Prevent Child Abuse Arizona™

ARIZONA FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

LANDSCAPE STUDY

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Executive Summary

Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are hubs of resources providing a range of formal and informal supports to families across the state. These centers offer services such as parenting support, opportunities for families to build social connections, and assistance with accessing resources, like child care, through the Arizona Department of Economic Security. FRCs play a crucial role in enhancing school readiness, preventing crises, and promoting family stability.

The Arizona Family Resource Center Landscape Study aimed to understand the current FRC landscape in the state. This report outlines:



Survey Design and Distribution
A collaborative effort involving various organizations generated a common definition of an FRC and designed and distributed a statewide survey to identify entities meeting that definition. The survey focused on services provided, funding sources, demographics of families served, and unmet needs in communities.



Summary of Findings
The survey reveals insights about types of services provided by survey respondents, the pressing needs of families, demographics of those served, funding sources, and opportunities for expansion.



Needs of Families
Basic needs such as food and housing emerged as the most pressing needs reported by survey respondents regarding the families they serve. Other needs included resource navigation, child care, transportation, and mental health support.



Demographics of Families Served
Entities responding to the survey primarily serve families with children age 0-5. Survey results capture the demographics served by each survey respondent.



Funding Sources
FRCs receive funding from various sources, including state and federal governments, private foundations, individual giving, and earned income. However, many FRCs rely on a single funding source, highlighting the need for diversified funding to expand services.



Opportunities for Expansion
FRCs expressed a willingness to expand services to meet unmet needs in their communities, including providing more housing assistance, generating more partnerships and outreach, offering parenting education, offering language-specific services, and providing support for special groups.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for stakeholders, funders, and policymakers to support and strengthen Arizona's Family Resource Centers, ultimately enhancing support for families across the state.

Family Resource Centers





Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are welcoming community hubs where families can access formal and informal supports, both in times of need and as a part of regular day-to-day life.

FRCs offer responsive, family-oriented programs on-site that strengthen families in their communities, including:

- information, resources, and referrals
- parenting activities, classes, and support
- opportunities for families to build social connections

FRCs support Arizona's long-term prosperity & wellbeing by:

- Improving school readiness for young children[1]
- Connecting families to support and preventing crisis, which decreases the need for DCS intervention[2, 3]
- Building protective factors that strengthen family stability[4]

[1] *Foundation, D. and L. P. (2019, December 6). 2019 California Family Resource Center (FRC) statewide survey. Harder+Company Community Research. https://harderco.com/sample_work/2019-ca-frc-statewide-survey/*
[2] OMNI Institute (2021). Return on Investment of a Family Resource Center to the Child Welfare System: Community Partnership Family Resource Center, Teller County, CO
[3] Chapin Hall. (2018). Do Family Support Centers Reduce Maltreatment Investigations? Evidence from Allegheny County.
[4] Family Pathways & CFSA 2.0 Evaluation Report - Executive Summary 2019.

Understanding the Landscape of Arizona FRCs

In 2022, a partnership between First Things First, the Department of Child Safety Office of Prevention, and Prevent Child Abuse Arizona formed to discuss FRCs as a strategy to achieve the shared goal of advancing child wellbeing statewide. As discussions progressed, other partners working to advance child wellbeing were added to the conversation, including the Arizona Family Resource Network, Arizona Department of Health Services, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The group, which will be referred to as the 'statewide team' in the remainder of this report, determined that its primary goal was to establish strategy to develop a robust, comprehensive, and sustainable system of FRCs accessible to all families with children aged 0 – 18 across the state.

This goal was designed to address a number of pressing and pervasive statewide issues, including:

- Service providers lacking knowledge on how and where to refer families to resources
- Families lacking knowledge on how and where to access resources available to meet their needs
- The inefficient dissemination of resources to families in need
- The overreliance on the Department of Child Safety (DCS) to address family needs, whereas DCS is not designed or equipped to be a family resource agency
- Underutilization of available resources in some areas
- Lack of real-time data on what is needed by families, and where
- Time wasted on constant creation of resource guides/isolated attempts to coordinate

