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Connecticut *Fatherhood Initiative* **Strategic Plan**

2015-2019

Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Strategic Plan
2015-2019

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Executive Summary

In September 2013 the state's *Fatherhood Initiative* partners, under the leadership of Department of Social Services' (DSS) Commissioner Roderick Bremby and his staff, began the development of a statewide strategic plan to strengthen the *Fatherhood Initiative's* infrastructure and enhance its sustainability. The resulting Strategic Plan outlines recommendations for short- and long-term strategies to address program, policy and system barriers to dads' engagement with their children, expand promising practices already being implemented, and establish new and strengthen existing partnerships at the state and local levels to support the result statements: "Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy and ready to lead successful lives" and, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children." The result statements are supported by a set of population indicators that quantify the various conditions of wellbeing associated with the results. The indicators present the most relevant population data currently available. A major focus of our work is the need to collect uniform data on dads and their relationships with their children. Obtaining these new data will lead to new or more focused indicators.

Connecticut's *Fatherhood Initiative* partners have long recognized that noncustodial fathers look a lot like the custodial mothers who access services through our state and local systems; they have similar social service, educational, and employment needs. The economic stability of fathers, which includes education, employment services, and supports like affordable housing, transportation, nutritional assistance and child care, is the focus of one of the domains of the Strategic Plan. Reform to child support and family court systems is the focus of another domain. While we have collaborated on such projects as the Problem Solving Court and Employment Pilots, these great efforts to help fathers support their children have not been brought to scale.

At the Strategic Plan kickoff over a year ago, partners were provided with an overview of the planning process, explanation of roles and responsibilities, and expectations for participation during this process. DSS contracted with Charter Oak Group to support the Plan's development using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework and assembled a Strategic Planning Workgroup and various committees to carry out the work. These groups were comprised of members of the *Initiative's* numerous partners, including state and local agencies serving fathers and families, advocates for women, men and children, and new partners such as the CT Data Collaborative and other research institutions.

The committees worked in the six domains to identify critical missing partners, develop strategies, and present recommendations to the Connecticut Fatherhood Advisory Council's Executive Team. The domains for which strategies are recommended include: fathers economically stable; fathers in healthy relationships; young people prepared to be responsible parents; men involved in the criminal justice system supported in being responsible fathers; policy/public awareness; and data.

Also included in this Plan is the outline for a Service Delivery System, with partners' recommendations in such areas as governance, sustainability, accountability and performance measures (for programs and common measures for the system), connecting with partner systems, capacity-building for father-serving programs, public awareness, the implementation of proposed strategies/and the development agenda, and a process for updating the RBA model and strategic plan regularly.

I. Introduction

Overview

Fathers Count was chosen as the title for the *Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative's* (herein after referred to as *CFI*) strategic plan (herein after referred to as the Plan) both because fathers are essential to the wellbeing of their children and because in Connecticut and most of the rest of the country fathers are not always counted in a way that acknowledges their critical contributions. While the field of fatherhood has made strides over the past decade, fathers, especially those who do not live in the same household as their children, are often not included in discussions about how to support parents, children and families.

Fathers have historically been viewed as important to financial support, but not necessarily to other critical areas in a child's life. A growing body of research debunks that myth, but many research and programming efforts still focus on the mother as primary caregiver. Yet the research shows that when fathers also have a role in caregiving, children achieve better outcomes and enjoy a better quality of life than children who are deprived of their fathers' positive presence. Despite this research, dads are often invisible to family-serving programs, and dads' potential contributions, as well as their own needs for support to be better dads, are ignored. *CFI* partners have long recognized that noncustodial fathers look a lot like the custodial mothers who access services through our systems; they have similar social service, educational, and employment needs.

The focus of our efforts is the wellbeing of children. Our attention to supporting the active engagement of fathers is not to suggest that they play a more important role than mothers and is not intended to deny the irreplaceable parenting that mothers do. Providing supports to both parents directly benefits children. Based on the research showing the potential impact of men in children's lives, our definition of "father" is expansive; it includes any man with biological, foster or adoptive ties, stepfathers, fathers-to-be, and men who have a paternal role in a child's life (boyfriends, fiancés, family friends, and so on).

Several critical considerations guide all of our work. Safe engagement of fathers with their children is a priority. We are promoting responsible fatherhood and recognize that not all men are ready for that role. For this reason, the issue of domestic violence must always be considered in our efforts. The *CFI* partners continue to recognize the importance of open communication between those seeking to prevent domestic violence and fatherhood practitioners. Since the inception of the Fatherhood Initiative in 1999, the state's domestic violence experts have been partners in the provision of staff training, technical assistance, development of surveys for stakeholders, and facilitation of a cross-discipline stakeholders' forum to create dialogue and gather information regarding the intersection of fatherhood and domestic violence. These experts continue to be critical partners, participating in the development of this Plan and the implementation work ahead of us, with a common commitment to eradicate violence in Connecticut's families.

We are especially committed to engaging parents as active participants and leaders in the *CFI*. We recognize the diverse populations affected by our work and our responsibility to be

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culturally responsive in both policy and practice. Of particular concern are immigrant families and the special hardships faced by undocumented dads.

Major Themes of Our Plan

As we began our investigation of the current system, we recognized that an overarching challenge in this area is the lack of data about dads and their relationship with their children. As a consequence, we have very little data at a population level to help drive policy, and agencies do not know which of their male clients are dads. We thus cannot provide an accurate picture of the status and wellbeing of dads and their children, and we do not have an effective way to target services to dads who need them. We believe that the old saying is true: What matters gets measured, and what gets measured gets done. For that reason, the systematic and universal collection of data on dads and their children by all agencies and programs is a cross-cutting theme and strategy throughout this plan.

We spent much of our time examining what it would take to encourage and facilitate dads' positive engagement with their children. We discovered that public policy and agency practice create barriers to dads' involvement. In response to this finding, key strategies in our plan revolve around system-wide changes to child support to ensure that it fosters strong emotional bonds between dads and their children, not just the fulfillment of financial obligations. We focused specifically on accessible approaches within the child support system to establish and enforce visitation rights that build on current promising practices here in Connecticut.

We also recognized the profound effect that every aspect of the criminal justice system -- from arrest to final discharge -- has on dads and their children. Our strategies recognize the unique needs of incarcerated dads, young dads in the juvenile justice system, and undocumented dads. We also recognize the need to mitigate the effects of incarceration on families and children.



All dads need to be financially responsible for their children. However, for many dads, lack of a job at a living wages makes meeting that responsibility impossible and often leads to dads' disengagement from their children. To address this critical issue, we propose partnering with existing systems and programs to focus on the specific employment and training needs of dads, including education.

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As much as we need to attend to the needs of current dads and their children, we must also ensure that youth become responsible adults and parents. To this end, we call for implementing a universal K-12 sexual health curriculum that promotes the social, mental and physical health and well-being of all students. We also call for addressing the special needs of teen dads for age-appropriate support in being responsible parents and in not fathering additional children until they are in a position to support them both emotionally and financially.

To accomplish this ambitious agenda, we must build a system that has the capacity to meet the needs of dads and their children and in which people have the skills and knowledge to deliver effective services. The partners will work together to develop a public awareness campaign, as well as curricula, standards, training and professional development opportunities for agencies and programs serving fathers, children, and families. We want to ensure that staff in these agencies recognize what they need to do with regard to fatherhood issues and have the knowledge and skills to do it well.

Development of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative (CFI) Strategic Plan

In September 2013, under the leadership of Commissioner Bremby and his staff at the Department of Social Services, *CFI* partners began the development of a statewide strategic plan to strengthen the *Initiative's* infrastructure and enhance its sustainability.

The Plan, adopted by the *CFI* Strategic Planning Workgroup contains recommendations for short- and long-term strategies to address program, policy and system barriers, expand promising practices already being implemented, and establish new and strengthen existing partnerships at the state and local levels to support the result statements: "Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy and ready to lead successful lives" and, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children."

At the Plan kickoff, our system partners were given an overview of the planning process and an explanation of their roles and responsibilities. The partners recognized the importance of their participation in this process. DSS contracted with the Charter Oak Group to support the Plan's development using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, and assembled a Strategic Planning Workgroup and various committees to carry out the work. (Our RBA framework is presented in Section II.) These groups were comprised of members of the *CFI's* numerous partners, including state and local agencies serving fathers and families, advocates for women, men and children, and new partners such as the CT Data Collaborative and other research institutions. The charge was to work in six identified domains to identify gaps and critical missing partners, develop strategies, and present recommendations to the Connecticut Fatherhood Advisory Council's Executive Team. Over 80 individuals participated in the Plan's development, representing over 50 state and local agencies. The complete list can be found in Appendix B.

From the beginning of this work, we recognized the value of the existing Fatherhood Initiative created within the Department of Social Services by legislation passed in 1999. The work of the

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Initiative has been focused on four proven strategies for change: capacity building in existing programs; infusing father-friendly principles and practices into existing systems; media and advocacy to promote fatherhood; and a social policy agenda to address potential barriers to father involvement. The Committees and Workgroup for the current Plan included representatives from the ten DSS-certified fatherhood programs, and the strategies presented here deliberately build on the effective work of these programs and of our state partners. A history of the original Fatherhood Initiative is presented in Appendix D.

During committee meetings held in the fall of 2013 and at the Workgroup meetings held through September 2014, partners emphasized the importance of providing parents, both dads and moms, the opportunity to voice their thoughts related to the areas the groups had been examining for inclusion in the draft Plan. Community-based partners serving fathers and families conducted focus groups in order to gather this critical input from their respective program's current or past participants, their significant others, or their co-parents. A protocol and template for summarizing the discussion were provided to ensure consistency in the information gathered and to allow the facilitators to manage the sessions in the time allotted.

Eight providers submitted information from a total of 62 parents. Some participants reported positive experiences with the child welfare and child support systems; however, the need for continued reform of these systems also surfaced. Another general theme was the need for increased efforts in the correctional system to recognize men in their fathering role, both during incarceration and when preparing for reentry into their families and communities. Unemployment and underemployment and the need for services to support obtaining and sustaining employment were a third major theme identified. Specific suggestions made by focus group participants were also raised by the numerous partners during the Committee meetings, and the majority of participants' recommendations are reflected in the strategies. The focus group details are outlined in Appendix C.

Plan Elements

Strategies are recommended in these five domains of the result, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children":

1. Fathers economically stable
2. Fathers in healthy relationships
3. Young people prepared to be responsible parents
4. Men involved in the criminal justice system supported in being responsible fathers
5. Policy and Public Awareness

In addition, our data committee has analyzed the existing indicators and has developed a Data Development Agenda to create additional indicators that are essential for describing the condition of children and their fathers in Connecticut and for guiding the work of the *CFI* as we go forward under this Plan.

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The key strategies are presented in Section III. The full strategies for each domain, along with issues that the committees identified as needing further investigation, are presented in Appendix A. It is important to bear in mind that the Plan is intended as a blueprint. Although major action steps for many of the key strategies are identified, a full implementation plan will be developed by the Initiative over the coming year.

Section IV discusses the need for better data at the population, system, and program levels. A newly created Data Committee will help us implement our system-wide strategy of collecting uniform data on dads and will facilitate the development of new performance measures for the *CFI* as a whole and for our provider programs.

Also included in the Plan in Section V is the partners' design for a new *CFI* Service Delivery System. The System design covers such areas as governance, sustainability, accountability and performance measures (for programs and common measures for the system), connecting with partner systems, capacity-building for father-serving programs, public awareness, the implementation of the proposed strategies and the data development agenda, and a process for regularly updating the Results-Based Accountability model and Plan.



II. Results-Based Accountability Planning Framework

The schematic on the following page provides an overview of the RBA model that shapes and drives the Plan's content. The primary and secondary results statements define the conditions of wellbeing that we aspire to. The primary result matches the Children's Report Card of the Connecticut legislature's Committee on Children: "Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy and ready to lead successful lives." We made this the primary result because engaging fathers is critical for ensuring that all children grow up in a stable environment. The secondary result, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children," speaks specifically to the concern of the *CFI* and makes clear how the Initiative contributes to the primary result.

The result statements are supported by a set of headline population indicators that quantify the various conditions of wellbeing associated with the results. There are also secondary indicators that are presented for some of the domains. The indicators present the most relevant population data currently available. To the extent possible, the indicators speak to different dimensions of the result. As set forth in the Introduction and in Section IV, a major focus of our work is the need to collect uniform data on dads and their relationships with their children. Obtaining these new data will lead to new or more focused indicators.

The strategies represented in the model are those described in the Plan to achieve the result, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children." These are not all of the strategies that will be needed to achieve the result for all fathers in Connecticut, but they are the ones that the *CFI* has identified as being most important and most feasible to address over the next five years. They are presented in the section of the schematic that shows the Fatherhood Service Delivery System because they will require the coordinated efforts of all of our system partners.

Below the system level, the model presents an array of state agency and local provider programs that are part of the service delivery system, many of whom participated in the Plan's development and can be found in Appendix B. Performance measures for the system and these programs will be developed. The system measures will include measures of system effectiveness, as well as common measures that will be used across a variety of programs that serve similar client groups or provide similar services.

The schematic is followed by the primary indicators in graphic form, along with a narrative that explains the data in regard to: 1) fatherhood and the result statements; 2) the causes and forces behind the data presented; and 3) the projected trend for each indicator, identifying the indicator's future direction if nothing changes. The indicators and complete Data Development Agendas are also included in each of the domain discussions in Appendix A. The elements of data collection and development are presented in detail in Section IV.

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Fatherhood Initiative: RBA Model Schematic

Primary Quality of Life Result: Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe healthy and ready to lead successful lives.

*Population
Accountability*

Secondary Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children.

Indicator 1: Percent of Female-headed households living in poverty.

Indicator 2: Percent of men 20 to 24 who are unemployed

Indicator 3: Percent of renter households paying 30% or more of income to rent.

Indicator 4: Percent of students graduating on time

Indicator 5: Maltreatment of Children under 18 years of age

Indicator 6: Births to teenage girls under 18

Indicator 7: Probationer 24- month re-arrest rate

Sample Indicator for Data Development Agenda: Common way of identifying fathers from other men.

Fatherhood Service Delivery System

*System/Program
Performance
Accountability*

Key Strategies

Strategy 1:
Make sure
dads count

Strategy 2: Encourage
dad's engagement
with their children

Strategy 3: Ensure
criminal justice system
treats fatherhood as a
priority

Strategy 4: Enable
dads to be financially
responsible

Strategy 5: Ensure
youth become
responsible adults and
parents

System Measure 1:
Successful
completion of
program

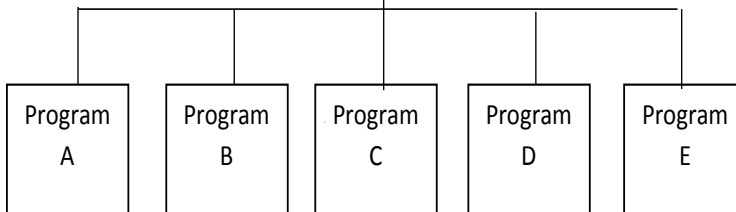
System Measure 2:
Satisfaction with
program or service
outcome

System Measure 3:
Dads in CFI programs
obtaining visitation
agreement

System Measure 4:
Dads in compliance
with support
obligations

System Measure 5:
Dads maintaining
regular contact with
children

State and Provider Programs



Sample Data Development Measures:
Identification of fathers in various
programs and partner systems.

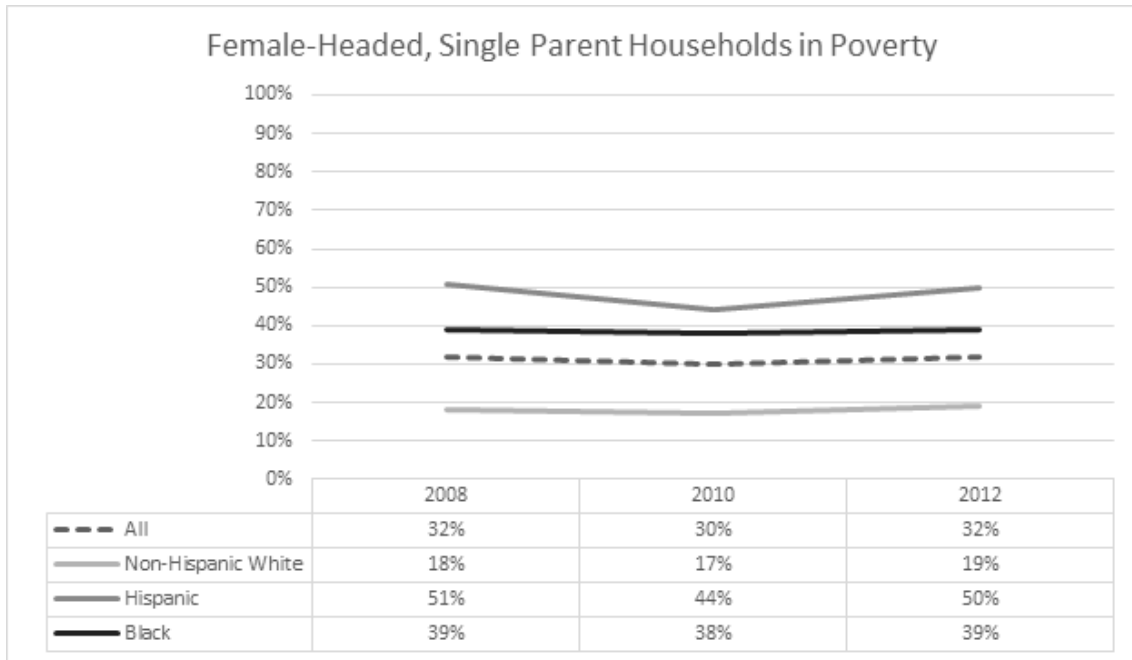
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Headline Indicators

The headline indicators presented below were chosen to detail key elements of the result statement, such as safety, health and preparation for successful lives. In addition, three criteria guided the choices: Does the indicator communicate clearly to a wide audience, is it of central importance to understanding the issues associated with fatherhood, and are data currently available for multiple years.

The data are presented in graphic form, and each indicator is followed by a narrative (the story behind the baseline) that highlights the main points about the data, their connection to the results, and the causes and forces behind the trend of each indicator.

Indicator 1



The chart presents the percentage of single-parent, female-headed households in Connecticut that are living below the federal poverty level. As evident from the chart, the indicator has changed very little since 2008. The households are mostly minority. Not all of the children in these female-headed households are without the consistent presence of a father, but, as noted by the Pew Research Center, 44% of Black children and nearly 35% of Hispanic children are without a father officially in their household.¹ The father’s financial support (a minimum but insufficient level of engagement) is for most single, female-headed households the largest contribution to household support and the child’s wellbeing other than the mother’s own income.² Lack of living wage employment and lack of education impact both mothers and fathers and contribute to the level of female-headed households in poverty.

¹ A Tale of Two Fathers. Livingston and Parker. PewResearch: Social & Demographic Trends (2011).

² Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2009. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-240.pdf>

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Indicator 2

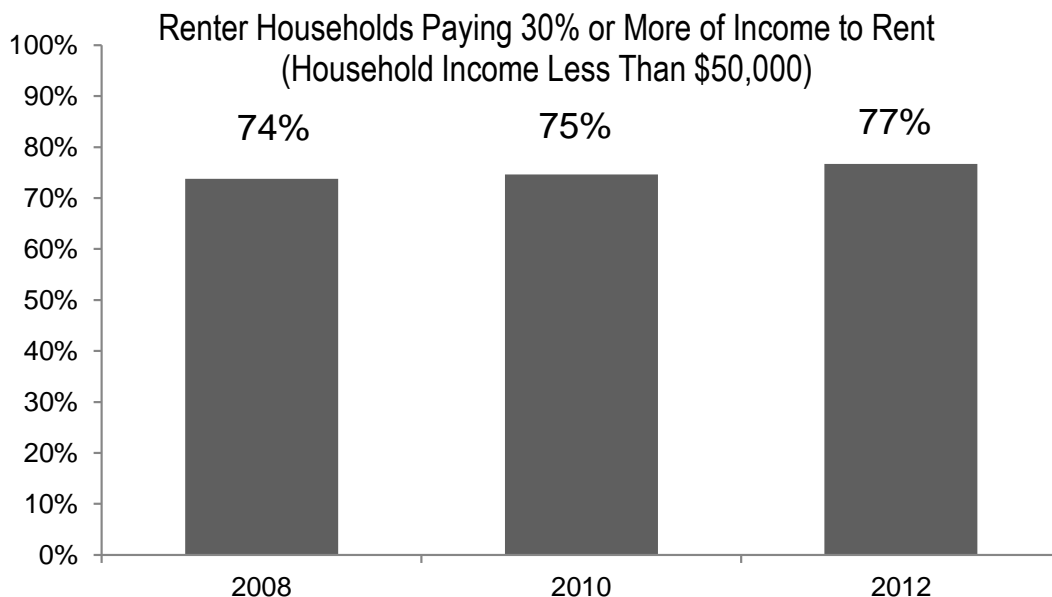
Unemployment for Young Men Age 20 to 24



There are particular challenges that young minority men face in obtaining employment, especially young men with low levels of education or a history of incarceration. These barriers often lead to a lifetime of limitations in wages and consistent employment.

Not only do these young men have a high rate of unemployment, but the trend in their unemployment rate (except Asian men) has been rising since 2008. Turning the curve on this trend will be a major challenge, but it is critically important to do so. Research on unemployed fathers shows that their inability to fulfill their financial responsibilities often drives them away from their children.

