None of the above | 1 |

Note. Numbers add to more than 21 because FRCs reported serving more than one special population. "Other" special populations served included children and kinship carers in the foster care system, people experiencing homeless, and the elderly.

Annual budget

Budget information was provided by a subset of open FRCs. Fifteen FRCs shared their “secured funding” budget information, and eight shared their “in-kind” budget information. Counties who did not provide these data were excluded from the analysis.

Across the open FRCs who provided this information, the average budget (secured and in-kind) was \$250,022. The total budget across all open FRCs who provided budget information (secured and in-kind) was \$3,750,335.

Program offerings

Respondents were asked to indicate which services are offered on-site at their FRC (not through referrals). All 24 open FRCs said they provide families with access to resources through enhanced information and referrals, and many provided concrete supports such as food, clothing, rental assistance and transportation assistance (20 out of 24 FRCs; Figure 9). Most open FRCs provide parenting support, parent leadership development activities, and child development activities. Services available in 2024 were similar; however, a greater proportion of open FRCs reported providing parent leadership development in 2025 than in 2024.

9. Services offered by open FRCs in 2025 (N=24)

| Services offered | Number of FRCs |
|---|----------------|
| Access to resources (i.e., enhanced information and referrals) | 24 |
| Concrete supports (e.g., food, clothing, rental assistance, transportation assistance) | 20 |
| Parenting support (e.g., parenting workshops, support groups, education and home visiting) | 17 |
| Parent leadership development (e.g., FRC Parent Advisory Committee, leadership and advocacy training) | 17 |
| Child development activities (e.g., early childhood development, literacy, school readiness, and academic achievement) | 16 |
| Family development services (formerly known as “case management”) | 13 |
| Health and wellness activities (e.g., nutrition education, physical fitness activities, health screening, dental services, substance abuse services) | 13 |
| Community strengthening activities (e.g., voter registration, civic engagement, collaborative projects, initiatives or coalitions to address community needs) | 11 |
| Family economic success activities (e.g., job skills training, employment services, financial education, asset building) | 11 |
| Culturally-specific activities (e.g., culturally-specific celebrations/holidays, classes focused on cooking or other cultural practices, ethnic dancing, language classes) | 11 |
| Activities for special populations (e.g., programs focused on males/fathers, grandparents, or youth; healthy couples/marriage programs) | 9 |
| Education activities (e.g., family literacy, English-as-a-Second Language, GED preparation, computer classes) | 8 |

Partnerships and resources

Respondents were asked to indicate with which types of organizations or groups their FRC collaborates or partners. All FRCs reported that they have at least one other type of organization with whom they partner and collaborate (Figure 10). All FRCs have partnered or collaborated with social service agencies, and nearly all have partnered with healthcare providers, educational institutions, government agencies and non-profit organizations. The types of partnerships reported in 2025 were similar to those reported in the 2024 survey.

10. Organizations FRCs have partnered or collaborated with in 2025 (N=24)

| Organization or group | Number of FRCs |
|--|----------------|
| Social service agencies | 24 |
| Healthcare providers | 22 |
| Educational institutions | 21 |
| Government agencies | 21 |
| Non-profit organizations | 21 |
| Cultural and community-based organizations | 19 |
| Volunteer and civic groups | 16 |
| Faith-based organizations | 15 |
| Business and corporate for-profit partners | 13 |
| Media partners | 5 |
| None of the above | -- |

Parent Leadership

Respondents were asked whether their FRC had a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or something equivalent. Twenty-two out of 24 open FRCs have a PAC.

Successes and impacts

Family or community member success

Respondents were asked to share at least one success story their FRC had with a family or community member. Among respondents with an open FRC who responded (N=15), successes and impacts respondents uplifted included:

- **Assisting families to access benefits (n=7).** Respondents most commonly mentioned successes with helping families and community members access benefits that were instrumental in achieving safety and stability. Several respondents described working closely with families to navigate complex applications, to get in touch with other agencies

or organizations, and to access education and services they may not have been able to otherwise. A few respondents also noted how efficiently families were able to access resources with the support of their FRC.

