



# Inspiration to Implementation

PROGRESS REPORT

NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVE







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“Because of the grant, our Fatherhood 365 program has expanded in a way that would not have been possible without it. Considering the economic climate in which we now find ourselves, without the benefit of the grant, it might well have taken several years for us to reach the level of service that we now can provide for the fathers in our community.”

—Max Loya, Pregnancy Care Center, Y2

“...on average,  
children experience  
better short and  
long-term outcomes  
when fathers are  
actively involved  
in their lives  
than when their  
fathers are not.”

—quote from *Father Facts 5*  
(an NFI resource)

## Executive Summary

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. A large body of research shows that, on average, children experience better short and long-term outcomes when fathers are actively involved in their lives than when their fathers are not. Many factors make it difficult for some fathers to be involved, responsible, and committed in their children's lives. Unfortunately, many social-service organizations do not have the capacity to adequately engage fathers and help them overcome the challenges and barriers they face.

Since 1994 National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) has sought to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives. A major part of NFI's work involves building capacity in organizations to effectively serve fathers. In an effort to better prepare small community and faith-based organizations to work with fathers, NFI implemented the National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity-Building Initiative (NRFCBI) in 2006 with funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families/Office of Family Assistance.

NFI works with cohorts of organizations (called Sub-awardees) for a period of 1 year as part of the NRFCBI. Each Sub-awardee receives a grant (sub-award) of \$25,000 to build capacity to more effectively engage fathers in programs and services. Each Sub-awardee receives standard and customized training and technical assistance (T & TA) from NFI staff and consultants during their 1-year grant period. Sub-awardees must use their grant and the T & TA to build their infrastructure (e.g. board development and staff training on fatherhood programs) rather than to provide direct services. NFI is in Year 5 of the 5-year NRFCBI.

The NRFCBI builds capacity in four areas: Leadership Development, Organizational Development, Program Development, and Community Engagement. NFI evaluates the overall impact of the initiative and its impact in each of the four capacity-building areas using quantitative and qualitative research methods and analyses. NFI has collected complete data on the impact of the initiative from the Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees (69 in total). The findings are striking and reveal the interconnected nature of the four capacity-building areas.

## Remarkable Impact

Quantitative data reveal that the NRFCBI increased Sub-awardees' overall capacity and in each of the four areas in the short term, and that those gains held in the long term. (NFI measures the impact of the initiative at the end of Sub-awardees' grant periods and again 1 year after the end of their grants.) Ninety-one percent (63 of 69) of the Sub-awardees increased their capacity by the end of their grant. Ninety-three percent (63 of 68)\* maintained or further increased their capacity 1 year after their grant ended. Nearly 1 in 3 Sub-awardees experienced long-term gains in overall capacity of more than 20 percent. The NRFCBI had the most impact on Sub-awardees' capacity to engage their communities on father absence and involvement (e.g. develop partnerships and coalitions).

Qualitative data supports the quantitative findings and reveals the relationships between and among the four capacity-building areas. Leadership Development focuses on influencing the attitudes, beliefs, and values held by the organization's employees on the importance of serving fathers. Sub-awardee staff who received T & TA said that it and fatherhood-education resources (e.g. NFI curricula and brochures) helped position them as leaders within their organizations and their organizations as leaders in their communities. The increase in knowledge and skills as well as offering fatherhood resources, helped staff to become credible sources for fatherhood program, service, and policy development within their own organizations and, in turn, their organizations became credible sources in the community, thus revealing the connection between this area and Community Engagement. A number of Sub-awardees reported their affiliation with NFI improved their organization's credibility related to working with fathers and, subsequently, the willingness and ability of the organization to seek funding to fill gaps in local fatherhood programming thus revealing the connection between this capacity-building area and Organizational Development.

Organizational Development involves how the "nuts and bolts" of an organization ensures that it carries out its mission. These nuts and bolts include the policies and procedures, rules and guidelines staff use to carry out their day-to-day activities. The NRFCBI helped Sub-awardee staff to examine practices within their organizations. This inward look led to "father-friendly makeovers" to the physical space within the walls (and, literally, to the walls) of their organizations. It also led to discussions between and among staff on the research on father absence and involvement and about the importance of assessing staff attitudes and beliefs about fathers and the value placed by staff on serving fathers. They learned a lot from networking with other Sub-awardees (e.g. they implemented the tactics used by other Sub-awardees to address challenges). And they developed effective strategies to secure funds to support programs and services for fathers.

An effective program relies on quality staff and resources (e.g. curricula) as the program's foundation. It also depends on effective strategies to recruit fathers into the program and retain their participation. Hiring and retention of program staff and recruitment and retention of fathers are often the greatest challenges within Program Development. Sub-awardees pointed to the training and resources provided by NFI (e.g. fatherhood curricula) and other sources that helped them implement proven programs and promising practices and that helped them to recruit and retain fathers.

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\*One Year 3 Sub-awardee did not complete the post assessment 1 year after their grant ended.

Sub-awardees spoke at length about the impact of the NRFCBI on their ability to engage their communities as providers of fatherhood programs and services and more broadly on the issue of father absence and involvement. Their focus on Community Engagement supports the quantitative finding that they increased their capacity most dramatically in this area. This finding is especially heartening because it is essential to the long-term success of fatherhood programs and services. Sub-awardees took that fact to heart. As one Sub-awardee stated, engaging the community helped it to step out of its “silo” and increase the social capital available to it to engage fathers. Sub-awardees remarked that their efforts to engage their communities have increased community awareness of the personal and societal costs associated with absent fathers, and that resources are available to help fathers become more involved, responsible, and committed. Sub-awardees proactively formed creative partnerships and coalitions while other relationships resulted by happenstance simply because they engaged their communities. Several Sub-awardees took Community Engagement to a new level by using their grants to hold community gatherings and forums to mobilize their communities around the issue.

### **The Bottom Line: More Programs and Services, Fathers Reached, and Children Touched**

Even though Sub-awardees could not use their grants for delivery of programs and services, the desired result of the NRFCBI is to position them for success in program and service delivery. Since the end of their grants, the Sub-awardees have continued to create and expand programs and services for fathers. The types of programs and services vary as do the settings (e.g. communities and sectors) in which they operate, but the impact of the NRFCBI on them and the fathers they serve is quite similar. Moreover, Sub-awardees report that the number of fathers receiving fathering education and “wrap-around services” to meet their basic needs (e.g. job readiness and education) have increased as a result of Sub-awardees’ participation in the NRFCBI. They say their programs and services have changed the very nature of how fathers see themselves and their role as fathers and, as a result, improved fathers’ relationships with their children and with the mothers of their children.

### **Capacity Building Sorely Needed**

Building the capacity of organizations to more effectively serve fathers and families is sorely needed. The evaluation of the NRFCBI shows unequivocally that organizations benefit from comprehensive T & TA that focuses on developing their infrastructure. Most importantly, however, our nation’s children, families, and society benefit when organizations implement a strategic plan to build their capacity.



# Introduction

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. Fathers contribute to a child's physical, emotional, and social development. The negative effects of children being raised without present or active fathers are well documented in the literature.<sup>1</sup> Numerous studies have shown that children who grow up without their father are at an increased risk of living in poverty and of delinquency, incarceration, injury, substance use, and teenage pregnancy.

The literature also indicates, on the other hand, that children with involved fathers have a better chance to experience a range of positive outcomes including better school performance; decreased delinquency, incarceration, injury, substance abuse; and fewer teen pregnancies. In 2000, for example, the U.S. Department of Education published *A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning* which reveals that when fathers are involved in their children's schools, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior.<sup>2</sup>

The consequences of father absence have huge costs for our nation. In 2006 the federal government spent close to \$100 billion on assistance to father-absent families.<sup>3</sup> **These federal expenditures include those made on thirteen means-tested antipoverty programs and child support enforcement, and the total expenditures add up to a startling \$99.8 billion.** These programs include many well-known and popular programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support enforcement, food and nutrition programs, housing programs, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The costs to children, families, and our society have led individuals, organizations, communities, and government at the federal, state, and local levels to focus more attention on how to better engage fathers in the lives of their children. At the community level there is great variation in the number and quality of programs and services for fathers. Some programs and services are informal and lack structure, such as small groups of fathers that meet sporadically to discuss issues they face or periodic workshops conducted by organizations on how to be a better father. Others are easy to identify as

“(NFI) gave us a push into saying look, here is the stuff you haven't been doing and here are some materials and here are some ways you can go about getting fathers more involved with their kids. And I think that is the beauty of it.”

—Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1

<sup>1</sup>*Father Facts: Fifth Edition*. National Fatherhood Initiative, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>*A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

<sup>3</sup>*The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Public Costs of Father Absence*. National Fatherhood Initiative, 2008.