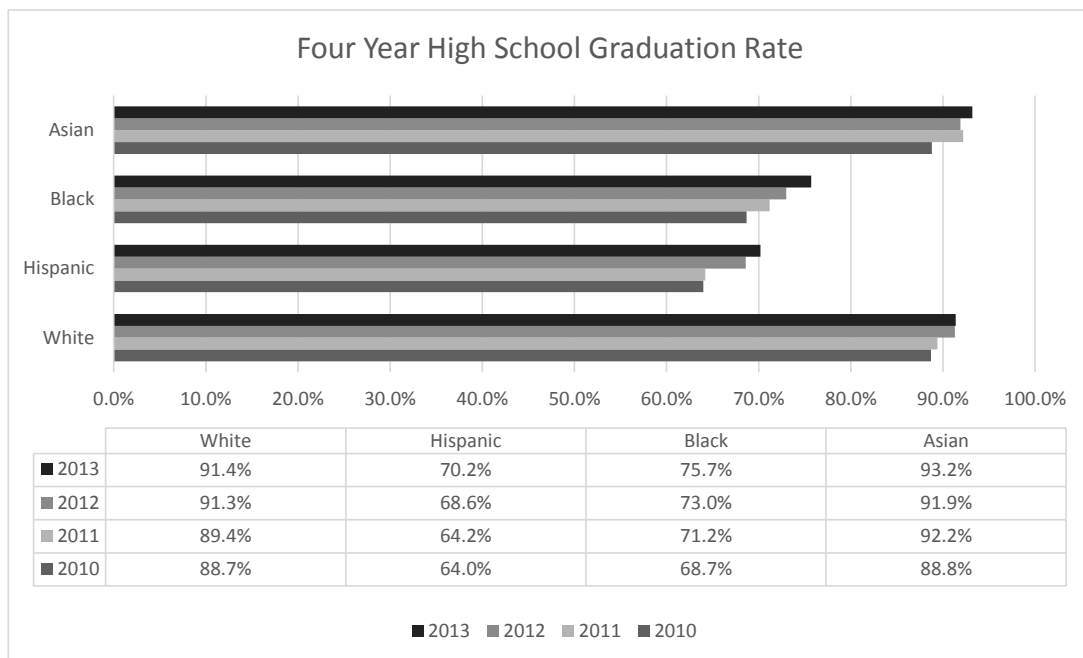
Indicator 3



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One of the major financial stresses families face is the cost of housing; this is especially so for those families with only one wage earner in the household. Research has consistently shown that paying more than 30 percent of income for housing creates challenges for meeting the other necessities of life, including food, clothing, and medical care. The cost of housing in Connecticut is going in the wrong direction. Lack of affordable housing adds to the strains on families, and where fathers are unwilling or unable to contribute to the household, there is the potential for greater strains on relationships and on the bonds between father and child and between father and mother.

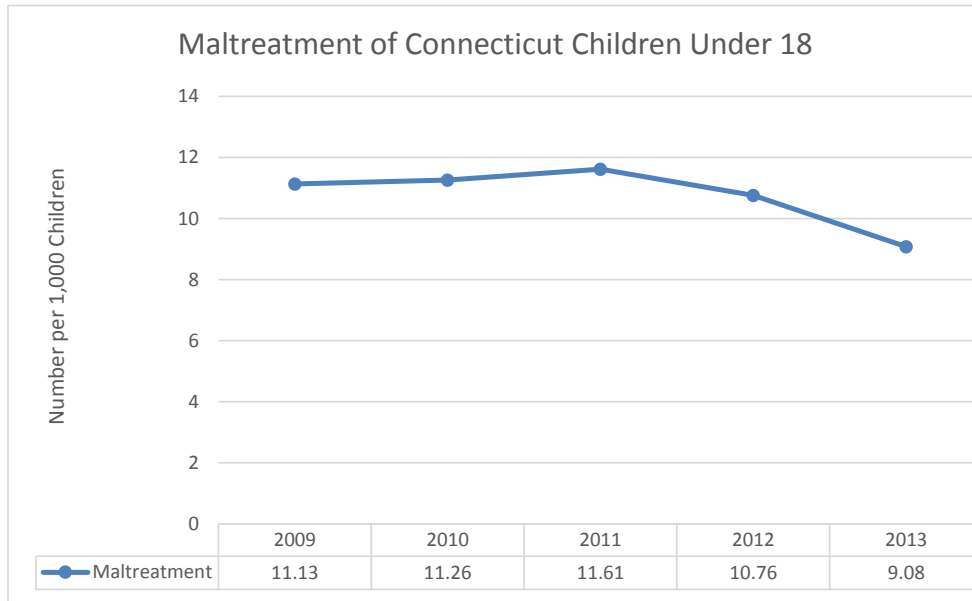
Indicator 4



High school graduation rates have shown modest gains in Connecticut. Approximately 1/5 of all students do not graduate on time. In 2011-2012, however, the on-time graduation rate improved from the 2010-2011 rate of 81.7 to a rate of 82.7 for all students. As the chart shows, most of the improvement in the statewide rate was due to improvements among Black and Hispanic students. Even with this improvement, more than a quarter of Black and Hispanic students do not graduate on time. This indicator is a major predictor of success for young people whose future is marked by low levels of skill attainment, low wages, and higher rates of unemployment throughout their life. As a result, these young people have difficulty with fulfilling family responsibilities and other aspects of life.

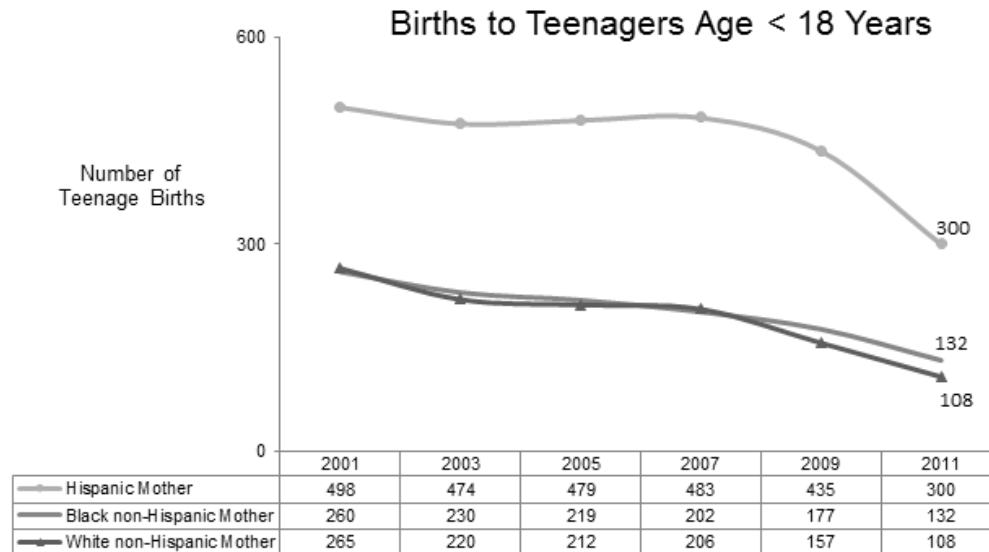
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Indicator 5



The data show the unduplicated number of maltreated children (ages 0-18) per 1000 children. Maltreatment includes both abuse and neglect. The vast majority of cases (approximately 85%) are reports of neglect, not abuse. There has been some significant decline in these rates from 2009 to 2013. However, the 2012 and 2013 data are not comparable to earlier years due to administrative changes affecting the way data were collected after 2011. Research shows that the presence of a father in the household is related to lower levels of abuse and neglect.³

Indicator 6



³ https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-programs/for-your-fathers/father-presence#Can_Fathers_Prevent_Child_Abuse_and_Neglect

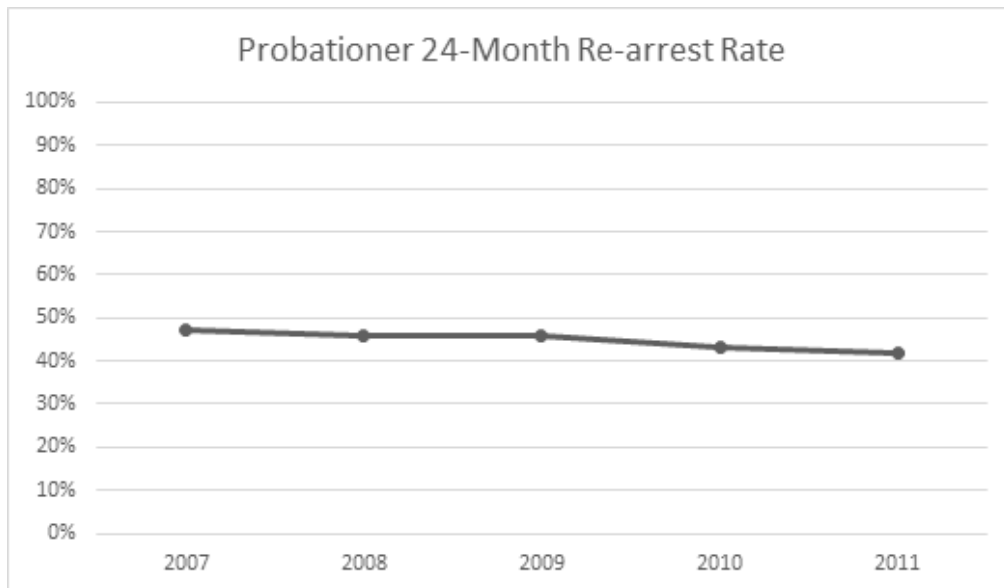
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Nationwide, the number of births to teen mothers has declined significantly over the past decade. Connecticut, in particular, has one of the lowest teen birth rates (births to teen mothers per 1,000 births) in the country. The data presented shows the decline in the actual number of births to teens. Births to Hispanic mothers declined from 498 (2001) to 300 (2011). Births to Black mothers declined from 260(2001) to 132 (2011). Births to White (non-Hispanic) mothers declined from 327 (1998) to 108 (2011).

Because of the focus of the *CFI*, however, it is important to continue tracking these data since teen fathers' involvement is often limited, and the chance that the father is mature enough to appropriately carry out his responsibilities as a father may be even more limited. The fathers are often those with the fewest financial and personal resources to support their child and the teen mother. They represent a group particularly challenged when it comes to being responsible fathers.

These numbers are small and the trend is going in the right direction. It is nonetheless important to track this indicator is to ensure that we maintain the progress already made.

Indicator 7



The re-arrest rate is one frequently used to measure recidivism. This rate has shown significant decline since 2007 and is at its lowest rate since 2006, the first year this measure was reported. The secondary indicator of recidivism reported in Section IV shows the age breakout for probationer re-arrest rates by age group. It shows that the strongest likelihood of returning to prison, as predicted by arrest rates, is for the youngest group of men, those under 23. By two years after release or discharge, 70 percent of this age group will have been re-arrested. This alarming rate, along with the education and unemployment rates for young men and especially young men of color, makes it clear where the challenges of fatherhood are likely to be most prevalent.

III. STRATEGIES

KEY STRATEGIES

The Workgroup and committees spent five months examining the available data, identifying both the positive and negative forces at work, and reviewing what had been done in Connecticut and around the country to promote the engagement of fathers. Out of this exploration, several main themes emerged, along with a number of strategies to help us realize the result, “All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children.”

In this section we present one key strategy that emerged from each of our committees. The selection of these strategies was based on a number of criteria, including:

- Reach and impact: How much will the strategy contribute to turning the curve on one of the indicators and achieving the result?
- Capacity and commitment: Do we and our partners have the skills, resources, and passion to be successful?
- Feasibility: Given the environment, how likely is it that the strategy can be successful?
- Foundation for other work: Will implementation of the strategy facilitate the completion of other important strategies?

Additional strategies for each domain of our result and the complete descriptions of all strategies by domain are presented in Appendix A.



KEY STRATEGY 1: Make sure dads count

Several committees, including those dealing with fathers being economically stable, fathers in healthy relationships, child support reform, and fathers in the criminal justice system, emphasized the need for data. The Data Committee focused on this issue, recognizing the need for a common way to identify men who are fathers.

Why this matters

Without data about men who are fathers that distinguishes them from all other men, we have no way of determining what services fathers receive. Moreover, the ability to distinguish fathers from all other males would make it possible to identify where existing programs may need to develop partnerships with fatherhood programs or where they need to develop their own resources to support fathers and attend to their unique needs.

The Data Committee noted that if we could have a common definition of fatherhood to use in identifying fathers throughout the service systems, we would be able to determine the systems with which these men are involved and the types of services they are receiving, including such areas as their status in regard to employment and educational attainment. Such a common definition for identification of fathers would be useful by itself, but combined with other data collected by programs it could also provide a clearer picture of how fathers are doing in a variety of service and program contexts. The collection of uniform data about fathers could also help us develop new population indicators.

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

According to the Children’s Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Services, “There is no standard definition of “father” in statutes across the States. Approximately four states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands provide no definitions for the term at all” While most states, including Connecticut have some statute(s) that define “father.”



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Although Connecticut has statutes and case law that establish standards for determining fatherhood, there is no single definition that facilitates a common approach to data collection that would allow agencies across the state to distinguish fathers from all other men. To create a common definition to facilitate data collection, the three components, already in Connecticut statute⁴ should be accommodated:

- 1) Presumption of fatherhood if the mother and supposed father are married to each other at the time of the birth
- 2) Court establishment of paternity
- 3) Formal acknowledgment of paternity by the father (e.g., acknowledgement on the birth certificate or through an acknowledgement process subsequent to birth recognized by law)

These three components would provide the foundation for the development of a common indicator of fatherhood. We propose formulating these components into questions that all cooperating agencies would use.

After the data committee has defined the way the common measure of fatherhood will be constituted, the second stage will be to engage the various partner agencies within the system to adopt the definition and begin distinguishing those men who are and are not fathers among all men served. Once data collection identifying men who are fathers can be established, more detailed data on fathers and the characteristics of their relationship with their children (e.g., custody, visitation) can be added, depending on the needs of the agency and program.

The result of this effort will be to understand what services fathers receive, what services they do not receive, and places in the system where services can be integrated or coordinated to improve the lives of fathers and their ability to fully participate in the lives of their children.



⁴ In [Connecticut] there are only three ways of legally establishing paternity: (1) the marital presumption if the mother and the putative father are married to each other; (2) adjudication of paternity by a court of competent jurisdiction; or (3) a formal acknowledgment of paternity in accordance with the acknowledgment statute.” Hjarne v. Martin, Superior Court, judicial district of Hartford-New Britain at Hartford, Docket No. FA00-0631333 (Apr. 21, 2002) (2002 WL 1163023).

KEY STRATEGY 2: Encourage and facilitate dads' engagement with their children by reforming critical systems with which dads interact

The state child support system will be the initial system for which system-wide changes will be sought to align with the federal child support system's family-centered approach to support strong emotional bonds between dads and their children, not just financial obligations.

Why this matters

As issues related to child support were raised during Policy Committee meetings, it became clear that a subcommittee was needed, dedicated to examining the major impediments related to child support that are negatively impacting dads' ability to engage with their children and their children's mothers, initiatives currently underway or pending in Connecticut that should be supported or increased, enhanced, or brought to scale, and evidenced-based or promising practices in other states that should be considered for Connecticut. The group also recommended important system changes that we should focus on in the next 2-3 years, as well as critical missing partners that need to be at the table moving forward. Detailed notes from the subcommittee meeting can be found in Domain 5 in Appendix A.

Some of the major system-related impediments to dads' engagement include:

- the existence of a felony record
- default orders and imputed income,
- unemployment/underemployment
- state and community-based staff attitudes and knowledge level about available resources.

Further, while the system handles child support and access/visitation/custody in different court systems, the two are intertwined for families (i.e., "If you don't pay you can't see him/her" and conversely, "I'm not paying unless I can see him/her").

Connecticut has had some great success with pilot initiatives, but these efforts have not been brought to scale. Some examples include the Judicial Branch Problem Solving Court Pilot, the Judicial Branch/DSS Employment Pilot Program, and the federal Access and Visitation Grant. Staff training and speakers' bureaus for the community about the child support process are conducted, but not in a formalized manner with all system partners' participating together.

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

The subcommittee recommended the following system changes for the next 2-3 years:

1. Increase the Department of Social Services' (DSS) Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) involvement with fatherhood-related matters on the side of the court dealing with the establishment of child support orders. Currently the main focus is on the contempt side.

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While supports are needed for fathers who currently have child support orders, having a process in place for referrals to programming prior to order establishment may help fathers avoid issues such as access, visitation, custody, and accumulation of debt.

2. Implement more affirmative efforts (e.g., multiple contacts, phone calls, review and revision of forms and notices) by both DSS BCSE and Judicial Support Enforcement Services (SES) to encourage people to engage in the child support process, attend court proceedings, and reduce the establishment of default orders.
3. Examine the feasibility of connecting child support and access/visitation/custody court processes.

In addition to BCSE, SES, the Family Support Magistrates and legal services, the following partners are critical in efforts for child support system changes: Office of the Chief Court Administrator, Office of the Attorney General, Judicial Court Support Services Division, and the Office of Policy and Management.



KEY STRATEGY 3: Ensure that every phase of the criminal justice system from arrest to discharge treats fatherhood as a priority

Why this matters

Involvement in the criminal justice system often has a profoundly negative impact on fathers' engagement with their children, including lengthy physical and emotional separation from children. The criminal justice system has not historically supported the connection between fathers and children as a primary need during any phase of the process, including arrest, arraignment, pre-trial, sentencing, incarceration, or release. Outcomes for the parent and the children are more likely to be positive when efforts are made to support these significant relationships. Research shows, for instance, a reduction in recidivism when a parent is actively involved with his other children upon release. Further, children are less likely to come into contact with criminal justice agencies when their fathers are positively engaged in their lives.

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

The initial step recommended for this strategy is the convening of a formal, on-going workgroup regarding fatherhood within the criminal justice system, co-led by the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division as point agency and the Department of Correction, outside of and distinct from the CFI Advisory Council and Executive Team, that includes a focus on data collection and the interoperability of computer systems. This workgroup would oversee the introduction of, and continued adherence to, fatherhood principles within all aspects of criminal justice involvement, which would begin with formal assessment of current practices in terms of policy, protocols, and service delivery from arraignment through release into the community. There may be agencies, both administrative and court location specific, that currently utilize fatherhood practices and programs (gender and culturally responsive) within the CJ system. The workgroup would identify these efforts to determine gaps as well as promising collaborations. The leads for this strategy will report their efforts to the Executive Team for the development of actions to formalize and expand promising practices throughout the criminal justice system.

KEY STRATEGY 4: Enable all dads to be financially responsible to their children by partnering with existing systems and programs to focus on the specific employment and training needs of dads, including education

Why this matters

Many dads, especially younger dads, suffer from lack of education and job skills, making employment difficult and hindering their ability to take on financial responsibilities for their children. More than a fifth of young men are not graduating from high school on time in Connecticut. And those individuals without a high school diploma (a GED only changes the picture slightly) are likely to have the highest unemployment rates and the lowest incomes when they are employed. National data show that in 2013, those without high school completion had nearly double the unemployment rate of those who had completed high school (including those who obtained a GED).⁵

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

Partnering will take at least two different forms. One has already been discussed in the first key strategy, Make Dads Count. The collection of data to identify fathers using a common definition is one critical step in solidifying that partnership.

The other step is to convene the agencies and other partners: Department of Labor, Adult Education, Community Colleges, Department of Social Services, Department of Housing, Department of Transportation, local non-profits working with fathers, and employers. The focus beyond common data on fathers is to develop MOUs and other mechanisms that will ensure that fathers can take advantage of existing education, training and employment programs. At the same time, those coordination mechanisms will also make it possible for agencies and programs to offer services specifically designed to help men better fulfill their potential and their responsibilities as fathers.

Many of the men who are fathers but struggle with fulfilling their financial responsibilities need to either finish high school or obtain some advanced training or education. Others may need help to obtain adequate, stable employment after they have gained new skills and knowledge. Many of the institutions that provide the training, education, and job search assistance have limited capacity in supplying the necessary supports. Many of them will be unaware of the circumstances of fathers who are trying to advance themselves while caring for one or more children. It is only through true partnerships between father-friendly service agencies and programs and the training, education, and job search institutions that fathers can be successful. We already know that many young men who begin education and training programs drop out before completion. Special support services are critical to raising completion rates. A recent article⁶ in “Inside Higher Ed” suggests as much and advises “triage” rather than simply focusing support services on first year students. Fathers struggling with financial and other responsibilities along with their education would undoubtedly benefit from such approaches.

⁵ http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_501.85.asp

⁶ Tyson, Charlie (2014). Website Inside Higher Ed; <https://www.insidehighered.com/>

KEY STRATEGY 5: *Ensure that youth become responsible adults and parents by implementing a universal K-12 sexual health curriculum that promotes the health and well-being of all students.*

Why this matters

Prevention is universally recognized as a key component of any work within the fields of health and social sciences. The ultimate goal of any prevention program is to eradicate the occurrence of the condition or behavior. Three levels of prevention are commonly recognized and provide the rationale for the three-tiered approach to strategy development within this domain. Primary or universal prevention targets a whole population prior to the existence of negative conditions in an effort to introduce protective factors that can help people avoid negative behaviors and conditions. Secondary or selective prevention provides early intervention for a select portion of the population when risk factors of the select portion suggest an increased likelihood or risk of involvement in the negative behaviors and conditions. Tertiary or indicated prevention provides services that help to manage risk factors and circumstances and build protective factors in order to improve lives by reducing the prevalence or seriousness of the problem. To prevent high-risk behaviors, or improve the conditions and behaviors associated with the problem -- in this instance fathering a child at a young age or abandoning contact with the child -- a combination of these levels of intervention leads to greater success.

Research shows that children who grow up in a home without a dad have an increased risk of living in poverty, doing poorly in school, having emotional and behavioral problems, and the list goes on. These risk factors impact children's day-to-day lives and follow them into the future.

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

This initial strategy is a primary prevention strategy targeting all students in all schools and all grades statewide. The K-12 sexual health curriculum should include, but not be limited to, the knowledge necessary to prevent HIV/STD/teen pregnancy and the skills to develop healthy age-appropriate relationships. Inclusion of sexual health education taught by a certified legally-qualified teacher, as part of a planned, ongoing and systematic health education program, including components that deal with becoming a responsible adult and developing healthy age-appropriate relationships, is a critical step in reducing teen pregnancies, as well as reducing the number of children growing up without the presence of their dad. Recognizing the overarching strategy of data development, it is recommended that the State Department of Education (CSDE), Department of Public Health (DPH), state associations of school officials and local school districts work together to increase the number of Connecticut school districts that complete the CDC School Health Profile on a biennial basis in order to compile and track data on what sexual health topics are being taught in Connecticut schools and to ensure that data collection includes information about students' own fathers' involvement in their lives.

KEY STRATEGY 6: *Build a system that has the capacity to meet the needs of dads and their children and in which program staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver effective services.*

Why this matters

In order to support their children, dads need to be healthy in all senses, including being economically self-sufficient and sufficiently educated to navigate the systems with which they must interact to achieve economic success and be engaged members of their community. Individual responsibility is only one piece in the “responsible fatherhood” picture. An equally critical piece is system responsibility, in which the state and local agencies with which fathers interact are prepared, and held accountable, for responsive and high quality service delivery.

