



Quarterly Update

Latest developments in the evaluation

Spotlight on two programs

October 2013

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These telephone surveys will obtain information about key outcomes the programs intend to affect. The evaluation team will begin collecting data on program implementation, including data gathered through on-site visits to grantees this fall.

Impact/process evaluations

Enrollment of fathers and couples into the study is ongoing. Applicants who meet grantees' eligibility requirements and who agree to participate in the study are enrolled into the study. Applicants first complete a 30-minute telephone interview (the evaluation staff conduct the survey). Then, individuals or couples are randomly assigned to a program group who are offered the grantee services, or a control group who cannot receive those services but are provided information about other services in the community. Enrollment started in December 2012. As of August 31, over 2,600 individuals were enrolled in the study across the four responsible fatherhood and three healthy marriage programs in the PACT evaluation. Study enrollment will continue until summer 2014.

A focus on participation levels is a high priority. It can be challenging to keep those who enroll actively participating in program services. High rates of program participation are important for both the grantees and the evaluation. The grantees, with support from the evaluation team, continue to identify and implement strategies to achieve targets for both enrolling study participants and having high program participation.

Use of a management information system. Grantees in the study collect detailed program participation information through a management information system (MIS). The evaluation team at Mathematica provided a web-based "PACT Information System," or PACTIS, to grantees who did not have an MIS or who wanted to use a different one. Through PACTIS, grantee staff can systematically record information on services scheduled and received as well as case notes. Grantees can use PACTIS to create schedules of workshops and attendance lists. Program managers can generate reports to help staff, and to track monthly benchmarks such as enrollment and participation targets. The evaluation team also uses PACTIS to study enrollment and participation across all the programs in the evaluation study. (Grantees and the evaluation team also use PACTIS to perform random assignment.)

Plans for future data collection. Approximately 12 months after they were enrolled, all study participants will be contacted via telephone to complete a second survey.

Sub-studies

There are two other studies within PACT. One study will be interviewing a sample of fathers enrolled in the Responsible Fatherhood programs to hear directly from them about their life experiences including their relationships and their children. The first interviews will be completed this fall.

The second study will focus on a few selected Responsible Fatherhood grantees serving primarily Hispanic fathers. Programs for this study will be selected and data collection will begin this fall. The evaluation team will obtain information from multiple sources including program managers and staff and fathers.

Program Spotlights



Responsible Fatherhood Program Spotlight: Fathers' Support Center-St. Louis, MO

Overview of the program. Fathers' Support Center (FSC) provides the Integrated Fatherhood Program to non-custodial fathers in St. Louis, Missouri. Fathers first participate in a six-week Family Formation Program (FFP): each day four hours of curriculum-based workshops¹ are combined with four hours of activities tailored to individual needs.² After completing FFP, graduates can continue to participate in program-sponsored basic and vocational education and regular meetings with an employment specialist and social worker. Also, they have access to

¹ Topics addressed include personal responsibility, communication, manhood and relationships, fatherhood, job readiness and seeking and maintaining employment.

² Services provided include GED classes, computer training, job search, community service, receipt of substance abuse services from other organizations, and meetings with social workers and employment case managers.

weekly job clubs, individual and family counseling, legal advice, and free family activities.

Outreach and recruitment approaches. FSC runs radio advertisements, and staff appear on local morning television shows to discuss program services. FSC staff attend community resource fairs, conduct presentations to local organizations, and distribute brochures to family-serving community organizations. FSC receives referrals from child support agencies, the courts, and the probation and parole systems. Using past clients as program ambassadors, FSC's "street outreach" staff approach men on the street and places where men congregate, such as pool halls and barber shops. The staff hand out flyers and talk with men about their needs and FSC services. Staff also go door-to-door and leave program information with FSC contact information at local residences.

Participation approaches. Before the start of FFP, staff members who recruited the father will call him to remind him about the start time and date of FFP. For help getting to the program, FSC also offers bus passes and gas cards if needed. Additionally, fathers are invited to attend a drop-in staff-facilitated support group called "Fathers Rap" while they wait for FFP to start. Once the daily FFP classes begin, the program provides a \$100 incentive to fathers for each week of perfect attendance (classes last for six weeks).

Promoting program attendance

A new FFP starts about every seven weeks. FSC used to conduct intakes daily, so some fathers had no contact with the program for seven weeks while waiting for the next FFP to start. FSC and the evaluation team at Mathematica reviewed PACTIS data: they found that the longer fathers waited between enrollment and the beginning of FFP, the less likely they were to show up to the program. In response, FSC began to schedule intake appointments to enroll fathers no earlier than two weeks before the start of the program. If fathers inquire about the program before then, FSC asks them to come back within two weeks of the start of the next FFP.



Healthy Marriage Program Spotlight: University Behavioral Associates-Bronx, NY

Overview of the program. University Behavioral Associates (UBA) provides the Supporting Healthy Relationships (SHR) Program to couples in the Bronx, New York. The program uses a curriculum adapted from *Loving Couples, Loving Children* (LCLC). Couples attend relationship education groups that meet in three-hour weekly sessions for nine weeks or in eight-hour sessions on three consecutive Saturdays. In addition to the core workshops,

couples may attend up to 36 supplemental sessions that are held approximately three times per month on a drop-in basis. Couples also have access to employment specialists and employment workshops. Employment specialists work with couples for up to a year and provide assistance with resume development, preparing for interviews, job search efforts, and job referrals (and referrals to other needed services). Employment workshops address job search strategies, interviewing skills, career exploration, training and education opportunities, resume development, and other career-related soft skills.

Outreach and recruitment approaches. UBA recruits couples receiving services through the Montefiore Medical Center system including its prenatal and WIC clinics. UBA makes presentations to church and other community groups, distributing flyers as needed. UBA has one recruiter who specializes in recruiting couples in the Bronx's church communities. UBA also receives referrals from partner agencies. Because women are most often the initial contact, UBA staff talk with the women applicants about how they can encourage their partners to enroll in the SHR program. To participate in the SHR program, both members of the couple must identify as being in a committed relationship and live together with their children. Both members of the couple must also agree to enroll in the study.

Participation approaches. Once couples are scheduled to attend the SHR program, they are assigned an employment specialist: this specialist manages many services for the couple, ranging from their immediate needs to employment and other services. Before the program begins, the employment specialist will call the couple to remind them about the start time and date that they are scheduled to begin the program. Couples earn \$75 for attending their first session and are reimbursed for child care costs.

Encouraging participation

To encourage regular workshop attendance, UBA holds a drawing to win a \$100 gift card. For each session attended on time, each couple gets an additional entry into the drawing. In the last session of the series, one couple's name is drawn; both partners must be present to win. In an interesting twist, group members decide whether to award the money just to the winning couple or to divide it equally among two or four of the top participating couples. Often, the group decides to divide the award and the winning couple agrees.

To find out more about the PACT Evaluation:

- Contact the federal project officers at ACF: Seth Chamberlain (seth.chamberlain@acf.hhs.gov); or
- Contact the evaluation contractor, Mathematica Policy Research Robin Dion (rdion@mathematica-mpr.com).



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