



## Quarterly Update

*Latest developments in the evaluation*

*Spotlight on two programs*

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### Study Progress

**Enrollment of fathers and couples into PACT continues.** As of November 30, 2013, 3,908 individuals (fathers and couples) were enrolled in the study across the four PACT responsible fatherhood programs and the three PACT healthy marriage programs. Study enrollment will continue through summer 2014.

**Follow-up data collection for the impact study is ready to begin.** In January 2014, we will begin conducting telephone interviews with study participants who enrolled in the study 12 months earlier. Trained interviewers will ask study participants about a range of topics, including:

- their relationship with their children and their partners (which may differ for healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs),
- their well-being, and
- their employment.

Interviews will take place with study participants who were assigned to the program group—and could participate in the program—and study participants who were assigned to the control group—and were not allowed to participate in the program. These interviews will help us learn about the experiences of the men and couples who are offered responsible fatherhood or healthy marriage program services. They will also help us understand the experiences of those who are not offered the program. The effectiveness of the programs will be evaluated by comparing the answers given by study participants in the two groups.

**Data collection for the implementation study is underway.** In October 2013, evaluation staff spent two to three days in each of the four responsible fatherhood sites conducting interviews with program staff and organization leaders, to obtain their perspectives on program design and implementation. Topics discussed included staffing, service delivery partners, recruitment and enrollment processes, strategies to encourage participation, and processes for monitoring program implementation. The first report on implementation, available in 2014, will focus on responsible fatherhood programs and will include information from the site visits and data from PACTIS.

In October 2013, an on-line survey was conducted with program staff from the four responsible fatherhood programs and the three healthy marriage programs in the study. Staff answered questions about their background and experience, the

training and supervision they receive, and their perceptions of program leadership and program quality. Overall, 92% of staff completed the survey.

**A report on in-depth interviews with about 90 fathers is forthcoming.** In October and November 2013, evaluation team members spent time talking, in person, with fathers who had participated in the PACT responsible fatherhood programs. During these interviews, which took about two hours each, the researchers asked the fathers to reflect on their lives, their relationships with their children, and their experiences in the program. A report on findings from the 2013 interviews will be available in 2014. The same fathers will be interviewed again in 2014 and 2015.

### Program Spotlights



**Responsible Fatherhood Program Spotlight:  
Goodwill/Easter Seals, St. Paul, MN**

**Overview of the program.** Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota operates the FATHER Project at multiple locations in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Rochester, and St. Cloud.<sup>1</sup> Fathers first participate in a two-day workshop orienting fathers to the program and providing information on child support, employment, and training. Each father is assigned a ‘father advocate’ who helps the father create a Fatherhood Plan describing his goals and service plan. Fathers may then participate in a 24-hour parenting workshop (using the *Young Dads/Young Moms* and *Nueva Familia* curriculum<sup>2</sup>) or a 24-hour relationship workshop (using the *Within My Reach* curriculum).

The program has an “open entry” approach: fathers can begin attending workshops immediately, starting with workshop #1, or a later module. Each workshop meets for two hours weekly for 12 weeks; fathers are encouraged to attend at least one session per month and to make up any missed sessions. Fathers typically complete the parenting workshop

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<sup>1</sup> GW/ES also collaborates with a number of culturally-specific organizations—including Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), Hmong American Partnership, African Community Services, and The Division of Indian Work—to better serve the diverse communities of the Twin Cities.

<sup>2</sup> *Nueva Familia* is a cultural adaptation of *Young Dads/Young Moms*. Both curricula were developed by Parents as Teachers/MELD.

before starting the relationship workshop. Fathers are also offered GED services, a host of employment services (see box), parent-child activities, access to a child support lawyer, and help with child support orders. Child support staff from Hennepin and Ramsey Counties are co-located at FATHER program offices.