## Introduction

formal programs or services (e.g. they have a name and funding) many of which use resources (e.g. curricula) designed to educate fathers to increase their involvement or to help them meet other needs such as job training and education that help them to be a responsible father. Most programs and services attempt to reach low-income fathers generally or in a specific setting (e.g. incarcerated fathers and fathers whose children attend Head Start). Some fatherhood programs and services exist within organizations solely dedicated to working with fathers; however, the majority of them are housed within organizations that provide a range of services to many populations.

Since 1994 National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) has sought to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives. NFI has done this work through its “3E” strategy: **E**ducating fathers; **E**quipping and developing leaders of national, state, and community fatherhood initiatives; and **E**ngaging individuals, programs, and communities through alliances and partnerships. A major part of NFI’s work involves building capacity in organizations to help them effectively serve fathers. Capacity-building has become an important mechanism in which organizations attempt to strengthen their overall infrastructure and effectiveness.





# National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity-Building Initiative

To better prepare small community and faith-based organizations to work with fathers, NFI implemented the National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity-Building Initiative (NRFCBI) in 2006 with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families/Office of Family Assistance. NFI solicits proposals from organizations on an annual basis through a competitive process to participate in the NRFCBI. Eligible organizations are community-based, faith-based, and other “grassroots” organizations. NFI works with an independent review panel to select 20-25 organizations (hereafter referred to as “Sub-awardees”) each year from across the country to receive “sub-awards” of \$25,000 that Sub-awardees use to implement a strategic plan to better serve fathers. Sub-awardees receive training and technical assistance (T & TA) to strengthen their capacity in the following areas: 1) Leadership Development; 2) Organizational Development; 3) Program Development; and 4) Community Engagement.

NFI provides in-depth, standard and customized T & TA to Sub-awardees for a period of one year that includes the following components.

- An intensive one-week Certification College that starts the T & TA process. Two staff from each Sub-awardee attends the college during which they examine the capacity of their organization to effectively serve fathers in each of the four capacity-building areas. Staff learns how to create a father-friendly organization, promising practices from successful fatherhood programs, how to market and recruit fathers into programs, and how to build an infrastructure that will support effective programming (e.g. fundraising and board development). Staff develops a strategic plan to build their organization’s capacity that guides their participation during the remainder of the year.
- A two-day Mini Camp attended by the same staff later in the year to receive training on other topics important to promoting responsible fatherhood, such as on prevention of domestic violence and how to promote healthy relationships and marriages.
- Site visits with each Sub-awardee that might include T & TA for staff and partners (e.g. board members) or participating in capacity-building events (e.g. community fatherhood forums).
- Webinars
- On-demand T & TA via phone and e-mail to help Sub-awardees implement their strategic plan to build capacity.

“I believe (NFI went) beyond what we could have ever expected...the technical assistance and availability of technical assistance is really outstanding.”

— Roy DeLyon,  
Maui Family Support Services, Y2



## Logic Model

Figure 1 shows the logic model for the NRFCBI. It shows how the initiative works or operates (the inputs and activities) and the intended results (outputs and outcomes).

The model is based on the knowledge that before an organization can develop and deliver effective programs and services for fathers it must have or create an organizational culture that places a high value on the importance of fathers in the lives of children and on providing programs and services to fathers. Programs and services for fathers cannot simply be added to an array of other programs and services for other populations and left to their own devices. For these programs and services to be effective, the organization must integrate this value into the very fabric of the organization.

Figure 1: NRFCBI Logic Model

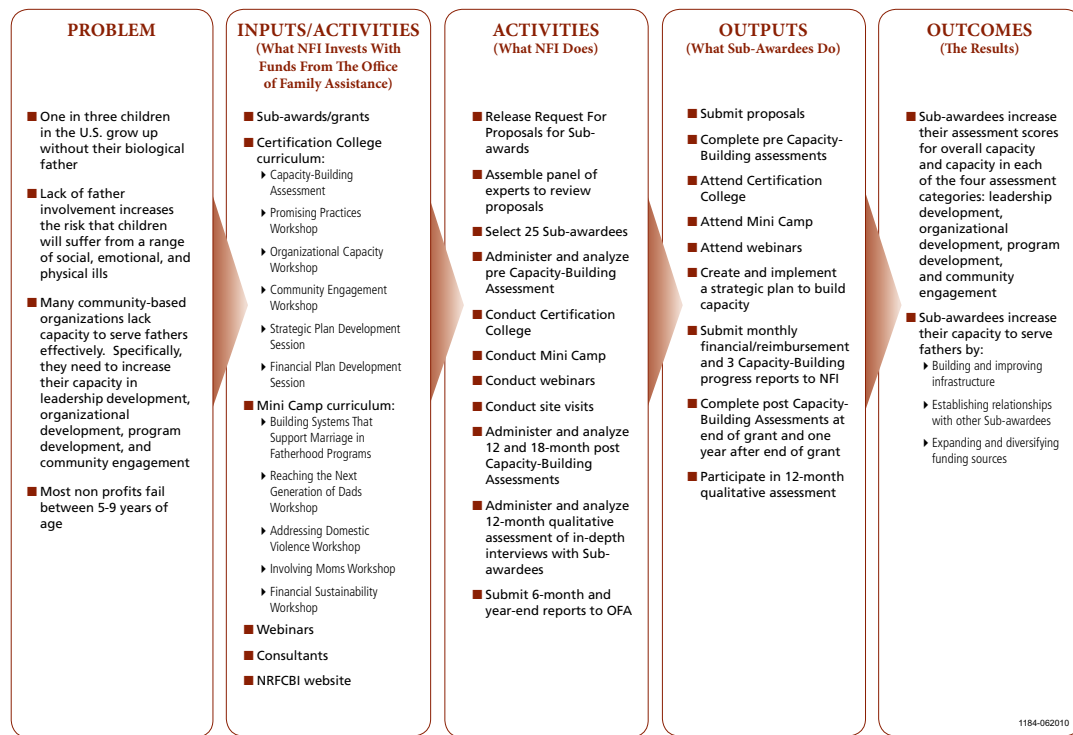


NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD  
**CAPACITY BUILDING**  
INITIATIVE

### Logic Model



National  
Fatherhood  
Initiative  
www.fatherhood.org



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# Evaluation of the NRFCBI

NFI conducted an evaluation of the impact of the NRFCBI on Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees (a total of 69 Sub-awardees, 19 from Year 1, 25 from Year 2, and 25 from Year 3).<sup>4</sup> The evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative components.

The primary way in which NFI evaluates the impact of the NRFCBI is through the use of an assessment (a questionnaire) that provides a quantitative measure of Sub-awardees' capacity in each of the four capacity-building areas (Leadership Development, Organizational Development, Program Development, and Community Engagement). NFI uses the tool to measure Sub-awardees' capacity at three points in time: 1) before they start their capacity-building work with NFI; 2) at the end their grant period (6-9 months after they begin their work depending on the cohort); and 3) 1 year after their grant ends. The assessment provides a capacity-building "score" for each of the four areas and an overall score that combines the separate scores for each of the four areas. NFI compares the scores at each point in time to determine whether Sub-awardees' increase their overall capacity, in which areas they increase their capacity the most, and whether capacity increases hold over time.

To supplement the quantitative data, NFI conducted interviews of Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees to further inform the impact evaluation from a qualitative perspective. These interviews allowed NFI to collect more detailed and richer information on Sub-awardees' perceptions of how the implementation of their strategic plan and work with NFI in general affected their organization's ability to serve fathers. In other words, this study helped NFI to understand the reasons behind and exactly how the NRFCBI increased their capacity (i.e. the "why" that underlies the "what"). NFI contracted with an independent evaluator to design the interview protocol, train NFI staff on how to interview Sub-awardees, oversee the data collection, analyze the data, and submit a report on the findings.

## Quantitative Evaluation of Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees

### *The Capacity Building Assessment*

The assessment is a simple, comprehensive questionnaire used by Sub-awardees to assess their capacity in each of the four capacity-building areas. NFI based it on the popular *The Father Friendly Check-Up™ for Social Service Agencies and Programs*. NFI created the check-up in 2000 and has revised it several times since then based on feedback from organizations that have completed it and as NFI has continued to learn what constitutes a father-friendly organization. Thousands of organizations have used it to identify their level of father friendliness and low and no-cost strategies to enhance their work with fathers and families. NFI has since adapted the assessment for different settings including schools, churches, businesses, and specific social-service agencies and programs (e.g. Head Starts and Parents as Teachers).<sup>5</sup>

The *NRFCBI Capacity Building Assessment* includes 111 statements divided among the four areas. (A copy of the assessment tool is available from NFI upon request.) Sub-awardee staff rates their organization on each statement using a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and

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<sup>4</sup>As of the writing of this report, NFI is in Year 5 of the NRFCBI and continues to gather impact data from Year 4 and 5 Sub-awardees. Therefore, NFI based this evaluation on the complete data from Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees.

