

## **New River Community Action Selected to Participate in Thriving Families Safer Children Demonstration Site Program**

RADFORD - New River Community Action (NRCA) has been selected by Families Forward Virginia (FFV) to participate in a three-year demonstration site program to build protective factors for children and their families within their communities. Selected sites will utilize the Family Resource Center model, identified by the National Family Support Network, as a strategy to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, advance racial equity and support for underserved communities in prevention programs, and speak to the complex issues that often contribute to families becoming involved in the child welfare system.

The project seeks to demonstrate implementation and evaluation of Family Resource Centers through developing comprehensive child and family well-being systems that are co-designed with families and communities. Sites will demonstrate a process for incorporating primary prevention and public health approaches into overall community well-being consistent with the social and environmental determinants of health and to create the conditions necessary for all families to thrive.

The Thriving Families Safer Children (TFSC) initiative demonstration Family Resource Centers are designed to focus on an individual census tract. The census tract which will be the focus of efforts led by NRCA is located in a portion of the Town of Pulaski and Pulaski County. Census tracts eligible under the program have a Child Opportunity Index (COI) rating of “low” or “very low”. The COI uses 29 measures from a wide range of education, health, environment, social, and economic indicators. The COI is developed by *Diversity Data Kids*.

NRCA will work with a team of agency partners including Women’s Resource Center, Calfee Community and Cultural Center, NRV Cares, and New River Valley Community Services, as well as community members, and people with lived experience to develop and implement the Family Resource Center demonstration site. The project begins with a six-month collaborative planning period in which additional partnerships and collaborations will be identified.

In addition to NRCA, three other organizations across the state were selected to participate in the Thriving Families Safer Children demonstration project: CHIP of Chesapeake; Liberation Veteran Services of South Richmond; and THRIVE Virginia of New Kent.

NRCA CEO Krystal Thompson noted, “We are honored that Families Forward Virginia selected our area of the state and NRCA to participate in this prestigious demonstration project. NRCA’s experience administering programs with a two-generation focus, such as CHIP of NRV, Head Start, and Whole Family, is a source of strength. We are

confident that the process and technical assistance provided by FFV will put this site in an excellent position for success.”

About FFV: Families Forward Virginia, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is Virginia’s leading organization dedicated to disrupting the cycles of child abuse, neglect and poverty. Supported by both public and private funding, Families Forward provides statewide leadership for and unifies support for a multitude of Virginia programs through evidence-based and multi-generational prevention strategies. In 2017, Families Forward Virginia was created as a result of the merger of Prevent Child Abuse Virginia, CHIP of Virginia, and Early Impact Virginia.

About NRCA: Established in 1965, NRCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency serving the City of Radford and the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski. The mission of NRCA is to promote and support the well-being and self-reliance of individuals, families, and communities. In partnership with other human service agencies, community groups, grantors, and donors, NRCA provides assistance to approximately 8,000 people each year through programs that meet basic needs, strengthen families, and promote economic stability. NRCA administers a variety of local programs designed to address the effects of poverty: Head Start; Children’s Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP); Homeless and Housing Programs (Rapid Re-housing, Homeless Prevention, Housing Counseling, Renter Education Workshops); VA CARES services for ex-offenders; Emergency Assistance/Food Pantries; Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA); Floyd County Backpack Program; To Our House thermal homeless shelter; and Whole Family two-generation comprehensive services.