



Outreach and Recruitment: Best Practices for Fatherhood Practitioners

July 16, 2014



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Overview

- Office of Family Assistance (OFA) funded national resource for fathers, practitioners, federal grantees, states, and the public at-large who are serving or interested in supporting strong fathers and families.



Toll-free: 877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411) | Fax: 703-934-3740 | info@fatherhood.gov | www.fatherhood.gov

Lisa Washington-Thomas, NRFC COTR, lwashington-thomas@acf.hhs.gov

Kenneth Braswell, NRFC Project Director, kenneth.braswell@gmail.com

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager, patrick.patterson@icfi.com



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

- Visit the NRFC: www.fatherhood.gov
 - www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit for *Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit*.
 - www.fatherhood.gov/webinars for archives of all our webinars.
- Contact any of our staff: info@fatherhood.gov
- Encourage fathers or practitioners to contact our national call center toll-free at **1-877-4DAD411** (877-432-3411).
- Engage with us via social media:
Facebook: [Fatherhoodgov](https://www.facebook.com/Fatherhoodgov) Twitter: [@Fatherhoodgov](https://twitter.com/Fatherhoodgov)
- See website for information on the *President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative* and NRFC *Fatherhood Buzz* events.
- Look for examples of our *Annual Media Campaign* designed to promote the Responsible Fatherhood field.



fatherhood.gov



Outreach and Recruitment: Best Practices for Fatherhood Practitioners

Nigel Vann, Senior Technical Specialist
ICF International/National Responsible Fatherhood
Clearinghouse
nigel.vann@icfi.com



July 16, 2014



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field

www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit

- Strategies for effectively recruiting and serving dads; and helping connect/reconnect them to their children and families.
- Tips and suggestions from experienced practitioners.
- Interactive/downloadable activities you can use with fathers in one-on-one or group work.
- Links to other resources.
- A “living document” - we invite input and suggestions for additional tips and resources.



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Home / For Programs / Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit

Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field

Home

About

Start

Build

Work

Activities

References

Printer Friendly Version



Home

Whether you have been supporting fathers for years, or are just beginning a program, the resources provided here can strengthen your efforts to improve the lives of families in your communities. This is a dynamic toolkit that will be expanded and enhanced over time.

We invite all users to submit information for possible inclusion in the toolkit. We are particularly interested in tools, resources, or strategies that you have found effective in work with fathers. If there is a topic or area that you'd like more information on, please contact us at info@fatherhood.gov.

About This Toolkit



Fatherhood programs provide services that support fathers in their roles as major influences in their children's lives. These programs are helping fathers create loving, nurturing relationships with their children and be actively involved in their lives. This toolkit draws on lessons learned and resources used by fatherhood programs in diverse locales throughout the nation. [Learn more.](#)

Start a Program



Careful planning before launch can help ensure the success and sustainability of any fatherhood program. It is important to identify needs, map community resources, foster solid partnerships, craft a thoughtful logic model, and determine the scope of services before the program ever opens its doors. [Learn more.](#)

Build Your Program



Effective communication and marketing strategies will help your program connect with dads and prompt them to move from interest to involvement. [Learn more.](#)



Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field



- Home
- About
- Start**
- Build
- Work
- Activities
- References

Printer Friendly Version

Start a Program

- Spotlight On...
- Planning and Design
- Needs Assessment
- Community Mapping
- Effective Partnerships
- Formalizing Partnerships
- Logic Model
- Program Services
- Staffing
- Budgeting and Fundraising
- Top Takeaways
- Helpful Resources
- Documentation and Sustainability

Effective Partnerships

After identifying potential partners and key points of contact, reach out to them to explore whether a partnership could be mutually beneficial. A formal first step might be to get in touch by email, letter, or phone; less formal contact might be made when attending community events or serving on multi-agency committees. Board members and others may be able to help by providing introductions. But before talking with potential partners, fatherhood programs must be clear about what they are asking for and know how to describe their goals and strategies. One approach is to develop an "elevator speech," a brief but compelling overview of the fatherhood program that can be adjusted according to the potential partner's focus. This can be an effective springboard to outlining the ways a prospective partner can benefit from an alliance with a fatherhood program.