<sup>5</sup>The free online version of *The Father Friendly Check-Up™* is available at [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org).

## Evaluation of the NRFCBI

strongly disagree.<sup>6</sup> Staff calculates their score in each capacity-building area by first converting their level of agreement to a number using the following conversions: strongly agree = 5; agree = 4; neutral = 3; disagree = 2; and strongly disagree = 1. Staff then adds the numbers for the statements to arrive at a score for each of the areas and then adds the scores for each of the areas together to calculate the overall capacity-building score.

### *Analysis of Assessment Scores*

NFI analyzed each of the Sub-awardees' scores in each area and overall by first calculating the proportion of the maximum score. The maximum score is the number of statements multiplied by 5. The maximum score in Leadership Development, for example, is 105 (21 statements multiplied by 5 points for each statement). The Sub-awardees' scores are presented as a proportion of the maximum score. A Sub-awardee

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<sup>6</sup>In Leadership Development, for example, staff rates their organization on the following statement: The leadership/administration/management of my organization provides adequate funding and other resources (e.g. staff) to effectively serve fathers. In Program Development, for example, staff rates their organization on the following statement: My organization delivers programs, services, or products at times convenient for fathers to attend and participate.



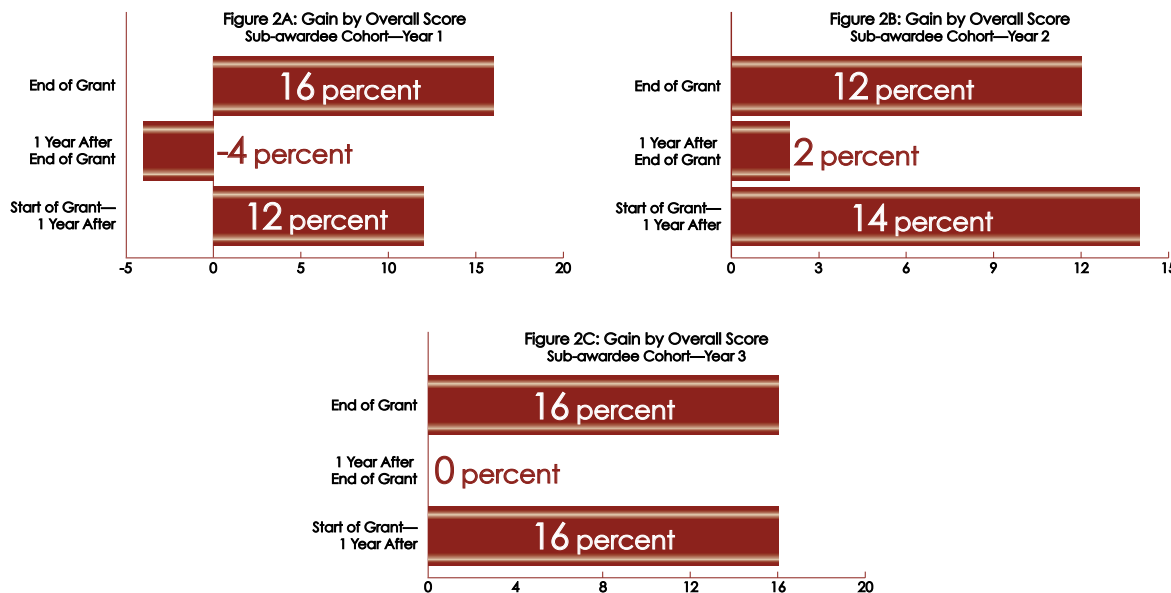


with a score of 75 in Leadership Development, for example, received a score of 71 percent (75/105). NFI then compared the area scores and overall scores for the Sub-awardees at the end of grant and 1-year after grant intervals to determine whether the scores increased or decreased over time.

### Quantitative Findings

The impact of the NRCFBI is impressive. Longitudinal data from Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees reveal that the NRCFBI increases capacity in the short and long-term. The impact on some Sub-awardees is remarkable.

**Scores Increase and Hold over Time.** Ninety-one percent (63 of 69) of the Sub-awardees increased their capacity by the end of their grant. Ninety-three percent (63 of 68) maintained or further increased their capacity 1 year after their grant ended. As Figure 2A, 2B, and 2C show, the average gain in overall capacity-building score for Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees at the end of their grant period was 16, 11, and 16 percent respectively. While there was a slight drop in the average score for Year 1 Sub-awardees from 16 to 13 percent 1 year after they completed their work with NFI, Year 2 Sub-awardees saw their average overall score rise from 12 to 14 percent at 1 year, while Year 3 Sub-awardees saw their score stay at the same level of 16 percent at 1 year.



“Ninety-three percent (63 of 68) of the Sub-awardees increased their capacity by the end of their grant and maintained or further increased it 1 year after their grant ended.”

“...Now, with the time of their incarceration and them being involved in the program, there is a level of sensitivity, a level of awareness of the impact, positive and negative that these fathers have had, are having, and are going to have in their children’s lives.”

—Nolan White, Lucas County TASC, Y3

## Evaluation of the NRFCBI (cont.)

Scores in each of the four areas reveal where Sub-awardees had the most capacity at the start of their grant period, where they needed the most help in building their capacity, and in which areas they saw the greatest gains. Table 1 shows that Sub-awardees had the highest average score in Leadership Development at the start of their grant: 72 percent for Year 1, 76 percent for Year 2, and 70% for Year 3 Sub-awardees. Their average score was progressively lower in Organizational Development, Program Development, and Community Engagement.

These data reveal that Sub-awardees scored fairly well in pro-fathering attitudes, beliefs, and values related to engaging fathers, but at the start of their grant they hadn’t put those attitudes, beliefs, and values into action. NFI has found this dynamic to be quite common in its work with other organizations and in the scores of organizations completing *The Father Friendly Check-Up™*.

**Table 1: Gain in Scores by Capacity Building Area**

Assessment Category by Cohort	Start of Grant Score	End of Grant Score	1-Year After Grant Score
Leadership Development – Year 1	72%	86% (+14)	82% (+10)
Leadership Development – Year 2	76%	87% (+11)	88% (+12)
Leadership Development – Year 3	70%	83% (+13)	85% (+15)
Organizational Development – Year 1	69%	80% (+11)	79% (+10)
Organizational Development – Year 2	72%	82% (+10)	86% (+14)
Organizational Development – Year 3	63%	81% (+18)	81% (+18)
Program Development – Year 1	65%	82% (+17)	80% (+15)
Program Development – Year 2	71%	83% (+12)	85% (+14)
Program Development – Year 3	65%	81% (+16)	80% (+15)
Community Engagement – Year 1	56%	78% (+22)	73% (+17)
Community Engagement – Year 2	65%	82% (+17)	83% (+18)
Community Engagement – Year 3	61%	81% (+20)	77% (+16)



Staff often says their organization sees the value in serving fathers, but the words often fail to translate into action. The good news for the Sub-awardees is that they had the cornerstone in place for building capacity: value in the importance of and serving fathers as reflected in their Leadership Development score. This fact is not surprising because the organizations that applied for the sub-awards are self-selecting—they applied to build their capacity to serve fathers because they value doing so.

**Community Engagement Sees the Largest Increase.** Generally speaking, Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees experienced the greatest gain as a single group in Community Engagement 1 year after their grant ended; followed by Program Development, Organizational Development, and Leadership Development. Table 1 shows that, following the overall average score, the Year 1 Sub-awardees saw a slight decrease in their score for each area over time while the Year 2 Sub-awardees saw a slight increase at the 1-year period. Year 3 Sub-awardees saw, over time, an increase in Leadership Development, no change in Organizational Development, and a slight decrease in Program Development and Community Engagement.

These data show that the NRFCBI had the greatest impact on increasing capacity in the area of Sub-awardees' greatest need: Community Engagement. This finding is not surprising because engaging the community is the final piece in building capacity.

An organization must get its own house in order before it reaches out to engage the community as a provider of programs and services for fathers and to build partnerships, coalitions, and broad-based community initiatives that address the issue of father absence and involvement.

The reason for the differences in the changes in the scores in the individual capacity-building areas among the cohorts of Sub-awardees is not clear.

“With all the training and the sessions I attended, I think they touched on every area that we have been dealing with,...I don’t think they missed anything.”