In order to develop a statewide strategy to build the capacity of FRCs to address the issues above, the statewide team determined that the first things that needed to be done were to establish a shared definition of a Family Resource Center, and to identify entities in Arizona that met this definition. Though there was already a list of known FRCs funded by First Things First, which has historically led the establishment and support of existing FRCs in Arizona, in order to establish a strategy to *develop a robust, comprehensive, and sustainable system of FRCs accessible to all families with children aged 0 – 18 across the state,* it was important to find as many unknown existing FRCs in the state as possible. To do this, the statewide team met biweekly in Fall 2023 to create a shared definition of an FRC. The following definition was finalized:

Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are welcoming community hubs where families can access formal and informal supports, both in times of need and as a part of regular day-to-day life. FRCs offer responsive, family-oriented programs on-site that strengthen families in their communities, including:

- **information, resources, and referrals**
- **parenting activities, classes, and support**
- **opportunities for families to build social connections**

The creation of this definition was informed by several other FRC definition examples, including the definition used by the National Family Support Network, the national organization supporting networks of FRCs; language included in the statutes of multiple states codifying the definition of an FRC; and the broad definition of an FRC used by First Things First.

In order to understand the landscape of Arizona's FRCs, the statewide team designed and distributed a statewide survey seeking to identify entities that fits its definition of an FRC.

Organizations were invited to complete the survey if they believed they fit the FRC definition above, even if the organization did not currently refer to itself as a "Family Resource Center."

Survey Design

The statewide team, comprised of Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, the Arizona Family Resource Network, First Things First, Department of Child Safety Office of Prevention, Arizona Department of Health Services, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security, met from October 2023 to December 2023 to discuss the survey's goals and design questions to meet those goals. The survey was created in an iterative process, leveraging biweekly meetings to revise survey questions and share perspectives of all collaborators.

Survey Distribution

Members of the statewide team relied on their professional networks to disseminate the survey. Each participating collaborator has their own statewide list-serve. The Arizona Family Resource Network distributed the survey link to the 60 current members of their network. First Things First, the largest funder of FRCs, shared the survey with its grantees. Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, the Department of Child Safety Office of Prevention, the Arizona Department of Health Services, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security shared it widely with their professional networks. Several organizations within those networks then passed it on to their email distribution lists.

To incentivize participation, survey respondents were offered the chance to win one of five $100 Amazon gift cards. Prevent Child Abuse Arizona randomly selected the winners following the deadline of the survey collection period, which opened December 15, 2023 and closed January 19, 2024. The survey is still open to accept new submissions, but only data received by the official survey close date are included in this report.



Summary of Findings

As the goal of the survey was to identify the landscape of current FRCs in Arizona, the statewide team will use the results to determine which survey respondents, based on their answers, currently meet the criteria to be considered an FRC. This determination will serve as a starting point for exploring strategy regarding the partners' primary goal. This report, however, includes all survey respondent entries received by the survey deadline, without making judgments or determinations about each entry's adherence to the definition.

This comprehensive scope of 175 family support entities provides insight into the types of services available to families, needs of families served by family resource agencies, and funding currently used to provide those services.

Survey Respondents' Services and Resources

The survey asked respondents to indicate if their entity offered any of the following eight common FRC strategies:

- **A place where families can drop in, hang out, use services or ask for information**
  FRCs have a physical space that is accessible to families. This is not just an administrative office headquarters, but a location designed to have a welcoming space to serve families in-person on a regular basis.

- **Providing parenting support**
  Parent supports refers to parenting education courses, support groups, or individual coaching.

- **Connecting families to resources**
  This involves referring families to resources in the community available to meet their needs, as well as consistently keeping informed about new or changing community resources to more effectively refer families.

- **Planned opportunities for families to build social connections with one another**
  Examples include parent/child interactions, story times, field trips, parent cafès, etc.

- **Family navigation**
  Family navigation captures services that work with families over time to address family-identified goals. This service has previously been called 'case management.' Compared to parenting support, family navigation is an individualized, one-on-one approach rather than a parenting class or group setting.

- **Support for families to apply for or access programs and services provided by the Arizona Department of Economic Security**

- **Parent leadership development**
  FRCs are encouraged to include those they serve in their program selection and design by developing a Parent Advisory Committee or Council. FRCs may host advocacy trainings to teach parents how to advocate for their families and influence policies and practices that strengthen family support systems.

