



NRFC WEBINAR

Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention for Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons Learned

1:00pm EDT | September 19th 2018



National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)



The NRFC is a DHHS/ACF/
Office of Family Assistance
funded national resource to
support fathers and families.

Resources are available for
dads, fatherhood practitioners,
researchers, and policy
makers.



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Visit the NRFC: [Fatherhood.gov](https://fatherhood.gov)

- [Fatherhood.gov/toolkit](https://fatherhood.gov/toolkit) for *Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit*.
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Today's Webinar Will Provide

- Overview of lessons learned about outreach, recruitment, and retention in responsible fatherhood programs.
- Information and tips from:
 - **Neil Tift**
Native American Fatherhood and Families Association, Mesa, AZ.
 - **Angel L. Flores**
Dads' Club, Vista Community Clinic, San Diego, CA.
- List of helpful resources available for download during the webinar.
- “Question and Answer” session with the presenters at the end of the webinar.



Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention for Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons Learned

Part I **RECRUITMENT** Practices & Strategies

September 19th, 2018





Helpful NRFC Resources

- Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: *Resources From the Field*
- Tip Card for Fatherhood Practitioners: Recruitment
- *Recruiting and Retaining Men in Responsible Fatherhood Programs: A Research-to-Practice Brief*
 - Author: Sarah Avellar, Mathematica Policy Research (2011)
 - Focus on 90 studies of 70 responsible fatherhood programs in the Strengthening Families Evidence Review (SFER)
- Previous NRFC Webinars:
 - *Outreach and Recruitment: Best Practices for Fatherhood Practitioners* (2014)
 - *Recruitment & Retention: Getting & Keeping Fathers Involved in Program Services* (2007)



NRFC Toolkit

Outreach and Recruitment

- The main goal of outreach is to spread the word about your program in the community.
- The main goals of recruitment are to:
 - Meet potential participants.
 - Listen to their story.
 - Determine if, and how, your program can be helpful to them.
 - Encourage participation with focus on what you can realistically offer.





NRFC Toolkit

Outreach Activities

- Community mapping
- Forming partnerships for referrals and services
- Developing effective outreach materials
- Working with local media
- Providing community presentations/focus groups
- Utilizing social media
- Engaging program alumni, community partners, and board members to spread the word



NRFC Toolkit

Recruitment Strategies

- Find opportunities to talk with potential participants.
- Listen actively and empathetically.
- Find common ground.
- Establish personal and organizational credibility.
- Make the program real for potential clients – talk about its benefits.
- Encourage commitment to enter the program.





What the Research Tells Us*

- Getting fathers through the door is one of the biggest challenges faced by fatherhood programs.
- Many programs report difficulty:
 - Meeting initial enrollment goals.
 - Convincing fathers to attend consistently and stay engaged over time.
- Overcoming such difficulties is essential to the success of a program, as fathers cannot benefit from services they do not receive.
- General lessons learned include:
 - Know your target population.
 - Hire and train staff who can quickly develop rapport with fathers.
 - Go where the dads are.
 - Address their needs and barriers.

*Source: *Recruiting and Retaining Men in Responsible Fatherhood Programs*



Recruitment

Promising Practices

- Develop a clear plan of action.
- Identify referral sources or locations that fathers frequent.
- Hire and train staff who can quickly build rapport with fathers.
- Offer services that appeal to fathers and meet their needs.
- Address any concerns or barriers to attending.
- Assess the success of recruitment strategies and sources, and make changes as necessary.
- Word-of-mouth may be one of the most effective recruitment strategies.



Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention for Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons Learned



Neil Tift

Outreach Project Coordinator

Native American Fathers &
Families Association

September 19th, 2018





Native American Fatherhood & Families Association (NAFFA)

- Arizona-based non-profit organization founded in 2002 to strengthen Native American families.
- *Fatherhood Is Sacred™* program designed to promote responsible fatherhood, strengthen individuals and families, and lay a strong foundation for a purpose-driven life.
 - Originally designed to work with Native American men, then expanded to include mothers.
 - Since then, we have found that our purpose and methods extend to people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds.



Native American Fatherhood & Families Association (NAFFA)

“The family is at the heart of Native American cultures. There is no other work more important than fatherhood and motherhood.”

