



## **Family Services Initiative Overview**

FSI is a collaborative prevention model built on a collective impact framework that includes boundary spanning to reach across Pinellas County's numerous social service agencies to help struggling families who have an unexpected event and request assistance to meet their basic needs.

Examples of FSI's immediate prevention efforts include (1) rental and utility assistance for families to remain in their current housing; (2) beds and bedding to eliminate infant co-sleeping with parents and provide safe sleeping space for children; and (3) kinship care navigation to enable children to continue to attend school. This assistance is intended to reduce each family's involvement with deeper-end services. The goal is to restore the families to independence.

FSI convenes community members in a structured way to achieve social change. Components include: common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a strong backbone organization.

2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc. offers FSI information and referrals for families who call for help. Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services (PEMHS) coordinates up to 30-days of navigation for families who require wraparound services. Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN) coordinates utilization management to monitor use. These organized efforts originated in 2012 to improve outcomes for children and parents through efficiency, advocacy, and leveraging resources. The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County (JWB) serves as FSI's backbone organization and, in addition, provides a financial resources pool for incidentals and staffing of the system at 2-1-1, PEMHS, and CFBHN.

FSI holds two regular meetings every Friday. The first is a 90-minute meeting to convene core partners and stakeholders for a discussion of FSI challenges and opportunities, including case review, procedure and process manual updates, information gathering, and frontline staff training. The meeting is attended by representatives from 60 Pinellas County faith-based, government, and social service agencies. The goal of the meeting is to pool resources to prevent a family's problems from compounding. A second meeting with core partners follows to discuss modifications to the process, infrastructure, and procedures as needed. In addition, JWB holds a monthly internal staff FSI meeting for fiscal oversight of expenditures.

Working with community partners creates efficiencies. FSI's philosophy is to do the best and most that community partners can do to renew a family's stability after it has been disrupted due to an unforeseen incident that may cause a family to miss a rent payment, lose access to transportation, require food and clothing, or seek a job placement. FSI creates an open structure to allow community providers to work together to eliminate the need for families to engage in child welfare services.

### **Three-Year Aggregate**

Over three fiscal years, FSI served 15,507 individuals in 4,307 families. Of those individuals, 62 percent were children. In general, FSI households are comprised of two to four members. The vast majority of the families served by FSI earn incomes under 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. According to 2-1-1 data, the total call volume does not significantly vary month-to-month, but there is an annual pattern of increase in the number of calls between June and August. Over a three-year period, the average spent per family is \$954. Over the same three-year period, 78 percent of all families who accessed FSI services were only served once; 94 percent of all families were served only once or twice.

### **Conference Presentations**

JWB staff and core partners have presented FSI information at the following conferences:

- Child Welfare League of America 2015 National Conference
- First 1000 Days Florida Summit Conference Showcase 2015
- Florida Child Protection Summit 2016

A proposal was accepted to present at the Child Welfare League of America 2017 National Conference.

For more information, contact: Karen Boggess, JWB Performance and Evaluation Manager  
[kboggess@jwbpinellas.org](mailto:kboggess@jwbpinellas.org)  
727-453-5653