Example of an Effective Elevator Speech

Provided by Catherine Tijerina, Co-Founder and Executive Director, The RIDGE Project "The RIDGE Project is in the business of saving lives by building a legacy of strong families. We accomplish our goal through youth development, fatherhood, healthy marriage, and reentry programs delivered across the state of Ohio."

Experienced practitioners also recommend:

- Ask staff and board members to carry the program's brochures or other materials with them at all times so they always have information ready to show a potential partner who might help with recruitment, services, or funding.
- When speaking with individuals or organizations that may be potential partners for





Promising Practices - Outreach and Recruitment

- Printed brochures and materials should be simple, easy to understand, and tailored to those you want to reach.
- Utilize traditional and social media.
- Hire recruitment staff who can relate to target population and forge connections based on mutual respect and caring.
- Go to where the dads are. Listen to what they have to say and respond to their current life needs.
- Don't oversell your program - focus on what you can realistically offer, **DO NOT** make promises you can't keep.
- Provide meaningful services - this will become your best recruitment tool through word-of-mouth marketing.





Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field



- Home
- About
- Start
- Build
- Work
- Activities
- References

Printer Friendly Version

Build Your Program

- Communications
- Working with Media
- Interviews
- Recruitment
- Top Takeaways
- Helpful Resources

Communications

Use visually appealing and carefully written products—brochures, flyers, business cards, newsletters, postcards—and effective media outreach to establish your program’s brand in the community. They are the calling cards program staff can distribute at local events or locations.

Key considerations are:

- Create products to suit the audience. Potential funders, community partners, and participants have different information needs and require tailored messages.
- Make publications and other products available in both English and Spanish, or other languages spoken by large numbers of the target population. Make sure translations are accurate and convey the concepts as intended.
- Keep the writing simple. Use short sentences.
- Use language that is easily understandable. A good rule of thumb is to write for a 6th grade or lower reading level and limit the use of words with three or more syllables.³²
- Use attractive photos and colors.
- Be sure that people in the photos represent the target audience. Also make sure the program has permission to use images.
- Do not clutter the page. Use words and images sparingly and leave adequate white space.
- Remember that printed materials are primarily a tool to start a conversation with a





Community Outreach

- Outreach activities include:
 - Community mapping.
 - Forming partnerships.
 - Developing effective outreach materials.
 - Working with local media.
 - Knowing your “elevator speech.”
- The main goal of outreach is to spread the word about your program in the community.

“I don’t ask partner agencies to give a father my brochure in the hope that he [the father] will call me. Rather, I ask the partner agency to describe the program, give the father the brochure, and ask, ‘Is it OK if I have the fatherhood program call you?’ so gaining the father’s passive consent for me to get in touch.” Barry McIntosh, Young Fathers of Santa Fe



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Recruitment

- Successful recruitment includes:
 - Knowing where & how to find potential participants.
 - Looking for diverse opportunities for engagement.
 - Making effective one-to-one connections.
 - Creating a welcoming program environment.
 - Working from a “strengths-based” perspective.
 - Focusing on what you can realistically offer.
- Recruitment goals include:
 - Talking with and listening to dads.
 - Understanding their needs.
 - Identifying ways in which the program may be able to help.
 - Encouraging enrollment and participation of fathers who may benefit from the program.

“It’s important to maintain a non-judgmental approach and build a relationship from the start .. At first, you want to spend 90% listening and 10% talking.” Barry McIntosh, Young Fathers of Santa Fe





Opportunities for engagement

- “Points of pain” such as:
 - Unemployment.
 - Substantial child support payments.
 - Divorce or separation.
 - Custody or visitation issues.
 - Incarceration/reentry.
 - Unplanned pregnancy.
- Other life transition points such as:
 - Becoming a new dad.
 - Preparing for marriage.
 - Becoming a stepfather or foster father.
 - Raising children as a single father, full- or part-time.
 - Co-parenting children in multiple households.





Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field



- Home
- About
- Start
- Build
- Work
- Activities
- References

Printer Friendly Version

Build Your Program

- Communications
- Recruitment
- Finding Participants
- Opportunities for Engagement
- One-to-One Connections
- Connecting with Dads
- Recruitment Strategies
- Top Takeaways
- Helpful Resources

Recruitment

"We are in the community knocking on doors, standing on the streets, in subway stations, etc.... People know us. Word of mouth kicks in after that. Seventy percent of the people that come through our doors actually met us on the streets. We tell people it is hard, but we show them how to get what they need."

— James Worthy, Center for Urban Families

"Just let it be known that fathers are welcome and that they will be treated with respect as an equal. Pretty simple."

— Fatherhood Program Participant³⁵

"You can't put up a sign that says, 'Fatherhood Class—Free Food.' Most of these guys have to be 'relation shipped' into these classes."

— Rozario Slack, Rozario Slack Enterprises

The ability to recruit fathers is one of the key measures of a fatherhood program's success. Effective recruitment requires staff who have flexibility, life experience, and listening skills. They should also have:

- Knowledge of the community.
- Solid presentation skills.
- Ability to relate to the target population.
- Ability to act naturally and "be themselves."
- Ability to be persistent in a respectful way.

In addition to training recruitment staff, fatherhood programs should make sure staff have enough time to spend on recruiting dads. Some programs can achieve recruitment goals with part-time recruiting staff, but many programs have found that recruitment requires more attention. Particularly during the first year of operation, before word-of-mouth has begun to





Outreach and Recruitment: Best Practices for Fatherhood Practitioners



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Barry McIntosh
Founder and Executive Director,
Young Fathers of Santa Fe
barrymcintosh@me.com

July 16, 2014



Planning and Preparation

- Build on successes.
 - What have you and the agency done that's worked?
- Look at failures as opportunities for improvement.
- Know the value of fathers. Fathers are the most important men on the planet to their child.
 - Margaret Mead said *“The most important task of any civilization is to teach its young men how to be fathers.”*
- Men are the only ones who can show children how men are in the world.
- See men and fathers as potential, not as risk.
- What baggage do you bring into this work?
 - Work on yourself first.





Outreach, everywhere

- Look to create a referral network with any individual or organization that works with boys, men or families.
- Health-based:
 - OB/GYN's, Community Health Centers, Women's Health Clinics, Birth Centers, Planned Parenthood, Hospitals.
- Schools:
 - School Health Centers, School Nurses, School Counselors, Health Teachers, Truancy officer, Student Wellness office.
- Juvenile Justice:
 - JPO's, Detention Centers, Teen Court, Family Court Judges, Juvenile Court Judges.
 - Risky behavior is rarely an isolated event.
- Early Childhood:
 - Child Care, Early Head Start, Community Colleges Child Care facilities.





More Outreach Approaches

- Homeless youth shelters and family shelters.
- Go to where the guys are:
 - Basketball courts, baseball field, skate park, soccer field, mall, car shows, sporting events, etc.
 - Be everywhere!
- If you work with girls and mothers, ask them about the guys/fathers.
 - Find out what he is doing that's working.
 - Have them focus on the positive if possible.
- Let friends and family know what you are doing and create contact networks.
- Make sure all your staff and other organizations have knowledge of your program that can be articulated.
- Use existing clients as referral resources.





How to get Referrals

- Ask agencies, organizations and individuals to call you with an interested father's contact information.
- Make sure the agency asks men if they are a father or a father to be.
 - Many guys don't consider themselves a father until after the baby is born.
- Ask referral agencies to encourage "passive consent" from interested fathers: *"Is it OK for the program to call you?"*
 - Ask the agency to give you his name and a good number to call.
 - Handing him a brochure and expecting him to call is usually not successful.
- Keep the referral process quick and easy, no long forms or too many questions.





First Contact

- Quick tips to create a relationship:
 - Honesty builds trust; Vulnerability builds connection.
 - Humor breaks down barriers; Acceptance validates others.
- Be welcoming and appreciative. Thank them for calling. Guys usually need acknowledgement of some sort.
- Listen lots, ask open ended questions (if he's not talking very much), but don't interrogate.
- If he is with his partner, ask her what he does that she appreciates.
 - Acknowledge him and keep it positive.
- Fathers take their role of provider and protector seriously.
 - Let them know how honorable that is.
- Do not be judgmental; Do be accepting.
- Find out immediate most pressing need first and address that.