Albert M. Pooley
Founder and President



Prepare for Successful Outreach and Recruitment

- Develop a clear marketing and outreach plan.
 - Contact service providers - inform them of your services and programs; request referrals.
- Develop specific strategies for recruitment.
 - Identify opportunities to approach individual fathers.
 - Be prepared for “indirect recruitment” (referrals via word of mouth).
- Train staff to implement outreach and recruitment plans.



Essentials of Good Recruitment Practice

- Demonstrate respectful attitudes toward fathers and men in families.
- Develop and utilize materials that reflect the specific population to be recruited and served.
 - Ensure language has “guy appeal.”
- Provide training that recognizes and respects fathers’ paternal instincts.



Who Will Recruit Dads for the Program?

- Men with children to recruit men with children.
- Staff and volunteers who are comfortable working with diverse populations of fathers.
- Community professionals who work regularly with at-risk families.
- Agencies that are current or potential partners.
- Recruiters who believe in the importance of fathers in the lives of children.



Where Will You Find Dads?

- Community or social media locations frequented by men/fathers.
- Organizations where fathers may seek assistance
 - e.g., for employment or legal aid.
- Agencies that may impose requirements on fathers
 - e.g., Child Support, Family Court, Child Welfare.
- Places where children go with their fathers.
- Places where mothers may seek assistance.
- Organizations that work with children or mothers
 - e.g., child care, Head Start.
- Other local places where you can get your message across.



Outreach and Recruitment for Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons Learned



Angel L. Flores

Program Supervisor

Dads' Club

Vista Community Clinic

San Diego, CA

September 19th, 2018





The Dads' Club

at Vista Community Clinic (VCC)



"Fatherhood Matters"



Before Recruitment

- Know the population you will be serving.
 - We held focus groups with young fathers, older fathers, English and Spanish speaking, to see what services they would be interested in.
- Determine mission, vision, and eligibility platform.
 - Create list of services you will provide.
 - Use flow chart to show how services will start/end for participants.
- Design staff shirts with logo and colors to emphasize logo.
- Develop marketing materials with logo and phone number.
 - e.g., pens, brochures, shirts, mugs, backpacks, lunch containers.
- Be flexible when it comes to scheduling workshops and time needed for case management.



Outreach

Create community partnerships for referrals.

- Identify agencies that have supported you before, serve a similar population, or provide relevant services.
- Make presentations to leadership and staff of these agencies.
 - Prioritize agencies you are most familiar with and those nearest to your service location.
 - Explain why your fatherhood program is needed in the community and the importance of services for fathers.
 - Create a “cheat sheet” of points to make.
 - Share flyers that highlight the free services you or other partners provide
 - e.g., tattoo removal, expungement of criminal records, help with child support arrears, child visitation, or custody.
 - Look to create Memoranda of Understanding (MOU’s) to guide how agencies will make referrals to your program.



Outreach

VCC Approach

- Spread word in the community.
 - Posted flyers at offices for Medicaid, Food stamps, Probation, Child Support, Child Welfare, Reentry, Treatment Centers, etc.
 - Listed services in Family Court directory of free parenting classes.
- Got to know key individuals and agencies in the community.
- Recruited interns and volunteers to help with recruitment
 - Program graduates, university/community college students.
- Participated in community meetings where focus was on food, housing, shelter, or employment.
 - 2-3 staff (in program shirts) attended, spoke about program.
 - Identified opportunities to tour agencies and/or provide presentations to their staff.
 - Provided community presentations that included 30-second videos.



Recruitment

Talking with potential clients

- If possible, provide a phone screening to be sure dads are eligible for program and motivate them to attend.
- Provide opportunities for dads to tell their story.
 - Your role: Be a listener and motivator.
- Explain the list of services you can provide.
 - We emphasize our parenting workshops and the flexibility of case managers (available 8am – 8pm).
- Follow-up (via text or other convenient method) so dads know next steps, time/address of first workshop or case management meeting, who to ask for, etc.





Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention for Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons Learned

Part II **RETENTION** Practices & Strategies

September 19th, 2018





Retention

Promising Practices*

- Ensure program is father-friendly and culturally focused.
- Consider effects of program duration and intensity on participation.
 - Some programs have seen improvement in attendance by increasing frequency of classes to reduce total number of weeks required.
- Clearly convey program benefits to fathers, but manage expectations.
- Prioritize program goals
 - e.g., balance employment and parenting goals.
- Provide services that appeal to fathers and meet their needs.
- Ease any barriers to attending.
- Be flexible and willing to try different techniques

*Source: *Recruiting and Retaining Men in Responsible Fatherhood Programs*,



Retention

Promising Strategies*

- Offer services in-house, at hours convenient for fathers.
- Provide peer support groups.
- Provide program supports
 - e.g., transportation, meals, child care.
- Conduct regular outreach with fathers to stay in touch.
- Piggyback on services for mothers
- Offer array of services to meet fathers' diverse needs.
- Offer make-up sessions for group activities.
- Provide incentives or recognition for participation.

**Effectiveness unknown - only some programs reviewed in SFER reported that these strategies improved participation (Recruiting and Retaining Men in Responsible Fatherhood Programs).*



Neil Tift

Retention Strategies

Employ staff who:

- Understand male learning styles.
- Respect paternal styles of parenting.
- Have common experiences with fathers.
- Are sensitive to barriers that fathers encounter.
 - Especially barriers faced by low-income dads.
- Are comfortable with debate in groups.



Neil Tift

Retention Strategies

- Maintain an environment that is clearly father friendly.
 - Consider applying the Assessment Guide on Father-Friendly Practices (available for download during webinar).
- Utilize the “asset approach” over the “deficit approach.”
- Hold and express high expectations of fathers.



Neil Tift

Retention Strategies

- Focus upon advocating for the needs of fathers, but not at the expense of mothers or women.
- Offer a variety of affordable accessible services that are father-specific.
- Allow client needs to shape the growth of your programs and services.
 - Survey them occasionally to monitor needs.



Neil Tift

Retention Strategies

- Start where fathers are, not where staff think they should be.
- Establish ground rules for groups.
 - Involve dads in setting rules.
 - Rules should be respectful and effective.
 - Enforcement of rules should be peer-driven.
- Teach and practice a win/win philosophy.
- Understand and respect the impact of stereotyping language.



Neil Tift

Closing Quotes

“My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, “You're tearing up the grass.” Dad would reply, ‘We're not raising grass, we're raising boys.’”

Harmon Killebrew

“Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories.”

John Wilmot



Angel L. Flores

Retention

VCC Approach

- **Food**

- Provided at group sessions and during home visits.
- Donations from local foodbank.
- Staff, interns, volunteers, and churches assist with this.

- **Enrollment days for dads to:**

- Complete intake packets and surveys.
- Learn their workshop schedule and name of case manager.
- Receive gift cards.

- **Case Managers**

- Trained to listen to participants.
- First meeting very important to build rapport.
- Identify needs and have something to offer
 - e.g., gas card, bus pass, clothing.
- Explain program
 - e.g., how dads can earn more gift cards.



Angel L. Flores

Retention

Lessons Learned

- Have case managers meet participants and provide initial service **before** their first workshop.
- Use ice breakers to warm up groups.
 - e.g., short, funny videos of fathers and children at workshops.
- Discuss at first workshop:
 - Describe previous program successes and improvements seen in first two weeks.
 - Include testimony from recent graduates.
 - Create ground rules for workshops, but also be compassionate and show empathy.
- Hold two family events each year.
 - e.g., Fathers' Day, end of year holidays.
- Provide a nice certificate of program completion.



Angel L. Flores

Retention

Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Be willing to take participants back into program, even if they left without notice.
- Understand that participants' needs are the most important thing to address.
- Write support letters for family court, probation, anyone a father wants to share his successes with.
- Involve participants as volunteers to distribute holiday gifts for those in need in community.
- Show fathers you are truly there for them.
 - Assist with drivers' license reinstatement.
 - Help them find jobs, open a bank account.



Angel L. Flores

Feedback from Clients

- *“I am so grateful for Dads’ Club. They have done so much for reuniting my family and Vista Community Clinic has been a big part of my three daughter’s lives’ from birth on. We love you all so much.”*



- *“Awesome program to help bring back the family unit before it is long gone. Dads are important too.”*



Angel L. Flores

Feedback from Clients

(cont.)



- *“This program has allowed me to grow into a better father figure and taught me how to better communicate with my son.”*
- *“This program has helped me in every aspect of life.”*



Q&A



Please enter any questions in the Q&A box at the bottom-right of your screen.



Today's Presenters



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Contact Us

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- Help@FatherhoodGov.Info
- Comments, questions, suggestions for future webinar topics, information or resources that you recommend.

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