

FATHERS MATTER

Mobilizing Fatherhood in Metro Atlanta

REPORT



INTRODUCTION

Georgia Department of Public Health (GA DPH), Maternal and Child Health partnered with the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) to support the work of its Strong Fathers, Strong Families Georgia Coalition (SFSF GA). The framework for the SFSF GA Coalition is NFI’s Community Mobilization Approach (CMA) which has been successfully implemented in several states (e.g. Texas, Indiana, Ohio) and cities (e.g. Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Sioux Falls) across the United States. The geographic focus of this initiative is SFSF GA partner metro Atlanta counties: Clayton, Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas and Fulton counties.

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) was selected to serve as the lead agency for the CMA process. MSM PRC is an academic partner/member of the SFSF GA Coalition. MSM PRC is the designated center for community engagement for Morehouse School of Medicine and has a community-based participatory approach that has been replicated locally, nationally, and internationally.

NFI held a four-hour CMA workshop for 13 SFSF GA coalition members and metro Atlanta leaders on January 13, 2021. During the workshop, NFI’s CMA was introduced. The three (3) phases of the CMA are: (1) a needs and assets assessment of metro Atlanta abilities to promote father involvement; (2) a Leadership Summit on Fatherhood attended by metro Atlanta county leaders; and (3) implementing an action plan for a fatherhood initiative generated by a broad cross-section of sectors.

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PHASE 1:

COMMUNITY NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT

A community needs and assets assessment, or Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of Programs and Services (REAPS), for fathers is the culmination of Phase 1 of this ongoing initiative in metro Atlanta.

This REAPS will help our community leaders to:

- Identify the need to promote or support father involvement
- Identify the services and programs for fathers that exist in the community, and the service and program gaps
- Identify the assets in the community that can be mobilized to promote father involvement
- Identify potential strategies to weave the promotion of father involvement into the social fabric of the community
- Collect information critical to attract funds for a sustainable community-wide fatherhood initiative.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

The first component of this REAPS report presents secondary (existing) data on issues related to father involvement from a national, state, and/or local perspective. During the CMA workshop, leaders decided on the topic areas for data collection. The topics were:

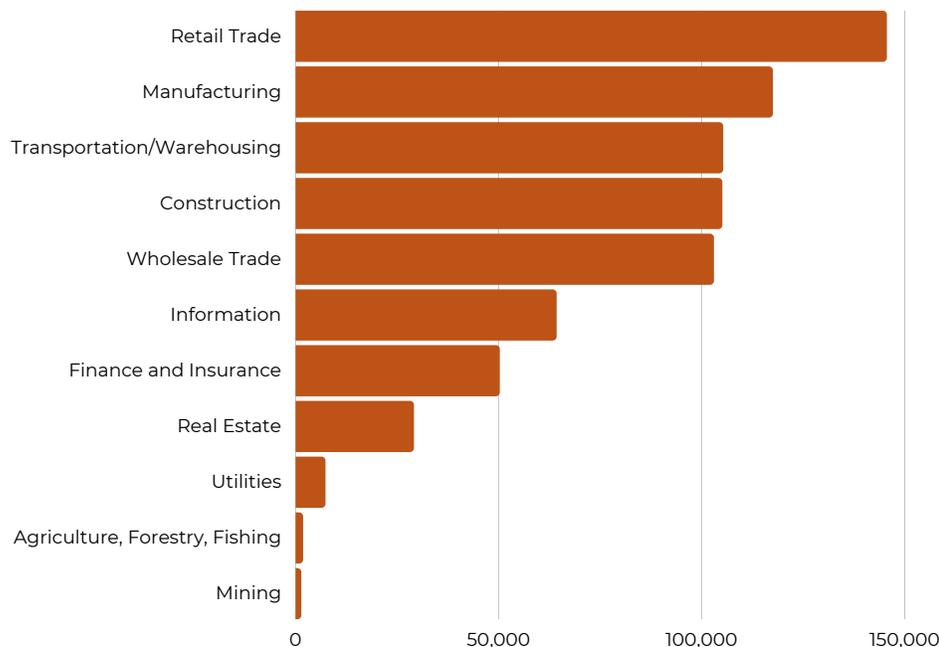
EMPLOYMENT, INCARCERATION, EDUCATION, HEALTH, POVERTY, HUNGER/FOOD INSECURITY, AND HOUSING

EMPLOYMENT

Financial provision and stability of fathers leads to improved child well-being (Moore et al., 2020). Unemployment rates have doubled and tripled between 2019 and 2020 due to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, Clayton county had a high percentage (9.6%) of children whose parents lacked secure employment in Georgia, above the state percentage.