- **Providing concrete supports for families (n=6).** Many respondents described being able to materially support families and community members by providing resources like meals, transportation, and baby formula. Some also noted successes around coordinating supports such as employment and utilities assistance.
- **Stabilizing families in crisis (n=5).** Several respondents shared stories in which families came to them in crisis situations, with many facing eviction or navigating a personal tragedy. Respondents described how FRC resources, as well as care from staff, helped to stabilize and provide relief for families.
- **Offering hope and empowerment (n=5).** Another element of success mentioned was the hope, confidence, and long-term resilience that families and community members achieved with the support of FRCs. Several respondents emphasized the progress made by families and individuals since initially arriving at their FRC in crisis.

When a single mother was asked what the most valuable part of her experience was, she said, 'How smooth the process was and the consistency of communication. [The FRC] followed through and stayed connected. [They were] honest and straightforward, no barriers. It was almost like a miracle, it was my last hope and I had nowhere else to turn.'
– FRC staff

Now, [this individual] has hope, build resilience and feels supported. ... She is in awe of how her life has changed from the devastation of facing eviction. – FRC staff

Other successes that were mentioned by one respondent included trainings and information-sharing for community members, increased opportunities for collaboration with providers, and the ability to offer a trusted space for families to connect.

Impacts on the service delivery system

Respondents were asked to share at least one impact their FRC has had on the service delivery system in their county or collaborative. Among respondents with an open FRC who responded (N=16), some of the impacts respondents shared included:

- **Stronger relationships with community partners (n=8).** Many respondents, including those still in the assessment phase, spoke broadly of increased collaboration and connection with community partners as a result of FRC processes and infrastructure. Respondents commonly shared that providers and partners have developed more of

a shared commitment to meeting the needs of families, as well as a collective vision for serving the community together.

Partners have continued to come together to best serve families. There has been large collaboration on assuring that families have access to services, resources, and choices. – FRC staff

Collaboration builds strong connections and reduces stress on families. – FRC staff

The development of the FRCs has brought community partners together who have never worked together. The excitement of being housed together to meet the needs of the community. – FRC staff

- **Expanded range of resources available to families (n=8).** Respondents described improvements to the types of services and resources they can connect families to as a result of increased trust between their FRC and community partners. Some respondents reported significant enhancements to the mutual referral process between FRCs and county agencies. Respondents also noted an improved ability to offer a variety of resources directly to families, including housing stabilization services, assistance with applying for benefits, and opportunities for social connections.
-

We have seen stronger relationships with county departments. As partners have come to know our staff and understand our work, they are more confident in referring individuals to us, and we are equally confident in referring clients to their services. – FRC staff

Eighty community partners sought us out to partner and provide mutual referrals to meet a wide variety of needs for families - they recognize that we are often the front door to families finding the resources they need. – FRC staff

- **Flexibility and efficiency of service delivery (n=4).** Several respondents uplifted the ways in which services have become more accessible, responsive and efficient. They noted that reduced barriers and increased centralization of available resources made it easier for families to access needed services.
-

It was amazing to see such great resources in one place. We were able to connect people with early childhood resource coaching, housing assistance, and more! – FRC staff

We collaborate with the county and multiple community organizations to jointly support housing stabilization efforts. We can spread support further and avoid duplication and waste. – FRC staff

Our ability to pivot to where the need is without added barriers. During the [federal government] shutdown, we were able to access resources quickly and mobilize to help families. – FRC staff

Two respondents also mentioned that FRC efforts have increased county focus and investment towards prevention and community engagement.

Benefits for their organization

Respondents were asked how their involvement in the MN Community & Family Resource Network has been beneficial for them and their organization (N=22). Some of the benefits included opportunities to:

- **Learn from other organizations' experiences and approaches (n=10).**
Respondents most commonly reported benefiting from the opportunity to hear about other FRCs' successes and challenges. Respondents also expressed appreciation for the ability to learn strategies and best practices from FRCs in different stages of implementation. Additionally, a few respondents mentioned that participation in the network provided them with new ideas and insights they could integrate into their own practices.