This calls for a collaborative effort to achieve the results, “Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy and ready to lead successful lives” and, “All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children.” The partners’ agree this system must include activities to address the following: accountability, performance measures, performance-based contracting for programs, research to identify evidenced-based and promising practices, capacity building, standards of practice program sustainability, partnership agreements and coordination with related service delivery systems and networks.

What are we going to do to turn the curve?

Using the structures created by our new *CFI* Service Delivery System design (see Section V), we will work over the next two years to implement these major critical components of the comprehensive, integrated system we envision for fathers and their families. At a minimum it must have:

- A stable and adequate funding stream to establish sufficient fatherhood programming so that quality services are accessible when and where needed
- The ability to evaluate and document existing fatherhood program models to identify evidence-based, promising and best practices for successful outcomes with specific target populations
- Training of the staff in existing human service agencies to better understand and meet the needs of fathers and families, bringing all to a basic minimum standard of practice
- A statewide referral system that provides statewide access to quality programs
- Public will-building to increase the understanding of support of the need for serving fathers and families
- A statewide coalition of trained, passionate leaders who use their unified voice to change programs, policies and practices to benefit fathers, children and families.

IV. Data Development as an Overarching Strategy

Primary Result Statement: Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy, and ready to lead successful lives.

Secondary Result Statement: All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children. There are a number of indicators that tell us how Connecticut is doing in achieving the primary result and a few that report on the secondary result.

Below are several of the currently available indicators. Some of the indicators that would further inform our understanding of the result are not currently available but are discussed in the Data Development Agenda; these indicators could provide information that would help chart our direction with the *CFI*. The investment in better data is clearly warranted.

Currently Available Indicators

The headline indicators are listed below; they are presented in chart form with the stories behind the baselines in Section II. Secondary indicators are presented with currently available data. Like the primary indicators, the secondary indicators are broken out, when possible, by relevant characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, and age.

Headline Indicators

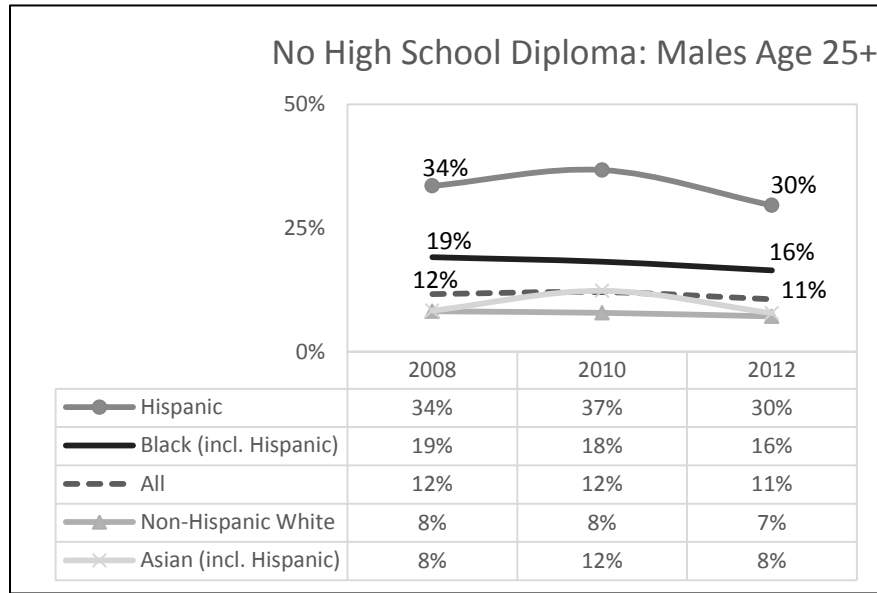
1. Poverty in Female Headed, Single Parent Households by Race and Ethnicity
2. Unemployment for Young Men Age 20 to 24 by Race and Ethnicity
3. Percent of Renter Households with Incomes Less than \$50,000 Paying 30% or More of Income for Rent
4. Four-Year High School Graduation Rate by Race and Ethnicity
5. Rates of Maltreatment⁷ for Children Birth to Age 18
6. Number of Births to Teen Mothers Less than 18 Years of Age
7. Probationer 24-Month Re-arrest Rate (a measure of recidivism)

⁷ The unique count of child victims counts a child only once regardless of the number of times he or she was found to be a victim during the reporting year.

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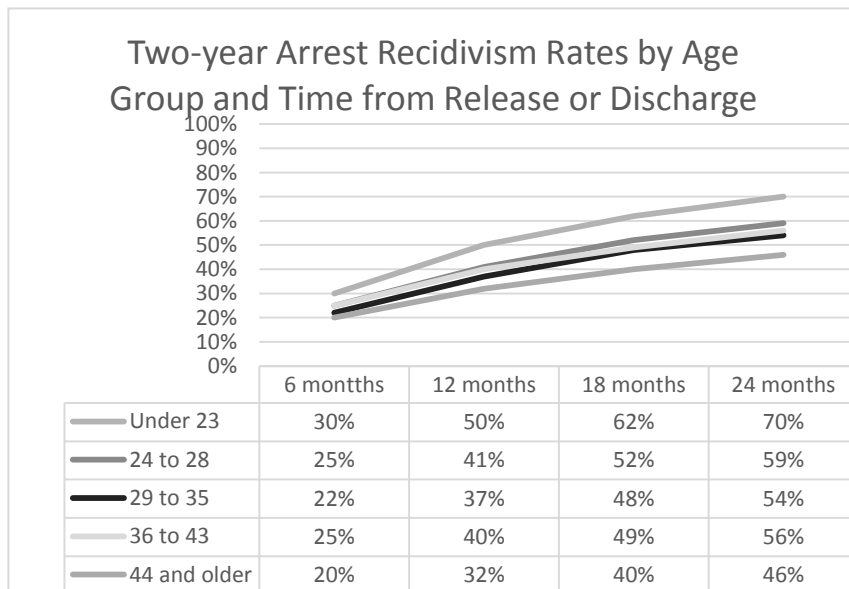
Secondary Indicators

Men with No High School Diploma



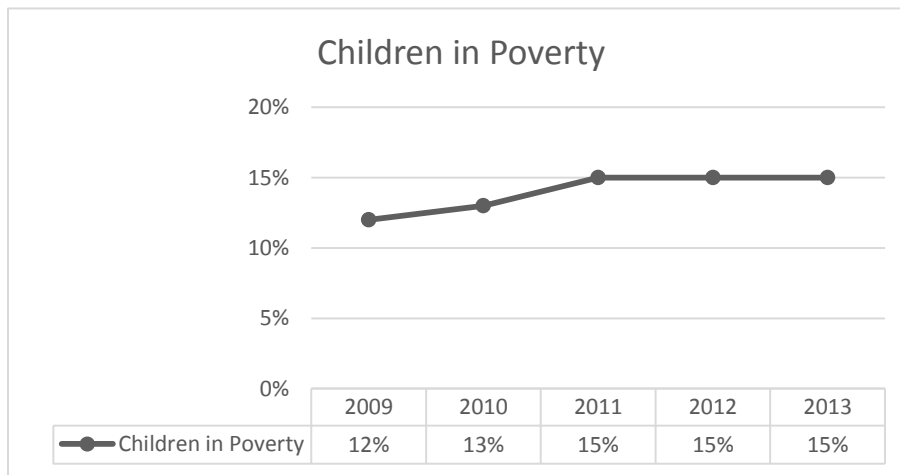
This is one of many approaches to looking at educational attainment and is closely related to the primary indicators of unemployment and the four-year cohort graduation rate. We know that fathers without a high school diploma are unlikely to be able to earn a living wage and contribute to the support of a family. It is often this inability to earn a living wage that lowers a young man’s incentive to take on parental responsibilities. The graph shows a slow decline among most groups in the percentage of young men over 25 without a high school diploma. While the decline is significant, it still means there are over 125,000 men in Connecticut without a diploma in 2012.

Two-year Re-arrest Rate by Age Group



This re-arrest rate is for individuals released from probation in 2008, who were then tracked for the next two years. It is designed to complement the primary recidivism indicator. The re-arrest rate for the youngest cohort (under 23) rises to 70% over these two years, providing a clear focus for our work.

Children in Poverty



The rate of children in poverty is a complement to the female-headed, single-parent household indicator. Many of the children in these figures come from female-headed households. In 2013, 46 percent of children living in single-mother families were poor, compared to 10 percent of children living in married-couple families.⁸ Census studies and other research based in part on Census data demonstrate that the absence of a father in a household is strongly related to children living in poverty.

Data Development Agenda

The data development agenda for the *CFI* is substantial. There are two broad areas for data development: identifying men who are fathers, especially in setting where they are being served; and new measures related to fathers and their relationships with their children. To the degree that we can begin to collect data consistently about men's status as fathers, we will have a better picture of the state of fatherhood in Connecticut.

Capturing some of these data will require national policy efforts. Some changes, however, can happen here in Connecticut. For example, we could determine which unemployed and under-employed men are fathers and could identify which men enrolled in post-secondary education or training are fathers. We currently do not have a consistent way of identifying incarcerated men who are fathers. We also do not know the numbers of young men in middle and high school who are fathers. These data are essential for understanding the state of fatherhood in Connecticut and would also allow us to identify special program needs for males involved in the criminal justice system, the juvenile justice system, and the public school system. These are only a few of the relevant areas, but they indicate the types of large scale data development that are needed and possible at the state level.

⁸ <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=children-in-poverty>

1. Common Data for Identifying Fathers

According to the Children’s Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Services, “There is no standard definition of “father” in statutes across the States. Approximately four states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands provide no definitions for the term at all,” while most states, including Connecticut, have some statutes that define “father.”

Although Connecticut statutes and case law establish standards for determining fatherhood, there is no single definition that facilitates a common approach to data collection that would allow agencies across the state to distinguish fathers from all other men. To create a common definition to facilitate data collection, the three components, already embedded in Connecticut law^[1] should be accommodated:

- 1) Presumption of fatherhood if the mother and supposed father are married to each other at the time of the birth
- 2) Court establishment of paternity
- 3) Formal acknowledgment of paternity by the father (e.g., acknowledgement on the birth certificate or through an acknowledgement process subsequent to birth recognized by law)

These three components would provide the foundation for the development of a common measure of fatherhood. We propose formulating these components into questions that all cooperating agencies would use.

The Data Committee has defined the way the common measure of fatherhood could be constituted, and it will engage the various partner agencies within the system to adopt the definition and begin distinguishing those men who are and are not fathers among all men served. Once data collection identifying men who are fathers can be established, more detailed data on fathers and the characteristics of their relationship with their children (e.g., custody, visitation) can be added, depending on the needs of the agency and program.



^[1] In [Connecticut] there are only three ways of legally establishing paternity: (1) the marital presumption if the mother and the putative father are married to each other; (2) adjudication of paternity by a court of competent jurisdiction; or (3) a formal acknowledgment of paternity in accordance with the acknowledgment statute.” Hjarne v. Martin, Superior Court, judicial district of Hartford-New Britain at Hartford, Docket No. FA00-0631333 (Apr. 21, 2002) (2002 WL 1163023).

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In addition to the broad measure of fathers, we can obtain supplemental data on sub-groups of fathers by the uniform collection of common data elements on the status of men as fathers by all state and local agencies that serve men, their children, or their families. This is one of the major strategies of the Plan and cuts across all of the domains of the plan.

As a first and most critical step, we will focus on collecting data from all men. (The first two questions below are minimum requirements):

- 1) How many children do you have?
 - a. None
 - b. 1
 - c. More than 1

- 2) Is your name on all of your children's birth certificates?
 - a. All
 - b. Some
 - c. None
 - d. Don't know

- 3) Do any of your children live with you?
 - a. Yes, full-time
 - b. Yes, part-time
 - c. No

- 4) Do you have any legal responsibilities for any of your children?
 - a. Yes, sole custody
 - b. Yes, joint custody
 - c. No custody, but pay child support under a binding agreement or court order
 - d. No, I don't see them or support them

We will also seek data from the family court system on fathers with formal rights to visitation and custody and from the Child Support Enforcement system on fathers for whom paternity has been established. By adding these data to the data on fathers captured by our other system partners, we will be able to construct measures that can serve as imperfect but invaluable population indicators for sub-sets of fathers in Connecticut, particularly those most at risk for being disconnected from their children.

Once we have established the most effective way to identify fathers, we will begin working with partners to collect information on fatherhood identity in a number of critical arenas, including:

- Employment/unemployment
- Education, both K-12 and post-secondary training
- Justice-involved youth and adults
- Mental health and drug addiction treatment
- Child welfare

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2. Fathers and their Relationship with their Children

In order to understand men's relationship with their children, we are working with the Department of Health and other state partners to add questions to the Connecticut Risk Behavior Survey, which is administered on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to a random sample of high school students every two years. We have requested that the survey include:

- 1) How often do you see your Dad?
 - a. Every day
 - b. Every week
 - c. About once a month
 - d. Every 3 months
 - e. Every 6 months
 - f. Once a year
 - g. Never
- 2) Which of the following can you talk to when you need help, advice, or just someone to listen to you?
 - a. Father or Stepfather
 - b. Uncle or other male relative
 - c. Mother's boyfriend
 - d. Older male friend/neighbor
 - e. Male teacher
- 3) How many children do you have?
 - a. I do not have any children
 - b. 1
 - c. More than 1

The first of the above questions was approved by the CDC in October. The second and third were not approved. The final decision on the introduction of the first question will be decided later this year. We will continue to work with DPH and our other partners to have this question included in the survey administered in 2015.

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Monitoring progress on these efforts and other newly initiated efforts will be carried out by the newly constituted standing committee of the *CFI* responsible for data, research, evaluation and accountability (see Section V. E. below).

Program and System Measures

In addition to indicators, the Data Committee discussed possible cross-program measures that can be reported for both individual father-serving programs and the *CFI* system as a whole. Initial ideas for Better Off (outcome) measures include:

- Successful completion of a program
 - Certificate or other credential upon completion of employment or training program
 - Gaining or retaining employment
 - Successful completion of probation without arrest
 - Remaining substance free for 3, 6, 12 months following substance abuse treatment
- Satisfaction with program or service outcome
- Dads in *CFI* programs who obtain a formal agreement of visitation or custody while in a program
- Dads in compliance with support obligations
- Dads maintaining regular contact with their children

There are also initial ideas for common How Well (quality of service delivery) measures, along with measures of the implementation of the Plan and the effectiveness of the *CFI* system:

- Satisfaction with quality and delivery of services
- Attendance rate at scheduled activities
- Rate of completion of classes and trainings
- % programs using evidence-based programs or externally developed promising practices
- % of programs implementing new referral or service protocols
- % of father-serving programs certified by the *CFI*
- % of partner program staff certified
- % Plan milestones reached on time
- % agency partners signing new MOU
- % of agency partners contributing to funding of local providers

V. Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Service Delivery System Design

This section outlines the partners' design for a new *CFI* Service Delivery System. From the start of the work in developing this Plan, the group recognized the value of the existing Fatherhood Initiative created within the Department of Social Services and the active participation of multiple state and local partners for more than a decade. However, all agreed that a stronger, more defined design for service delivery was necessary to support effective leadership and guide the work. The System design outlined below covers such areas as governance, sustainability, accountability and performance measures, connecting with partner systems, capacity-building for father-serving programs, public awareness, the implementation of proposed strategies and data development agenda and a process for regularly updating the Results-Based Accountability model and Plan.

A. *CFI* Service Delivery System

- There is established the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Service Delivery System (*CFI* System). The *CFI* System shall consist of those state and local partners that are collaborating to achieve the result, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children."
- In advancing its work, the *CFI* System shall recognize the challenges faced by fathers who most need support, including but not limited to those who are low-income, men of color, ex-offenders, and veterans. The *CFI* System shall ensure that all of its work is carried on with cultural and gender responsiveness.
- The *CFI* System shall:
 - Prepare and update as required a **strategic plan** using an RBA format
 - Prepare an **accountability plan** and annually report:
 - indicators on the well-being of fathers contributing to the achievement of the population result
 - performance measures for the *CFI* service delivery system
 - common performance measures for father-serving programs
 - Develop standard approaches and models of **performance-based contracting** for father-serving programs, including standards that must be met by applicants for such funding
 - **Conduct research** to identify evidenced-based and promising practices and programs in Connecticut and nationwide, and to determine those programs and practices that have the highest return on investment
 - Provide **capacity building** and technical assistance to state and community partners
 - Develop **standards of practice and certify** father-serving programs that meet those standards
 - Develop and implement a **sustainability** plan that includes:
 - State funding, including re-investment funding based on savings achieved by evidenced-based programs that improve child and family outcomes,

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reduce recidivism, and lead to fathers becoming productive and self-sufficient

- Foundations and private funders
- Public-private partnerships
- Federal funding through grants and other opportunities
- Succession planning to ensure continuity of leadership within the *CFI*
- **Develop MOAs** among the state partners and other partnership agreements that include each partner's contribution to the *CFI* System
- **Coordinate with related service delivery systems and networks**

B. Office of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative

- There is established within DSS the *Office of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative (OCFI)*. The *OCFI* shall report to the Commissioner and shall be staffed at appropriate levels to effectively support the activities as outlined in this document, including support for the *CFI* Council, Executive Team, and committee work and for the daily operations of the *CFI*, including but not limited to, such functions as contracting, program monitoring, training, and technical assistance. The *OCFI* shall support the *CFI* System in achieving the result, "All Connecticut fathers are engaged in the lives of their children" and in carrying out the tasks set forth in Section A.
- Pursuant to MOAs, the *OCFI* may have the assistance of staff from other state agencies or from statewide or community partners
- The creation of the *OCFI* is not intended to cause the transfer or relocation of any existing state programs to the Department of Social Services

C. CFI Council

- The Council is the policy making body of the *CFI* and is broadly representative of all partner organizations and stakeholders at the state and local levels that comprise the *CFI* System. The Council is responsible for approving the tasks of the *CFI* System set forth in Section A.
- The Council shall meet at least quarterly (in March, June, September, December), with additional meetings scheduled as necessary
- The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services shall convene the Council
- The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services will serve as Chair of the Council, along with another Council member from the state or local level, who will be appointed by the Commissioner to serve as Co-chair for a period of one year; a new Co-chair will be assigned at the December meeting each calendar year
- The membership of the Council shall include, but not be limited to:
 - The Commissioners of Social Services, Labor, Education, Correction, Children and Families, Developmental Services, Housing, Public Health, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Early Childhood, or their respective designees
 - Directors of Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division and Support Enforcement Services, or their respective designees
 - The director of the Department of Social Services' Bureau of Child Support Enforcement or his/her designee;

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- The executive directors of the Commission on Children, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, and the African American Affairs, Commission, or their respective designees
- The chair of the Board of Pardons and Parole, or his/her designee
- The chancellor of the regional community-technical colleges, or his/her designee;
- One representative with expertise in the area of legal assistance to low-income populations; one representative of a regional Family Reentry Council
- One representative of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission;
- One representative of a regional workforce development board
- One or more representatives of a local community- and faith-based fatherhood programs
- One representative with expertise in male psychology and health
- An individual representing the interests of custodial parents
- An individual representing the interests of noncustodial parents
- An individual serving the veteran population
- A representative with expertise in the area of domestic violence
- All members shall be designated by the Commissioner of Social Services. The Commissioner shall seek the advice and participation of any person, organization or state or federal agency the Commissioner deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.
- The Council will identify additional state and community members as necessary, to which the Co-chairs will extend an invitation to participate

D. CFI Council Executive Team (ET)

- The ET acts on behalf of the Council and implements policy adopted by the Council, addresses issues that may need attention between Council meetings, and advises Council on new issues that arise. The ET is responsible for ensuring that the tasks of the CFI System set forth in Section A are carried out, subject to the approval of the Council, and that the Plan is implemented.
- The ET may designate ad hoc and additional standing committees and shall coordinate and oversee the standing and ad hoc committees
- The ET supports the Council with agenda development and other assistance to guide the Council's policy making
- The ET shall meet at least quarterly (in March, June, September, December), with additional meetings scheduled as needed
- The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services shall convene the ET and appoint as members:
 - At least four representatives of the Executive and Judicial branch agencies
 - Four representatives of community-based agencies
 - Two representatives from statewide organizations/Commissions
 - Two parent representatives
 - At least one representative from the domestic violence field

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- The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services will serve as Chair of the ET, along with another ET member from the state or local level, who will be appointed by the Commissioner to serve as Co-chair for a period of one year; a new Co-chair will be assigned at the December meeting each calendar year and will be a different person from the Co-chair of the Council

E. Standing Committees

- There shall be 4 standing Committees of the *CFI* System:
 - Capacity building, standards, and certification
 - Data, research, evaluation, and accountability
 - Partnerships and statewide and local planning
 - Public awareness, education, and advocacy
- The Committees shall implement the Plan adopted by the Council, undertake the tasks set forth in Section A as appropriate, and perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the Executive Team
- Committee meetings are held bi-monthly, in between Council meetings so that each may report back at the quarterly Council meetings
- Each Committee reports to the Council on Committee progress and on issues raised that demand attention (e.g., policy changes, cross-Committee collaboration, new partnerships in the *CFI* that may be required to carry out work of the Committee)
- Council members will self-select for Committees, and additional members will be solicited based on identification by that Committee's membership of potential gaps in expertise needed at the table
- Membership may include representatives who do not serve on the Council or ET
- Committee leads will be chosen by each Committee at its initial meeting
- The Council may develop such other standing and ad hoc Committees as appropriate



APPENDIX A COMPLETE STRATEGIES BY DOMAIN

This appendix provides details for each of the four substantive domains in the Plan, as well as the policy domain. Under each domain, readers will learn more about recommended strategies to address the identified need; the recommended lead agency or agencies for each strategy; critical partners; proposed action steps for implementation at the program, system or policy level; outcomes and potential performance measures; and the data development agenda for additional population indicators. Research was cited when available, with the recognition that more must be done moving forward in order to implement the recommended strategies effectively.

Domain 1: Fathers economically stable

WHAT DATA DO WE HAVE?⁹

- Unemployment rate for young men 20-24 (page 12)
- % of men without a high school diploma (page 26)
- % of renters spending 30% or more of income on rent (page 12)

WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?