The figure to the right shows the number of males employed in certain occupations in Georgia. Several types of manufacturing jobs are on the list of industries in decline in the metro Atlanta area by 2026. The highest paying industries are Management of Companies & Enterprises (\$92,289), Utilities (\$92,031), and Finance & Insurance (\$87,223) but there are not as many working in these spaces in 2020. These can be opportunities for workforce development.

NUMBER OF GEORGIA MALES BY OCCUPATION



Source: Georgia Labor Market Explorer

INCARCERATION

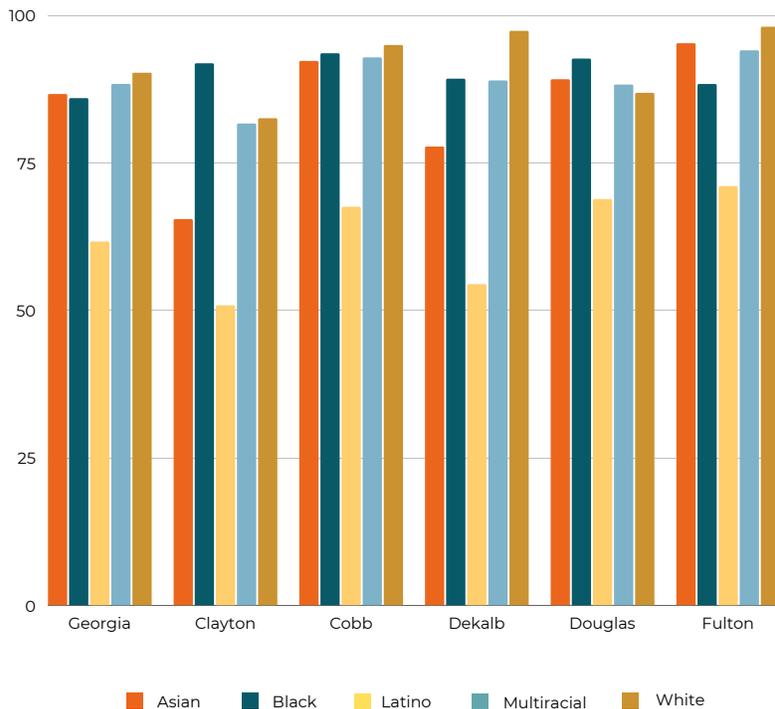
Georgia has one of the highest incarceration rates in the nation. 527,000 Georgia residents are under some form of correctional supervision (Prison Policy Initiative, 2018). 92% of incarcerated parents are fathers (US Department of Justice, 2010). Specifically, 1 in 10 Georgia children had a parent who was ever incarcerated (National KIDS COUNT, 2020).

Racial disparities in incarceration impact families as 40% of African American fathers have been incarcerated by their child's first birthday, compared to 18% of White fathers (Meyer & Warren, 2011).

Children of incarcerated fathers reported more depressive symptoms and their teachers noted more externalizing behaviors, after controlling for other biopsychosocial risks (Wilbur et al., 2007).

Felony convictions result in the loss of voting rights and eligibility for housing and educational grants. Criminal records are also a huge barrier for employment of fathers. Opportunities with accountability courts and other efforts are needed to help realize the potential of these employable fathers.

**ADULT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR HIGHER IN GEORGIA,
RACE AND ETHNICITY**



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDSCOUNT data set

EDUCATION

Unfortunately, the high school graduation rates of several counties in the metro Atlanta area fall below the national rate. Fathers' involvement in their children's lives has been shown to have a positive effect on increasing their children's chances of academic success (Jones & Mosher, 2013). Research shows that children's performance in school is enhanced specifically when their fathers are engaged in their school experience. When fathers are more engaged in schools beyond attending and volunteering at events, children have been shown to get better grades, go further with their education, and enjoy school more. It is important to note that this relationship between father engagement and children's achievement was evident regardless of whether their fathers lived with them.

