EXPANDING PROJECT FATHERHOOD TO REDUCE LEGAL AND EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS: A GRANT PROPOSAL

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Over the last 40 years, there has been an increase in the number of children who are growing up in homes without a father figure being present (Cartwright and Henriksen, 2012). Fathers play a central role in the identity formation of their children (Harper and Fine, 2006). Fathers will influence how his children will be with their children, how the children will live their lives, and how they perceive romantic relationships (Geddes, 2008). Research suggests that child welfare agencies tend to overlook fathers or view them negatively (Zanoni, Warburton, Bussey, & McMaugh, 2013). Foster care placement can be prevented or reduced with the implementation of prevention, permanency planning, and developing family support strategies and services (Freundlich, 2010). There has been an increase in programs, such as Project Fatherhood at Children's Institute of Los Angeles whose aim is to have fathers be more involved and responsible parents (Perry, 2011; Project Fatherhood, 2015). In 2010, Families Uniting Families, a non-profit organization in Long Beach, California, became one of many locations that initiated a Project Fatherhood program (Families Uniting Families, 2015a). Some barriers identified which impact a father's involvement are: employment, legal issues, child support policies, and being low income (S. Maldonado, 2006; S. Maldonado, 2014; Roulet, 2003).

The overarching goal of this project is to expand the services of Project Fatherhood at host agency Families Uniting Families by adding employment and legal assistance components with the hope of reducing the barriers that are preventing fathers from being involved in the lives of their children. The program is intended to serve as both an intervention and prevention measure for the fathers who are looking for parental support and seeking to take the necessary steps to reunify with their children.
The importance of understanding and seeking social justice for the underrepresented and unique needs of fathers.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2015) expressed the importance for social workers to treat every client equally and with dignity, as well as to understand their cultures and how they influence a person’s behavior and actions.

Fathers come from different cultures, thus they have different understandings of what discipline entails, as well what their role as a father is.

When fathers are seeking supportive services, they should have equal rights and opportunities that the mothers have. They should not feel as though they are being challenged or given an unfair shot.

This Project Fatherhood Program will aim to achieve social justice for the fathers so that the barriers that are in place and keeping them from being involved with their children can be removed.
The Child Welfare Information Gateway (2011) stated that ethnic families are disproportionally reported for child abuse and neglect. Additionally, during the investigation the allegations are most likely found to be substantiated.

The 2015 California Child Welfare Indicators Project (Needell et al., 2015) that in 2014, in Los Angeles, California, there were a total of 26,922 cases found to have substantiated allegations.

- African American families made up 29%
- Latino families made up 13% (Needell et al., 2015).

The vulnerable people who find themselves in the child welfare system are the people who will be served by the fatherhood program.
METHODS

**Target Population**
- Fathers who reside in Long Beach, California.

**Strategies to Select a Funding Source**
- The grant writer conducted an internet search to identify potential funding sources. The grant writer used key words such as grants/fathers/California, grants/fatherhood programs/California, grants/employment assistance/California, and grants/legal assistance/California.
- When looking at foundations for grant opportunities, this grant writer researched program information that matched the mission and goals of the program. This grant writer searched for foundations that provided clear explanations about their qualifications and funding restrictions.
- To ensure that the program had all the components available, this grant writer searched grants opportunities that offered amounts that were equal to or exceeded the amount needed for the program.

**Identifying the Funding Source.**
- Due to the high projected budget of $75,000 for the new components of Project Fatherhood, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and The Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation were selected.
Sources Used for Needs Assessment

- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Child Welfare Information Gateway,
- Child Indicator Project
- National Center for Fathering

Projected Budget Range and Categories

$75,000 is the estimated funding request for the proposed program. The total cost for the program to operate is $138,677.

- Salaries with benefits for: Job Developer, Vocational Counselor, and Legal Consultant= $59,880
- Direct operating cost: Mileage, Office supplies, and Miscellaneous expenses= $8,302
- Indirect Costs at 10%= $6,818
Program Summary and Description

- The purpose of this grant will be to serve and expand the service capacity of Project Fatherhood at Families Uniting Families through increased funding for staff positions in order to implement an employment, vocational training program, and legal assistance components to their Project Fatherhood Program.
- These additions are going to address the reoccurring barriers that current and former members of Project Fatherhood face when striving to reunite with their children.

Population Served

- Fathers in Long Beach, California.
- For the purpose of this program, fathers/members can be birth fathers, foster fathers, stepfathers, adoptive fathers, putative fathers, and males providing kinship care to children.

Sustainability

- Program evaluations will be provided to funders to show the positive outcomes of the program.
- These outcomes will show the funders that the program is helping fathers decrease the barriers that have been keeping them to be uninvolved with their children.
- Additionally, other potential funding sources will be researched and fundraisers will be utilized to sustain the program. The fundraisers will take place in Long Beach, California and will include member testimonials to show the funders and donors who they are helping and how their money will be used.
**Program Objectives**

- **Goal 1: Increase employability of fathers involved in Project Fatherhood.**
  - Objective 1: Vocational counselor will conduct vocational assessments.
  - Objective 2: When appropriate, the vocational counselor will facilitate enrollment into short term training program.
  - Objective 3: Vocational counselor will provide training sessions on completing job applications, interview skills, and dressing for success.

- **Goal 2: Remove legal barriers to employment and reunification.**
  - Objective 1: Legal advisor will consult and advise members with legal issues impacting their employability and child involvement.
  - Objective 2: Legal advisor will serve as an advocate with the judicial system for members.

**Program Evaluation:**

- **Sign-In sheets** - utilized to keep track of how many members are participating in the program and to keep record of who sought out specific services with the job developer, vocational counselor, and legal consultant and how often.

- **Open Ended Questionnaire** - Current and new members will be asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire in which they will be asked to identify what services and assistance they are in need of. At the end of year, the members receive those forms again, however, this time they will be asked to rate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services. In this form, the members will also have the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program, which will be used when seeking refunding.

- The overall effectiveness of the program and its services will be determined by total number of fathers who become and remain employed, and the number of fathers whose legal barriers are decreased and/or removed through the program.
It is imperative that social workers continuously research and understand the impact that fathers have on the development of their children, as well as become knowledgeable of the unique challenges that low income fathers face to best guide their practice and services.

It is also imperative for social workers to understand their client’s history and cultures, as this can be influencing the person’s behaviors or actions.

Research suggests that there is indeed a bias against fathers when it comes to the child welfare system. By becoming aware of these biases, practitioners can work towards making more of an effort to include fathers in the service plans (Bellamy, 2009; L.Brown, Callahan, Strega, Walmsley, and Dominelli, 2009; O’Donnell, 2001; Scourfield, 2006; Zanoni, Warburton, Bussey, & McMaugh, 2013).

Imperative to see fathers as partners, rather than an uninterested parent. There are fathers who want to be present and engaged with their children, however, there are barriers getting their way.

Overall, collaboration is key when it comes to working with fathers in the field of social work. Practitioners and fathers can work towards eliminating and/or removing the barriers, rather than creating more.
REFERENCES