- % of fathers with custody
- % of men with post-secondary degree or certificate
- % fathers/noncustodial parents reporting income below poverty threshold
- % of fathers/noncustodial parents who own homes versus renting

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

While economic stability is not the only factor affecting men's ability successfully to play their role as dads, it is a major factor that affects everyone in the family, especially the children. We looked at three critical aspects of dads' economic stability: employment, education, and housing.

Unemployment. There are particular challenges that young minority men face in obtaining employment, especially young men with low levels of education and lack of a high school diploma or a history of incarceration. Not only are 20% of these young men unemployed, but the trend in their unemployment rate (except Asian men) has been rising since 2008. Turning the curve on this trend will be a major challenge, but it is critically important to do so. Research on unemployed fathers shows that their inability to fulfill their financial responsibilities often drives them away from their children.

⁹ Page numbers in parentheses refer to the graph and detailed analysis of the data trends for each indicator.

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High School Graduation. High school graduation rates have changed very slowly. In 2011-2012, the on-time graduation rate for all students was 82.7. In 2012-2013 it rose to 85.5 for all students. Small but significant improvements among Black and Hispanic students are largely responsible for the overall statewide improvement rate. Even with this improvement, about a quarter of Black and more than a quarter of Hispanic students do not graduate on time.

Housing Costs. Seventy-seven percent of renter households with incomes less than \$50,000 are paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing. The percent of those households continues to rise. One of the major financial stresses families face is the cost of housing; this is especially so for those families with only one wage earner in the household or with two earners contributing at minimum wage. Research has consistently shown that paying more than 30 percent of income for housing creates challenges for paying for the other necessities of life including food, clothing, and medical care. It is not surprising given that the Connecticut has some of the highest housing costs in the country. Lack of affordable housing adds to the strains on families, and where fathers are not able to contribute to the household, there is the potential for greater strains on relationships and on the bonds between father and child, and between father and mother.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT/STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to support their children, dads need to be healthy in all senses, including being economically self-sufficient and sufficiently educated to navigate the systems with which they must interact to achieve economic success and be engaged members of their community.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

STRATEGY 1

Partner with existing agencies and programs that provide training/job search assistance for employment to ensure that the special needs of fathers are incorporated into those agencies/programs.

- Adult Education- including GED/trades/ job training /career tracks- all connected
- Job funnel has a follow-up program that would work well for working fathers
- Mentoring
- Connect FI to community college network
- Job readiness training and support
- Identify employers seeking employees- job developers
- Continuum of support services based on assessed needs
- Follow-up support services to ensure job retention. These services may be best delivered in conjunction with existing fatherhood programs since employment programs

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rarely have resources (other than the Jobs funnels) to continue support after employment has been achieved

- Address barriers to employment including transportation, access to clothing and work attire, etc.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The Department of Labor is the recommended lead agency for this strategy.

PARTNERS

- CFI
- DSS
- Adult Education
- Community Colleges
- State University System
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Housing
- Local Non- Profits
- Employers

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Convene meeting of lead and partner agencies to develop action steps	X	X	

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- % of dads indicating satisfaction with program
- % of dads who successfully complete the program
- % of dads who gain full-time employment
- % of dads who increase hours worked
- % of dads who are provided health insurance through employer
- % of dads who maintain employment at 3 months, 6 months, 1 year

EVIDENCE BASE

- Anderson, E.A., Kohler, J.K., Letiecq, B.L. (2002). “Low-Income Fathers and “Responsible Fatherhood” Programs: A qualitative Investigation of Participants’ Experiences.” *Family Relations*. 51.2
- Hero, J. “Connecticut’s Economy in Recession: Trends in Employment and Unemployment.” CT Voices for Children. May, 2009.

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- Astone1, N.M, Dariotis1, J., Sonenstein1, F., Pleck, J. & Hynes, K. “How Do Men’s Work Lives Change After Fatherhood?” Accessed at http://fatherhood.human.cornell.edu/ttf/upload/draftforjfei_0108.pdf

There are significant studies that demonstrate the importance of supportive services, especially for those individuals who have not had steady work for a while or have experienced a significant period of unemployment (such as men who have been incarcerated).

<https://www.bja.gov/publications/csg-reentry-and-employment.pdf>

<http://www.prudential.com/documents/public/VeteransEmploymentChallenges.pdf>

STRATEGY 2

Connect access to insurance, physical health, mental health and addiction prevention treatment services to fatherhood efforts as part of a holistic approach. External systems (housing, etc.) need to be a part of this effort (strategy 4 in original outline for this domain)

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The recommended lead for this strategy is the Department of Health and Addiction Services.

PARTNERS

- DSS
- Hospitals
- Department of Housing
- Local nonprofit providers
- Employers
-

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- % of dads indicating satisfaction with program
- % of dads who successfully complete the program
- % of dads who gain full-time employment
- % of dads who increase hours worked
- % of dads who are provided health insurance through employer
- % of dads who maintain employment at 3 months, 6 months, 1 year

EVIDENCE BASE

STRATEGY 3

Provide support services to ensure job retention. These services may be best delivered in conjunction with existing fatherhood programs since employment programs rarely have resources to continue support after employment has been achieved.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The Department of Labor is the recommended lead agency for this strategy.

PARTNERS

DSS

- Department of Housing
- Local Non- Profits
- Employers

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- % of dads indicating satisfaction with program
- % of dads who successfully complete the program
- % of dads who gain full-time employment
- % of dads who increase hours worked
- % of dads who are provided health insurance through employer
- % of dads who maintain employment at 3 months, 6 months, 1 year

EVIDENCE BASE

- <https://www.bja.gov/publications/csg-reentry-and-employment.pdf> ;
<http://www.prudential.com/documents/public/VeteransEmploymentChallenges.pdf>

Domain 2:

Fathers in healthy relationships with their children, co-parents, significant others

WHAT DATA DO WE HAVE?

- Percent of female-headed, single-parent households in poverty (page 11)
- Percent of all children living in poverty (page 27)
- Percent of men 25+ without a high school diploma (page 26)
- Maltreatment of children under 18 (page 26)

WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?

- Percent of divorced fathers with joint custody or other co-parenting relationships
- Percent of 8th and 10th grade youth with a positive relationship with their father or a father figure.

What do we know?

Children Living in Poverty. Not all of the children living in poverty in these female-headed households are without the consistent presence of a father. However, nearly 20 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, half of Black children, and nearly 30% of Hispanic children are without a father identified as part of their household.

No high school diploma. Even when a father is present in the household, the frequent lack of living wage employment and lack of education impact both mothers and fathers and contribute to the level of poverty in these households and contribute to limitations on their children's preparation for success in school. The rate of men over 25 without a high school diploma declined by one percent from 2008 to 2012, a decline of little consequence, especially since the need for education has increased during this period and the wages for these men have declined in real terms.

Rate of Maltreatment. The rate of maltreatment among children (ages 0-18) per 1000 children in the population includes both abuse and neglect. The vast majority of cases (approximately 85%) are reports of neglect, not abuse. There has been some significant decline in these rates from 2009 to 2013. Research shows that the presence of a father in the household is related to lower levels of abuse and neglect.¹⁰

¹⁰ https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-programs/for-your-fathers/father-presence#Can_Fathers_Prevent_Child_Abuse_and_Neglect

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT/STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Research indicates that the unique manner in which fathers interact with their children contributes to the healthy development of children from infancy through early adulthood (Heinrich, 2007).

In recent years, the critical link between promoting responsible fatherhood and positive outcomes for children has resulted in a growing body of literature and research and has attracted the attention of the national community of foundations and organizations including those supporting child welfare practice such as Casey Family Programs, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and American Humane.

Today more Connecticut children are growing up without their biological father in the home than at any point in our nation's history. Data suggests that from 2004 to 2010 the number of Connecticut children residing in single parent homes increased by 14% from 214,000 to 249,000, surpassing the national increase of 12% from 21,361,000 to 24,297,000 (U.S. Census Data 2010).

Research indicates that children, whose biological fathers are absent, are on average 2-3 times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents (Horn & Sylvester, 2002, p.15). Conversely, children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers (Horn & Sylvester, 2002, p.152). In addition to the impact and consequences associated with children as individuals, communities with high levels of father absence tend to also have high rates of poverty, crime, and young men in prison (Blankenhorn, 1995; Merrill, Schweizer, Schweizer, & Smith, 1996; Popenoe, 1996).

Further, father presence contributions to child safety, National Child Abuse and Neglect (NCANDS) and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting Systems (AFCARS) data suggests father presence contributes to lower rates of repeat reports, shorter lengths of stay in foster care, higher reunification rates, fewer placement episodes, and greater stability in foster care (Velasquez, Edwards, Vincent and Reynolds, 2007).

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

STRATEGY 1

Expanded Authority of Family Support Magistrates and Juvenile Court System

The expansion of the authority of Family Support magistrates and Juvenile Court judges is anticipated to increase the level of participation of fathers in the lives of their children. Lack of defined visitation schedules and clear understanding of visitation rights creates a barrier to fathers' spending time with their children. Additionally, the ability of fathers to spend time with

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their children should not be based on their ability to pay support. Although financial support is a critical issue, it should not be a barrier. Lastly in this area, providing or requiring parenting classes for unmarried parents is seen as an opportunity for parents to clarify expectations and improve communication about parenting and their child’s development.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

PARTNERS

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
	Allow for order and enforcement of parenting/co-parenting classes for unmarried parents	X		
	Expanded, state-wide authority to issue/enforce visitation orders in conjunction with support orders – and perhaps independent of support orders		X	
	Examine need to expand authority of juvenile courts to address same issues			X

DESIRED OUTCOMES

EVIDENCE BASE

- Hartford Magistrate/Family Court Pilot Program (reports available?)

STRATEGY 2

Acknowledgement, Custody, Visitation

Active engagement of fathers is critical to the success of children and families. Fathers need to be identified and if appropriate, contacted to participate in activities and services with their children. They need and deserve similar parenting education and support services as those provided to mothers.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The recommended lead for this strategy is the Department of Social Services

PARTNERS

- Judicial Branch
- DCF
- SDE
- Community partners

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Convene meeting of lead and partner agencies to develop action steps		X	
	DCF will continue to support the Fatherhood Community of Practice in the development and recommendations of policy, practice and processes to support, promote and ensure strong fatherhood case practice/involvement, inclusive of the juvenile justice population.	X	X	X
	Implementation of the Fatherhood Firewall for all cases transferred from intake to ongoing services... The Fatherhood Firewall is intended to ensure the fathers of children involved with the Department are identified, located and engaged. When this is not possible in the first 45 days of a case, a plan is to be developed to ensure this is achieved. *		X	
	Create a fatherhood message to educate father of their rights and responsibilities and how DCF could support them in being a responsible and positively involved father.		X	
	DCF will continue to support the Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELT). The purpose of FELT is to engage key community stakeholders as partners in developing strategies for supporting fathers and families. FELT also act as an ongoing mechanism for DCF staff to discuss successes, challenges, and lessons learned in practice.		X	

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	DCF will develop practice standards/guide and accompanying training for all current and incoming agency personnel to ensure fathers are treated equal to mothers.			
	DCF will review and analyze the notification pilot between DCF/DOC for consideration for statewide implementation. The pilot developed a protocol between DCF and DOC to improve and increase communication between systems when fathers who are incarcerated have children involved with DCF with the goal of increasing father engagement and participation in case planning.			
	DCF will create father-friendly environments in the area offices to support visitation between fathers and their children.			
	The Wilderness School will continue to provide activities in support of the "Dad's Matter Too" road race.			
	The Wilderness School will schedule "Retreat Days" as requested by area office staff and facilitate a ropes course/teambuilding day for fathers involved with the Department and their DCF social worker.			
	DCF will plan and organize the statewide Dad's Matter Too run/walk annually.			
	DCF will analyze services and spending for current contracts to ensure fathers are included in the provision of services offered to mothers including parenting education and coaching and supervised visitation.			
	DCF will review contracts to ensure the inclusion of fathers.			
	DCF will ensure fathers are engaged in the case planning process for their children. This includes participation in Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), Considered Removal and Permanency Teamings.			
	DCF will continue to offer fathers (whenever appropriate) regular visitation with their children in DCF care. This includes access to transportation to facilitate visitation.			
	The CT Juvenile Training School (CJTS) will continue to offer the two programs to support young adolescent/adult fathers. The first is the "DoctorDad" program, for new and expectant fathers. The other program is the "Baby Elmo" program, which includes a group component, skill building, practicing and coaching.			

In Federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) and subsequent Connecticut Comprehensive Outcome Reviews (CCOR) conducted in Connecticut dating back to 2001, rates of achievement in performance indicators measuring agency efforts and effectiveness on behalf of both mothers and fathers have been the lowest of all areas of service delivery. Per the federal performance methodology, jurisdictions rates of achievement in key well-being areas are only as strong as their effectiveness in serving both parents. Often, ineffective practices were identified on behalf of fathers amid optimal service to mother and child. This performance has

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remained static despite a decade of family centered trainings and initiatives focusing on the family as a whole, rather than the area most needing improvement, knowledge and skills.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A statewide standardized practice, including administrative divisions, regions and facilities
 - Parents (mothers and fathers) are treated equally, and we are engaging all parents in the care of their children
 - Equal visits with fathers
 - Increase in services for fathers
 - Increase father participation in ACR and other planning meetings

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Fiscal commitment to support fathers, including increased services that are father-specific
- Increased father-involvement
 - Increased reunification rates with fathers
 - Increase in paternal relative placements
 - Increased involvement of paternal relatives
 - Increase in placement diversion – children live with their fathers
- Kids do better
 - Better academic performance
 - Decrease in delinquent, antisocial behaviors
 - Improved physical and mental health
- Fathers are empowered
 - Fathers know their rights
 - Fathers have access to services

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a “promising practice,” meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

STRATEGY 3

Child Support Reform

The existing child support policies, procedures and cultural norms can intentionally and systematically be transformed to better meet the needs of low-income, noncustodial fathers. The child support system needs to support fatherhood by linking directly to court services for dads, including assistance with visitation; it should encourage a parenting relationship, not just a financial relationship; and it should consider the impact of orders on visitation. Active engagement of fathers is critical to the success of children and families. Fathers need to be identified and, if appropriate, contacted to participate in activities and services with their children. They need and deserve similar parenting education and support services to those provided to mothers. ***[Major strategy requiring careful articulation of need to change, highest priorities, and expected outcomes.]***

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The recommended co-leads for this strategy are the Department of Social Services, Bureau of Child Support Enforcement and Judicial Branch, Support Enforcement Services

PARTNERS

- State MOU partners
- Community-based agencies serving fathers/families
- Judicial Branch divisions
- Statewide Legal Services
- Connecticut Women's and Children's Education Fund (CWEALF)
- Office of the Attorney General

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
	DCF will provide fathers involved with DCF access to information regarding child support available by DSS.			
1	BCSE, SES, DOC, CSSD (Family Services and Adult Probation), and Court Operations (Court Service Centers) will work together to build on existing collaborations to deliver child support related information to fathers accessing each system or program.		X	
2	BCSE, in conjunction with Judicial Branch partners, will develop a tracking system which will result in the ability to measure a parent's participation in fatherhood activities and the resulting outcomes.	X		
3	BCSE and SES will continue to perform outreach to incarcerated parents, with a focus on establishment of orders and modifications of orders to reduce the growth of child support debt while a parent is incarcerated.			X
4	BCSE and SES will re-evaluate policies and procedures for providing child support services to fathers as they enter and exit prison.			X
5	BCSE and SES will ensure that parents know the FSM court may order custody and visitation agreements, and Family Support Magistrates should enter such orders where the parents want such orders and have reached agreements concerning custody and visitation.			X
6	BCSE and SES will work with Dept. of Labor and community providers to identify employment and training programs available to child support parents and work with FSMs when appropriate to refer parents to these programs during the establishment and enforcement aspects of the child support program.			X

OUTCOMES

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a "promising practice," meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

STRATEGY 4

Child Welfare System Reform

In 2009, the DCF began efforts to plan, develop and implement strategies for supporting the Department’s work with fathers and their families and established the Fatherhood Matters Initiative. The overall arching goal of Fatherhood Matters is to increase the involvement of fathers and their extended kinship networks in Connecticut’s child welfare system. At present, all (6) regions and one facility (CJTS) have designated liaisons to support their efforts at the local level and are involved in some phase of ongoing planning, with the ultimate goal of creating an infrastructure for meaningful fatherhood engagement consistent with the Department’s Practice Model. The Department successfully established its Fatherhood Engagement Community of Practice (COP) in 2012. The COP is comprised of DCF regional staff, a community provider and a consumer, from each of the six regions. The committee is charged with; coordinating statewide efforts to become a more inclusive child welfare system, implementation of strategies for promoting the inclusion of fathers and their kinship networks in the child welfare process, coordinating forums for training, and develop partnerships with key stakeholders, cross pollinating successes, challenges and lessons learned, and formulating family centered recommendations to ensure policy development and statewide practice changes. Recommendations generated from the committee are funneled through to the DCF Change Management Committee for final approval.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

The Department of Children and Families is the recommended lead for this strategy.

PARTNERS

- DOC
- DSS
- Community Providers

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Develop Father inclusive policy and practice guidelines, and recommendations across concurrent family centered initiatives (DRS, CFTM, ACRI, Kinship).		X	X
2	Form Regional Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Teams (FELT) charged with strengthening local partnerships and jointly guiding the fatherhood work across offices.	X		

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3	Assess strengths and address gaps in local and statewide service array and capacity (IFP/FES re-design, credentialing, pilot programming) utilizing data.	X	X	
4	Create linkage between regional office teams, fathers, and community providers to support practice and share successes, challenges and lessons learned.	X		
5	Develop and implement strategies for supporting the Department’s efforts and effectiveness to engage fathers at key points in service delivery identified as needing improvement (e.g. SW/father visitation – involvement in case planning – needs assessment/service provision).			X

OUTCOMES

1. Statewide standardized policies and practices, across all administrative divisions, regions and facilities that will support a change in the messaging around fathers, to include a shift in culture and change in values.
2. Increase in fiscal commitment to support fathers and increase services that are father-specific.
3. Fathers will have the opportunity to be more involved in the lives of their children.

EVIDENCE BASE

Domain 3: Young people prepared to be responsible parents

WHAT DATA DO WE HAVE?

- On-time high school graduation rate (page 13)
- Percent of Men 25+ without a high school diploma (page 26)
- Number of births to teen mothers (page 14)

WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?

- Percent of 8th and 10th graders who have children
- Percent of 8th and 10th graders that see their father or father figure once a week or more

What do we know?

High school diploma. While there has been some increase in on-time graduation rates, 30% of Hispanics and 24% of Blacks do not graduate on time. Preparation for fatherhood begins with children acquiring the skills for healthy relationships. While high school graduation does not guarantee acquisition of those skills, failure to graduate from high school or graduating late is often associated with social/emotional limitations as well as academic ones. Young people struggling to achieving success in adulthood often find their choices limited in a society that demands higher education or advanced skills. Society tends to see these young people without those degrees and skills as unprepared to be successful members of society. Much worse, these young people tend to see themselves as failures and poor role models for their children.

Men 25+ without a high school diploma. Men 25 and over without a high school diploma are likely to be stuck in low wage jobs that provide little sense of accomplishment and make fulfilling their roles as fathers and husbands extremely difficult. Society assumes they are failures, something they may internalize, causing difficulty in their relations with partners and children.

Births to teen mothers. While the number of such births has dramatically declined, the burden of an infant or young child on a young woman still developing emotionally and intellectually is substantial. Teen mothers are at high risk of not completing high school. Attending college is even more of a challenge.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT/STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prevention is universally recognized as a key component of any work within the fields of health and social sciences. The ultimate goal of any prevention program is to eradicate the occurrence of the condition or behavior. Three levels of prevention are commonly recognized and provide the rational for the three-tiered approach to strategy development within this domain. Primary or universal prevention targets a whole population prior to the existence of negative conditions in an effort to introduce protective factors that can help people avoid negative

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behaviors/conditions. Secondary or selective prevention provides early intervention for a select portion of the population when risk factors of the select portion suggest an increased likelihood or risk of involvement in the negative behaviors/conditions. Tertiary or indicated prevention provides services that help to manage risk factors and circumstances and build protective factors in order to improve lives by reducing the prevalence or seriousness of the problem. To prevent high-risk behaviors, or improved the conditions/behaviors associated with the problem, in this instance fathering a child at a young age and/or abandoning contact with the child, a combination of these levels of intervention lead to greater success.

Research shows that children who grow up in a home without a dad have an increased risk of living in poverty, doing poorly in school, having emotional and behavioral problems and the list goes on. These risk factors impact children's day-to-day lives and follow them into the future.

Children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents. Children of young parents are 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school than the children of older mothers and have lower performance on standardized tests. Children of teen parents suffer higher rates of abuse and neglect than if their mothers delayed childbearing. Sons of teen mothers are 13 percent more likely to end up in prison. Daughters of teen parents are 22 percent more likely to become teen mothers. Adverse childhood experiences such as physical abuse, verbal abuse and witnessing intimate partner violence are linked with having sex at an early age (before the age of 15) (Hillis et al, 2001); approximately 50-60 percent of adolescents who become pregnant have a history of childhood sexual or physical abuse (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994); girls in high school who reported experiencing dating violence were four to six times more likely to have ever been pregnant than their peers who had not experienced dating violence (Silverman et. al, 2001).

Teen pregnancy is linked to a host of other critical social issues. For example, in 2010 the costs of teen childbearing cost the country's taxpayers at least \$9.4 billion in direct costs associated with health care, foster care, criminal justice and public assistance, as well as lost tax revenues. Almost one-half of all teen mothers and over three-quarters of unmarried teen mothers began receiving welfare within five years of the birth of their first child (National Campaign, 2010). Connecticut Department of Public Health officials in 2010 estimated the total cost to taxpayers of teen pregnancy at \$116 million dollars.

According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, in *Why It Matters: Teen Childbearing, Single Parenthood, and Father Involvement*, "...teen mothers are at high risk for single parenthood and especially high risk of parenthood without the biological father in the home". Further, "Reducing teen pregnancy can improve child well-being by increasing the chances that children are born into two-parent families and, in particular, families with married parents."