While most fathers in metro Atlanta have attained a high school diploma or higher, there are still certain populations of adults who have not. Georgia educates the 8th highest number of English Learners in the nation. English learner enrollment is the highest in school districts in the metro Atlanta area. Therefore, efforts must be made to ensure that their fathers, who have lower rates of high school graduation and likely do not speak English, are welcomed and engaged.

HEALTH

The health benefits of father involvement for mothers and children has been widely researched. However, the physical and mental health effects of being a father are understudied and largely unknown. Georgia has the third highest percentage of uninsured people in the nation, and 21% of Georgia men are uninsured (Berchick, Barnett, & Upton, 2019). Additionally, Georgia ranks 48th in the nation in terms of the availability of mental health providers (National Alliance on Mental Illness Georgia, 2017). We detail below some data on mental and physical health outcomes for fathers and their families.

Heart disease is the top cause of death for Georgia men. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the negative impact of underlying health conditions and the lack of health insurance coverage as men of color are the most likely to be hospitalized or die because of COVID-19 (Gold et al., 2020).

Men's Top Health Concerns

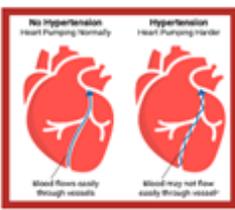
Based on the Morehouse School of Medicine Community Health Needs & Assets Assessment

After surveying 131 men residing in Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's) T, V, X, Y, and Z in Atlanta (Fulton County), data shows the major health priorities of the respondents who identified as African-American men include: hypertension, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and mental health at the forefront. To increase awareness and prevention of these health challenges, this infographic includes: data that reflects how each health challenge specifically affects African-American men in Fulton county along with prevention strategies.

High Blood Pressure

High Blood Pressure, also known as Hypertension is commonly referred to as the 'silent killer'.

When compared to other groups in Georgia, African-American men are 23.3% more likely to die from hypertension at a total rate of 87.5%. In Fulton county, hypertension is the #2 leading cause of death for this same group as of 2018.



Diabetes

Pre-diabetes is a state where blood sugar levels are high but, not high enough to classify as diabetes. Pre-diabetics can avoid type-2 diabetes altogether with corrective action.

As of 2017, 36.6% of men are pre-diabetics with only 8.9% knowledgeable about their condition.

Type-2 diabetes is diagnosed when the body is unresponsive to insulin, a hormone responsible for allowing blood sugar to be converted and used by the body for energy.

3x

Black men are **three times** more likely to die prematurely from diabetes when compared to other groups in Fulton County, GA

HIV/AIDS

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that weakens a person's immune system, thus making it difficult to fight off infections and diseases that the body could have tackled. The human body cannot eliminate HIV but it can be managed with medication.

Auto immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a severe stage of HIV where the immune system is at its weakest point. As of 2018, Black men represented 21.2% of newly reported HIV/AIDS cases in Fulton County. This same population experienced premature deaths from the virus. Life expectancy for persons with AIDS has been determined as 1-3 years.



Mental Health

African American men are **four times** more likely to die by suicide than African American women.

Untreated mental health conditions can be fatal. Suicide is the 3rd most prevalent cause of death within the 15-24 age group of African-Americans.

Stigmas that exist in the African-American community contribute to the alarming rates of black men living with an untreated mental illness.



Source: MSM PRC Community health needs and assets assessment data, 2017-2018.

MENTAL HEALTH

Father involvement impacts children's emotional and mental well-being. The past decade has expanded our understanding of mental health among fathers. Research shows that being a father can produce positive mental health outcomes. We also know paternal depression seems to affect 5% to 10% of fathers in the postpartum period, that there is an increase in paternal depressive symptom scores in the first 5 years after the birth, and 21% of fathers will have experienced depression by the time their child is 12 years of age (Garfield, 2015).