- **Opportunities for adult learning**
  This includes ESL, financial literacy, and other family strengthening skills.

The four underlined strategies above are core functions necessary to meeting the definition of an FRC. The survey provided examples of each strategy to help respondents understand how their activities fit within each strategy.

TABLE 1: Services

Eight key strategies of FRCs and the percentage of survey respondents who offer those strategies. Bolded text represents a core function of organizations meeting the definition of an FRC.

DEFINING SERVICES	PERCENTAGE
A place where families can drop in, hang out, use services or ask for information (e.g. use computers, printers, hang out with other families)	54%
Parenting Support (such as information on child development, parenting classes, parenting support groups, etc.)	76%
Connecting families to resources (such as car seats, food boxes, child care)	85%
Planned opportunities for families to build social connections with one another (playgroups, family fun events, etc.)	63%
Family navigation (supporting families with complex needs to develop a plan of care, & connect them with services & resources to achieve their goals)	62%
Support for families to apply for or access programs and services provided by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (e.g. SNAP, TANF, childcare subsidies)	49%
Parent Leadership Development (such as a Parent Advisory Committee or advocacy training)	37%
Opportunities for adult learning (GED/educational supports, ESL classes, job training, etc.)	29%

Of the 175 respondents, 60 (34%) offer all four of the defining strategies. This information will guide the statewide team in constructing an updated and accurate map of FRCs across Arizona.

Needs of Families Served by Survey Respondents

The survey asked respondents to share the top three unmet needs in their community, based on their experience serving children and families within that community. Respondents were able to populate the question with their own unique responses. Prevent Child Abuse Arizona identified 14 themes among the 175 responses.

TABLE 2: Pressing Needs of Families

Fourteen themes describe the most pressing needs that survey respondents find while serving families in their community. Results are organized in order from the most to the least prominent.

PROMINENT THEMES	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Basic Needs (other than housing)	122	70%
Housing	113	65%
Resource Navigation	48	27%
Child Care	41	23%
Transportation	27	15%
Parent Education	31	18%
Healthcare	21	12%
Workforce Development	19	11%
Cultural Support (immigration, language)	17	10%
Mental Health	14	8%
Social Connections	15	9%
Developmental Needs	10	6%
Services for Families in the DCS System	8	5%
Substance Use Treatment	6	3%

Basic Needs made up the most pressing problem that families reported to survey respondents at 70%. Housing followed as the second most pressing need at 65%. While housing is a basic need, the study group chose to identify it as a separate need because of the sheer volume of survey respondents reporting the need and the urgent housing crisis facing Arizona.

For all other basic needs, Table 3 details the specific basic needs reported and the frequency in which they were reported.

TABLE 3: Basic Unmet Needs of Families

The Basic Needs that survey respondents described fell into nine larger themes, the largest of which included food at 41% of respondents expressing a basic need.

BASIC NEED	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Food	59	41%
Utilities	24	17%
Clothing	17	12%
Financial Assistance	15	10%
Diapers and Hygiene Products	15	10%
School Supplies	6	4%
Shelter	6	4%
Car Seats	2	1%
Internet and Phone	1	1%

The results provide insight into common challenges affecting families across Arizona. However, many challenges are specific to each community, especially rural areas.

Those Served by Survey Respondents

The survey collected demographics of those served to gauge whether the agency met an ideal attribute of FRCs: to serve all families. Further, collecting the demographics of those served by survey respondents deepens understanding of the most pressing needs of those families.

The survey aimed to gain a general understanding of service populations by outlining six life stages of people in families. Table 4 outlines those age groups and the survey responses.

TABLE 4: Age Demographics of Families Served

Survey respondents selected all that applied when reviewing the six suggested age groups. The results in Table 4 reflect the number of times each age group was selected by the survey respondent. Survey respondents primarily served families with children ages 0-5 at 89%. Respondents were provided an opportunity to specify other demographic populations by ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability.