Relationships Matter: Strengthening Vulnerable Youth provides extensive background material on the importance of guiding youth in developing the skills necessary for healthy relationships. This *Proceedings Summary* reflects outcomes and discussion from a 2009 conference sponsored

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by The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

<http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/files/RelationshipsMatter.pdf>

Conversations between teen pregnancy prevention and marriage and relationship education proponents have led to the acknowledgement that the two topic areas do not need to be mutually exclusive, but that the joining of pregnancy prevention education with relationship education is highly feasible. With a shared goal of improving the lives of young people, a partnership would lead to the inclusion of pregnancy prevention content within the framework of a healthy relationship curriculum. (www.healthymarriageinfo.org)

Disadvantaged youth often lack positive role models and do not know what a healthy relationship looks like. In the interest of decreasing the negative impact for children of teen parents, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has looked at skill-building programs that incorporate the development of healthy relationships. Its work suggests that there is great potential in helping existing community-based organizations that serve at-risk youth to realign their programming within an over-arching goal of creating a culture of healthy relationships.

Bouchet, Stacey (2009). More than Jobs: Providing Disadvantaged Teens and Young Adults with Healthy Relationship Skills as a Strategy to Reduce Poverty and Improve Child Well-Being. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.dibbleinstitute.org/>

Helping teens develop the life-skills they need to develop healthy relationships, and ensuring that pregnancy prevention skills are included, is an important step in reducing teen pregnancies, as well as reducing the number of children growing up without the presence of their dad.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

The strategies below recognize the value of a multi-faceted approach that involves families, schools and communities working in concert to ensure all young people have the skills they need to avoid risky behaviors and make decisions that guide them on a path towards productive and responsible adulthood and parenthood.

STRATEGY 1

Strategy 1 is a primary prevention strategy targeting students in all schools and all grades.

School systems statewide implement a K-12 sexual health curriculum that promotes the health and well-being of all students. This should include, but not be limited to, the knowledge necessary to prevent HIV/STD/teen pregnancy and skills to develop healthy age-appropriate relationships.

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LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended lead agency for this strategy is the CT State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

PARTNERS

- Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
- Local school districts

- State associations of school officials
- Child advocates
- Health care providers and associations
- Youth Service Bureaus
- After-school providers

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Work with CT State Department of Education (CSDE), Department of Public Health (DPH), state associations of school officials and local school districts to increase the number of Connecticut school districts that complete the CDC School Health Profile on a biennial basis in order to compile and track data on what sexual health topics are being taught in Connecticut schools.		X	
2	Build awareness of the need for developmentally-appropriate sexual health education.			X
3	Advocate for inclusion of sexual health education taught by a certified legally-qualified teacher, as part of a planned, ongoing and systematic health education program, including components that deal with becoming a responsible adult and developing healthy age-appropriate relationships.		X	
	DCF will ensure youth in care are receiving sexual health education provided by the school system they are enrolled in.			
	USDII schools will continue to use the DPH curriculum Be Proud! Be Responsible!			

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OUTCOMES

- Decrease in the rate of births to teen mothers.
- Decrease in the rate of abuse and neglect of children with parents under the age of 21.
- Increase in the percent of men age 18-21 who have gainful employment or are enrolled in post-secondary education/training.
- Reduce rates of unprotected sex among target population.

EVIDENCE BASE

The first step in changing policy related to the teaching of sexual health topics requires a complete understanding of the current policies of Connecticut's 164 school districts. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), maintains a [State School Health Policy Database](#), which includes a comprehensive set of laws and policies from all 50 states on more than 40 school health topics. This database is maintained with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is designed to supplement information contained in the CDC's [School Health Policies and Programs Study](#) (SHPPS).

The focus of the database is primarily on authoritative binding policies and other information that gives a detailed picture of a state's school health policies and activities. The database is intended to facilitate the sharing of school health improvement strategies and policy language across states and to help state, district and school practitioners access their state's school health policies in one convenient location. Profile data is used to:

- describe school health policies and precedents and compare them across jurisdictions;
- identify professional development needs;
- plan and monitor progress;
- support health-related policies and legislation;
- seek funding; and
- garner support for future surveys.¹¹

All states receive a list of randomly selected schools that are asked to complete the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) questionnaire. Middle and high school principals and lead health teachers complete and submit the self-administered questionnaire either online or by mail. When 70 percent of the selected schools within a community complete the survey the data is considered to be weighted. The data provided in the State School Health Policy Database is relied upon to provide valid current data for health-related grant applications prepared by state-level and community-based health departments and programs. States not meeting the benchmark for weighted data have incomplete data included, which does not provide valid data for monitoring and grant writing.

¹¹ http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/

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In 2012 the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) was unable to obtain 70% participation among the randomly selected schools; therefore, the data currently reported for Connecticut is not weighted. For example, if weighted data were available Connecticut would be able to report the range and median percentage of schools that teach 22 key HIV/STD/pregnancy prevention topics in a required course by grade level and fact sheets would be available regarding this topic, sexual risk behaviors and other health-related topics.
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/index.htm>

To ensure the completion of the questionnaire, some states require completion by state statute. Such an action in Connecticut would ensure that weighted data on current school policies was consistently available.

The CDC reports that close to two thirds of high school students have sex before they graduate, with approximately 40 percent reporting they did not use a condom the last time they had sex. The consequences of unprotected sex among young people (13-24) has led to this age group having the highest rates of sexually-transmitted disease as compared to other age groups. In addition, three in 10 young women become pregnant before the age of 20.
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/about/hivstd_prevention.htm

In 2013 the Department of Public Health (DPH) and CSDE partnered using Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant funds received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to fund the implementation of an evidence-based intervention focusing on HIV/STD/Teen Pregnancy Prevention. Capitol Region Education Council and the Connecticut Technical High School System each selected two high schools to participate in this pilot program. *Reducing the Risk* and *Making Proud Choices* programs were implemented in health classes during the 2013-14 school year with 504 students participating. Teachers and students alike expressed high satisfaction in the program. The 2014 PREP Performance Measure Report indicates that students made large gains in knowledge, were interested in the topics, and enjoyed the variety of learning activities. As a result of participating in the program, the majority of students had an improved ability to use refusal skills, increased their ease in talking to a parent about sexuality, were more likely to abstain or postpone having sex and, for those who were sexually active, more likely to use birth control measures. Both school systems have plans in place to expand the use of these evidence-based programs to all of their schools.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 10-16b states that school program instruction shall include health and safety, which may include among other listed topics, human growth and development, disease prevention and physical, mental and emotional health. Section 10-16c provides for the development of family life education curriculum. It goes on to state that topics shall include, but not be limited to, family planning, human sexuality, parenting, nutrition and the emotional, physical, psychological, hygienic, economic and social aspects of family life (no information on abortion may be included). In 2012, in accordance with the statute, the CSDE published *Guidelines for the Sexual Health Education Component of Comprehensive Health*

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Education, which was based on the *National Health Education Standards* and the *National Sexuality Education Standards*. However, CGS Sections 10-16d-f state that it is not mandatory for a district to develop such a curriculum and for those that do, students cannot be required to participate in such a program.

In January 2012, New York City Public Schools began mandatory inclusion of sexual health education as part of the required health curriculum. New York utilizes two evidence-based curriculums, *HealthSmart* for middle-school students and *HealthSmart* and *Reducing the Risk* for high-school students. The goals of these curriculums are to: 1) delay the initiation of sexual intercourse; 2) increase the use of contraceptives for those who do choose to become sexually active; and 3) increase parent-child communication regarding sexuality and contraceptives. Currently 22 states plus the District of Columbia require public schools to teach sex education.

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-policies-on-sex-education-in-schools.aspx>

STRATEGY 2

Strategy 2 is a secondary or early intervention strategy targeting adolescents at-risk of early parenting.

Positive youth development programs offered in the community for young people (e.g. Boys and Girls Clubs, Youth Service Bureaus (YSB), Family Resource Centers (FRC)) incorporate knowledge and skill development needed to prevent HIV/STD/ teen pregnancy. These community-based organizations also may provide opportunities for parents to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to talk with their child(ren) about sexual health.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended lead agency for this strategy is the CT State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

PARTNERS

- DCF
- Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Connecticut
- Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
- Community-based organizations serving at-risk youth

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Training for community-based organizations on how to incorporate practices that promote healthy relationships, teen pregnancy prevention, and parent-child sexuality conversations	X		
2	Community-based organizations use evidence-based/informed practices when providing programming for at-risk youth on healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention, communication skills and sexuality-related topics.	X	X	
	USDII schools will continue to use the DPH curriculum Be Proud! Be Responsible!			

OUTCOMES

- Decrease in the rate of births to teen mothers.
- Decrease in the prevalence of sexual risk-taking behaviors.

EVIDENCE BASE

The National Fatherhood Initiative has recently announced a partnership with The Dibble Institute to offer two curriculums focusing on the development of healthy relationships which are suitable for use with at-risk youth and young adults, including parenting dads and moms and non-parenting young people.

Relationships Smarts PLUS is listed on The National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices. *Love Notes* is an adaptation of Relationships Smarts PLUS and is undergoing evaluation as a pregnancy prevention strategy for at-risk youth through funding from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, an office of the Administration for Children & Families at the US Department of Health & Human Services. The focus of both curriculums is the development of decision-making skills related to relationships, sex, dating and pregnancy prevention.

The CDC lists a number of evidence-informed curriculums on HIV/STD/pregnancy prevention and the skills necessary to avoid risky behaviors. Connecticut Department of Social Services funds a statewide program using *Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP)* curriculum, which is a teen pregnancy prevention program where students in middle- and high-school focus on relevant issues to teens, including making good decisions and participating in regular community service learning and neighborhood improvement projects.

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/about/hivstd_prevention.htm

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Planned Parenthood of Southern New England has certified trainers available in the following evidence-based curricula:

- Be Proud! Be Responsible!
- Cuidate!
- Love Notes
- Making a Difference!
- Making Proud Choices!
- Reducing the Risk
- SHARP (Sexual Health and Adolescent Risk Prevention)

In addition, the agency offers a 90-minute workshop (*Real Life Real Talk*) within communities throughout Connecticut on helping parents learn the communications skills and facts they need to talk with their child about sexuality.

STRATEGY 3

Strategy 3 is a tertiary or targeted prevention strategy targeting young fathers under the age of twenty-four years old.

Programs are available in schools and/or community organizations (Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens (SPPT), Young Parents Program (YPP), Triple P (PPP) and Nurturing Families Network (NFN) Home Visiting Program) to provide teen dads with the support, case management and skills needed to handle the responsibilities of fatherhood. Evidence-based/informed interventions shall be used to implement programs that include topics such as co-parenting, healthy relationships, attachment, child development, education supports and workforce development activities.

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended lead agency for this strategy is the CT State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

PARTNERS

- Office of Early Childhood
- Community-based organizations serving teen fathers
- Local school districts and advocacy groups

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Identification of teen parents within the education setting to provide more accurate data on the need for services and help to assure that all parenting students are connected to the services necessary to balance their dual role of parent and student.		X	
2	Increase financial and technical support needed to expand the number of young fathers served by evidence-based programs that address the needs of young fathers.	X		

OUTCOMES

- Increase in the graduation rate for young men.
- Increase in the percent of men age 18-21 who have gainful employment or are enrolled in post-secondary education/training.
- Decrease the number of repeat pregnancies
- Decrease the number of domestic violence incidents between teen fathers and the mothers of their children.

EVIDENCE BASE

Love Notes has been identified as being effective for use with parenting teens. The curriculum does not require training. However, Planned Parenthood has a trained facilitator available to provide training and support to assure facilitators have the required knowledge and skills to address sexuality topics with teens. This curriculum could be incorporated into existing programs that work with teen parents or made available to organizations wishing to expand their work with this population. Evidence-based curriculums such as 24/7 Dad and Nurturing Fathers are being used by programs funded by Department of Social Services and Children’s Trust Fund.

Outcomes from existing Connecticut programs indicate the value of education, life-skill development, case management and support to help pregnant and parenting teens improve outcomes (increased high school graduation rates, improved health outcomes, improved parent relationships/co-parenting skills).

Domain 4:

Men involved in the criminal justice system supported in being responsible fathers

WHAT DATA DO WE HAVE?

- Probationer 24-Month Re-arrest Rate (page 14)
- Men 25+ with No High School Diploma (page 26)
- Two-year Arrest Recidivism Rates by Age Group (page 26)

WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?

- Percent of fathers among all males in the criminal justice system
- Percent of fathers in criminal justice system with custody
- Percent of youth in the juvenile justice system who are fathers

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Probationer Re-arrest rate. This rate has shown significant decline since 2007 and is at its lowest rate since 2006, the first year this measure was reported. The secondary indicator of recidivism reported in Section IV shows that the strongest likelihood of returning to prison, as predicted by arrest rates, is for the youngest group of men, those under 23, 70 percent of whom will have been re-arrested within 2 years. This alarming rate, along with the education and unemployment rates for young men and especially young men of color, makes it clear where the challenges of fatherhood are likely to be most prevalent. The criminal justice system has not historically supported the connection between fathers and children as a primary need during any phase of the process, including arrest, arraignment, pre-trial, sentencing, incarceration, or release. Outcomes for the parents, such as recidivism rates, and for children, such as graduation from high school, are more likely to be positive when efforts are made to continue these significant relationships.

Men 25+ without a high school diploma. Since 2008, men without a high school diploma has only one percentage point overall (from 12% to 11%). There have been small declines in the percent of Hispanic and Black males without a diploma. But, in 2012, there were still 16% of Black males and 30% of Hispanic males without a high school diploma. Men without a high school diploma are at a greater disadvantage within society than those with high school diplomas or college education. Those individuals with criminal records face the greatest challenges in avoiding recidivism, being unable to obtain work that pays well enough to reduce the temptations to seek alternative, mostly illegal ways to earn a living. These men also face the challenge of how to be successful role models for their children.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT/STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Involvement in the criminal justice system often has a profoundly negative impact on fathers' engagement with their children, including lengthy physical and emotional separation from children. The criminal justice system has not historically supported the connection between fathers and children as a primary need during any phase of the process, including arrest, arraignment, pre-trial, sentencing, incarceration, or release. Outcomes for the parent and the children are more likely to be positive when efforts are made to continue these significant relationships. Research shows, for instance, a reduction in recidivism when a parent is actively involved with his other children upon release. Further, children are less likely to come into contact with criminal justice agencies when their fathers are positively engaged in their lives.

EVIDENCE BASE

From the Journal of Extension <http://www.joe.org/joe/2005october/a7.php> Fit 2-B FATHERS: *The Effectiveness of Extension Programming with Incarcerated Fathers*

“Prisoners often do not exhibit internal locus of control and the ability to empathize with others (Winters, 2000), both key factors influencing positive social and parenting behaviors. The correctional education literature suggests that social and parenting skills education for the corrections population can improve social behaviors (e.g., Schippers, Maerker, & DeFuentes-Merillas, 2001). In fact, prisoners who gain personal, family-life, and social skills are empowered to make a positive reentry into the community following release (Reinhart, 1991; Williams, 1996), are less likely to recidivate (Carlson, 1995; Jancic, 1998), and potentially are more likely to be the good fathers they desire to be (Hairston, 1998).”

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

STRATEGY 1

All entities of the criminal justice system should be mandated to include fatherhood as a central priority. CJ system needs consistent approach to fatherhood throughout entire continuum: arrest, arraignment, pre-trial, sentencing, incarceration, and release. This includes increased capacity for data collection and sharing throughout the system. [Cross-reference: Policy, Service Delivery System Design

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended co-leads for this strategy are the Judicial Branch, with Court Support Services Division as point agency, and the Department of Correction

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PARTNERS

- Police Chiefs’ Association
- POST
- Office of the Chief State’s Attorney
- Office of the Chief Public Defender
- Office of the Chief Court Administrator
- Judicial Branch Court Operations
- Community Providers
- CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
3	Identify agencies, both administrative and court location specific, that utilize fatherhood practices and programs (gender and culturally responsive) within the CJ system to determine gaps as well as current collaborations		X	X
6	Examine practices that directly enhance the father-child relationship during incarceration, specifically child-friendly visitation and addressing child support		X	X
5	Identify and Formalize Fatherhood-Related Data Collection, with consistent collection within the CJ system		X	X
4	Identify and resolve barriers to data collection (internal computer system capacity/ external impacts regarding fathers (suspicion/fear)	X	X	X
8	Develop and conduct formalized on-going training regarding the importance of fatherhood within the CJ system		X	X
2	Introduction of fatherhood principles within all aspects of CJ involvement – formal assessment of current practices in terms of policy, protocols, and service delivery from arraignment through release into the community		X	X
7	Offer formal, evidence- based fatherhood programming as an enhancement to current menu of interventions/program within DOC, for fathers on probation/parole, and in community	X	X	
9	Conduct formal evaluation regarding the response to fathers and fatherhood within the CJ system	X	X	X
1	Formal on-going workgroup of the criminal justice system (including a focus on data collection and computer system interaction) regarding fatherhood-outside of and distinct from the Fatherhood Advisory Council (FAC)		X	X
	Continue to offer the two programs to support young adolescent/adult fathers at the Connecticut Junior Training School (CJTS), "DoctorDad" and "Baby Elmo" programs.	X		

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OUTCOMES

- 1) Number of structured fatherhood programs offered within the criminal justice system (during incarceration and in the community (probation/parole and pre-trial)
- 2) Effective Fatherhood program outcomes – program completion rates, recidivism rates post program completion, program completion rates and impact on behavior while in DOC facility, Violations of probation post program completion (technical violations)
- 3) Enhanced visitation policy/practice for fathers – Number of visits (per quarter, per year) tracked over time. Types of Visitation offered (per quarter, per year)—in person, video-conferencing, telephone visits
- 4) Number of Child Support Modifications completed as a result of direct interaction with criminal justice professional staff
- 5) Number of Fatherhood Specific Trainings offered to staff

EVIDENCE BASE

- No research articles were found regarding fatherhood as a central priority within the continuum of CJ system involvement. Most research centered on programming and visitation with family during incarceration.
- The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House “What Works” in Programs Serving Fathers Involved in the CJ System focused on the need for hiring and training staff with specialized experience working with incarcerated fathers and the requirement for program facilitation best practices. Several program models were identified that serve fathers during and after incarceration.
- The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House “What Works” in Fatherhood Programs outlined 10 strategies that are highly effective when delivering a fatherhood program, including the need for incentives to engage fathers and families.
- A Yale University research study looked specifically at the prison visitation policies of all 50 US states. The research demonstrated that there are many forms of visitation that can be used to connect a father and child. The research could be used to determine best practice and how CT compares to that standard.
- Wildeman and Western (2010)- looked at the implications of policies surrounding sentencing and the need for sentencing reform, especially as it related to fragile families.
- The Center for Policy Research (2000) conducted a review of the child support policies, procedures and programs. This research outlined some promising practices regarding effective approaches to containing the growth of arrears during incarceration.

STRATEGY 2

Special efforts needed to identify and support young dads in the Juvenile Justice system, many of whom have had little or no contact with their own dads. [Cross-reference: Domain 2, Service Delivery System Design]

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended co-leads for this strategy are the Department of Children and Families and Judicial Branch, with Court Support Services Division as point agency

PARTNERS

- Juvenile Probation Services
- Juvenile Parole (DOC?)
- Juvenile Detention Services
- Community Contracted Providers

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
2	Formalize data collection from narrative field to a required data point to be gathered at intake	X	X	X
3	Offer formal fatherhood programming as an enhancement to the current menu of community based interventions	X	X	X
1	Evaluate and update policies regarding visitation for JJ involved fathers and their children		X	
4	Support mentoring programs in the community	X	X	X
5	Mandate training for JJ system regarding the importance of supporting young fathers through information, programming, and a method to impact recidivism	X	X	X

OUTCOMES

- 1) Number of structured fatherhood programs offered within Juvenile Detention Services
- 2) Number of structured fatherhood programs offered within Juvenile Justice System (Juvenile Probation)

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- 3) Effective Fatherhood program outcomes – program completion rates, recidivism rates post program completion, program completion rates and impact on behavior while in Juvenile Detention, Violations of probation post program completion (technical violations)
- 4) Enhanced visitation policy/practice for teen fathers – Number of visits (per quarter, per year) tracked over time. Types of Visitation offered (per quarter, per year)—in person, video-conferencing, telephone visits
- 5) Number of Mentors recruited for teen fathers
- 6) Number of Fatherhood Specific Trainings offered to staff

EVIDENCE BASE

- Shannon and Abrams (2007) in the Journal of Contemporary Social Services review the connection between adolescent fatherhood and its impact on future recidivism. The finding and recommendations have potential for replication in Connecticut, especially as it relates to the time spent in Juvenile Detention facilities.
- Shade, Kools, Pinderhughes, and Weiss (2012)- Adolescent Fathers in the Justice System- this research focused on the issue and impact of gender/masculinity within the context of young fathers and their identity. Parent education and support are vital components for young fathers and mothers.
- Nurse (2003) in Social Forces- Fatherhood Arrested: Parenting from within the Juvenile Justice System- focused on the overlap between prison and young fatherhood in relation to the impact on families and the larger society/community. Policy change including parenting classes and enhanced visitation while incarcerated are discussed and viewed as vital for this population.
- The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House “What Works” in Teen Fatherhood Programs outlined 10 promising practices that should be utilized when delivering a fatherhood program for young parents. One promising practice highlighted is the use of mentoring to display positive role modeling. Effective teen programs also offer multiple services that go beyond just basic parent education.
- The Minnesota Fathers and Families Network identified several negative perceptions and false assumptions regarding young fathers that could serve as a foundation for work with the Juvenile Justice System. These barriers to successful interaction with, and understanding of, teen fathers have numerous policy and practice implications.