PHYSICAL HEALTH

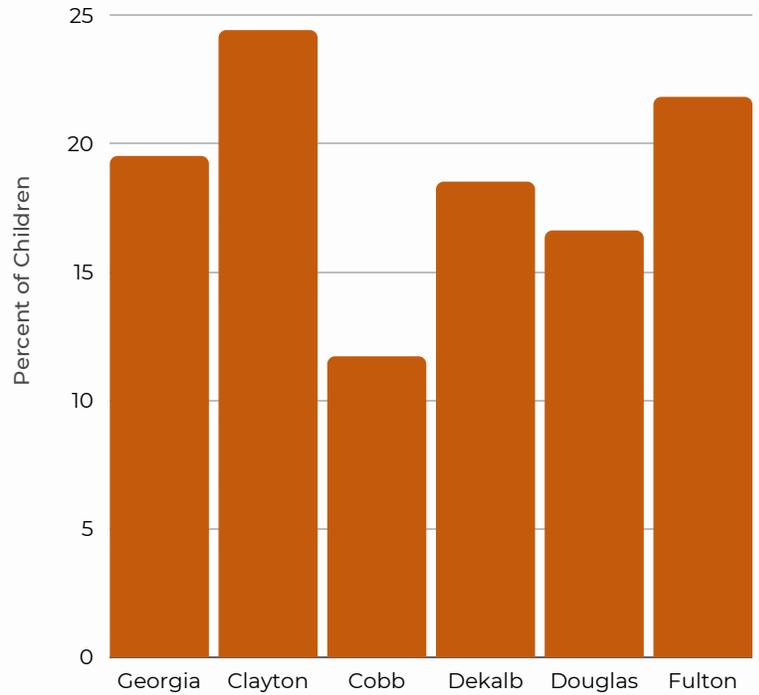
Fathers have positive impact on children's physical health outcomes. One study found that 82% of the fathers had attended a well-child visit in the previous year, which afforded an opportunity for engaging fathers in pediatrics (Taylor et al., 2020). Patients (aged 9-14 years old) whose fathers attended one or more clinical visits over a 2-year period had better outcomes, compared to fathers who never attended a visit (Taylor et al., 2020). Higher father involvement was associated with less perceived impact of disease on family functioning and more favorable general family functioning among a sample of patients (190 patients, aged 2-18 years old) diagnosed with a chronic illness (Taylor et al., 2020).

POVERTY

Poverty can have a negative impact on a child, and such toxic stress presents a serious threat to brain development and healthy system function. Children who experience poverty are at increased risk for negative outcomes in their physical and mental health, social emotional development, learning success, and future employment, and they are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems into adolescence (Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017; NFI, 2019). This is true across all demographics and disproportionately impacts Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous children (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

The percentage of children living in poverty in both Clayton and Fulton county exceeds the statewide percentage. When further examining the breakdown of children living in poverty by race and ethnicity in these counties, the majority of children are Black and Latino. Some children who are living in poverty whose fathers are more engaged with them have less social and behavioral problems. Therefore, a father’s involvement, even in poverty, can moderate the negative impact of poverty on a child (Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017).

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY IN GEORGIA, 2019



Source: United States Census 2000, U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, SF3, Tables P87 and P159A,B,H. For 2001 and later: United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE).

FOOD INSECURITY

Father involvement has been linked to a lower rate of food insecurity within households and subsequently better outcomes for children. Fathers' regular and consistent financial contributions are also associated with lower levels of food insecurity for children in early and middle childhood (Nepomnyaschy, Miller, Garasky, & Nanda, 2014). Fulton county has the highest number households receiving food stamps, with Dekalb county as a close second.

CHILDREN LIIVING IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES IN GEORGIA, 2015- 2019 ESTIMATES

| LOCATION | PERCENT OF CHILDREN |
|----------|---------------------|
| GEORGIA | 33.8% |
| Clayton | 50.4% |
| Cobb | 26.6% |
| Dekalb | 40.3% |
| Douglas | 34.5% |
| Fulton | 38.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five Year Estimates, Table B09002

HOUSING

While we understand that U.S. Census data do not measure or reflect father involvement, we thought it was important to share the statistics on family household composition for our communities. All of our counties, with the exception of Cobb, have high percentages of children living in single-parent households. Although a high percent of children are born to unmarried couples, father involvement in all families has never been higher (Garfield, 2015). Further, Georgia census data estimates show that the majority of households with their own children are married couple households, which is higher than the national percentage.

PRELIMINARY DATA ON NEW FATHERS IN GEORGIA

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a joint research project between the state departments of health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Reproductive Health. It is the only surveillance system that provides data about pregnancy and the first few months after birth. PRAMS is an ongoing, state-specific, population-based surveillance system designed to identify groups of women and infants at high risk for health problems, to monitor changes in health status, and to measure progress towards goals in improving the health of mothers and infants. The purpose of PRAMS is to find out why some babies are born healthy and others are not. The survey asks new mothers questions about their pregnancy and their new baby. In 2018, in an effort to better understand the experiences of new fathers in Georgia, the PRAMS for Dads Pilot project used the PRAMS mail and phone methodology to experiment to contact fathers in conjunction with the maternal PRAMS survey, and/or independently of the maternal survey (CDC, 2021).