POPULATION	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Expecting Families	120	69%
Families with children 0-5 years of age	155	89%
Families with children 6-17 years of age	117	67%
Teens	101	58%
Adults	111	63%
Grandparents	110	63%
Other demographic population, such as specific ethnicities, differnetly abled families, LGBTQ+ families, etc.	81	46%

Upon reviewing results, it was evident that two of the seven demographic levels were unclear. First, the population of "teens" did not distinguish between parents of teens, teen parents, or teens themselves. Many FRCs serve teen parents and regularly report on this population in grant reports, but may not provide services for adolescents or parents of adolescents. Respondents indicated whether teens were a part of their services; however, it is unclear whether these teens participated because their caregiver also attended the FRC or if they were parents seeking services for their young children.

Second, the survey listed "adults" as an option. The survey did not make it clear whether it is adult parents seeking services or adults who are not parents seeking services. While the survey did distinguish "grandparents" as a relationship within the family, the "adult" option was less descriptive.

TABLE 5: Birth to Five Limitations

This table shows the percentage of respondents whose services are limited to families with children under the age of 6 (25% of survey respondents).

POPULATION	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 6 Only	44	25%

Survey respondents provided a variety of combinations of the types of demographics they served. One respondent may serve just teens and adults, while another may focus solely on grandparents and children under the age of 18 in their care. For the purpose of our goal, we took a closer look at those survey respondents who served all families (ideal criteria for FRCs) and those who served families with children under the age of 6 (a limitation of FRCs funded solely by First Things First).

TABLE 6: Other Demographics of Families Served

Respondents had the opportunity to elaborate on specific population groups served, including populations with a specific ethnicity, ability/disability, engagement with child welfare, economic ability, immigration or refugee status, sexual orientation, and more.

OTHER POPULATION EXAMPLES	
African American families	Kinship families
Differently abled children and families	LGBTQ+
Domestic violence survivors	Spanish-speaking families
Families from polygamous cultures	Native American families
Families impacted by cancer	Other service providers
Families involved with DCS	Refugees
Foster families	Adults with substance use disorders
High poverty rate	Veterans
Immigrants	

Many respondents used the "Other" survey question comment box to reiterate that they serve all families.

TABLE 7: Entity Locations

Survey respondents serve 12 of the 15 Arizona counties. The most represented county was Maricopa County at 63%, followed by Pima County at 12%.

LOCATION	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Maricopa	110	63%
Pima	21	12%
Yavapai	13	7%
Coconino	9	5%
Mohave	5	3%
Santa Cruz	4	2%
Gila	3	2%
Navajo	3	2%
Pinal	3	2%
Cochise	2	1%
Apache	1	1%
Graham	1	1%

Funding Sources

Survey respondents were asked to select all that applied from eight common FRC funding sources. The ninth option provided an opportunity for respondents to select "Other" and share other funding sources not included in the eight options.

Table 8 displays these results by count and percentage.

TABLE 8: Entity Funding Sources

Eight funding sources capture common ways for FRCs to meet their budget. Respondents selected multiple options to showcase the diverse streams of income that cover their costs. 20% of respondents also detailed an "other" source of funding.

LOCATION	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
State government (including First Things First)	103	59%
Individual giving	67	38%
Private foundation(s)	51	29%
Federal government	45	26%
Other (please specifiy)	35	20%
School district (i.e. Title funding)	30	17%
County government	27	15%
Earned income (i.e. fee for service programs)	24	14%
City government	23	13%

TABLE 9: Diversity of Funding Sources

While the survey listed eight different funding sources, many FRCs do not benefit from high funding diversity. 42% of survey respondents only receive funding from one source and 27% receive funding from two sources.

NUMBER OF FUNDING SOURCES	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
1 Source	73	42%
2 Sources	47	27%
3 Sources	24	14%
4 Sources	8	5%
5 Sources	7	4%
6 Sources	14	8%
7+ Sources	1	1%

These results showcase that many survey respondents do not receive a diversified funding. The reliance on one funder can limit the population they serve and their sustainability. For example, those receiving funding from First Things First are limited to serving families with children under the age of 6. Further, those that rely on school district funding often may be limited to serving those within the same school district. These results make a case for the opportunity to diversify FRC funding, allowing FRCs to more flexibly serve all ages of children, regardless of participation in specific schools.