Tips for engagement

- Create a safe space, where fathers can:
 - Feel comfortable and free from criticism.
 - Talk openly without fear of it being used against them.
 - Share things and know it is confidential.
- Employ staff who show clearly that they understand men and what's important to them.
- Ensure that fathers are treated with respect:
 - Help them see themselves as successful problem solvers.
 - Help them identify their successes.
 - Acknowledge them.
- Involve them in something they can do successfully.
 - e.g., helping mom prepare for the birth by measuring contractions or making a playlist of relaxing music for her.





Touch Points for Connection*

- Pregnancy
 - Birth
 - Entry into childcare
 - School
 - Adolescence
 - Marital/relationship changes
 - Job loss
 - Illness
- * Ideas adapted from work by Kyle Pruett



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



How Birth is a Touch Point

- Although they may not realize it immediately, guys often want someone to talk to as they prepare for their child's birth.
- This feeling continues in those early weeks!
- Guys also experience huge physiological changes if they are involved in the pregnancy and birth.
 - Testosterone drops 33% for 1 month after birth.
 - Estrogen levels increase 1 month prior and 3 months post birth.
 - Prolactin increases 20% for 3 weeks post birth.
- All this is bonding and attachment -- and it can be a wonderful foundation for dad's continued healthy involvement.





Contact information

Barry McIntosh
Founder and Executive Director
Young Fathers of Santa Fe
505-699-7431
barrymcintosh@me.com



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Outreach and Recruitment: Best Practices for Fatherhood Practitioners



fatherhood.gov



James Worthy
Consultant & Trainer,
jwqns894@gmail.com

July 16, 2014



Outreach Philosophy

Conduct Outreach with Retention and Completion in Mind:

- Know what it is about your services that “Sells.”
- Know what has helped previous participants succeed.
- Study your current customer’s demographic:
 - Who are they?
 - How are they different from people who chose not to participate?
- Understand why your current customers have accessed your services.
- Put your new customers’ needs before the needs of your program.



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Outreach Messaging

Craft your message with your customer in mind:

- What is your “sales pitch” or “elevator speech?”
- Make sure your pitch answers the question:
 - “What’s In It For Me?” (WIIFM)
- Remember to “cast the vision” of your customer’s success.
- Focus on benefits, not just services.
- Ensure the message is urgent, action oriented and inviting.



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Outreach Messaging/Strategy

- What does your Program Material look like?
 - Make sure your literature and handouts are pleasing to your customer and not just to your program.
 - Keep your message consistent.
- How do you get your message to potential customers?
 - Make sure brochures and other material are visible and accessible for potential customers.
 - Use mediums that your customer is using.
- Where have your customers come from in the past?
 - How many of your clients were walk-ins?
 - Where have your referrals come from?
 - Who are your program ambassadors?
 - What's your “word of mouth” message?





Recruitment

Recruitment is a 24/7 activity.

- How do you bring your customer in?
- What is your level of commitment to the customer?
- What commitment level are you looking for from your customer?
- How do you determine if it's the right or WRONG customer for your organization?
- How do you sell the vision?



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Recruitment

- Make sure your entire staff knows the “Sales Pitch” message.
- How many people are involved in the recruitment process?
- How many steps does the potential customer have to go through?
- How long does the potential customer have to wait?
- If there is a waiting period, who is responsible for keeping the lines of communication open with the customer?





Recruit to SERVE

Outreach, Recruit and Enroll to Serve!

- Remember to put the goals of the customer before the goal of the program.
- Make sure you are serving the RIGHT customers.
- When the customer is right for the organization's services it's a Win-Win for both!

GREAT OUTREACH EQUALS GREAT OUTCOMES!



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov



Contact information

James Worthy
Consultant | Family Advocate | Trainer
443-677-3484
jwqns894@gmail.com



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse

fatherhood.gov