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STRATEGY 3

Improved and enhanced response regarding the impact on children whose parent and/or parents are currently or formerly in the criminal justice system. [Cross-reference: Domain 2, Service Delivery System Design]

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

Recommended lead for this strategy is the Department of Correction

PARTNERS

- Police Chiefs' Association
- POST
- all Judicial Branch Divisions
- Parole
- Department of Children and Families
- Community Providers
- CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence

ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level		
		Program	System	Policy
1	Formal on-going workgroup of the criminal justice system (including a focus on data collection and computer system interaction) regarding children of incarcerated parents outside of and distinct from the Fatherhood Advisory Council		X	X
2	Develop arrest protocols that support and protect arrestees' children		X	X
5	Recruit and train advocates to support children during/after a parent's arrest		X	X
4	Create a mechanism for the voice/input of children to be considered in court proceeding (pre-trial and post-conviction) as it relates to their incarcerated parent		X	X
3	Criminal Justice sentencing (laws, guidelines and decisions) of offenders should take into account the impact on children while fulfilling the requirement of public safety		X	X
10	Turn arrest into an opportunity for Family Preservation	X	X	X
11	Support children of incarcerated parents by supporting caretakers in the community (consider subsidized guardianship for children whose parents are serving long sentences)	X	X	X
8	Provide access to prison visiting facilities that are child-centered, non-intimidating and conducive to bonding	X	X	X
9	Consider proximity to family members when assigning prisoners to facilities	X	X	X

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7	Provide telephone, videoconferencing, and in-person visits for children of incarcerated parents	X	X	X
6	Provide access to therapists, counselors, and/or mentors who are trained to address children of incarcerated parent’s unique needs	X	X	X

OUTCOMES

- 1) Number of referrals made to community-based programming that supports children of arrested and incarcerated parents by law enforcement, courts, and probation/parole
- 2) Number of contacts made by criminal justice system with caretakers for children of incarcerated parents prior to sentencing regarding impact (Set standard- 90% of caretakers will be contacted)
- 3) Enhanced visitation policy/practice for families – Number of visits (per quarter, per year) tracked over time. Types of Visitation offered (per quarter, per year)—in person, video-conferencing, telephone visits
- 4) Number of trainings held for criminal justice system regarding the impact of parental incarceration on children
- 5) Effective program for children of incarcerated parents outcomes – program completion rates, measure of improved functioning for the child as a result of program participation, and measure of connection between incarcerated parent and child as a result of program participation

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a “promising practice,” meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

The San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents and many others have championed a Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents. The Bill of Rights outlines the need for children to be safe, informed, in contact with their parent, and supported through the process

Family Support in Practice: Supports for Incarcerated Parents- identified nine (9) practices with associated principles which outlined some promising practices both programmatic and for the well-being of the family

Research by Wilderman and Western (2010) discuss the finding relating to the consequences of imprisonment on fragile families. Issues of sentencing reform and prisoner re-entry policies are vital to strengthen families and improving public safety.

The Osborne Association’s New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents (2006) reported a structure that includes a community and government agency collaboration. The New York Initiative is a comprehensive review of all aspects of the criminal justice experience for children of incarcerated parents. The recommendations found within the report issued have wide ranging potential for replication in Connecticut.

Domain 5: Policy/Public Awareness

WHAT DATA DO WE HAVE?

(See Data Development Agenda in Section IV)

WHAT DATA DO WE NEED?

(See Data Development Agenda in Section IV)

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT/STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to support their children, dads need to be healthy in all senses, including being economically self-sufficient and sufficiently educated to navigate the systems with which they must interact to achieve economic success and be engaged members of their community.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

STRATEGY 1

Program Sustainability:

Create a stable & adequate funding stream to establish sufficient fatherhood programming so that quality services are accessible when and where needed

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

- DSS/OPM/CGA
- MOU Partners
- Fatherhood Programs
- OEC-CTF
- DOC Re Entry Programs
- COC

PARTNERS

- Philanthropy – local & through CT Council on Philanthropy
- Fatherhood Advisory Council
- CCSU-ISCJ
- Judicial Branch
- State-funded Family Service Agencies
- LISTs
- CT Youth Service Association
- Discovery Communities
- Home Visitation Programs

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level			How?		
		Program	System	Policy	Legis	MOU/A	In part w/out legis
	Explore options for co-location of staff	X					
	Develop budget options to create funding for fatherhood programs	X					
	Identify possible new funding streams, i.e. use of TANF, BCSE, etc.		X				
	Have MOU identify what state agency partners can do within existing resources		X				
	Create MOU with ACCESS CT for health coverage enrollment through Fatherhood Programs		X				
	Develop local collaboratives modeled after Discovery for coordination across services for fathers & families		X				
	Create a pool of private matching funds to incentivize a state appropriation		X				
	Mandate exploration of funding mechanisms			X			
	Draft comprehensive fatherhood legislation that includes an annual state appropriation			X			

STRATEGY 2

Evidence-based, Promising & Best Practices:

Evaluate & document the existing fatherhood program models to identify evidence-based, promising and best practices for successful outcomes with specific target populations.

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a “promising practice,” meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

Federal UofH Evals

Yale Consultation Center Eval

DPH/Home Visitation Pilot Data

Centering Pregnancy/Fatherhood Data

Certified Sites Program Data

DSS/DV Mandel Assoc Report

National scan for Best Practices with specific target populations

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

- DSS & the certified sites
- Office of Early Childhood – Children’s Trust Fund
- Fatherhood Advisory Council & Executive Team

PARTNERS

- CT University partners
- Local & statewide philanthropy
- US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families
- Judicial Branch
- Central CT State University-Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level			How?		
		Program	System	Policy	Legis	MOU/A	In part w/out legis
	Implement Fatherhood Audit	X					
	Establish working group from certified sites to identify existing "Best Practices"	X					
	Explore a common, shared system of assessment to support referrals & data collection	X					
	Need to address "life skill deficits" like financial management, how to keep records on CS payments, etc.	X					
	Keep the focus on "child-centered" parenting	X					
	Update Program Certification Requirements		X				
	Develop curriculum standards		X				
	Develop meta-analysis of CT evaluations		X				
	Review national info to identify EV-B, Promising & Best Practices		X				
	Meet with CCP for potential \$\$\$ to fund eval efforts		X				
	Meet with GMF for collaboration with Discovery		X				
	Need to identify strategies & resources to track the impact of fatherhood programs on kids		X				
	Explore options for intergenerational programming		X				

STRATEGY 3

Scale, Infrastructure & Standards of Practice:

Retool the staff in existing human service agencies to better meet the needs of fathers and families bringing all to a basic minimum standard of practice, creating a statewide referral system & providing statewide access to quality programs.

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a “promising practice,” meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

TBD

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

- DSS
- Fatherhood Advisory Council & Executive Team
- MOU Partners
- State Agency Training Staff
- OEC- CTF

PARTNERS

- State-funded Family Service Agencies
- Community Volunteers
- Fatherhood Programs
- Home Visitation Programs
- FDC Trainers
- Local E&T providers

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level			How?		
		Program	System	Policy	Legis	MOU/A	In part w/out legis
	Fatherhood Program Inventory & Gap Analysis	X					
	Insure cultural competence/relevance in implementation	X					
	Increased capacity for programs to provide education & access to engagement across systems (i.e. DCF proceedings, Criminal Justice, including Pardons, etc.)	X					
	Establish a survey to get a baseline of current staffing re: education, training & certifications		X				
	Identify Best Practices currently used by providers		X				
	Create a “Standards of Practice” Work Group to translate the evidence-based, promising & best practice into the certification process & staff development guidelines		X				
	Explore partnerships with other statewide entities, i.e. the CT Parenting Education Network, Strengthening Families Initiative, Circle of Security, etc.		X				
	Align with other systems to mirror “My Brother’s Keeper” prevention model		X				
	Create Resource Directory of certified programs along with capacity-building/training resources		X				
	Review FDC, etc. for applicability as standard of practice			X			
	Create a tiered system of certification like QRIS			X			
	Link funding to quality services and common outcome measures			X			

STRATEGY 4

Public Will-Building and Advocacy:

Increase the understanding of and support for serving fathers & families, and develop a statewide coalition of trained, passionate leaders to use their unified voice to change programs, policies & practices to benefit fathers & families

EVIDENCE BASE

(provide a link to or discussion of research for the strategy; if no research is found, indicate whether the strategy has no associated research or is a “promising practice,” meaning it has reports of success but no persuasive research)

- Need to identify “attitude” research to help build the campaigns
- Explore Frameworks Institute approach Explore community advocacy models used in other states to promote responsible fatherhood
- Explore other successful campaigns in CT & identify best practices that are applicable to the fatherhood arena

LEAD AGENCY/AGENCIES

- DSS as centralized “hub” for communications
- Fatherhood Advisory Council & Executive Team
- MOU Partners
- OEC-CTF

PARTNERS

- Family Serving Agencies
- Community Volunteers
- LISTs
- Discovery Communities
- CCSU-ISCJ
- Media Partners
- Fathers
- Advocacy Groups
- Parent Leadership Training Network
- CGA
- CYSA
- Connecticut Association of Human Services (CAHS)
- Community Action Agencies

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY)

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level			How?		
		Program	System	Policy	Legis	MOU/A	In part w/out legis
	Post success “stories” to help change the image	X					
	Create a Campaign to “Debunk the Myths” of Deadbeat Dads	X					
	Develop media strategy for program “Storytelling”		X				
	Provide “Spokesperson” training for “Dads”		X				
	Use the evaluation data to develop story coverage		X				
	Explore avenues for use of social media like Facebook, blogs & YouTube		X				
	Create a “picture of the day” message campaign featuring Dads & kids		X				
	Identify free or low cost national PSAs to use in CT		X				
	Create a “Kids Campaign for Dads”		X				
	Define/adopt 3-5 common key messages for all partners			X			
	Identify “cost-effectiveness” of programming & utilize as part of the media campaign			X			
	Draft a “Children’s Bill of Rights”			X			
	Leadership/Advocacy training for program staff	X					
	Create fatherhood “advocates/ombudsman” in each court like DV advocates		X				
	Use naturally occurring events (like Father’s Day, Back-to-School activities, etc.) as hooks to generate media coverage		X				

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ACTION STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (PROGRAM, SYSTEM, OR POLICY) CONTINUED

Priority (assign #)	Action Step	Implementation Level			How?		
		Program	System	Policy	Legis	MOU/A	In part w/out legis
	Hold a briefing/event to re-introduce the <i>CFI</i> to rollout the Plan		X				
	Create FAN -“Fatherhood Action Network”			X			
	Seek “natural alliances” based on the data like the JJ Alliance			X			
	Increase support for Child Support/Access-Visitation reform			X			
	Draft comprehensive fatherhood legislation to address infrastructure, data collection, reporting, establishing a referral network, aligning outcomes, expand programming & address child support reform			X			
	Hold a legislative forum on Fathers & Families			X			
	Link Fatherhood work with Education Reform through research			X			

Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Child Support (CS)

Meeting Notes December 2, 2013

Attendees: Paul Bourdoulous, SES; Dean Festa, DSS; John Lomax, SES; Diana Mason, DSS; Dalia Panke, SES; Lucy Potter, GHLA; Norma Sanchez-Figueroa, FSM

After introductions, Diana began meeting by providing a context for the formation of this Subcommittee for Dalia and Paul.

Lucy, Dean and John then shared the discussion about child support-specific items from the 11/14 policy meeting, including the Guidelines Commission's recommendations for the schedule that negatively impact low-income obligors; the revised regulations for the Arrearage Adjustment Program; and the SES/DOC collaborative inmate outreach program for child support order modifications.

It was suggested again that a statement be made by Commissioner Bremby reiterating DSS's perspective on the proposed Guidelines recommendations. John Dillon and Tony Judkins testified at the public hearings, but it is believed a clear message from DSS leadership would provide needed emphasis for the Commission members. The next meeting is scheduled for December 17. The letter should be written and sent out to the Commission prior, and copies also provided at the meeting to those in attendance.

The CS Subcommittee was asked to address the following questions:

1. What are the major impediments related to child support that are negatively impacting dads' ability to engage with their children and their children's mothers?
2. What initiatives are currently underway or pending in CT that should be supported or increased/enhanced/brought to scale?
3. What evidenced-based or promising practices in other states should we consider for CT?
4. What are the three most important system changes that we should focus on in the next 2-3 years?
5. Are there any critical missing partners who need to be at the table with us?

MAJOR IMPEDIMENTS TO FATHER ENGAGEMENT

- Felony records
- Default orders/imputed income

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- Debt owed to family, state
- Unemployment/underemployment
- Staff attitudes/knowledge level about available resources (both at state and community-based agencies)
- Differences in Family Support Magistrates' approach/rulings (judicial discretion)
- In some situations, father/child relationships are strictly financial, no other engagement with child
- Relationship between dad and mom(s)
- Reality of child support intertwined with access/visitation/custody (i.e., "if you don't pay you can't see him/her" and conversely, "I'm not paying unless I can see him/her")
- Difficulty with navigating the system

CURRENT/FORMER INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT/ENHANCE/BRING TO SCALE

- CT Arrearage Adjustment Program (revised regs submitted to OPM)
- Problem Solving Pilot (run in New Haven, ended in 2011)
- Employment Pilot Program (Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven; ended June 2013) – report attached at end of this document
- Access & Visitation Grant
- Parenting Education provided in Family Support Magistrate (FSM) Court
- Staff Training (attitudinal/informational – sharing of resources)
- Speakers' bureaus/ongoing training for community providers about CS process

EVIDENCED-BASED/PROMISING PRACTICES TO CONSIDER FOR CT

Group members sharing the following information regarding promising practices:

- Ohio statute for imputing income and deciding contempt (felonies, geographical area unemployment/underemployment rates, etc.) – OHIO, R.C. 3119.01(C) **3119.01 Calculation of child support obligation definitions**

(11) "Potential income" means both of the following for a parent who the court pursuant to a court support order, or a child support enforcement agency pursuant to an administrative child support order, determines is voluntarily unemployed or voluntarily underemployed:

(a) Imputed income that the court or agency determines the parent would have earned if fully employed as determined from the following criteria:

- (i) The parent's prior employment experience;
- (ii) The parent's education;

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- (iii) The parent's physical and mental disabilities, if any;
 - (iv) The availability of employment in the geographic area in which the parent resides;
 - (v) The prevailing wage and salary levels in the geographic area in which the parent resides;
 - (vi) The parent's special skills and training;
 - (vii) Whether there is evidence that the parent has the ability to earn the imputed income;
 - (viii) The age and special needs of the child for whom child support is being calculated under this section;
 - (ix) The parent's increased earning capacity because of experience;
 - (x) The parent's decreased earning capacity because of a felony conviction;
 - (xi) Any other relevant factor.
- Article: *Would Ohio hire Moses or Jesus?*
<http://www.piconetwork.org/news-media/releases/would-ohio-hire-moses-or>
 - Oregon statute suspending payments for incarcerated people: *Oregon mod stat authorizes temporary suspension of orders for periods of unemployment or incarceration*
<http://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/416.425>
 - study of the effects of an earned income tax credit awarded in NY when people got current on their child support payments: *Effect of EITC for full child support payment, NY*
<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412773-Tax-Credits-and-Job-Oriented-Programs-Help-Fathers-Find-Work-and-Pay-Child-Support.pdf>
 - Information provided on Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) website:
 - Child support and Parenting time
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/13_child_support_and_parenting_time_final.pdf
 - Problem-solving court practices
<http://nasje.org/news/newsletter0803/R1cNCJFCJIntegratingProblemSolving.pdf>

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- Arrearage adjustment aka “debt compromise”
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-child-support-agencies-with-debt-compromise-policies>
- Work-oriented programs for NCPs
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/work-oriented-programs-for-noncustodial-parents-with-active-child-support>
- Establishing realistic child support orders
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/establishing_realistic_child_support_orders.pdf
- Realistic orders for incarcerated parents
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/realistic_child_support_orders_for_incarcerated_parents.pdf
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/paid_no4_companion.pdf
- Access to justice innovations
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/access_to_justice_innovations.pdf
- CRS Report for Congress; *Fatherhood Initiatives: Connecting Fathers to Their Children* by Carmen Solomon-Fears
<http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/RL31025.pdf>

SYSTEM CHANGES FOR NEXT 2-3 YEARS

The group identified several strategies...

- BCSE involvement with fatherhood-related matters on the establishment side of court (right now main focus is on contempt side – i.e., program staff there for referral by FSM, SES staff); efforts to include more affirmative efforts (multiple contacts, phone calls etc.) to encourage people to show up for court, and reduce defaults
- Strengthen fatherhood programming so that resources are available for CS staff (DSS, SES, FSM) to be able to refer clients
- Access & Visitation connection to Child Support
- Education/Outreach - staff training/speakers' bureaus (state and community-based agencies, parents)

A policy issue raised regarding default orders and imputed income launched a discussion about a current BCSE policy that states that default orders can be reopened within one year – it seems it may be the best kept secret – this is something the group agreed needs to be included in the education/outreach campaign. The need for reviewing data on default rates was identified. Beyond providing the notice to re-open on the court order itself, and educating providers about the policy, in order to increase the uptake on reopening defaults it was suggested that the form (developed by David

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Mulligan) be made available on the judicial website and DSS Child Support website, and also provided with the first wage attachment. When FSMs are considering reopening default orders, it was stated that a minimum wage order would be the presumption notwithstanding. It was suggested that the court should consider whether imputing an order based on 40 hours per week at minimum wage is fair in all circumstances. Someone with a criminal record, e.g., might truly be unable to get that job. And of course, given the alternative of jail, might resort to illegal activity in order to pay.

CRITICAL MISSING PARTNERS

- Office of the Attorney General (Sean Kehoe?) – need buy-in
- CSSD (Diana to follow up with Joe DiTunno)
- OPM – support for strategies that may cost \$\$\$

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY OTHER COMMITTEES

- The group talked a great deal about unemployment/underemployment, especially for those obligors with a criminal record – agreed this is an issue for Restorative Approaches 1 and maybe even CJ System involvement (support/enhance strategies for job-readiness while dads/obligors incarcerated)

OVERALL STRATEGY TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE PLAN

It was recommended that the FI Strategic Plan include a recommendation for a commission (i.e., “Permanent Commission on the Status of Men/Fathers”) be established, to centralize statewide fatherhood efforts. Similar approach as that of Commission on Children, Permanent Commission on Status of Women, Office of the Child Advocate, Office of Victim Advocate...an objective office that can keep fatherhood at forefront, maintain a global approach to the work and provide equal accountability across state and community agencies, etc.

Employment Pilot Program: May 2012 – June 2013

**A collaborative effort by
Judicial Branch- Court Support Services Division
Department of Social Services
Judicial Branch- Support Enforcement Services
DSS-Certified Fatherhood Program Sites
and
Judicial Branch- Family Support Magistrate Division**

Purpose:

In response to the passage of Public Act 11-233, Section 15, the Judicial Branch, with the assistance of the Department of Social Services, and support of community partners, implemented an Employment Pilot Program (Pilot) for Title IV-D child support matters heard in the Family Support Magistrate Division of Superior Court. The Pilot began in the Judicial Districts of New Haven and Bridgeport in May 2012 and Hartford beginning in July of 2012. Services within this Pilot were provided through December 2012.

Numerous non-custodial parents (NCP) who are in contempt of their child support orders do not meet their obligations due to under/unemployment, which may be due to various barriers. The selected pilot sites are located within the three poorest cities in Connecticut. The poverty rates in these locations are double the rate for the state as a whole. Individuals in these geographic areas experience the most barriers to employment, as evidenced by a much higher unemployment rate (Bridgeport 14 %, Hartford 16.9%, and New Haven 13.4%).

The goal of this Pilot program was to assist obligors through a holistic approach by connecting them to community-based, DSS-certified fatherhood programs in these high-need areas of the state. Program sites offered an array of services that address economic stability and parenting, with a focus on employment/vocational support services in order to promote job-readiness and in turn prevent incarceration for contempt of child support orders.

Agency Partners

As an extension of the current interagency Fatherhood Memorandum of Understanding between DSS and its Judicial and Executive Branch partners, the Judicial Branch - Court Support Services Division (CSSD) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Social Services (DSS), lead agency for the *John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut* and the *CT Fatherhood Program Certification Project*. The Department of Social Services (DSS) contracted with two community-based agencies with Certified Fatherhood Programs (CFP) in three targeted geographical areas (Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport) and monitored program implementation. New Haven Family Alliance, Inc. (NHFA) executed the pilot in New Haven and Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) in Hartford and Bridgeport. Judicial Family Support Magistrates and Support Enforcement Services provided the referrals to these programs. NHFA and CRI provided direct services, tracked participant progress, and communicated with all partners regarding compliance.

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Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Target Population

Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven represent approximately 60% of Connecticut’s child support caseload. Potential participants for programming were obligors with current child support orders who had been brought by Judicial Branch- Support Enforcement Services (SES) before the Family Support Magistrate (FSM) for contempt of the court order. The availability of job-readiness services within the local Certified Fatherhood Program was announced at the beginning of the contempt docket. Referrals were made by either the SES staff assigned to a particular case, or the presiding FSM within a particular court location. Each of the three program sites aimed to serve at least 60 unduplicated individuals, for a total of at least 180 individuals, for this pilot project.

Description of Services

Program sites were contracted to meet with court-referred, non-custodial parents to complete the intake and enrollment process, including an in-depth assessment and Individualized Service Plan (ISP). Programming included curriculum-based group instruction and individualized case management services, with a focus on job-readiness/employment services as well as economic stability (i.e., education, financial literacy, support services such as transportation and housing). In order to provide a holistic approach to the noncustodial parent’s role in the life of his/her child(ren), Pilot participants also received supportive services as needed, either directly or by referral, through the Contractor’s existing Fatherhood Initiative Program (FIP). Case management services included, but were not limited to the following: assistance with addressing and/or responding to court orders and navigation of court systems; application for DSS assistance programs, housing, employment, education; parenting skills classes; supportive counseling; transportation; legal assistance; mental health services; substance abuse treatment/support; pregnancy prevention; domestic violence; conflict resolution; anger management; relationship mediation; personal development; life skills; nutrition, health and sexuality and other regionally available services/programs. Services were either provided directly or by referral to another agency as appropriate.

Budget

The total amount allocated for this project was \$113,000 for FY2012 and \$112,500 for FY 2013. Each of the three program sites was allocated \$28,250 for FY2012 and \$28,125 for FY2013.

Participant Demographics

The majority of referrals (75%) to the program had one associated child support case.

Race

- 74% identified as African- American
- 13% identified as Caucasian
- 6% did not respond to question
- 5% identified as other
- 1% identified as American Indian
- 1% identified as multiple races

*Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Strategic Plan
2015-2019*

Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Ethnicity

- 80% identified as Non-Hispanic
- 8% identified as Hispanic
- 8% identified as Puerto Rican
- 3% identified as West Indian
- 1% did not respond to question

Age/Gender

The average age range (53%) was between 26-35 years old and 90% of program participants were male.

Socioeconomic Factors/Barriers

- 79% reported currently receiving some form of state assistance
- 99% identified at least one significant barrier to employment
- 50% reported having a High School Diploma or GED; 35% reported some High School or less; 15% reported some college with only 2% identified as having a diploma from an institution of higher learning
- 39% reported having temporary housing
 - While 61% identified their housing as permanent, the majority indicated that they were living with relatives; it is unclear how permanent this housing situation may be as a long-term/stable arrangement
- 25% reported having no form of valid identification (46% in Hartford)
- 80% reported a criminal history
- 76% reported no access to reliable, consistent transportation
 - Of the 24% that reported access to reliable transportation, many identified public transportation or borrowing a family member's/friend's automobile. It is unclear if these modes of transportation would be reliable on a consistent basis.