**Outreach and recruitment approaches.** The FATHER Project runs radio and TV ads, and staff appear on local TV shows to discuss program services. FATHER Project staff attend community resource fairs and local events, conduct presentations to community organizations, and distribute information about the program. Staff and former participants conduct street outreach, approaching men in public places to discuss the men's needs and program services. The FATHER Project offers a one-time incentive (a \$15-\$25 gift card) to participants who refer five or more friends or family members to the program. The program periodically organizes special events, such as community kickball games, to reach out to the community.

**Participation approaches.** Father advocates encourage fathers to participate fully and to accomplish their goals. Group facilitators encourage fathers to develop relationships with their peers, using them as a source of encouragement and support, in an effort to keep the fathers coming back. The FATHER Project provides bus passes and gas cards to participants when needed, and the program celebrates fathers' program milestones with FATHER Project t-shirts and gift cards.



### Healthy Marriage Program Spotlight: El Paso Center for Children

**Overview of the program.** The El Paso Center for Children (EPCC) has provided the Healthy Opportunities for Marriage Enrichment (HOME) program to parenting couples since 2006. Using a curriculum adapted from *Within Our Reach*, HOME engages parenting couples in an 18-hour marriage enrichment workshop that meets for two hours each week for nine weeks. Couples can drop in on two-hour supplemental enrichment sessions, typically held twice per month, that use the same curriculum. Couples also have access to a family support worker who provides case management during the nine-week workshop and for up to six additional months, and to an employment specialist who can help the couple develop a career plan, find a job, or access GED or English Language Learner classes. HOME offers a job-readiness workshop every other month to help clients develop resumes, fill out job applications, prepare for interviews, and hone soft skills such as time-management. Couples can begin accessing services while participating in the marriage workshop.

**Outreach and recruitment approaches.** HOME staff conduct outreach at school events (see box) and community health fairs and provides information about the program (in Spanish and English) on TV, billboards, and in theater ads.

**Participation approaches.** The family support worker calls couples weekly to remind them to attend their marriage workshop. Couples receive a gas card to facilitate session attendance; free child care and dinner are also provided. HOME offers an employment-related financial incentive for participating: couples who complete at least seven of the nine

### Employment Services at the FATHER Project

Fathers can access the following employment services:

**Employment Readiness Training (ERT).** ERT is a six-hour workshop offered in both a one-day format and a multisession format (two hours per week for three weeks) and includes skills assessment and help with job applications, resume writing, and the interview process.

**Job Club.** Employment specialists facilitate this two-hour peer support group twice a week. Fathers share job search experiences, and guest speakers often attend to discuss their professional or personal experiences.

**Employment Assistance.** Employment specialists also provide intensive one-on-one assistance including individualized assessments, creating placement plans, connecting fathers to job training opportunities and job leads, conducting mock job interviews, and providing support for job retention and advancement.

**Subsidized Jobs.** The FATHER Project pays fathers an entry-level stipend to work at such places as Denny's, McDonald's, or Cub Foods (supermarket). Fathers receive on-the-job training in the first month, perform supervised work in the second month, and work more independently in the third month.

workshop sessions and at least one supplemental session per month are eligible to receive up to \$500 in a Career Development Account, which can pay for vocational skills training, the GED test-taking fee, or for start-up work expenses such as uniform costs.

### Partnering with Schools in El Paso

EPCC staff have built relationships with staff from El Paso's public schools over the years, and this has been EPCC's most reliable recruiting source, reaching parents through school-based events each year. For example, some local schools host a Back-to-School Health Fair in the fall or a Holiday Fair in December. EPCC hosts a table at these events, which are usually well-attended, where parents sign up to learn more about program services. EPCC's outreach staff also reach parents through presentations at Parent-Teacher Association meetings and other parenting groups in the schools. EPCC outreach workers follow up with interested couples as quickly as possible. Staff call the couple, screen them for program eligibility, and invite eligible couples to come into the office to enroll. School-based outreach allows EPCC to reach its target population of low-income, young parents in a relatively inexpensive way.

To find out more about the PACT Evaluation:

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



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