—Keith Sears, CTE, Inc. Y1

# Evaluation of the NRFCBI

**Remarkable Impact.** The scores for each Sub-awardee provide startling evidence of the NRFCBI's impact on many of the Sub-awardees. **Of the 69 Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees, 33 percent (23) saw at least a 20 percent increase in their overall capacity-building score 1 year after their grant ended.**

Table 2 shows the increase for these organizations.

As with the difference between Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees' scores decreasing versus increasing over time, respectively, it is not clear from these data exactly why the NRFCBI had such a remarkable impact on these organizations. Nevertheless, the impact is striking considering that the NRFCBI affected 1 in 3 Sub-awardees so dramatically.

## Qualitative Evaluation of Year 1 - 3 Sub-awardees

NFI conducted key-informant interviews during the fall of 2009 (Year 2) and 2010 (Year 3) with staff from a subset of Sub-awardees that were randomly selected by the independent evaluator. NFI interviewed staff of 10 Sub-awardees from each year so that NFI interviewed nearly half of the total pool (30 of 69). The evaluator involved this many Sub-awardees to lend credibility to the findings.

Key informants were either administrative staff (e.g. an executive director or program staff such as

Table 2: Sub-awardees with 20 Percent or Greater Increase

Sub-awardee and Year	Increase in Overall Score at 1 Year
Father Focus Family Empowerment Initiative – Year 1	21%
Oaks Family Care Center – Year 1	29%
Phipps Community Development Corporation – Year 1	24%
The Advocacy Foundation, Inc. / Clayton County Fatherhood Initiative Partnership – Year 1	33%
Alliance for Families and Children of Central Virginia – Year 2	23%
New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department / New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition – Year 2	22%
Elizabeth's New Life Center – Year 2	22%
Male Empowerment Network, Inc. – Year 2	23%
Oregon Child Development Center – Year 2	24%
Roca, Inc. – Year 2	23%
Vineyard Family Services of Central Alabama, Inc. – Year 2	22%
Alameda County Public Health IPOPOP – Year 3	22%
Center for Child and Family Services – Year 3	22%
Community Empowerment Center – Year 3	20%
Coshocton County Fatherhood Initiative – Year 3	28%
Family Connection of South Carolina – Year 3	24%
Family Services Center – Year 3	30%
First Things First of Greater Richmond – Year 3	35%
Henrico County Public Schools – Year 3	23%
Kindering Center, WSNF – Year 3	25%
Life Network of Southern Illinois – Year 3	28%
Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita – Year 3	29%
Women's Health Center of Duluth – Year 3	21%



a fatherhood program director) who were most knowledgeable about the capacity-building activities of their organization. Nearly all of the key informants were NFI's primary contacts during their participation in the NRFCBI (i.e. they received T & TA and were charged with implementing strategic plans).<sup>7</sup> NFI used a comprehensive 10-item interview guide that included a number of additional probing questions. NFI taped the interviews and transcribed them verbatim for analysis. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete. (Refer to Appendix A for a list of the Sub-awardees that took part in the interviews.)

The objectives of the qualitative portion of the evaluation were to identify the most important ways in which the NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees build capacity in all four areas in general and in certain aspects of one or more of the areas that included:

- Whether the NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees to connect fathers with the resources fathers need to be involved, responsible, and committed dads;
- Whether the NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees to positively affect the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children and how has that affect, in turn, affected the community; and
- Whether the NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees to build relationships or collaborations with other organizations in their community.

NFI also inquired about the ultimate impact of capacity building on the delivery of programs and services for fathers. Even though Sub-awardees could not use the grant for delivery of programs and services, the desired result of the NRFCBI is to position them for success in program and service delivery. Consequently, NFI sought to determine whether Sub-awardees achieved this outcome after their grant ended.

## Analysis

The evaluator used *domain analysis* to analyze and interpret the data. The evaluator identified common “domains” or “themes” that emerged from the data related to each of the four capacity-building areas and then identified how Sub-awardees’ responses reflected on or brought meaning to those themes (e.g. the frequency of responses indicating exactly how the NRFCBI built capacity in Leadership Development). Quotes pulled directly from the transcripts supplement the theme-based findings.

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<sup>7</sup>Because NFI conducted the interviews 2 years after Year 1 Sub-awardees and 1 year after Year 2 and Year 3 Sub-awardees participated in the initiative, some of NFI's contacts were no longer employed by the Sub-awardees. Staff interviewed the primary contacts whenever possible.



## Findings

Sub-awardees' responses reveal the depth of the positive impact of the NRFCBI in each of the four areas as well as the ultimate impact of capacity building on the delivery of programs and services for fathers. Sub-awardees' responses support the quantitative findings in several ways which lends further credibility to the evidence of the NRFCBI's impact.

## Leadership Development

The NRFCBI encouraged Sub-awardees to create an organizational culture that supports the effective delivery of fatherhood programs and services. Capacity building necessarily begins with a focus on the culture of the organization and whether it supports or hinders program and service delivery. Organizations often fail in program and service delivery because they lack the leadership to challenge and, if necessary, change the organization's culture to create the infrastructure, programming, and engagement of the community necessary for effective delivery of fatherhood programs and services.

Sub-awardee staff who received T & TA said that it and fatherhood-education resources (e.g. NFI curricula and brochures) helped position them as leaders within their organizations and their organizations as leaders in their communities. The increase in knowledge and skills and fatherhood resources helped staff to become credible sources for fatherhood program, service, and policy development within their own organizations and, in turn, their organizations became credible sources in the community. A number of Sub-awardees reported their affiliation with NFI improved their organization's credibility related to working with fathers and, subsequently, the willingness and ability of the organization to seek funding to fill gaps in fatherhood programs and services in the community.

**Making Fatherhood Programs and Services a Priority.** Nearly all of the Sub-awardee staff interviewed provided examples of how they raised awareness within their own organizations of the need for fatherhood-specific programs and services. This awareness led most of the Sub-awardees to make programs and services for fathers a priority instead of simply adding them as just another program or service in a milieu of offerings for many populations. Some Sub-awardees completely re-organized, placing fatherhood programs and services as a priority for the organization. One Sub-awardee, in fact, changed the organization's logo from a woman holding a baby to a **man and woman** holding a child's hand (shown)—a symbol of the organization's newfound commitment of service to the entire family.<sup>8</sup> Several Sub-awardees cited Compression Planning<sup>®</sup> as a useful tool for board development that facilitated efforts to involve board members as advocates on behalf of culture change.<sup>9</sup>



Oaks Family Care Center logo—a Year 1 Sub-awardee.

<sup>8</sup>Oaks Family Care Center, a Year 1 Sub-awardee.

<sup>9</sup>Compression Planning<sup>®</sup> is a model for developing strategic plans that NFI uses to help organizations develop a strategic vision and approach to create and deliver programs and services for fathers. NFI provided Compression Planning<sup>®</sup> sessions for several Sub-awardees.



*“We’ve developed a whole new set of program polices, procedures, guidelines. We’ve done a whole new strategic planning process around our fatherhood initiative in which [a board member] has been involved. All those things result in leadership.” — Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2*

*“Our board has been very supportive of all our fatherhood initiatives. Our goal is to continue to grow and develop and sort of build the programs, which is what we have been doing.”  
— David Goodson, Family & Children’s Council of Blackhawk County, Y2*

*“[Participating in the NRFCBI] focused us much more in the kinds of things we need to do. It’s really given us the opportunity to take a step back and take a look at where we need to go and to pretty much focus.” — Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1*

*“That’s so rare. I mean I have never, ever seen that focused, intentional commitment to leadership development and that is huge. You can throw all the resources at somebody in the world, but if you don’t build the leader, once the resources are gone, a leader who has been built up has skills to create his own.”  
— Susan Lear, Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita, Y3*

One of the most important aspects of Leadership Development is that leaders integrate fatherhood into the fabric of the organization’s culture. When that happens, it is reflected in the organization’s programs and services and in how staff approach their work on a daily basis. Many Sub-awardees took this perspective to heart as illustrated below.

*“Changes really are taking place in our juvenile-based programs because we are now considering the fact that our juveniles are not only dealing with school and probation and parole issues, but they are fathers. Now our case managers are instructed to make that part of case planning, part of goal plans that these juvenile fathers are addressing their issues as dads. We’re planning now to do a new department of youth services case management grant, and one of the components that has come up for discussion is what sorts of requirements are we going to have in regards to finding out who the father [is], connecting [him] to fatherhood resources in our agency and maybe perhaps even some activities for our juvenile fathers.”  
— Sirema Crowley, Lucas County TASC, Y3*

### **Leadership in the Organization “Leads” to Leadership in the Community.**

Sub-awardees not only created culture change within their organizations, they took the message to serve fathers into their communities. This impact of the NRFCBI shows the integrated nature of the four areas as, in this instance, Leadership Development affects

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— Susan Lear, Pregnancy Crisis  
Center of Wichita, Y3

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Community Engagement. Some Sub-awardees didn't initially realize this effect at first, but they connected the dots during the interviews. Several Sub-awardees transferred the training they received from NFI to other staff (e.g. a train-the-trainer effect) and then took it a step farther by training community partners. As a result, the Sub-awardees' issued a "call to action" answered by other organizations with an interest in fatherhood (e.g. providing programs and services or referring fathers to Sub-awardees' programs and services). Many Sub-awardees moved to the forefront in their communities as experts in fatherhood.