Services Received

Case Management

- The majority of program participants engaged in case management services- an average of 84% across the three program sites.
- Case management services included supportive counseling, job search assistance, and job training supports.

Curriculum-Based Group Instruction

- Curriculum-based group instruction was utilized for a majority of participants in New Haven (78%) and Hartford (85%), while Bridgeport focused on case management services.

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Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Forty-eight percent (48%) of program participants received both case management and Curriculum-based group instruction

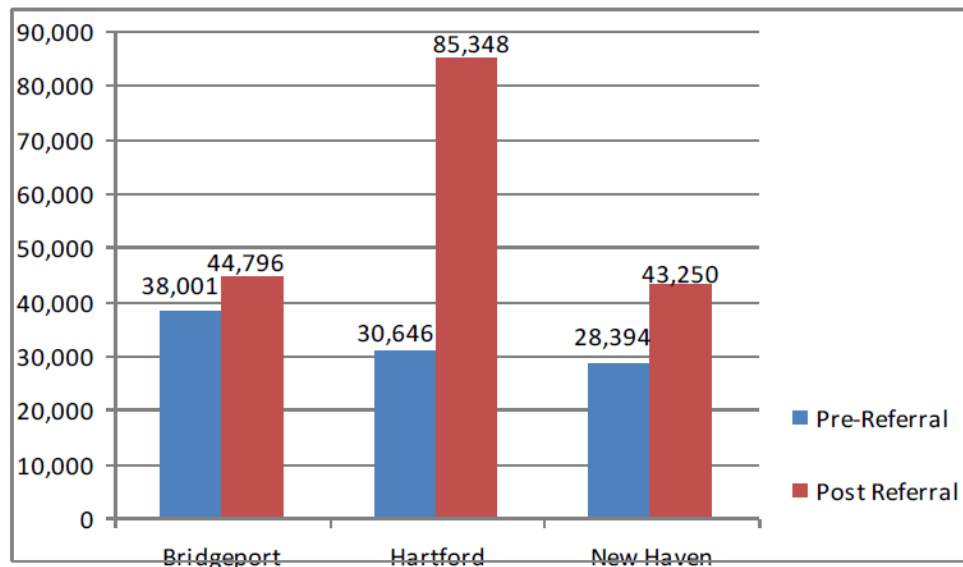
Child Support Data/Findings

- 179 unduplicated court-based referrals were made to the program across three sites
- There was a 79% increase in the total amount of child support collected 6 months after referral to the program
- 50 participants had made no payments before referral but began making payments subsequent to referral
- Fourteen (14) of the referred cases already had income withholding in place.
- Thirty-six (36) cases established income withholding after referral to the Pilot (9 in Bridgeport; 9 in New Haven; and 18 in Hartford).
- Average number of payments increased 125% as a result of program participation
- There was a 1% increase in the average dollar amount per payment; while this statistic seems low, the increased number of payments results in more consistent payment history over time which in turn provides better financial support for the children
- While the pilot demonstrated many positive outcomes, 26 program participants (15%) did not pay before or after referral

The detailed charts below further illustrate these findings.

Employment Pilot

*Total Amount Collected by Site: Pre vs. Post – Referral
Whole Group*

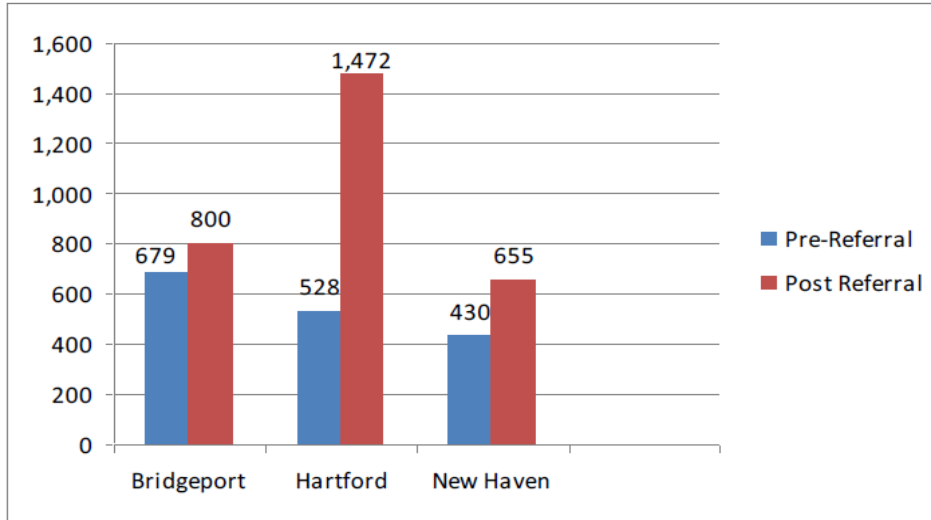


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Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Employment Pilot

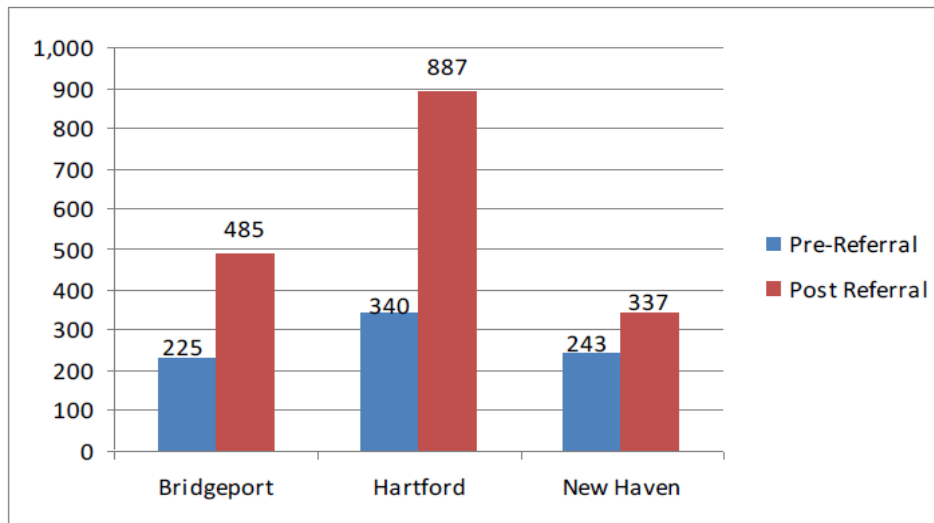
*Total Amount Collected by Site: Pre vs. Post – Referral
Average Per Person*



The Pilot produced positive results with regard to improving the current support collection rate. All three sites experienced significant increases in the collection rate for families. Overall, there was a 79% increase in the total amount of child support collected six months after referral to the program.

Employment Pilot

*Payment Frequency – Total Number of Payments by Site: Pre vs. Post - Referral
Whole Group*

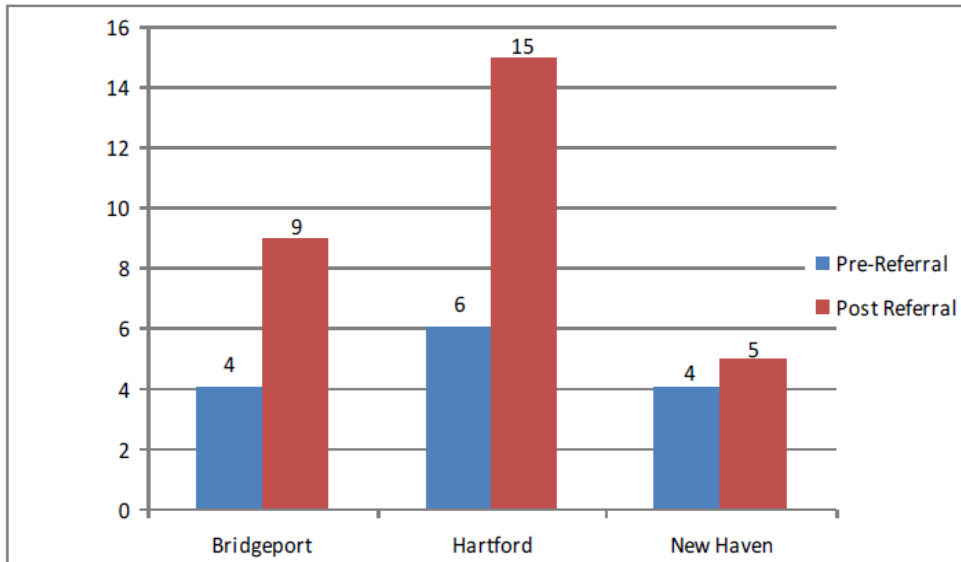


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Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Employment Pilot

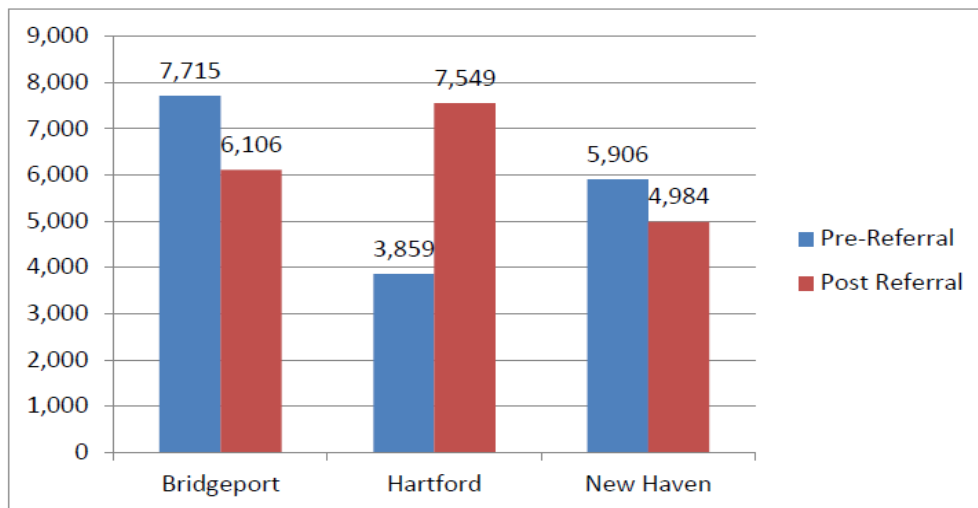
*Payment Frequency – Total Number of Payments by Site: Pre vs. Post - Referral
Average Per Person*



The Pilot produced positive results in the category of increasing the frequency of payments. There was a solid increase in the number of payments received post referral. Increasing the frequency or number of payments helps to assist custodial parents and their children by making child support a consistent and reliable source of income. Overall, the average number of payments increased 125% as a result of program participation, which is a significant outcome.

Employment Pilot

*Amount Per Payment by Site: Pre vs. Post – Referral
Whole Group*



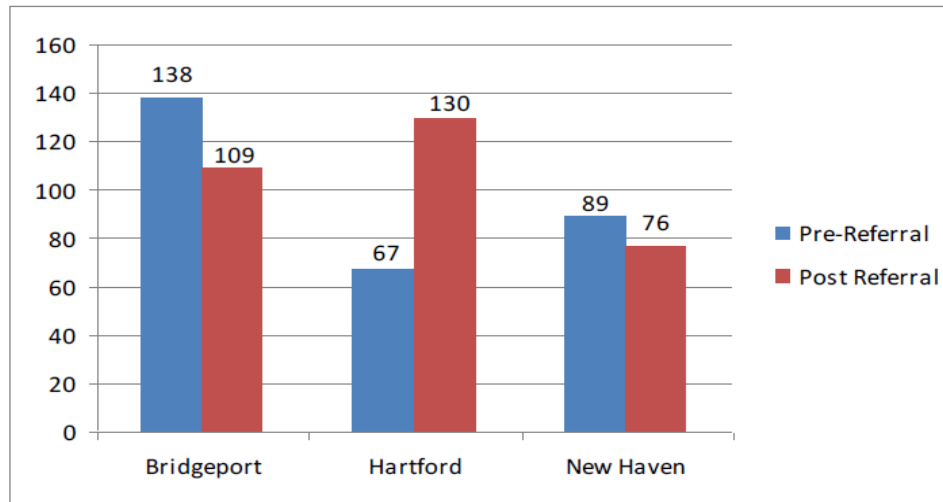
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Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Employment Pilot

Amount Per Payment by Site: Pre vs. Post – Referral

Average Per Person



Although the amount per payment reduced in both the Bridgeport and New Haven sites, the frequency increased thereby raising the overall collection rate. This allowed for consistent, regular, and reliable payments for families leading to an overall increase in collection rate. There was a 1% increase in the average dollar amount per payment; however payments became more consistent over time.

Magistrate Interviews

Overall, the Family Support Magistrate Division (FSMD) supported the main Pilot objective of providing obligors vital, and often lacking, employment readiness skills. The non-custodial parents were requested by the FSMD to make good faith payments, if possible, while they were enrolled in the Pilot. The sites engaged and motivated the non-custodial parents toward the goal of employment readiness. The design and implementation of the Pilot was well received by all participating Magistrates.

For noncustodial parents with identified barriers it can become easy to shift from personal responsibility to economic blame as the reason for under/unemployment. The Pilot helped these child support obligors to recognize the barriers that faced them in terms of employability and encouraged them to take steps to overcome those barriers. One of the major benefits of the Pilot was the requirement of having program staffs present for all court hearings. This aspect provided valuable assistance to the Magistrates and obligors. The obligors gained confidence during the process as improvements in demeanor, communication with court staff, and physical appearance were noted with many of the participants. It appears that increased self-esteem was an outcome associated with Pilot completion.

FSMD embraced this Pilot initiative and would welcome any program designed to help a parent become successful in their child’s life both financially and emotionally. The format of the Pilot,

Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

which included monthly court continuance dates to report progress, was seen as a positive aspect by the Magistrates, court staff, and the obligors. The identification of appropriate referrals contributed to the overall success of the initiative. This Pilot was a true collaboration among many Judicial, Executive, and community- based agencies.

Beyond the Pilot

The findings in this Pilot reinforce those of former efforts described below:

- DSS Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) conducted a review of cases for a three-year period (10/1/2006 – 9/30/2009) and found cases where NCPs were at/below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) increased by 41.9% in that three-year period alone. And men continue to reflect the majority of these cases. NCP fathers are at/below FPL accounted for 85.8% of total NCP cases at/below FPL. These data represent a snapshot of the population; there are likely more NCPS at/below FPL as BCSE was not able to include NCPs in this review who were unable to be located/were determined as exempt (ex. incarcerated) at the start of the case.
- During the Department of Social Services' (DSS) implementation of the federal *Promoting Responsible Fatherhood* grant (January 2007- September 2011), program participants reported the following barriers to employment and economic stability: lack of transportation (26%), housing (20%), identification/driver's license (37%), and history of criminal offending (55%). Other barriers may include educational levels, sporadic work history, addiction, and mental health issues.

Currently, CT has 155,468 active with obligation child support cases and of these 87,477 (57%) are in geographic areas targeted for this Pilot, indicating an ongoing need for services to fathers, of whom represent the majority of child support obligors.

Appropriate Funding Levels

This Pilot was only able to serve 179 individuals across three sites. It is clear the need exceeds the capacity of the community service providers given the limited funding. In order to make a greater impact across the state, funding needs to be at a level that ensures statewide implementation with appropriate staffing levels to allow for programming and court coverage.

Consistency in Implementation

Uniformity in the application of program, policy and procedures is critical to ensure consistency across locations and maintain the integrity of program goals. This uniformity includes:

- Clear definitions of policy/procedures for all court and program staff
- The use of templates for all data collection (from referral to program completion/exit) and reporting
- Clear definitions of data elements
- Regular monitoring of documentation/data collection

Employment Pilot Program: May 2012-June 2013

Summary

The outcomes from this Pilot were a direct result of the significant collaboration between all aspects of the Magistrate Court. This included the leadership of the Chief Family Support Magistrate during the design phase of the initiative. The local Magistrates were vital in developing court protocol for use during Pilot implementation. The Judicial Branch- Support Enforcement Services Division Administration was instrumental in guiding the format of the Pilot and provided the scope of referrals to the program. In addition, the ability of Judicial Branch-Court Support Services/Support Enforcement Services and the Department of Social Services to identify the population need and the most appropriate services to include in the initiative lead to the strong outcomes achieved during this timeframe. It was this spirit of cooperation and dedication of all agencies that allowed for the success of the Pilot.

Overall, the Pilot met all key child support outcomes. Program participation led to an increase in both the frequency of support payments and overall collection rate. This occurred despite the significant number of identified barriers to employment. Twenty percent (20%) of the participants were able to obtain verified employment as documented through new wage withholdings. Fifty-six (56%) percent were able to make consistent payments to the custodial parents. Many of the participants completed job skill training with the goal of future employment. Learning to be employment ready and acquire vital proficiencies is a step in the right direction toward being able to be a reliable financial resource for their children.

The Pilot also initiated an innovative and promising court practice. The ability for a Magistrate to refer an obligor for services aimed at addressing barriers/increasing employability was described as extremely helpful to the Court. Another key aspect was the presence of the community partners at court hearing to offer progress/compliance reports for the obligors. Instituting a process prior to incarceration for non-compliance with support orders seems to be a necessary step within the range of graduated sanctions.

The major contributions and professionalism of New Haven Family Alliance, Inc. and Career Resources, Inc. directly impacted the positive outcomes of the Pilot. The two community service providers brought considerable skills and competencies to the work. Without their efforts and active engagement with the participants, this Pilot would not have achieved the excellent results.

With the necessary funding, resources, and phased implementation, this Pilot can be effectively replicated on a statewide basis. The Pilot experience formulated the infrastructure, court protocol and community services required for success. Future expansion could provide significant benefits for many custodial parents and their children as well as those individuals striving for opportunities that increase their positive financial and emotional involvement.

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APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANTS WHO ASSISTED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

CFI Strategic Planning Workgroup

Angel Arce, Connecticut General Assembly
Joyce Betts, Families in Crisis, Inc.
Rosa Biaggi, Department of Public Health
Rosa Correa, Career Resources, Inc.
Heriberto Cajigas, Department of Labor, OWC
Kimberly Clarke, Department of Children and Families
John Dillon, Department of Social Services
Diana DiTunno, Department of Social Services
Joseph DiTunno, Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division
Marvin Douglas, Community Renewal Team, Inc.
Liz Dupont-Diehl, Career Resources, Inc.
Yadira Duran, Department of Children and Families
Douglas Edwards, Real Dads Forever
Dean Festa, Department of Social Services
Nancy Gentes, Madonna Place, Inc.
Saleh Hanaif, GBAPP, Inc.
Linda Hawkins, Village for Families and Children, Inc.
Steven Hernandez, Commission on Children
Vincent Hollister, Village for Families and Children, Inc.
Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Commission on Children
Douglas Howard, Department of Children and Families
Anthony Judkins, Department of Social Services
Patricia Kupec, Department of Correction
Linda Ladas, Department of Labor
Nicole Laracuente, Family Strides, Inc.
Catherine Lenihan, Office of Early Childhood
John Lomax, Judicial Branch, Support Enforcement Services
Carol Meredith, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

David Mulligan, Department of Social Services
Tiffany Murasso, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford
Dalia Panke, Judicial Branch, Support Enforcement Services
Kyle Pinto, David Mandel and Associates, LLC
Shelby Pons, State Department of Education
Lucy Potter, Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Susan Quinlan, Families in Crisis, Inc.
Susan Radway, State Department of Education
Julie Redding, Department of Labor
Emil Renzullo, Family Strides, Inc.
Alberto Roman, Fair Haven Community Health Center
Anthony Rucker, New Opportunities, Inc.
William Rybczyk, New Opportunities, Inc.
Robert Sanchez, HRA New Britain, Inc./Connecticut General Assembly
Norma Sanchez-Figueroa, Judicial Family Support Magistrate Division
Javier Santiago, Career Resources, Inc.
Trina Sexton, Department of Correction
Raymond Singleton, Department of Social Services
Valerie Sorrentino, GBAPP, Inc.
Barbara Tinney, New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.
Scott Swartz, Madonna Place, Inc.
Dennis Tomczak, Community Renewal Team, Inc.
Bruce Trammel, New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.
Nancy Turner, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Edorbal Valentin, Department of Labor
Joy Vouthunes, Department of Correction
Edgar Young, Department of Social Services

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DOMAIN 1 COMMITTEE

<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGENCY</i>
Biaggi, Rosa	Department of Public Health (DPH)
Carroll, Jude	CT Housing Coalition
Douglas, Marvin	Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)
Hanaif, Saleh (Sal)	GBAPP, Inc.
Hollister, Vincent	Village for Families & Children, Inc.
Homer-Bouthiette, Dawn (co-chair)	Commission on Children
Kupec, Patricia	Department of Correction (DOC)
Laracuate, Nicole	Family Strides, Inc.
Motta, Karin	Department of Housing
Murasso, Tiffany (co-chair)	Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford (CAOH)
Pinto, Kyle	David Mandel & Associates, LLC
Radway, Susan	CT State Dept. of Education (SDE)
Rucker, Anthony	New Opportunities, Inc.
Santiago, Javier	Career Resources, Inc.
Vouthounes, Joy	CT Dept. of Correction (DOC)
Williams, Jane	Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (ConnSCU)

DOMAIN 2 COMMITTEE

<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGENCY</i>
Betts, Joyce	Families In Crisis, Inc.
Biaggi, Rosa	CT Dept. of Public Health (DPH)
Cosme, Rosalie	CT Department of Social Services
Edwards, Doug (co-chair)	Real Dads Forever
Gentes, Nancy	Madonna Place, Inc.
Hollister, Vincent	Village for Families & Children, Inc.
Keys, Christine	Klingberg Family Centers
Kupec, Patricia	CT Dept. of Correction (DOC)
LaTorraca, Maresa	CCT Judicial Branch, CSSD, Family Services Division
Lomax, John	CT Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services (SES)
Matas-Muniz, Juan	Rogers Park Middle School
Montemurro, Louise	Dept. of Children and Families
Renzullo, Emil	Family Strides, Inc.
Robinson, Damien	Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford (CAOH)
Sanchez, Robert	Human Resources Agency - New Britain (HRA-NB)
Sanchez-Figueroa, Norma	Judicial Branch, Family Support Magistrate Division
Sawyer, Amanda	Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies
Swartz, Scott (co-chair)	Madonna Place, Inc.