TABLE 10: Other Sources of Funding

For those respondents who selected "Other" as a source of funding, they responded with one of these options.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES
Administrative Office of the Courts
African American Businesses / Community
AZ Charitable Tax Program
Community Partnerships / Collaborations
DCS
Entity is established for profit
Gila River Indian Community Gaming Funding
Grants
Kiwanis Club
Medicaid

Opportunities to Support and Strengthen FRCs

Survey respondents were asked to share the ways in which their entity would willingly expand, if resourced to do so, to meet additional needs in their community. Prevent Child Abuse Arizona identified 22 themes among the 175 responses. Table 11 organizes the 22 themes by total count and percentage, sorted by the majority to the lowest representation.

TABLE 11: Expansion Needs

EXPANSION NEED	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Provide housing assistance	24	18%
Create more partnerships/conduct outreach	22	16%
Capital expansion/additional space	16	12%
Offering parenting education	15	11%
Offering services in different languages	13	10%
Providing for more basic needs	12	9%
More support for special groups	10	7%
Education support	9	7%
Child care	8	6%
Transportation	7	5%
Social connections	7	5%
Health/education promotion	7	5%
Resource referral	6	4%
Mental health support	6	4%
Additional staffing	5	4%
Prenatal engagement	4	3%
Drop-in space	4	3%
Supporting families to apply for government assistance	3	2%
Providing cash assistance	3	2%
Providing services to families with children older than 5	2	1%
Offering legal services	2	1%
Offering parent leadership opportunities	2	1%

These responses offer guidance to funders and resource providers on opportunities to expand the ability of FRCs and family support entities to meet more needs of families in their community.

Appendix A:
FRC Landscape Survey Questions

Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, the Arizona Family Resource Network, and various state agencies are collaborating to conduct a survey to identify Family Resource Centers in Arizona. Survey results will be used to increase access to and coordination of services for children and families.

Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are welcoming community hubs where families can access formal and informal supports, both in times of need and as a part of regular day-to-day life. Family Resource Centers offer responsive, family-oriented programs on-site that strengthen families in their communities, including:

- information, resources, and referrals
- parenting activities, classes, and support
- opportunities for families to build social connections

If your organization fits the Family Resource Center definition above, even if your organization does not refer to itself as a "Family Resource Center," please take a few minutes to complete the survey by Friday, January 12, 2024. Survey respondents will be entered into a drawing to receive one of five available $100 gift cards for their organization. We greatly appreciate your help!

As you complete the survey, the term "FRC" refers to your organization or program that fits the above definition. Please note: if your organization has more than one FRC location, please complete this survey for each physical location.

1. **Please provide:**

   a. Your first and last name
   b. Title
   c. Email
   d. Phone Number
   e. Name of Organization
   f. Name of FRC
   g. The point of contact for your FRC (name and email address)
   h. FRC Address
   i. FRC Website, if applicable

2. Please indicate which of the following services your FRC directly provides (select all that apply):

- A place where families can drop in, hang out, use services or ask for information (e.g. use computers, printers, hang out with other families)
- Parenting Support (such as information on child development, parenting classes, parenting support groups, etc.)
- Connecting families to resources (such as car seats, food boxes, child care)
- Family navigation (supporting families with complex needs to develop a plan of care, and connect them with services and resources to achieve their goals)
- Planned opportunities for families to build social connections with one another (playgroups, family fun events, etc.)
- Support for families to apply for or access Department of Economic Security (DES) services (e.g. SNAP, TANF, child care subsidies)
- Parent Leadership Development (such as Parent Advisory Committee or advocacy training)
- Opportunities for adult learning (GED/education supports, ESL classes, job training, etc.)
- Other (please specifiy):

3. How is your FRC funded? (select all that apply)

- Federal government
- State government (including First Things First)
- County government
- City government
- School district (i.e. Title funding)
- Private foundation(s)
- Individual giving
- Earned income (such as from fee-for-service programs)
- Other (please specify):

Comments:

4. Who does your FRC serve? (select all that apply)

- Expectant families
- Families with children 0-5 years of age
- Families with children -17 years of age
- Teens
- Adults
- Grandparents
- Other population (please specify):

