



Quarterly Update

Latest developments in the evaluation

Spotlight on two programs

April 2014

OPRE Report Number: 2014-67

Program Spotlights



Responsible Fatherhood Program Spotlight: Connections to Success

Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas

Study Overview

The Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation is a formative evaluation that will examine and document selected healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grantees' experiences in operating their programs, the needs and experiences of participants, and the effectiveness of services. For more information, please see the [PACT](#) website.

Study Progress

Enrollment of fathers and couples into the PACT evaluation continues. As of March 31, 2014, 5,194 individuals (fathers and members of couples) were enrolled in the study across the four PACT responsible fatherhood programs and the three PACT healthy marriage programs. Study enrollment continues.

Follow-up data collection for the impact study has begun. In February 2014, we began conducting telephone interviews with responsible fatherhood study participants—both program and control group members—who enrolled in the study 12 months earlier. Trained interviewers asked study fathers about a range of issues, including their relationship with their children and their partners, their employment, and their well-being. Follow-up interviews with study participants in the healthy marriage sites will begin this summer. The information from the interviews will be used to assess program effects.

Implementation Study activities continue. Evaluation staff are analyzing responsible fatherhood implementation information gathered from on-site visits, interviews, surveys and from program administrative data. The first report on the implementation of the responsible fatherhood programs is expected to be available in late 2014. Implementation study activities have begun in the healthy marriage sites and findings are expected to be available in early 2015.

Analysis is underway on the in-depth interviews. A report on findings from the first round of three interviews with about 90 program fathers will be produced this year. Findings will include fathers' reflections on their lives, their relationships with their children, and their experiences in the program.

The study of a set of responsible fatherhood programs serving Hispanic fathers is underway. Program visits will be conducted over the coming months.

Overview of the program. Connections to Success (CtS) provides the Successful STEPS program to low-income fathers in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas. Fathers participate in the core parenting and employment workshop as a cohort, with a new group starting once a month. The program's two-and-a-half week, 80-hour core workshop covers primarily economic stability (job readiness, child support, financial management) during the first ten days of the workshop, and parenting topics the remaining two and a half days. After completion of the the core workshop, fathers may participate in a healthy marriage and relationship workshop called CONNECT, which uses the 12-hour Ready for Love curriculum. The CONNECT workshop is open-entry/open-exit—that is, fathers do not attend as a cohort and can begin (and end) at any time. After graduating from the core workshop, a case manager and job developer continue follow up with fathers for up to a year. Fathers may participate in additional services such as job club and subsidized employment and can obtain professional clothing for interviews.

Outreach and recruitment approaches. CtS staff make presentations to community groups and referral source agencies, distribute flyers and brochures, sponsor radio announcements, and contact potentially eligible men on the street and in other public places. The Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) supports recruitment by sending out flyers to men on their child support enforcement caseload. CtS staff also participate in "Fatherhood Buzz"—a national initiative to help barbershops connect fathers to local resources to help build strong families.

Participation approaches. After enrollment, fathers meet with workshop facilitators right away and are assigned a case manager to begin the process of identifying their needs. Because class is held every day for three weeks, program staff have the opportunity to build rapport with fathers, which can promote completion. CtS staff reach out to reengage men who have missed appointments or activities, and provide supports

(including financial incentives) to overcome barriers to participation and completion.

Connections to Success: Partnership with Child Support

For fathers who complete the core workshop and who owe old child support, CtS offers a participation incentive through a partnership with Kansas Child Support Services (KCCS). Depending on the number of hours of program participation, the child support agency reduces fathers' child support arrearages up to \$2,000. Fathers who obtain their GED or a commercial driver's license receive an additional \$1,000 in arrearages reduction. For every \$1 fathers invest in a 529 college savings plan, KCCS also provides participants with a \$2 reduction in child support arrearages. A liaison from KCCS discusses fathers' legal obligations and navigating the child support system during a morning workshop session, then meets individually with participants to provide support and guidance related to each father's child support situation. As a result of CtS' partnership with KCCS, KCCS has forgiven \$170,000 of child support arrearages for participants in the Successful STEPS program. In addition, fathers who have participated in the Successful STEPS program have made over \$256,000 in child support payments. CtS is working with the child support agency in Missouri to develop an incentive for fathers who owe child support in that state.



Responsible Fatherhood Program Spotlight: Urban Ventures Leadership Foundation, Minneapolis, MN

Overview of the program. Urban Ventures' Center for Fathering (CFF) provides parenting, relationship, and employment services to low-income fathers in Minneapolis, MN. A total of 31 hours of material is offered through three core workshops: a 12-hour parenting group provided in 1½-hour sessions over eight weeks; a seven-session job readiness workshop provided in 1-hour sessions twice per week; and a 12-hour relationship group for couples and individuals provided in 1½-hour sessions over eight weeks. Fathers are encouraged to begin with the parenting workshop and after completion, proceed to the relationship workshop. However, fathers can participate in any workshop, including job readiness, at any time. All workshops are open-entry/open-exit. CFF offers one-on-one employment-related services, a staffed resource room (with access to computers, job listings, and employment staff), on-site job fairs with local employers, job retention incentives, and referrals to community services. Staff also help fathers negotiate the child support system and may advocate for them in court.

Outreach and recruitment approaches. Fathers are typically identified through street outreach (see text box below), while others are referred by substance abuse treatment centers.

Participation approaches. To increase initial engagement in services, CFF designated a staff member to act as a "closer" after intake to discuss expectations for participation, provide a schedule of workshops, and walk interested fathers over to their employment services office. Staff also make reminder calls to fathers who do not show up for services to encourage participation. To accommodate fathers with scheduling conflicts and to facilitate engagement in the full range of services offered, CFF expanded the frequency and formats of their workshops, including offering the 12-hour parenting workshop in a compressed two-day format over a single weekend and providing participants the opportunity to complete all three parenting, relationship and employment components in a compressed five-day format over a single week.

UV Center for Fathering: Innovative Street Outreach

Urban Ventures' Center for Fathering has a longstanding and collaborative partnership with the Minnesota chapter of Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS). Most of the individuals who participate in Urban Ventures' fatherhood program are recruited by MAD DADS staff, who come from similar backgrounds and are committed to bringing about positive change within their community. A recognizable and strong presence in the neighborhoods and on the streets, MAD DADS' Street Outreach Patrol conducts vigorous and proactive one-on-one outreach. Through an agreement with Minneapolis' public transportation provider, MAD DADS staff are permitted to ride on public buses that route through disadvantaged neighborhoods. During their rides, they are allowed to speak with passengers about the Urban Ventures' program. Those who express interest are encouraged to come to the Center for Fathering to enroll in the program and are given a card with information on the intake schedule and address of the program.

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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