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Trammell, Bruce	New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.
Velasquez, Marissa	DC Moore Family Resource Center/East Haven
Vouthounes, Joy	CT Dept. of Correction (DOC)

DOMAIN 3 COMMITTEE

Betts, Joyce	Families In Crisis, Inc.
Biaggi, Rosa (co-chair)	CT Dept. of Public Health (DPH)
Blozie, Linda	CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Clarke, Kim	Dept. of Children and Families
Coleman, George	Cooperative Education Services (CES)
Douglas, Marvin	Community Renewal Team, Inc.
Edwards, Doug	Real Dads Forever
Hanaif, Saleh (Sal)	GBAPP, Inc.
Matas-Muniz, Juan	Rogers Park Middle School
Meredith, Carol	Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Radway, Susan	CT State Dept. of Education (SDE)
Renzullo, Emil	Family Strides, Inc.
Roman, Alberto	Fair Haven Community Health Center
Santiago, Javier	Career Resources, Inc.
Sisco, Cathy (co-chair)	Wheeler Clinic
Sorrentino, Valerie	GBAPP, Inc.
Williams, LoriBeth	CT Dept. of Social Services

DOMAIN 4 COMMITTEE

Correa, Rosa	Career Resources, Inc.
Cummings, Rosemary	CT Judicial Branch CSSD, AIC Program
DiTunno, Joseph (co-chair)	CT Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (CSSD)
Hunt, Tasha	CSSD, Juvenile Probation Services
Kupec, Patricia	CT Dept. of Correction (DOC)
Lomax, John	CT Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services (SES)
Quinlan, Susan (co-chair)	Families In Crisis, Inc.
Rayford, Brett	Dept. of Children and Families
Rossini, Michael	The Connection, Inc.
Rucker, Anthony	New Opportunities, Inc.
Tomczak, Dennis	Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)
Trammell, Bruce	New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.
Turner, Nancy	CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV)
Vouthounes, Joy	CT Dept. of Correction (DOC)
Zeno, Yvette	CT CSSD, Adult Probation

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DOMAIN 5 COMMITTEE

Anderson Diaz, Teodoro	First Choice Health Center
Brown, Elizabeth (Liz)	
Brown, Kevin	First Choice Health Center
Correa, Rosa	Career Resources, Inc.
Ebert, Charles	
Festa, Dean	CT Dept. of Social Services
Gay, Anthony	Dept. of Children and Families
Homer-Bouthiette, Dawn (co-chair)	Commission on Children
Lomax, John	CT Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services (SES)
Pinto, Kyle	David Mandel & Associates, LLC
Potter, Lucy	Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA)
Radway, Susan	CT State Dept. of Education (SDE)
Redding, Julie	CT Dept. of Labor (DOL)
Rybczyk, William	New Opportunities, Inc.
Sanchez, Robert (Bobby)	Human Resources Agency - New Britain (HRA-NB)
Sanchez-Figueroa, Norma	Judicial Branch, Family Support Magistrate Division
Tinney, Barbara (co-chair)	New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.

DATA COMMITTEE

Altomare, Michelle	CT Dept. of Correction
Betts, Joyce	Families In Crisis, Inc.
DiTunno, Joseph	CT Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (CSSD)
Edwards, Doug (co-chair)	Real Dads Forever
Fontaine, Kimberly	CT Data Collaborative/CHEFA
Gentes, Nancy	Madonna Place, Inc.
Gordon, Derrick	The Consultation Center
Homer-Bouthiette, Dawn	Commission on Children
Howser, Michael	University of Connecticut Libraries , CT State Data Center
Hughes, Marcia	Center for Social Research, University of Hartford
Laracuente, Nicole	Family Strides, Inc.
Lomax, John	CT Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services (SES)
Parchin, Valentina (Tina)	Catholic Charities Archdioceses of Hartford
Redding, Julie	CT Dept. of Labor (DOL)
Rodriguez, Orlando	Voices for Children
Roman, Alberto	NFN, Fair Haven Community Health Center
Rybczyk, William (co-chair)	New Opportunities, Inc.
Singleton, Raymond	CT Dept. of Social Services
Young, Edgar	CT Dept. of Social Services

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CT Fatherhood Advisory Council Executive Team*

Aldwin Allen, Village for Families and Children, Inc.
Heriberto Cajigas, Department of Labor
Diana DiTunno, CT Department of Social Services
Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Commission on Children
Anthony Judkins, Department of Social Services
David Mulligan, Department of Social Services
Dalia Panke, Judicial Branch, Support Enforcement Services
Lucy Potter, Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Raymond Singleton, Department of Social Services
Barbara Tinney, New Haven Family Alliance, Inc.
Michael Williams, Department of Children and Families

*Domain Committee Co-chairs served as members during the development of the Plan:

Rosa Biaggi, Department of Public Health*
Doug Edwards, Real Dads Forever*
Tiffany Murasso, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford*
Susan Radway, State Department of Education*
Orlando Rodriguez, Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission*
William Rybczyk, New Opportunities, Inc.*
Scott Swartz, Madonna Place, Inc.*

APPENDIX C

PARENT FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY

During Committee meetings held in the fall of 2013 and at the Workgroup meetings held through September 2014, partners emphasized the importance of providing parents, both dads and moms, the opportunity to voice their thoughts related to the areas the groups had been examining for inclusion in the draft Plan. Community-based partners serving fathers and families were asked to conduct focus groups in order to gather this critical input from their respective program's current or past participants, significant others, or co-parents.

Eight providers submitted information from parents; the key points and general themes are outlined here.

Establishment of Paternity

Participants reported the number of children they had and whether or not they had established paternity. The majority reported they voluntarily established legal paternity at the hospital for their biological children although a few reported establishing paternity after DNA testing was conducted or through the court process.

Access, Visitation, Custody

The majority of participants reported they do not live with their children. Of those that reported living with a child, they all also reported they have other children with whom they do not live. For example, one participant reported that he has five children, but only lives with one child. Contact with the children who did not reside with the participants varied. Many reported weekly contact; a few reported they were involved with formal (DCF) and informal (mom present) supervised visits. A few said they see their children monthly, or only see their children on special occasions. Many reported the mother makes the decisions about frequency of contact. Others reported not having seen their children in months or years.

Participants' responses to the questions related to access, custody, and visitation illustrate a strong desire for access and consistent involvement in their children's lives. When asked the following question about their children not living with them, "Would you like to see them more than you do?" all 62 participants answered "yes."

Court involvement was viewed as mainly a negative experience although several participants reported that some of the professionals they dealt with did seem to want to help.

Parenting Supports

Parenting classes were viewed as extremely helpful; participants appreciated both the community program staff and the opportunity to share with others in a group setting. A reoccurring point raised was that mothers should be involved in programming, too, to help them understand their role in supporting fathers. Many reported that they appreciate having discussions with other men, and that group sessions encourage learning and critical thinking.

Child Support

Focus group participants reported negative experiences with the child support system, with most reporting that the child support system discourages them from building a relationship with their children. Many expressed the need for more advocacy for fathers. The connection between the payment of child support and access to the child was raised by many participants. For example, one father stated, "Being unable to pay impacted me from seeing my child. It is mother-driven a lot of the time." Many reported dealing with large arrearages, feeling like they will never be able to meet their obligations no matter what they do.

History of Incarceration

Participants who had experienced incarceration reported that their role as a father was not discussed during entry into the system, during incarceration, or during transition back into the community.

The majority of participants reported having some contact with their children while they were incarcerated, mainly via phone calls. Some reported that visits were stressful for both the men and their children, and it was difficult to coordinate visits. Some reported the mother would not allow contact. One reported he wrote letters and the mother wrote back "not to contact them anymore." It was mentioned that visits with children can get revoked; it is approached by the system as a privilege, so if there is an infraction they can "take it away." Participants reported this affects the children too.

Many reported that they only found out about fatherhood programming that was available in the correctional facility through discussions with other inmates, not corrections staff. Many stated it would be helpful if staff shared information about available programming upon intake and during the period of incarceration. Participants also stated it is difficult to get into the classes because there are waiting lists.

Regarding child support, some mentioned that they did receive information about modification of child support orders, but they did not understand what it meant for them and it was not explained to them. Others said they were never informed that they had the right to request a modification of their child support order while they are incarcerated. Many stated it would have been helpful to have informational meetings about issues related to child support during their period of incarceration.

Employment and Training

With regard to employment and training, the majority of participants reported that they were unemployed at the time the focus group was conducted.

Several had participated in employment and training programs, such as CTWorks and BRS. All reported that the staff at employment and training programs did not ask them about whether or not they had children. Participants who were involved in fatherhood programming reported they received help with job readiness and employment from program staff.

Involvement with Child Welfare System

The majority of participants who reported involvement with the state's child welfare agency (DCF) reported negative experiences with the system. Participants stated they did not feel that they were involved with any decision-making with regard to their children and that DCF did not show interest in working with them.

APPENDIX D

HISTORY OF CONNECTICUT'S FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

Connecticut's Fatherhood Initiative is a broad-based, statewide program led by the Department of Social Services that is focused on changing the systems that can improve fathers' ability to be positively involved in the lives of their children.

Traditionally, support programs and policies had been earmarked to help mothers and their children. Partners began to realize that some of these policies may have pushed dads away. National and statewide data confirmed the unique and undeniable importance of fathers to children.

In 1999, as key leaders at the community, regional and statewide levels continued to see children who had been impacted by their fathers' absence, the Fatherhood Initiative legislation entitled "*An Act Establishing a Fatherhood Initiative, a Fatherhood Council and a Research and Demonstration Program and Concerning Other Methods to Strengthen Child Support Enforcement*" (PA 99-193) was passed. The goal of the *Fatherhood Initiative (FI)* legislation was to promote the positive involvement and interaction of fathers with their children. The objectives of the *FI* were to provide dads with the skills and supports they need to get involved in the lives of their children and stay connected by:

- Promoting public education concerning the responsibilities and rewards of fatherhood;
- Assisting men in preparation for the legal, financial and emotional aspects of real, not just biological fatherhood;
- Encouraging the establishment of paternity at childbirth;
- Encouraging fathers, regardless of marital status, to foster their emotional connection to and financial support of their children;
- Establishing and Integrating support mechanisms for fathers and families.

As the head of the lead agency, the DSS Commissioner was also charged with convening a broad based advisory council to assist in the planning and implementation of statewide activities to support the *FI*. The first meeting was held in the fall of 1999. The council, consisting of a diverse group of stakeholders, established several workgroups, each focused on a specific interest area. Each work group developed a set of recommendations to support the objectives of the *FI*. Many of these recommendations continue to be addressed in the new Plan.

Our work was focused on four proven strategies for change: capacity building in existing programs; infusing father-friendly principles and practices into existing systems; media advocacy to promote fatherhood; and a social policy agenda to address potential barriers to father involvement.

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Partners in the *FI* include the Departments of Children and Families, Correction, Education, Labor, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Public Health; the Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services and Court Support Services Divisions; CT Commission on Children; CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Legal Services, and numerous community-based partners serving families (mothers, fathers, and children).

Initially, the *FI* funded three fatherhood research and demonstration projects. Each pilot site was targeted to serve up to 100 fathers and was designed to offer a comprehensive set of services featuring case management; life skills training; parenting education and referrals to education, training and employment services. The Fatherhood pilot projects were operated by Madonna Place in Norwich, Career Resources, Inc. in Bridgeport, and Families in Crisis, Inc. in Cheshire at the Manson Youth Correctional Facility. The pilot sites were selected following a bidding process in the spring of 2000.

Over the next several years, fatherhood program sites expanded across the state, growing from three to ten DSS-certified fatherhood programs. In addition to the three mentioned above, programs are currently operating at New Haven Family Alliance in New Haven; Family Strides in Torrington; GBAPP, Inc. in Bridgeport; Department of Correction in facilities statewide; New Opportunities, Inc. in Waterbury; and Community Renewal Team, Inc. and The Village for Families and Children, Inc. in Hartford.

An important piece in the foundation of Connecticut's *FI* has been examining the numerous state systems that interact with fathers and their families and facilitating changes to better support these parents and the invaluable contributions our community-based partners make in the provision of services to families. The following list outlines some of the efforts state level partners have made since the inception of the *FI*, illustrating the recognition that state agencies, as public servants, have a significant responsibility in identifying areas for systems change.

Selected State Agency Efforts in Support of Fatherhood Initiative Goals
January 2001 – Present

Catalyzing Agency Cultural Change

- Re-examined agency mission (BCSE, SES, DCF)
- Created internal Fatherhood Teams (DCF, DMHAS, DSS Regional Offices, DOL, SES)
- Developed agency *FI* action plan (BCSE, DCF, DMHAS, DOL, SES)
- Assigned Fatherhood liaison for each field office (DCF, DSS/BCSE, SES)
- Sought new position of Coordinator of Men's Issues (DMHAS)

Promoting Staff Awareness

- In-service and/or new employee training (Board of Parole, DCF, SES)
- Mandatory *FI* training for all staff (CSSD, one DSS regional office)
- Fatherhood Practitioner Institutes on working with families (DSS)
- Five staff seminars of fatherhood and family topics, including domestic violence (DSS)
- Training Academy developing and delivering curricula (DCF)

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Selected State Agency Efforts in Support of Fatherhood Initiative Goals
January 2001 – Present

Promoting Staff Awareness, Continued

- Upgrading facilities with positive fatherhood images (SES, DSS)
- Site visits to regional offices for father-friendliness (DSS)
- Sponsored domestic violence training by CCADV for fatherhood program providers and BCSE staff (DSS)
- Sponsored safe engagement/batterer intervention training by David Mandel & Associates for fatherhood program providers and community action agencies (DSS)
- Presentation to central office staff on statewide Fatherhood Initiative (DMHAS)

Using a Common Assessment Tool

- DSS contracted with NPNFF to develop an assessment tool; five regional offices used the tool
- DMHAS has used the assessment tool
- DCF has committed to using the assessment tool
- SDE used the assessment tool during workshops on family/school teambuilding

Engaging Private Contractors

- CSSD has incorporated FI language into agency contracts since SFY 2003
- DSS and BCSE have incorporated FI language into agency contracts
- On Site assessments of contracted providers (DCF)
- Contract language under consideration (Board of Parole)
- Technical assistance and targeted grant proposal language stressing father inclusiveness and parental involvement (SDE)
- DSS/BCSE contract with CWEALF for Court Liaison to assist noncustodial parents in court system

Using Gender Neutral Language

- The Governor's Commission on Custody and Divorce recommended terminology changes for visitation and custody in statute and Judicial policies and forms
- All new forms/notices reviewed for father-inclusive language (SES, DOL)

Interagency Collaborations

- Joint sponsorship of fatherhood public hearings (DSS, Judicial)
- Job Fair for employers and inmates (DOL, DOC)
- One Stop Centers set up at three prison sites providing on site employment services (DOC, DOL with federal grant)
- Funded the development of Fatherhood Initiative Strategic Plan (DMHAS, DSS, DCF, SDE)
- Pre and post-release employment services for inmates who are veterans (DOL, DOC)
- Curriculum and evaluations development for inmate training program (DOL, DSS)
- Joint Funding of 4 Alternative Incarcerations Center pilots (CSSD, DSS)
- Drug Court Collaboration produces protocol to avoid conflicting court orders for noncustodial parents (CSSD, SES)
- "Daddy Strategies" workshop (SDE, DSS)
- Collaborative pursuit of grant funding for case management and other services (SES, DSS, DOC)

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Selected State Agency Efforts in Support of Fatherhood Initiative Goals
January 2001 – Present

Interagency Collaborations, Continued

- Child support modification and case management services for pre-release inmates (SES,DOC)
- Development of regulations on arrearage management, based on recommendations from interagency workgroup (DSS/BCSE, SES, fatherhood program providers)
- Development of alternative default order establishment policies (DSS/BCSE)
- Exploration of supervised visitation options for inmates (DOL, DCF)
- Memorandum of Agreement addressing father-inclusive audit of contract providers, hosting a Recovery Conference for men, workshop at FI conference, distribution of newsletters, mailing lists etc. (DSS, DMHAS)
- Joint sponsorship of the annual New England Fathering Conference (NEFC) (DSS, SDE, DMHAS, DPH, DOC, SES, CSSD, DCF, DOL, CTF)
- Fatherhood Memorandum of Understanding to actively participate in efforts that further the objectives of the John S. John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut (CGS Section 17b-27a), both within their respective agencies and as interagency partners. (DSS, SDE, DMHAS, DPH, DOC, SES, CSSD, DCF, DOL, CTF)
- Conducted Employment Pilot Program, assisting child support obligors through a holistic approach by connecting them to community-based, DSS-certified fatherhood programs in high-need areas of the state (Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven) with a focus on employment/vocational support services (CSSD, DSS, SES)
- Participation at the Annual Department of Correction Resource Fairs (DSS, DOC)
- Joint sponsorship of the annual Dads Matter Too 5k Road Race and Resource Fair (DSS, DCF)
- Participation on the Fatherhood Program Certification Review Committee (DCF, SES, CSSD, BCSE, DSS)
- Joint sponsorship of the Shaken Baby Prevention Initiative Dr. Harvey Karp’s “Happiest Baby on the Block” Training (DSS, DCF, OCA)
- Joint sponsorship of the Safe Sleep Symposium (DSS, DCF, OCA)
- Co-sponsored Babies Cry Have A Plan Trainings for fatherhood program providers (DSS, DCF)
- Co-sponsored Parents With Cognitive Limitations (PWCL) Training (DSS, DCF)
- Co-sponsored legislative forums on fatherhood (COC, DSS)
- Connecticut Panel Presentation at the 8th Annual National Fatherhood & Families Conference (DSS, SDE, DCF, DOL, DOC)
- Delivered Fatherhood Training sessions to Help Me Grow regional provider networks (CTF, DSS)
- Participated in curriculum crosswalk for Triple P Program (DSS, COC)
- Collaborative development of Fatherhood Initiative Strategic Plan (DSS, SDE, DCF, CSSD, SES, DOL, DOC, DMHAS, DPH, CTF, COC)

Providing Information to Customers

- New eight session “Embracing Fatherhood” curriculum (DOC)
- New brochure for noncustodial parents (SES)
- Website information for noncustodial parents (DSS)
- Customizing curricula for parolees under consideration (Board of Parole)
- Expansion of audit education, literacy, and family support services for fathers (SDE)

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**Selected State Agency Accomplishments in Support of Fatherhood Initiative Goals
January 2001 – Present**

Providing Information to Customers, Continued

- New brochure about agency services with father inclusive language (DOL)
- Domestic violence curricula that comprehensively addresses fatherhood and positive parent involvement (CSSD, Family Services)
- Contract for media products (DSS)
- Contract with CT Clearinghouse to disseminate fatherhood materials to the public (DSS)
- Development of informational tape on father's role in breastfeeding (DPH)
- Intensive case management services available to teen fathers as well as mothers via Right from the Start program (DPH)
- School Based Health Center programs provide support or counseling around fatherhood issues in Bridgeport and Norwalk (DPH)
- Fatherhood Initiative information shared with staff at hospitals implementing the CT Voluntary Paternity Establishment Program (DSS)
- Produced Fatherhood Initiative Public Service Announcements (DSS)
- Published Annual Fatherhood Initiative Family Services Directory (DSS)
- Produced Fatherhood Initiative Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Video, "It's About The Kids" (DSS)
- Coordinated with media team to include fatherhood-related information on the DSS Network, which available stream information and services in DSS office waiting areas (DSS)
- Funded the development of a report entitled "How father- and family-friendly is Connecticut?" (DSS)
- Established Fatherhood Initiative Information & Referral line, 1.866.6.CTDADS (1.866.628.3237) (DSS)
- Added a workshop on Fatherhood issues to its annual Prevention Training Catalog (DMHAS)

Viewing Customers Holistically

- Payment of child support is a condition of parole (Board of Parole)
- Considering including a positive father-child relationship as a treatment goal (DMHAS)

Providing Information/Support to Service Providers

- Funded for three pilot fatherhood providers (DSS)
- Developed Fatherhood Initiative website (DSS)
- Funding and dissemination of Fatherhood Inventory of Services Directory (DSS)
- Support for Service Providers' Network (DSS)
- Hosted annual fatherhood conference and two annual awards luncheons (DSS)
- Funded six certified fatherhood sites under the Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Grant (PRF) (DSS)
- Purchased the "Babies Cry Have A Plan" Curriculum for certified fatherhood program sites (DSS)
- Contracted with Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence(CCADV) to provide training for certified fatherhood and other community providers (DSS)

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**Selected State Agency Accomplishments in Support of Fatherhood Initiative Goals
January 2001 – Present**

Providing Information/Support to Service Providers, Continued

- Funded the development of a batterer intervention report entitled “Safe Engagement of Fathers When Domestic Violence is Present: Building a model response to domestic violence within Responsible Fatherhood Programming (DSS)
- Funded a Safe Engagement of Fathers When Domestic Violence is Present: A Forum for Stakeholders (DSS)
- Funded and Developed the CT Fatherhood Program Certification Project (DSS)
- Sponsored the CT Child Support Policy Conference: Shaping the Future for Families in Connecticut: The Child Support/Fatherhood Connection (DSS)
- Contracted to provide professional development on fatherhood to five targeted school districts through Support for Pregnant & Parenting Teens Grant (SDE, DSS, CTF)
- Sponsored the Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens (SPPT) Leadership Forum and Conference “Building Strong Futures” (SDE)
- Purchased Dr. Harvey Karp’s “Happiest Baby on the Block” Video for certified fatherhood programs funded under PRF Grant (DSS)
- Funded Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Retreat for certified fatherhood programs funded under PRF Grant (DSS)
- Purchased the 24/7 DAD (AM) curriculum for certified fatherhood programs funded under PRF Grant (DSS)
- Funded the evaluation and research of fatherhood programs (DSS)
- Hosted the New England Fathering Conference (DSS)

Providing Technical Assistance to Other States

- State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Family Service Integration Office (DSS)
- Wisconsin, Department of Children and Families (DSS)
- Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS)
- State of New Hampshire, Division of Family Assistance (DSS)
- Minneapolis Health Department, Research and Program Development Division (DSS)
- Westchester County, NY Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Maine Fatherhood Leadership Council (DSS)
- South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families (DSS)