Six Step Plan for Getting a Community Healthy Marriage Initiative Started

These steps will guide you in your efforts to build a Community Healthy Marriage Initiative (CHMI) in your community and help develop potential for receiving government resources.

1. ***Write your strategic plan.*** In order to create legitimacy for your effort, it is important that you develop a strategic plan to share with potential allies and supporters. Briefly describe your goals. What will be your focus? (e.g., marriage preparation, education or enrichment, mentoring, abstinence education or a combination) What population will you serve? (teens, single parents, fathers or couples) How will you deliver these services?

   For Strategic Planning Worksheets, go to www.lewin.com.
   Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Training Materials" select "Strategic Planning Worksheets." This document outlines a process for developing a mission statement and strategic plan.

   Also see Attachment A that includes a sample Strategic Plan from First Things First and materials from The Marriage Alliance of Central Virginia.

2. ***Develop a working team.*** Your team should include a group who share a common commitment and willing to contribute time on a regular basis.

   For Coalition Building Worksheets, go to www.lewin.com.
   Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Training Materials" select "Coalition Building Worksheets." This document outlines a process for developing a coalition. Also see attachment for a sample Steering Committee Charter.

   Also see Attachment B that includes a sample Steering Committee Charter from the Anne Arundel County Coalition for Healthy Marriages and Responsible Fatherhood.

3. ***Volunteers increase your capacity.*** College interns can donate 10-20 hours per week helping you organize a community initiative. Interns can help organize events, write letters, make phone calls, and assist with fundraising and proposal writing. Identify three local colleges and universities from which to recruit interns.

   For Volunteer Recruitment Information, go to www.lewin.com.
   Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Technical Assistance Toolkit" select "Internship Recruitment Letters" and "Internship Recruitment Tools."

   Also see Attachment C that includes Volunteer Recruitment information.

The Lewin Group is pleased to share these materials developed for the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative.

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4. *Plan at least one meeting every six months to recruit new supporters.* Invite community, religious, and government leaders for a meeting to discuss your local community healthy marriage initiative. ACF regional offices can help recruit speakers and design an agenda.

   For Samples of Meeting Agendas, go to www.lewin.com.
   Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Technical Assistance Toolkit" select "Boilerplate Documents." This includes samples of meeting agendas.

   Also see Attachment D that includes a sample meeting agenda.

5. *Develop a strategy and capacity for delivering marriage education and support services,* a) identify and organize marriage education and preparation services in the community, b) distribute information on services available, c) locate the needed facilities, and d) develop training programs to expand capacity.

   - **For a Description of Marriage Education and Training Programs, go to www.lewin.com.**
     Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Technical Assistance Toolkit" select "Summary Description of Marriage Education and Training Programs."

   - A web-based resource center can help identify capacity. **A useful model is Dennis Stoica's website for the Orange County Marriage Resource Center** www.OCMarriage.org.

   - Secure needed office space, obtain legal status as a 501c3, if appropriate, and establish a bank account for the organization. **For information on how to form a 501c3 corporation go to** http://www.tgci.com/magazine/96summer/tobe1.asp.

6. *Sponsor at least two Marriage Celebration activities every six months.* These activities could include an awards banquet, free dates for newlyweds, and a variety of other activities to celebrate marriage. Such events let your community know that marriage matters.

   For Sample Marriage Celebration Activities, go to www.lewin.com.
   Select "Areas of Expertise," then select the "CHMI" button. Under "Technical Assistance Toolkit" select "Marriage Celebration Activities."

   Also see Attachment E that includes a list of Marriage Celebration Activities.

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This 6 step plan will help lay the groundwork for a Community Healthy Marriage Initiative and help your coalition compete for funding opportunities. ACF wants to give you the help you need to accomplish these tasks. Request technical assistance by going to the ACF website www.acf.hhs.gov/key.html. Click on the healthy marriage link and follow instructions to make a formal request. Select the "ask a question" tab and fill out the form.