*"We're starting to get a sense that people are coming to us to ask us how can you help us be better, what kind of insight can you provide us, where are we missing the mark. So I think we're starting to become recognized as an organization [that serves fathers]. Though we're small, we have the capacity to provide input to help effect change in other organizations, which is exactly what we want to do." — Renee Thompson, Family Comes First, Y1*

*"You educated us in regards to the whole issue of fatherlessness. You also funded [in addition to a leadership summit on fatherhood] a public service announcement promoting fatherhood which appears on television stations throughout [the state]. We have become known as the fatherhood organization in our state." — Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2*





*“I think that we’ve been a catalyst in the sense of trying to stimulate conversation [in the community.] In terms of our own organization, we’re looking at how we can partner more effectively with area organizations. I think our role is the voice of saying, ‘We have limited resources. How can we work together to maximize those resources?’ I think we’ve been effective at doing that.” — Renee Thompson, Family Comes First, Y1*

*“We’re trying extremely hard to put a positive face on fathering and to bring fathering to the table at the different conferences and advisory councils and so forth that we serve on. I don’t know if we could measure that change quite yet in terms of survival changes in the larger community, but we’re definitely bringing fathers to the table and the word and the concept of including fathers to the social service table throughout the community. I think that’s going to have a wonderful ripple effect.” — Sue Barrett, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Y3*

## Organizational Development

Organizational Development involves how the “nuts and bolts” of an organization ensures that it carries out its mission. These nuts and bolts include the policies and procedures, rules and guidelines staff use to carry out their day-to-day activities. Within the context of serving fathers, simple changes to intake forms—such as including contact information on fathers, outreach efforts to fathers, and resources fathers have accessed to meet their needs—can send a “psychologically” powerful message to staff that fathers are important.

**Hi! How are You? Welcome to My Home.** The nuts and bolts of this area of capacity building also includes developing a welcoming “father-friendly environment” and training staff to focus on and welcome fathers in everything they do. One of the endemic challenges faced by many social service agencies, regardless of the population(s) they serve, is the tendency for staff to act as “gatekeepers” and not “gateways.” In the context of providing programs and services to fathers, staff might operate from the perspective that fathers must “prove themselves worthy” of programs or services. Worse yet fathers might not even be on staff’s radar screen as NFI has learned in its work with child welfare agencies in their attempts to involve non-resident fathers in child-abuse prevention and child welfare cases.<sup>10</sup> Sub-awardees benefitted from T & TA on how to create a physical environment that says “dads are welcome here.”

<sup>10</sup>Visit [www.fatherhoodqic.org](http://www.fatherhoodqic.org), the website of the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, for more information on NFI’s work to increase the engagement of non-resident fathers by child welfare agencies. NFI’s partners in this project are the American Humane Association and the American Bar Association’s Center on Children and the Law. The center receives funding from the Children’s Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“We have become known as the fatherhood organization in our state.”

—Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2

*“As a result of the training we’ve gotten through NFI, we’ve also set the staff down at a number of staff trainings and [asked], “OK, how do we present ourselves to dads when come into our programming? How to we look as an agency when someone walks through the door? Are we father friendly?”*

*— Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1*

*“Just the simple things like changing our intake forms so it includes mom or dad, not always assuming that it’s just mom...and so just kind of getting it again, beyond just being a program thing but an agency focus.” — Jennifer Bourne, Clinch Valley Community Action Agency, Y3*

They also benefitted from T & TA on how to get the staff of the entire organization to engage fathers proactively.

*“So the staff has been trained in how to be father friendly. And now that the 60 or so staff that we have on board know that when a father’s coming in the door, they ask certain questions; that if they need additional help, they have a resource that they can use; and then they have a contact within the building that they can send that father to, which has increased the numbers [of fathers] that we saw. Because before that, they weren’t even asking [fathers] whether they had children, whether they were a father or not. So they weren’t even addressing the need.” — Keith Sears, CTE, Inc., Y1*

*“The Certification College and then the Mini Camp were incredibly helpful just preparing staff to understand the need [to serve fathers], better understand specific needs of fathers, and find out best practices from other organizations who were also funded.”*

*— Kirsten Trefflich, Cambodian Association of America, Y2*

**The Power of Networking.** The last quote reflects one of the most powerful dynamics of the NRFCBI—the opportunity to network with organizations from across the country that have the same desire to serve fathers.

*“Just the knowledge NFI [gave] us through the Certification College and the Mini Camp and getting to network with other agencies around the country to see how their programs are working, and what they are doing...is really important.” — Roy DeLyon, Maui Family Services, Y2*

*“For those two conferences...that was huge because from that point we’ve also done collaborative work outside of it. We are looking at both jointly applying for one of those federal grants when it comes to do a much more in depth and actual development of curriculum for fathers of kids with special needs. So that is one very, very strong collaboration. All of those things are rollouts from the supports and information we got from NFI.*

*— W.C. Hoecke, Family Connection of South Carolina, Y3*

*“Like when we wrote grants, I’ve been contacting people from all over the country that went through the capacity college with us, and we help each other. So the guys in New Mexico, it would be like I’m writing a supervised visitation grant and I know you do one (a supervised visitation program), and then I contacted the guys from Ohio because I was writing a big grant to work with guys out of the prison system. So that has been a wonderful benefit that we’ve kind of, for some of us we’ve kept in contact and been able to provide support for each other.”*

*— Ellen Williams, Center for Child and Family Services, Y3*



Indeed, one of the outcomes of the Certification College with Year 1 Sub-awardees was the creation of a Facebook page by one of the Sub-awardees that the cohort used to stay connected and share information. Moreover, evaluations of the Certification College and Mini Camp revealed the desire of Sub-awardees for more networking opportunities during those events. NFI built additional networking opportunities into subsequent colleges and camps.

The bottom line is that the NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees examine practices within their organization. This inward look led to “father-friendly makeovers” to their physical space within their walls and, literally, to their walls. It also led to discussions between and among staff on the research on father absence and involvement and about the importance of assessing staff attitudes and beliefs about fathers and the value placed by staff on serving fathers. As a result, Sub-awardees were able to develop effective strategic plans to build their capacity to engage fathers.

**Upgrading Technology.** In today’s high-tech world when people hear the word “networking” they often think of computers and technology. Sub-awardees used funds from their subgrants to purchase computers, start and improve websites, acquire databases, and otherwise bring the advantages of better technology to their work.

*“... we were able to actually put in place a tracking system. We were able to hire a database administrator who came in and designed a system for us which has been extremely helpful. We were able to pull certain statistics, demographic information, and compile statistics from them. So that really helps with trying to seek funding and actually get a measure of how well our program is going. So I think that was a strengthening point in creating that information management system.” —Javez Henderson, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Y3*

**The Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow.** Sub-awardees implemented a variety of father-friendly policies and procedures too numerous to mention in this report. While this impact is nothing to gloss over, the Sub-awardees emphasized how the NRFCBI helped them in one of the most critical areas of Organizational Development: increased ability to compete for and acquire funding from public and private sources. Indeed, a key objective of the NRFCBI is to position Sub-awardees to more effectively compete for funding to provide fatherhood programs and services. Sub-awardees happily reported that they found themselves in a much better position to seek funding beyond the Sub-award.

Many interviewees said they secured funds to support new or existing programs and services for fathers. The recent economic crisis has caused widespread funding challenges for organizations especially for the small community and faith-based groups involved in the



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NRFCBI. Despite these challenges, many Sub-awardees have increased their fundraising infrastructure and coffers and commented that NRFCBI webinars addressing sustainability have been very helpful in this regard.

*“[NFI] brought the awareness to the need of having a fatherhood program in which we received a grant from the California Endowment, as well as some additional funding to run a father program.” — Tracy Killings, Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Y1*

*“I think as a result of this grant...since we’ve shown the leadership part of it [and] the importance and the success of the program, [we] hired a grant writer [and] hired another male to do the grant writing and funding and outreach and program development. We’ve been able to hire another person responsible for finding funds for our various programs.” — Roy DeLyon, Maui Family Services, Y2*

*“It seems as though we’ve written several more grants and have been funded [by] several grants since receiving the award from the fatherhood capacity building program.” — David Goodson, Family & Children’s Council of Blackhawk County, Y2*

*“Well, [the T & TA] has given us definition. We now have one full-time gentleman [who raises] the funds, and he is the fatherhood specialist. We’ve also written a request, a federal grant, for the Second Chance Act, requesting \$300,000 to assist us in implementing these various stages and to recruit volunteers to surround dads that will be released from incarceration and returning to communities.”*

*— Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2*

NFI is currently gathering information from Sub-awardees on the funding they’ve received after participating in the NRFCBI. As of the writing of this report, 31 Year 1 – Year 4 Sub-awardees have received combined funding of more than \$4,000,000!