The MN Community & Family Resource Network has been a wealth of information and a source of great inspiration for our new FRC. – FRC staff

The network has been beneficial to hear what others across the state are doing in terms of assessments, planning, and implementing FRCs.
– FRC staff

- **Deepen knowledge through trainings and technical assistance (n=8).** Many respondents cited the importance of the knowledge- and skill-sharing opportunities offered through the network. They commonly mentioned trainings, meetings, and conferences that deepened their understanding of the work and best practices. A couple of respondents also shared positive comments around the technical assistance, data support, and personalized consultation they received.

The expertise from the technical assistance sessions ... [has] been valuable in providing best practices for us to use and build upon. – FRC staff

We have participated in sponsored trainings that enhanced our understanding of FRC development and best practices. – FRC staff

- **Build relationships and connections (n=6).** Respondents described peer support and collaboration with other FRCs as significant benefits of participating in the network.

Collaboration and partnerships with other FRCs have been invaluable; the meetings have created opportunities to learn from one another, and we have reached out to many of the other FRCs with further questions. – FRC staff

The network helps draw people together and build momentum for development and support. – FRC staff

- **Improve service delivery (n=4).** Some respondents mentioned the ways in which they have applied frameworks and lessons learned through the network to strengthen their services, making them more consistent and comprehensive.

Topics and lived experiences [at monthly meetings] have strengthened our services. – FRC staff

Attending meetings with other FRCs has been incredibly valuable. Hearing their updates... and exchanging program ideas has helped us grow and refine our own services. – FRC staff

Challenges

Challenges in reaching or serving families

Respondents were asked what challenges they have encountered in reaching or serving families and how they were addressing them (N=19). The challenges and strategies that emerged were primarily around:

- **Family and community engagement (n=12).** Respondents commonly mentioned challenges with engaging families and garnering attendance at events and activities. They cited various reasons including difficulty reaching immigrant families due to increased federal immigration presence; lack of transportation, particularly in rural counties, preventing families from accessing services; and the need for stronger trust and relationships between FRCs and the communities they serve.

One strategy some respondents discussed was shifting service delivery, including offering virtual options and providing transportation or basic necessities using low-contact methods, often in collaboration with trusted community partners. Others said they have been focusing on programming that has received positive community reception or have adjusted target audiences to increase participation.

With increased ICE presence in our community, many immigrant families are understandably reluctant to leave their homes. In response, we are intentionally leveraging our existing cross-sector partnerships to meet urgent needs in ways that prioritize safety, trust, and confidentiality.

– FRC staff

We are a rural community, and there are transportation barriers that prevent families from being able to access the hub where services are.

– FRC staff

Some planned activities have seen strong attendance, while others have not, highlighting the importance of trial and error when determining what approaches resonate with parents. – FRC staff

We recognize the need to build trust with community to increase participation, but with our events being scheduled so intermittently and at various locations, it has been difficult to build the trust needed to grow operations through word-of-mouth. – FRC staff

- **Capacity, resources, and funding to provide intended services (n=7).**

Respondents reported struggling with securing funding as shifting budgets and priorities have limited local governments' ability to financially support FRCs. Some described challenges around personnel, with a few respondents noting that they are unable to fully staff all locations or have staff available at all times of day. Those without a permanent location mentioned difficulties around finding locations for events and activities and achieving community consensus on where services should be offered. A couple of respondents noted the time, energy, and learning curve involved in successfully transitioning existing services to align with the Family Resource Center model (including Family Advisory Board development, incorporation of the Five Protective Factors and establishing Standards of Quality).

Despite funding and capacity constraints, a few respondents noted how they continued to provide services to families with the resources on hand, including utilizing a “pop-up” model and offering communication options for families to reach out for support even when staff are not available.

