

# FAMILY SERVICES INITIATIVE

# INTRODUCTION

The Juvenile Welfare Board has a history of strengthening Pinellas County children and families through innovation, advocacy, and partnerships. The Family Services Initiative (FSI) is a strategic partnership of community agencies who are working to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children through collection action, leveraging of resources, and implementing real-time strategies.

Pinellas County is rich in resources for families and there are numerous high-quality organizations with dedicated and skilled people trained to help. But, for a family who's already overwhelmed, finding the right services and accessing these in a timely manner can be a challenge.

There are four core partners with the Family Services Initiative: 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Pinellas Enrichment through Mental Health Services (PEMHS), Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, and the Juvenile Welfare Board. In addition, multiple other stakeholders and network agencies are actively involved with FSI. The participating individuals and agencies in the Family Services Initiative have created a responsive, streamlined process designed to link a family's needs with information and timely access to services. A growing number of agencies are becoming actively engaged in FSI and are developing partnerships for more efficiency with resources to help children and families in a way that's also responsive, timely, *and* compassionate.

The Juvenile Welfare Board makes a significant investment into the Family Services Initiative by funding positions within the four core partner agencies, as well as funding the Family Services Pool for wraparound incidentals and services to meet families' needs. Other stakeholders make investments into the Family Services Initiative as well. For example, the Pinellas Early Learning Coalition funds a specialized childcare position as part of the 2-1-1 Family Services Team. In addition, Directions for Living (Family Works) and Pinellas County Schools (HEAT Teams) invest funds into the Family Services Pool, which are managed by Central Florida Behavioral Health Network and provide incidentals for the families these organizations serve.

The Juvenile Welfare Board provides:

- Financial oversight to reconcile expenditures for system accountability;
- Analysis of key data, trends and system evaluation methods used in the FSI Utilization Review process.
- Vendor agreements and memorandums of understanding for wraparound services.
- Agreements with the St. Petersburg Free Clinic and St. Vincent de Paul's residential programs to provide short-term lodging and meals for families with children in need of emergency housing. Additional agreements include those with RCS Grace House and select mid- and north-county hotels that provide family-friendly environments.

One of the key features of the Family Services Initiative is a weekly Friday morning meeting that brings together representatives of the four core partners, stakeholders and network agencies. The participants work together to collectively help develop strategies for the continuous quality improvement of the FSI processes and to discuss issues affecting families before them become widespread.

- Multiple doors for families to get help.
- Expedited eligibility determination and service delivery that's responsive, timely and streamlined.
- Utilization management to ensure the right service at the right time in the right amount.
- An efficient, trusted and credible system to manager and approve requests and get wraparound incidentals to families in "real time" to meet real needs.
- And continuous quality improvement that brings core partners and stakeholders together each Friday morning for utilization review, problem-solving and information-sharing.

The Family Services Initiative provides timely and efficient intervention that saves the system money in the long-run while saving families on a daily basis. By providing the right service at the right time in the right amount, we can prevent problems from compounding for a family. Families can be helped before they wind up living in their car or before their children are placed into foster care. Helping to make families stronger helps make communities stronger.

# FAMILY SERVICES INITIATIVE

STRONGER FAMILIES. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

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## STRONGER TOGETHER

## OVERVIEW

The **Family Services Initiative** (FSI) is a collective partnership that connects Pinellas County agencies and resources together to help struggling families. Not a handout but a partnership with families to provide the right service at the right time and in the right amount.

There are four core partners: *Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County*; *2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares*; *Central Florida Behavioral Health Network*; and *Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services (PEMHS)*. In addition, multiple stakeholders and network partners make referrals, access wraparound incidentals for families and provide services as part of the FSI network.

Families start by calling 2-1-1, which serves as the “main door” to the **Family Services Initiative**. Here, 2-1-1 Family Services Specialists provide triage, screening, advocacy and linkages for families. Those with more complex issues or multiple needs are connected with PEMHS Navigation for more intensive intervention lasting up to 30 days. Wraparound incidentals families need, such as transportation, emergency housing, food and more, are accessed from the Family Services Pool. Requests are entered into a coordinated content management system overseen by Central Florida. In addition, a host of Pinellas agencies are able to access incidentals for their families through a “side door”; that is, they enter requests *directly* into Central Florida’s system for more efficient and timely access to resources.

Key benefits of the **Family Services Initiative** include: multiple doors for families to get help; an expedited eligibility determination and service delivery; strong utilization management; an efficient, trusted and credible system to manage requests and get wraparound incidentals to families in “real time” to meet needs; and continuous quality improvement that brings core partners and stakeholders together each Friday morning for utilization review, problem-solving and information sharing.

The **Family Services Initiative** is a collective partnership that maximizes Pinellas County resources and meets a family’s needs in a way that’s streamlined, responsive, timely, efficient *and* compassionate. It can prevent problems from compounding for a family — saving the system money in the long run while saving families on a daily basis. It makes families stronger, which in turn makes our communities stronger!