## Program Development

Even with support from leaders and the resulting changes in infrastructure, executing (i.e. delivering) a fatherhood program or service is a challenge. An effective program relies on quality staff and resources (e.g. curricula) as the program’s foundation. It also depends on effective strategies to recruit fathers into the program and retain their participation. Hiring and retention of program staff and recruitment and retention of fathers are often the greatest challenges within Program Development.



**Fatherhood Resources.** Many Sub-awardees used their grants to acquire and receive training on fatherhood curricula, such as NFI's 24/7 Dad™, Doctor Dad™, and InsideOut Dad™ curricula, and have subsequently implemented programs with those curricula as the foundation. Sub-awardees purchased curricula from other organizations, as well.

Several Sub-awardees created their own materials to supplement the use of NFI and other organizations' resources as they built their capacity to address the unique needs of the fathers they served or intended to serve. Bethesda Family Services Foundation, for example, created a workbook called a "Healing Journal" for work with incarcerated fathers and had it translated into Spanish. Christian Heritage developed a public service announcement that promotes responsible fatherhood and distributed it to television stations across the state of Nebraska. Two other Sub-awardees created videos. The first video, entitled "Our Stories," was produced by Family and Children's Council of Black Hawk County to promote fatherhood in the Iowa Department of Corrections. The second video, entitled "All About Your Child," was produced by Fill the Gap Program for use in child support enforcement offices. It targets custodial and non-custodial parents. Lastly, Hillcrest Ministries created a 30-minute television program that aired for 21 weeks. A companion website (MenofLegacy.com) allows viewers to download the program's weekly shows and other information related to fatherhood. These Sub-awardees reported that these products led more men to seek fatherhood services and to discussion and a sense of urgency in communities and institutions to address the problems men face on the road to becoming a responsible father.

**Recruitment and Retention.** The NRFCBI helped Sub-awardees to reduce and, in some cases, eliminate the challenge of recruitment and retention. Sub-awardees included a variety of approaches to build capacity to recruit and retain fathers. Some Sub-awardees casted a wide net by providing an array of programs and services to meet the unique needs of fathers in their community while others looked inward and "mined" their own resources/assets by linking new programs and services for fathers to other programs within the organization (e.g. prenatal and parenting) that successfully reach families or by designating staff across the organization as "fatherhood contacts" to work with fathers and identify appropriate resources as they engaged the organization's programs and services.

*"[Attending a presentation given by fathers who served as outreach staff] really gave [pregnant teens] hope that they could successfully engage their partners in our programming and, in fact, all the young men are invited to come to our childbirth education [program]. I think having the men make that presentation was very empowering for them."*

— Kathleen Clarke, Inwood House, Y2

"We were addressing mothers, babies, grade school, middle school and high school and even addressing the teen pregnancy issue. We attempted to address fatherhood, but we had no resources until NFI (the grant)."

— Tracy Killings,  
Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Y1

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*“Because of all the funding and all the technical support given us, we’ve been able to expand our inner outreach to the fathers within our own program. We were really never clear on how to get to these fathers [before the grant].” — Roy DeLyon, Maui Family Support Services, Y2*

*“Now we have branched out into an alumni group [of graduates from the fatherhood program]. But you know what? I don’t know that I would’ve done that if I hadn’t really been kind of jogged by NFI to think about creative ways of how to capture people in your community that could benefit from what’s going on. And in a way, we had said well, those dads are kind of graduated and they’re doing fine. We don’t hear from them much anymore, so we’ll just kind of not pay attention. But actually many of the same issues that young dads deal with, they’re still dealing with and their children are in 20’s and 30’s now, so we’re going to have an alumni group session once or twice a year from now on anyway.”*

*— Greg Schell, Kindering Center, Y3*





Most Sub-awardees developed multi-sector referral networks through their links to other organizations (e.g. social services, churches, and schools) while others focused their recruitment and retention efforts on “captive audiences” (e.g. incarcerated fathers) or on fathers who are court-ordered to attend fatherhood programs (e.g. for failure to pay child support). Overall the Sub-awardees reported success in recruiting and retaining fathers, especially those that focused on incarcerated fathers or fathers required to attend programs with many fathers continuing to engage the organization beyond their “required” period (i.e. on a voluntary basis) after they recognized the value of the program or service.

*“We have implemented InsideOut Dad™ in the six correctional facilities. When we put up one poster for a class that is going to have 10 dads, in two days we had 35 dads sign up. Another facility where we were going to have 15 in a class, we put up a poster and [had] 50 dads sign up. In a third facility, we put up a poster and had 85 dads sign up for a potential class of 15.”*

— Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2

## Community Engagement

Community Engagement is essential to the long-term success of fatherhood programs and services. Sub-awardees took that fact to heart as they used T & TA from NFI to lay the foundation to engage their communities around the issue of father absence and involvement. Indeed, when asked to list the top three ways in which the NRFCBI helped them, the most popular answers were related to Community Engagement. As one Sub-awardee pointed out, engaging the community helped it to step out of its “silo” and increase the social capital available to it to engage fathers. Sub-awardees remarked that their efforts to engage their communities have increased community awareness of the personal and societal costs associated with absent fathers, and that resources are available to help fathers become more involved, responsible, and committed.

As noted earlier, there are links between and among the four capacity-building areas—each of them supports the others. As a result of building their capacity in the first three areas, the Sub-awardees’ communities became aware of the programs and services for fathers offered by Sub-awardees. Organizations turned to Sub-awardees to ask for help to improve their own services for fathers and families (i.e. consulting), invited Sub-awardees to conduct presentations and lead workshops, and to participate on coalitions or advisory councils related to father involvement or family strengthening in general.

“...because now we are beginning to be seen as the people who are advocating for these child related issues. We had not had that presence before.”

— Mary Weaver,  
Friends Outside Los Angeles County, Y1

“...the coalition started a grass root statewide networking of organizations in Louisiana doing the responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage work.”

— Cheryl Breaux,  
Fill the Gap Program, Y1

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*“I mentioned our collaboration with the court system and having the fathering class here. We have a job development area [that] is connecting to businesses to help place our fathers in jobs. We are part of a domestic violence task force, so we are able to meet with a lot of other non-profit organizations to talk about fathers and the father’s role in [preventing] domestic violence.” — Heather Rebbman, Roca, Inc., Y2*

*“I believe that the community at large is much more sensitive in their wording and their behavior towards fathers. A lot of guys [are] saying, ‘Wait a minute. We’re still the father even though we’re in jail. We want to hear what’s going on with the kids.’ So I think it’s impacted the fathers themselves in now having the confidence to be able to speak out and say, you know, ‘I’m in jail now, but [that] doesn’t mean I’m not a father.’” — Karen Hoelker, Humanitri, Y1*

*“One big thing we were able to do is connect with the mayor’s office. We had the mayor proclaim June as father month. We had a proclamation and a ceremony at the mayor’s office. So we were able to get our local government to see the importance of fatherhood.”  
— Roy DeLyon, Maui Family Support Services, Y2*





*“It helped us build better relationships with Support Enforcement Services and the court system, the district attorney, [and] public defenders. [That] in turn led to us to take part in a fatherhood and family policy forum, which allowed us to network with other responsible fatherhood education providers in the state.”*

— Cheryl Breaux, Fill the Gap Program, Y1

**Stepping it Up a Notch.** The last two quotes speak to the importance of connecting with “influencers” and leaders (e.g. public officials) as part of a successful strategy to engage the community. A few Sub-awardees included this tactic by raising community awareness in more high profile ways, such as by forming coalitions and through statewide and local forums on fatherhood attended by leaders from many sectors of community life. This tactic helped them engage fathers not only through their organization but in a broader way.

