

## Community Readiness | An Overview

Family Connects Illinois (FC IL) depends on strong collaborative relationships with hospitals, and strong working partnerships with existing networks of service providers. Successful programs are those that are co-created and co-owned by the community and serve the entire community's system of care.

FC IL reaches all families with newborns, building on and bolstering utilization of existing networks of services rather than replacing or duplicating other programs.

Successful development of a FC IL program requires lead agencies and community partners to take the time to have a thoughtful discussion and reflection process about the pathway to achieve the intended outcomes of the program model. Completing the Community Readiness Assessment sets communities up for success by illuminating strengths and potential barriers in their local contexts to successfully implement FC IL.

The following steps are recommended for completing the Community Readiness Assessment:

1. Identify key community partners, including those from one or more hospitals, collaborative groups, medical personnel, the local health department and social service providers.
2. Prior to your discussions with community partners, consider the answers to the following questions, as they may bring clarity to the work and the reason for bringing an FC IL program to your community:
  - Who benefits from the program?
  - What value does it bring to the community?
  - What value does it bring to hospitals, medical and social service providers?
  - Is the program something that people want?
  - What are the barriers?
  - What are the risks?
3. Have reflective discussions with key partners about:
  - The FC IL model
  - The Community Readiness Assessment
  - Importance of collaborative work to build support for the program
  - Primary birthing hospitals that serve the community residents
  - How it may work best to have access to families prior to hospital discharge
4. Identify the potential program lead agency in the community. The program lead agency will be the direct service provider for FC IL. Lead agencies can be birthing hospitals, health departments or community nonprofit service providers.

### Community Alignment: Awareness of Family Connects Interest

This section highlights your ideas about how to garner support for FC IL from providers who serve pregnant and postpartum women and families with newborns, predicts potential reactions to supporting a universal program in the community and the importance of developing a broad range of community awareness and support for bringing FC IL to your organization.

### Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is an essential part of every FC IL program and performs as an advisory committee to support the implementation and continuing development of the program. This section helps to define important advisory partners and potential collaborative groups that may serve as the CAB for FC IL. As an alternative, FC IL lead agencies may choose to develop a new CAB to help support and move the program forward.

### Community Birth Information (by County)

This section identifies the estimated number of annual births for community residents and will help the Start Early (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund) identify staffing and funding levels needed to bring FC IL services to your organization and community. For the purposes of this Community Readiness Assessment we are asking for county level data. When the interested FC IL lead agency is a hospital, having county level data will also help to identify the number of births of county residents at their hospital and the number of additional county births that may need future FC IL coverage.

### Delivery Hospital(s) for Community or County Residents

This section identifies the hospitals where county residents usually give birth. Based on the universal nature of the program, it is important to know which hospitals are potential partners with FC IL lead agencies in serving all county residents shortly after the birth of their newborn. Having the names of the hospitals, the corresponding number of births and the level of lead agency collaboration with each hospital is helpful in understanding the relationships with the hospitals, the complexity of the community, and the funding needed to serve the births at each hospital and the entire county.

To discuss and begin the Community Readiness Assessment contact: [info@FamilyConnectsIL.org](mailto:info@FamilyConnectsIL.org).

The Family Connects model is part of Family Connects International at Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy, one of the most promising universal home visiting models. Family Connects International is being actively replicated in over 15 locations across the country, including in Illinois. Family Connects is approved at the federal level by the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) as an evidence-based model.

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