# FAMILY SERVICES INITIATIVE

## CORE PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares

Central Florida Behavioral Health Network

City of St. Petersburg

Community Law Program

Directions for Living

Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas

Eckerd Community Alternatives

Florida Dept. of Children & Families

Florida Dept. of Health / Pinellas County

Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas

Homeless Leadership Board

Juvenile Welfare Board

Neighborhood Family Centers (NFCs)

Operation PAR Homeless Outreach

PEMHS Navigation

Pinellas County Health & Community  
Services

Pinellas County Schools Homeless  
Education Assistance Team (HEAT)

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office  
Child Protection Investigations Division

RCS Grace House

St. Petersburg Free Clinic  
Family Residence

St. Vincent de Paul Center of Hope

Suncoast Center

Suncoast Voices for Children Foundation

The Children's Home Kinship Pinellas

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# STRONGER TOGETHER

# PINELLAS COUNTY CHILDREN & FAMILIES



Total Population: 917,389 ♦ Total Families w/ Children Under 18: 225,693

Families w/ Children Under 18 Living In Poverty: 30% ♦ Homeless Families: 351 ♦ Hungry Children: 7,000

Child Abuse Investigations: 13,956 ♦ Child Removals/ Dependency: 883

## 2-1-1 PINELLAS CALL CENTER



Total Calls Handled by 2-1-1 Pinellas Call Center: 56,184

JUVENILE WELFARE BOARD

## FAMILY SERVICES INITIATIVE

### 2-1-1 FAMILY SERVICES TEAM



Total Calls from Families Handled by 2-1-1: 32,532

Total Families Served by 2-1-1 FSI: 12,267

94% FSI Families Served at 2-1-1 Level

6% FSI Families Served at PEMHS Level

### PEMHS NAVIGATION



Total Families Served by PEMHS FSI: 716

## CENTRAL FLORIDA



### Received Incidentals:

- ♦ Total Families: 790
- ♦ % Families: 6%

### Top Incidentals:

- ♦ Transportation: 25%
- ♦ Temp. Housing: 21%
- ♦ Beds/ Furniture: 8%
- ♦ Food: 7%
- ♦ Utility Assistance: 7%
- ♦ Infant Care/ Safety: 6%

\*\*NUMBERS ARE FROM FISCAL YEAR 12/13

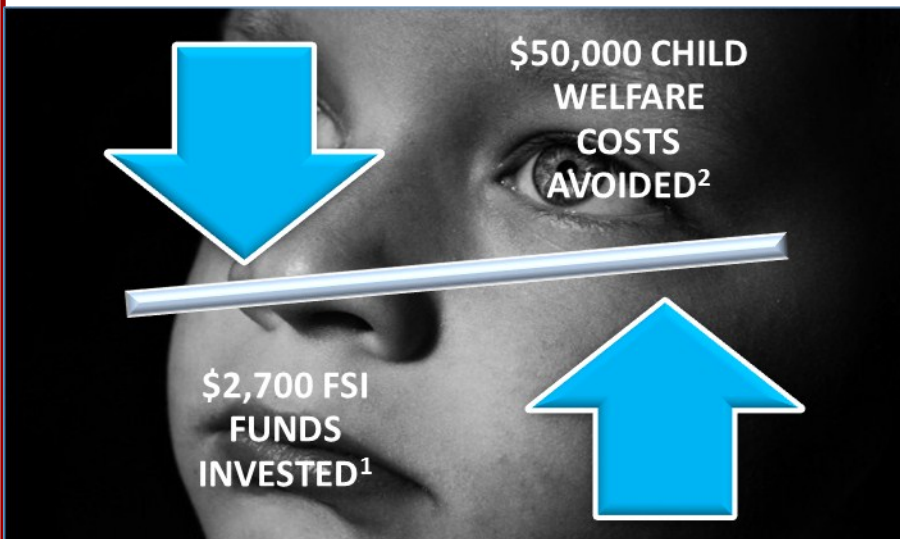
# FAMILY SERVICES INITIATIVE

A family recently served through the Family Services Initiative (FSI) felt they had nowhere to turn. A grandmother and her two teenage grandchildren were being kicked out of the home they shared with their uncle, thus making them homeless. There was a real threat that they would be on the streets with nowhere to turn. At that point, a Child Protective Investigator became involved and contacted 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. for help.

With support from FSI funds, the family was immediately placed in a motel close the children's school - one that had been vetted through FSI and assigned to a PEHMS Navigator. The Navigator used funds through FSI and Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN) to cover the rental fee for the 5 weeks they stayed in the motel, while also collaborating with a local real estate agent to secure permanent affordable housing close to the children's school.

The family was registered to obtain "Relative Caregiver Funds" through the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to activate benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Until those benefits kicked in, the Navigator provided funds for the family to purchase food.

Once affordable permanent housing was located for the family, the Navigator covered the rental deposit for the apartment, and also connected the family with Hands Across the Bay to assist with the utility deposits. In addition, the Navigator was able to work with the real estate agent to ensure that the family was placed in an apartment next to a grandmother raising her own grandchildren, thus strengthening both families' support systems. Finally, the family was connected to Kinship Care to provide long-term guidance and support.



A little over \$2,700 of FSI funds were accessed to support this family through their transition from the brink of homelessness to a stable, affordable environment. Had they not been given this hand up, the children, given their age, would likely have been separated and placed in group foster homes. This would've resulted in an estimated \$50,000 in costs to the community, not to mention the long-term trauma inflicted upon the family.

By accessing FSI approved vendors, there was also a realized cost-savings of more than \$4,500...the amount it would've cost the family for temporary housing, food,

transportation and more, as they traveled from agency to agency completing the necessary paperwork for services. And by connecting the family with existing, longer term support services, such as Kinship Care and Hands Across the Bay, an additional \$5,000 was saved.

This was a family on the brink of crisis and splitting up. But they are together and they are stronger because of the Family Services Initiative. And there are many more like them...

<sup>1</sup>FSI funds spent to stabilize the family.

<sup>2</sup>Out-of-Home Foster Care for 2 children for approximately 10 months (based on a typical case) = \$50,000.