*“We currently have about 30 organizations participating actively and another 20 at least paying attention to what’s going on in the fatherhood arena. So we’ve got a collaboration put together that can do cross referral, [and] we can work together in efforts toward community awareness. So we are able to direct fathers more effectively to where the needed resources are, not just our own resources.”* — Steve Nylin, Young Parents Network, Y1

*“We’ve developed an alliance. It’s a very broad group, including [the] faith community, law enforcement, hospital, health care, education, [and] human services of course. So that’s been very helpful in terms of furthering the fatherhood effort in our community.”*

— Steve Nylin, Young Parents Network, Y1

*“We’ve expanded partnerships with the hospital here that runs that prenatal center and with the public officials with the mayor’s office. We’ve talked with [the mayor] about a Taos Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. We’ve talked with public officials at the governor’s office and the lieutenant governor’s office, and the Children News and Family’s department, and then with the early childhood community. We’re part of a network, an early childhood development network, and we’ve actually introduced fatherhood as a focus. They never really keyed on to the fact that you’ve got to work with fathers, too, because it’s like all of the members of the network besides myself are all women, and they’ve been kind of career professionals in early childhood, but they hadn’t really worked with fathers before. So we’ve introduced that, and then now this network has created a special project committee on starting a Taos fatherhood initiative.”*

— Crispin Clark, Taos Men Engaged in Nonviolence, Y3

“We’ve developed an alliance. It’s a very broad group, including [the] faith community, law enforcement, hospital, health care, education, [and] human services of course. So that’s been very helpful in terms of furthering the fatherhood effort in our community.”

— Steve Nylin,  
Young Parents Network, Y1

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These Sub-awardees reported that working with public officials who influence public policy, for example, facilitated their ability to offer programs and services within the context of strong, collaborative, multi-sector efforts. Christian Heritage, in fact, worked with 20 volunteer educators in the Nebraska Department of Corrections to standardize NFI's InsideOut Dad™ program in the Nebraska correctional facilities. Furthermore, the Department of Corrections (Nebraska) issued a resolution to place the program in the remaining facilities.

**Creative Collaborations.** Forming relationships with law-enforcement agencies, for example, has been a part of some Sub-awardees' strategic plans. As noted earlier, fathers engaged with law enforcement (e.g. corrections) are a captive audience that can be easier to recruit and retain than other fathers. Sub-awardees described collaborations with law enforcement to provide fatherhood programs as part of a wide range of broader efforts, such as re-entry of former inmates into communities.

*“The job readiness program we have, which is for men coming out of jail, is comprehensive. We literally get them a job. They come for 12 hours and get trained and then we get them a job. And we give them financial counseling and we help them become self-sufficient, which may include connecting to community resources for housing.”* — Ellen Williams, Center for Child and Family Services, Y3

Such relationships often lead to the creation of creative collaborations that, in turn, can lead organizations in unexpected, fruitful directions and help solve difficult challenges in serving fathers. The efforts of two grantees in this area led one into a relationship with a statewide commission on fatherhood and the other into a relationship with a statewide marriage-strengthening effort that allowed them to access the social capital of individuals and groups across their state. The Parenting Network's collaboration with the state Department of Corrections opened a door to a greater interest in the issue and the impact of fatherhood programs within the research community.

*“We've developed a relationship with the [Wisconsin] Department of Corrections, the Milwaukee Security Detention Facility and the City and are now doing InsideOut Dad™ with four different groups every week within that facility. Right now we are in the process of working with the Medical College of Wisconsin to look at developing a grant for research as to the effects of fathering programs within the Milwaukee community.”*

— Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1

Another Sub-awardee discovered through engaging another organization an answer to a vexing problem with recruitment of fathers while another was able to solve a problem for a state agency.



*“I was sharing with her [a staffer from another organization that serves fathers] what we did and how we operated and found out we had some common issues and problems in working with [Child Support Enforcement] due to confidentiality issues. The two of us brainstormed and came up with an idea how to resolve it, and the state office approved it. And what it did was [it] allowed [Child] Support Enforcement to share contact information with us. So it opened doors for us to get more referrals.” — Cheryl Breaux, Fill the Gap Program, Y1*

*“I know with DSS [Department of Social Services], they’ve closed a lot of their cases there with Child Protective Services where the parents have actually received the children back as a result of our fatherhood initiative.” — Angela Pruitt, Abbeville County First Steps, Y2*

A third Sub-awardee described how their fatherhood program collaborates with fathers living in high-risk neighborhoods—where 70 percent of all births are to single mothers—to recruit fathers into programming. This type of “citizen involvement” peaked the interest of local legislators and potential partners in their work.

*“Our fathers were actually doing outreach in the community to recruit dads and raise awareness of the fatherhood initiative [which created] new ties with our local legislators and some of our community partners who may not have known that we had this service to provide. The Million Man March [we participated in] was another way to strengthen our relationship with local Bronx legislators, the bureau president’s office, and our local council people.”*

— Kathleen Clarke, Inwood House, Y2

A fourth Sub-awardee carried the message of fatherhood programming in a spirit of collaboration to other programs in their community.

*“We contacted the fatherhood programs in the community. They were almost non-existent. They might serve 15 fathers in a whole year. We met with them, we expressed our enthusiasm about their program, our desire to support their programs, our desire to refer our men to their programs. I see those programs getting off the ground [now]. So one program that was almost dead now has hired a man to revitalize it. [Another] program is doing the same thing.”*

— Ellen Williams, Center for Child and Family Services, Y3

“It helped us build better relationships with Support Enforcement Services and the court system, the district attorney, and public defenders...that led us to take part in a fatherhood and family policy forum, which allowed us to network with other responsible fatherhood education providers in the state.”

— Cheryl Breaux,  
Fill the Gap Program, Y1

**Free Press.** When organizations brainstorm on ways they can engage communities around fatherhood or any issue, they often think of television, radio, and print media. Engaging media is easier said than done especially when working on a limited budget. Organizations must think creatively about how to engage the media around fatherhood for little or no cost.

Several Sub-awardees effectively engaged the media and, as a result, received the important benefit of free press, a priceless way to market a program or service at no charge. Once again, the link between two capacity-building areas is evident. In this case, Community Engagement aids Program Development. A prime example of this connection is the creativity of Christian Heritage's idea to reward fathers for completing the InsideOut Dad™ program while serving sentences in the Nebraska Department of Corrections. Fathers recorded messages for their children on DVD which got the attention of a local newspaper that ran a full page cover story in the Sunday paper. Later the governor of Nebraska mentioned the use of InsideOut Dad™ during a speech. Other examples of free press garnered by Sub-awardees include:

*“This year we were able to get our newspaper involved in covering some of the fathers that are changing their lives from maybe what our community would have called deadbeat dads into something else. That’s the first time I remember seeing an article about fathers that wasn’t portraying the best of the best, but fatherhood as a journey, and I think that’s a tremendous testament in this particular area.”*

—Javez Henderson, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Y3

*“Another thing was we jointly published with Richmond Health District a report that assessed the cost of father absence to taxpayers in the Richmond city area and that report has gotten some attention of a variety of people.”* — Bob Ruthazer, First Things First of Greater Richmond, Y3

### Impact on Program and Service Delivery

**More Fathers Served.** Since the end of their grants, Sub-awardees have continued to create and expand programs and services for fathers. The types of programs and services vary as do the settings (e.g. communities and sectors) in which they operate, but the impact of the NRFCBI on them and the fathers they serve is quite similar. Moreover, Sub-awardees report that the number of fathers receiving fathering education and “wrap-around services” to meet their basic needs (e.g. job readiness and education) have increased as a result of Sub-awardees' participation in the NRFCBI.

*“We were able to help a number of fathers and it was the only such service available in the Cambodian community, so [we were able to help] lot of people who don’t speak English. I don’t know that there are any other fatherhood-specific services available, but specifically it was the only thing available for Cambodian people who wouldn’t be able to communicate in another language.”* — Kirsten Trefflich, Cambodian Association of America, Y2



*“[The middle schools] heard about our work with the high school boys and came to us. We’re just trying to reach out to these young men that are spending a lot of time on the streets, trying to teach responsible behavior. So my fatherhood social worker does a lot of work with these young men on relationship building and respect and those kinds of things.”*

— Diane Daffron, Children’s Aid Society, Y1

*“Well, when we start talking about a rural community and [how to] have a successful fatherhood program in a rural community, it goes without saying...I mean it’s huge because you’re getting fathers to come [despite transportation as a barrier]. In a lot of cases the whole family comes. We’re able to provide a meal, and that meal may be one of the few meals that child may get. The biggest thing is the commitment that fathers have and the success of a program in a rural community when you lack so many resources.”*

— Michael Gaskin, Abbeville County First Steps, Y2

*“Well, [the fatherhood program] gave fathers an outlet. A lot of fathers in our community did not have anywhere to turn because most all of our focus—the vast majority focus—[is] on the child and the mother. So now the fathers actually have a program that is assisting them to be better parents and to be more active with their children.”* — Michael Gaskin, Abbeville County First Steps, Y2

*“[Fathers] knowing there now is a place that they can come and receive services, receive links to employment, receive links to counseling, links to housing and things of that sort. So I think it’s become more so of a home base now where men can feel comfortable now to know that there is a place in my community that does service fathers.”* — Roderick Elzy, Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Y1

*“The other positive impact here has been we’ve increased the number of men that we deal with on a normal week through some of our parenting classes. Between incarcerated programs that we’re now doing as well as our Saturday morning program [with non-incarcerated fathers], we’ve increased the number of fathers that we talk with every week and do programming with.”*

— Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1

“We see more fathers wanting contact with their children.”