Many families are working full-time, so we try to offer programs and events in the evenings, but that overextends some of our staff and time. We know how valuable it is to families, [so] we try to make it work as best as we can.

– FRC staff

Securing our first permanent location with limited funding has been difficult. We have been in discussions with school districts, libraries, and other community partners to find locations that increase capacity for all, but it has been difficult. – FRC staff

With limited county-level funding, this has limited our ability to grow and move securely into the implementation stage. Activities offered to families have been [confined] to limited concrete supports and other one-time resource supports. Ideally, we want to offer sustained programming to families. – FRC staff

Funding challenges and opportunities

Respondents were asked to share challenges and opportunities their FRC has experienced regarding funding and sustainability. Some respondents noted that their FRC was not far enough along to have encountered significant challenges or opportunities. Those who did share feedback (N=17) mentioned:

- Challenges with **identifying long-term funding sources (n=7)** and **securing state or county grants after Sauer funds are used (n=3)**. Respondents expressed concern around the future financial outlook for their FRC due to lack of commitment from local leadership, shifting priorities on the county-level, and the political climate. Some respondents noted that they have not received any new funding, while others reported having received short-term grants to fill in the gaps as they pursue more sustainable solutions. A few respondents also mentioned **adequate funding for staffing (n=3)** as a significant challenge, as well as **effective communication around the benefit and impact of FRCs (n=2)** needed in order to bring in long-term investment.

One ongoing challenge has been demonstrating how supporting our Family Resource Center benefits not only our organization, but the county as a whole. We continue to work on clearly communicating that shared investment reflects a true community-wide approach to serving families and strengthening outcomes. – FRC staff

Funding is a significant concern. While prevention work is imperative to family safety and well-being, the current financial situation is concerning for sustainability. – FRC staff

- Opportunities to **present to and meet with county partners and state leadership (n=2)** to uplift the work of the FRCs. Other opportunities shared by respondents included securing **support from community and private partners (n=2)**, including funding and in-kind donations, to support FRC programming, as well as the **emergence of new local initiatives (n=1)** that may provide new avenues for funding. Despite challenges with securing new funding, several respondents reported feeling hopeful that continued conversations and efforts will lead to sustainable funding for their FRC.

The FRC team is optimistic that increasing programming, continued pop-up activities, and ongoing community engagement wins will be enough to demonstrate the impact of our FRC and shift internal funds to allow for indefinite sustainability. – FRC staff

Resources and supports needed from the Minnesota Community & Family Resource Network

Respondents were asked what additional resources, supports, or training they needed from the network to enhance their service delivery in the upcoming year. Among those who shared feedback (N=15), requested resources and supports included:

- **Support with funding (n=8)**, including regular communication about funding opportunities and increased guidance and discussion around funding strategies, ideas, and best practices.

More information and guidance on sustainability and funding sources is going to be the area of greatest need. – FRC staff

- **Training opportunities (n=4)** for both parent leaders and staff on topics such as Protective Factors and Standards of Quality.
- **Continued support with data (n=3)**, including standardizing and systematizing data collection, and **technical assistance (n=2)** with elements like contracts and MOUs.

I believe data is my biggest concern. It is not my strong suit, and I need a strong system for data and reporting. – FRC staff

- **Opportunities for learning and knowledge-sharing (n=3)** with FRC, county, and state leaders to enhance understanding of best practices and implementation strategies.

Continued partnership with the MN CFRN is important to provide ongoing learning and growth opportunities through training and collaboration with other counties. – FRC staff

- **Continued organizational transparency within MN CFRN (n=2)** around the network's overarching goals and available resources.

Each phase of FRC work... will have specific needs for resources, support, and training. Having the MN CFRN accessible and organized so roles are clear for what support exists and transparency in how to utilize supports is key. – FRC staff

One respondent described a need for more narrative-building and communications support from the network to effectively convey the value and impact of FRC services and programming to funders, community partners, and families.

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