



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201 | www.acf.hhs.gov

Dear Colleague,

The federal government has made a long-standing commitment to supporting healthy relationships and stable families. The Administration for Children and Families and the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) believe that children do best when they have the support of both parents and when their parents have healthy relationships with each other. Research also indicates that married adults and children raised by both parents in stable, low-conflict households do better on a host of outcomes (*Why Marriage Matters for Child Wellbeing*, Ribar, D.C., Future of Children 25, no. 2, 2015). Studies have shown that people live longer, have less stress, and are more financially stable in a healthy family environment where both parents are present, share the responsibility of the household, and raise the children (*What Do "I Do"s Do?*, Acs and Nelson, Urban Institute, 2004). In these households, children are healthier, both mentally and physically, and are better able to have their fundamental needs met.

As you know, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program includes efforts to reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and *marriage* (Purpose 2), and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (Purpose 4) as two of its core purposes. As a result, TANF provides states with the funding and flexibility to support activities to promote healthy marriage. In 2006, OFA began providing demonstration grant funding for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood activities. These programs provide services that combine marriage and relationship education and father-child involvement skills development and activities, with efforts to address participation barriers and the economic stability needs of their participants.

I want to bring to your attention several OFA-funded resources that are available to states interested in engaging in efforts to strengthen marriages, support healthy relationships, and encourage positive father involvement.

The National Center for Healthy Marriage and Families (www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org) helps human services agencies develop the capacity to promote healthy relationship skills in a way that meets both their needs and those of the families they serve. The National Center supports the integration of healthy marriage and relationship education into targeted safety-net service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen families and promote family self-sufficiency. The National Center provides in-person and virtual trainings (or Integration Institutes) for agency staff and leadership; technical assistance for interested stakeholders; expert-led webinars and a monthly newsletter highlighting new research and promising practices; and an online library, with publications and resources developed in-house and from the field in a variety of formats.

The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (www.Fatherhood.gov) serves as a resource for responsible fatherhood information, designed to promote and encourage the appropriate involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. The Clearinghouse provides access to curricula, webinars, research products, and other resources to improve the implementation and success of their programs.

These free, easily accessible resources, can help you—our TANF Administrators—achieve our common goal to improve the overall well-being of the families you serve. Please let us know how we can help facilitate your connection to these important resources.

Sincerely,

/s/

Clarence H. Carter
Director
Office of Family Assistance