— Steve Nylin,  
Young Parents Network Y1

**More Involved, Responsible, Committed Fathers.** The effect of better, more numerous fatherhood programs and services is, generally speaking, immeasurable. Nevertheless, the vast literature on the benefits of father involvement coupled with the quantitative and qualitative data from the evaluation of the NRFCBI argues strongly that the initiative has led to improved well-being for children, families, and communities. Nearly every Sub-awardee stated emphatically that their fatherhood programs and services have helped fathers to become more involved, responsible, and committed to their children in a number of ways. Here are just a few examples.

*“We see more fathers wanting contact with their children. We get a number of referrals from the other organizations of fathers that want to have contact with their children but are running into barriers, so we try to help remove those barriers for them [so they can] effectively interact with their children and families.”* — Steve Nylin, Young Parents Network, Y1

*“What we overwhelmingly hear from [fathers] is they start the program talking about a lot of excuses for why they are not doing more—that they would do more except A, B, C, D—and by the end they start to realize that while there might be a lot of obstacles for them—which is the reality for most of these men—they get some creative ideas for how to get around [those obstacles].”* — Rebecca Starnes, Family Life Council, Y2

*“A priority is made [by fathers] to paying their child support. In doing that they have to be responsible in that they have to work. They have to be able to work, they need to hang onto a job, and show up every day and be a valuable team player in the workplace.”*

— Cheryl Breaux, Fill the Gap Program, Y1

*“Our employment program for the formerly incarcerated [helps] them seek employment [and] build their job skills.*

*We are enrolling them in our employment program and helping [fathers] get jobs.”* — Mary Weaver, Friends Outside Los Angeles County, Y1

**Improved Relationships.** Of course the most compelling stories of impact involve how Sub-awardees’ fatherhood programs and services change the very nature of fathers’ relationships with their children. Sub-awardees shared stories, for example, about fathers who had no contact with their children—some for many years—who re-established relationships with their children as a result of participating in a program. These programs touch fathers so deeply that they change their perspective on their role as a father and of themselves as the following quotes illustrate.



*“The guys do report...they come back and [say] my kids are happier, I’m happier, there seems to be less stress in the house.” — Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1*

*“We’ve received quite a few referrals where [fathers] came in the door with the attitude that they were not all that important in the lives of their children. Some even believed that maybe their kids were better off without them.”*

*— Cheryl Breaux, Fill the Gap Program, Y1*

*“[Fathers in the program] are not really known for expressing their grief and they have sort of a hard shell. But they come to terms with recognizing their own pain and [how] that sort of stifled their growth and their condition—the condition of their relationships with their children.” — Lisa Storer, Bethesda Family Services, Y2*

*“I’ll draw your attention to the mission statement which the young men themselves wrote for the program. The mission is to empower and educate young fathers to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, and strong, confident advocates in order to navigate the most important personal journey of their lives, that of fatherhood.”*

*— Kathleen Clarke, Inwood House, Y2*

The change in the nature of a father’s relationship with his children and view of himself results in changes in behavior, which is ultimately what fatherhood programs and services seek to influence.

*“Sixty-five percent of the guys who come to our program become more involved in their children’s education, but they also get involved in other ways as far as increased reading with the kids, increased time spent with kids, [and] increased awareness of their children’s activities.” — Rebecca Starnes, Family Life Council, Y2*

*“[Fathers] do report regularly that from their side, they’re more apt to back away from an argument, but they also report [problems] with their ex. So we work with them to say, ‘OK, you can only control yourself.’ Overall, they report a better relationship from their side and, hopefully, mom will begin to understand this isn’t about [her], [it’s] for the betterment of the children.” — Tom Weber, The Parenting Network, Y1*

“Sixty-five percent of the guys who come to our program become more involved in their children’s education, but they also get involved in other ways as far as increased reading with the kids, increased time spent with kids, [and] increased awareness of their children’s activities.”

— Rebecca Starnes,  
Family Life Council, Y2

*“I would venture to say—especially dealing with those who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated—there is a greater awareness and sensitivity of the need for the fathers to be involved in their children’s lives; whereas prior to the time of incarceration, quite frankly, a number of the individuals were self-centered, focused on themselves. Now, with the time of their incarceration and them being involved in the program, there is a level of sensitivity, a level of awareness of the impact, positive and negative that these fathers have had, are having, and are going to have in their children’s lives.” — Nolan White, Lucas County TASC, Y3*

One of the most intractable challenges facing fatherhood programs is how to involve the mothers of fathers children (e.g. helping mothers become a “gateway” instead of a “gatekeeper” regarding fathers’ access to their children). Three Sub-awardees found that the NRFCBI helped them to increase the involvement of mothers, thereby changing the relationship between the fathers and mothers for the benefit of their children.

*“We spend a lot of time getting the mothers involved, want to speak to them, want to find out their opinion on the father, on the children and how they can be part of the influence with the situation. I think that was a very positive part of being part of this capacity building grant.”*

*—Javez Henderson, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Y3*

*“This year, for the first time, [the fatherhood program coordinator] has been invited to speak to a group of custodial moms about fathering. That’s a pretty big step for this community.” — Sue Barrett, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Y3*

*“The psychology and presence of fatherhood programs and us kind of being at the forefront of those programs is really impacting the mindset of the females, especially moms; whereas before in the community it was more of a negative thing for them when you talked about the dads. Now they are wanting to engage their children’s father in whatever way that they can, and I think that our work has a lot to do with that.” — LeMar Bowers, First Things First of Greater Richmond, Y3*



## Conclusion

The work to build the capacity of organizations to more effectively serve fathers and families is sorely needed. The evaluation of the NRFCBI shows unequivocally that organizations benefit from comprehensive T & TA that focuses on developing their infrastructure. Most importantly, however, our nation's children, families, and society benefit when organizations implement a strategic plan to build their capacity.

***“I truly do have a message I would love for you to send to your funders because in the 10 years that I’ve been here—and we’re 25 years old—this opportunity [has] made a dynamic difference in the future of our organization. And it is directly due to your funders believing in something like this and taking a risk. I mean it’s been a huge blessing to our organization. This is unprecedented. The support is phenomenal. This was so well thought through.”***

— Susan Lear, Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita Y3

*“..I’d like to say that I believe NFI has really taken the lead on fatherhood in America, and we are honored to have been a recipient and to work with NFI... So you folks have led the charge, you’ve provided us with phenomenal resource materials... We’re just delighted to be a part of what is important to you in what you’re making possible in America.”*

—Greg Nicklas, Christian Heritage, Y2



# Appendix A

## Sub-awardees that Participated in Key Informant Interviews

Year 1 Sub-awardees
Children's Aid Society, Birmingham (Homewood, AL)
CTE, Inc. (Stamford, CT)
Family Comes First, Inc. (Columbus, OH)
Fill the Gap Program (Independence, LA)
Friends Outside in Los Angeles County (Pasadena, CA)
Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Inc. (Inglewood, CA)
HUMANITRI (St. Louis, MO)
Oaks Family Care Center (Brunswick, OH)
The Parenting Network (Milwaukee, WI)
Young Parents Network (Cedar Rapids, IA)
Year 2 Sub-awardees
Abbeville County First Steps (Abbeville, SC)
Bethesda Family Services Foundation (Lewisburg, PA)
Cambodian Association of America (Long Beach, CA)
Christian Heritage (Walton, NE)
Family and Children's Council of Black Hawk County (Waterloo, IA)
Family Life Council (Greensboro, NC)
Hillcrest Family Ministries (Abilene, TX)
Inwood House (New York, NY)
Maui Family Support Services, Inc. (Wailuku, HI)
Roca, Inc. (Chelsea, MA)
Year 3 Sub-awardees
Center for Child and Family Services (Hampton, VA)
Clinch Valley Community Action Agency (N. Tazwell, VA)
Coshocton County Fatherhood Initiative (Coshocton, OH)
Family Connection of South Carolina (Columbia, SC)
Family Guidance Center of Alabama (Montgomery, AL)
First Things First of Greater Richmond (Richmond, VA)
Kindering Center (Bellevue, WA)
Lucas County TASC, Inc. (Toledo, OH)
Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita (Wichita, KS)
Men Engaged in Non Violence (Taos, NM)



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*— Susan Lear, Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita Y3*