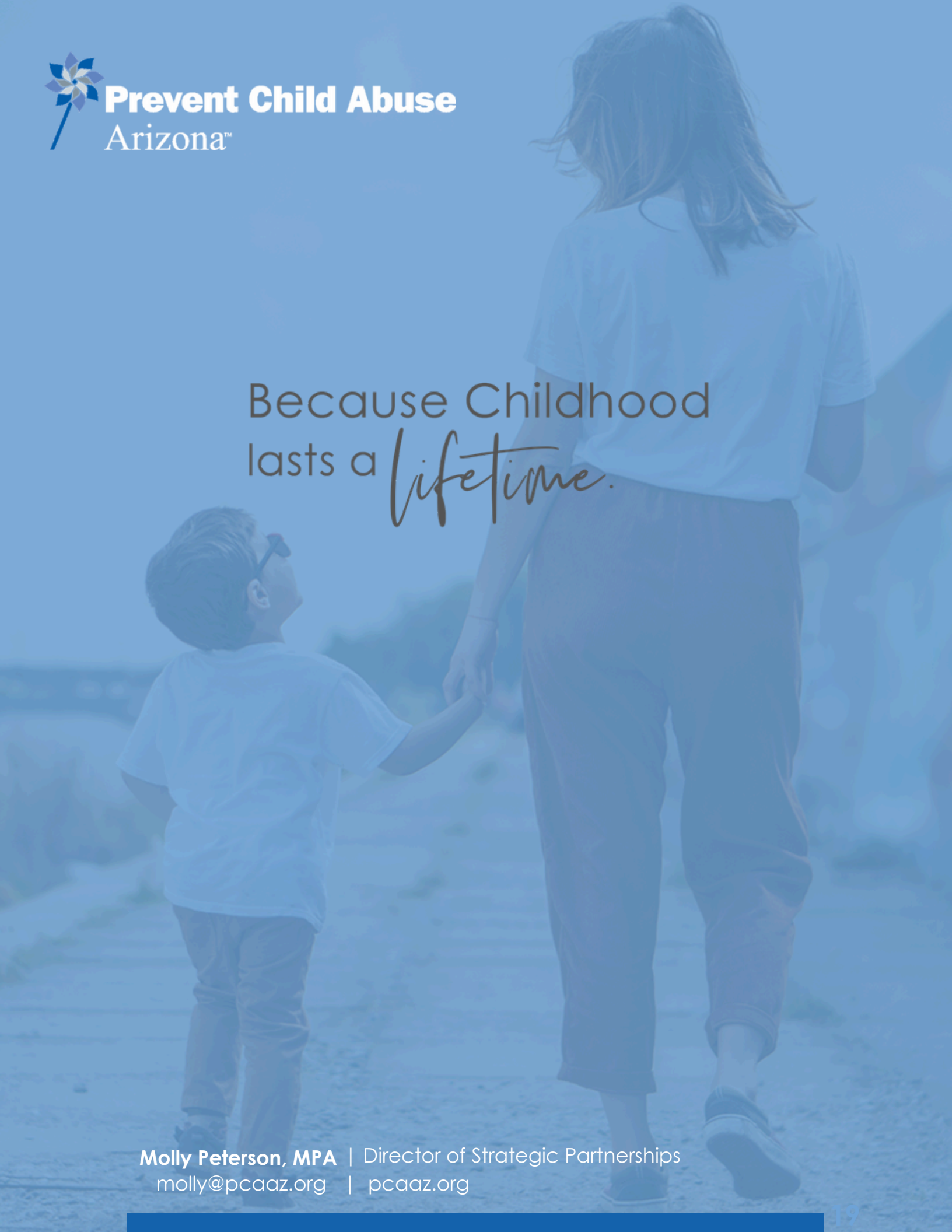
Comments:

5. **Are there specific requirements for participation in your FRC (such as income eligibility, age of child, participation within your school district, involvement in the child protection system, a referral from a specific system, domestic violence involvement, etc.)?**
   - No
   - Yes. Please specify:

6. **Based on your experiences serving children and families at your FRC, what are the top 3 unmet needs in your community? (open-ended)**

7. **In what areas would you like to expand your FRC services to meet unmet needs in your community? (open ended)**

Prevent Child Abuse Arizona™



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