The table below describes the characteristics of the fathers who participated in the pilot project. The majority of fathers in the sample were between the ages of 25-34, White, with a college education. The majority of fathers were married to the mother, had private health insurance, with an annual household income greater than 200% of the federal poverty level.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FATHERS WITH A RECENT LIVE BIRTH IN GEORGIA

| | N | n | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| AGE AT INFANT'S BIRTH (YEARS) | 266 | | |
| <25 | | 31 | 13.1% |
| 25- 34 | | 144 | 56.7% |
| ≥35 | | 91 | 30.2% |
| RACE/ ETHNICITY | 263 | | |
| White, Non- Hispanic | | 121 | 44.9% |
| Black, Non- Hispanic | | 73 | 28.3% |
| Hispanic | | 50 | 19.0% |
| Other, Non-Hispanic | | 19 | 7.9% |
| EDUCATION | 266 | | |
| Less than High School | | 43 | 15.7% |
| High School Graduate/GED | | 80 | 29.2% |
| Some College, No Degree | | 47 | 19.5% |
| College Graduate | | 96 | 35.7% |
| PATERNITY TYPE | 266 | | |
| Married to Mother | | 193 | 64.7% |
| Paternity Acknowledgement | | 73 | 35.3% |
| HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS | 257 | | |
| Private | | 160 | 61.1% |
| Public | | 14 | 6.0% |
| Other | | - | - |
| No insurance | | 80 | 31.7% |
| FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL | 240 | | |
| ≤100% | | 47 | 22.2% |
| 101-200% | | 70 | 29.4% |
| >200% | | 123 | 48.4% |

Specific findings about these new Georgia fathers were also shared. About 40% of these fathers had some criminal justice system involvement. The majority of these fathers were employed and were able to take paid leave after their child's birth. As shown in research cited above, about 12% of these fathers reported always sometimes or often feeling down depressed or hopeless after their child was born. Further, about 25% of fathers always, sometimes, or often had little interest or pleasure in activities they enjoyed before their child was born.

**CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCES OF FATHERS WITH
A RECENT LIVE BIRTH IN GEORGIA**

| | N | n | % |
|--|-----|-----|-------|
| INCARCERATION & COMMUNITY SERVICE | | | |
| Spent time in a correctional institution (ever) | 258 | 30 | 13.1% |
| Required to perform court-ordered community service (ever) | 258 | 51 | 56.7% |
| EMPLOYMENT AND PATERNITY LEAVE | | | |
| Employed during pregnancy | 261 | 240 | 92.3% |
| Paternal Leave | 255 | | |
| Yes- paid or unpaid leave taken | | 171 | 66.8% |
| No leave taken | | 60 | 24.2% |
| Unemployed | | 24 | 9.0% |
| Paid Paternity Leave | 231 | | |
| Paid leave taken | | 120 | 53.3% |
| No paid leave taken | | 111 | 46.7% |
| RESIDENCE WITH FAMILY & RELATIONSHIP WITH INFANT'S MOTHER | | | |
| Lives with new infant | 247 | 224 | 92.9% |
| Lives with infant's mother | 261 | 242 | 93.3% |
| Relationship with infant's mother | 260 | | |
| Wife (legally married) | | 190 | 66.1% |
| Partner (not legally married) | | 32 | 16.1% |
| Girlfriend | | 28 | 14.7% |
| Friend | | - | - |
| Other | | 7 | 1.9% |
| Among fathers not married to infant's mother, description of their relationship | 68 | | |
| Romantically involved on a steady basis | | 59 | |
| Involved in an on-again and off-again relationship | | - | - |
| Just friends | | - | - |
| Hardly ever talk to each other | | - | - |
| MENTAL HEALTH | | | |
| Felt down, depressed or hopeless since new infant was born | 262 | | |
| Always, Often, or Sometimes | | 49 | 12.2% |
| Rarely or Never | | 213 | 87.8% |
| Had little interest or pleasure in things they usually enjoyed since new infant was born | 262 | | |
| Always, Often or Sometimes | | 70 | 25.4% |
| Rarely or Never | | 192 | 74.6% |

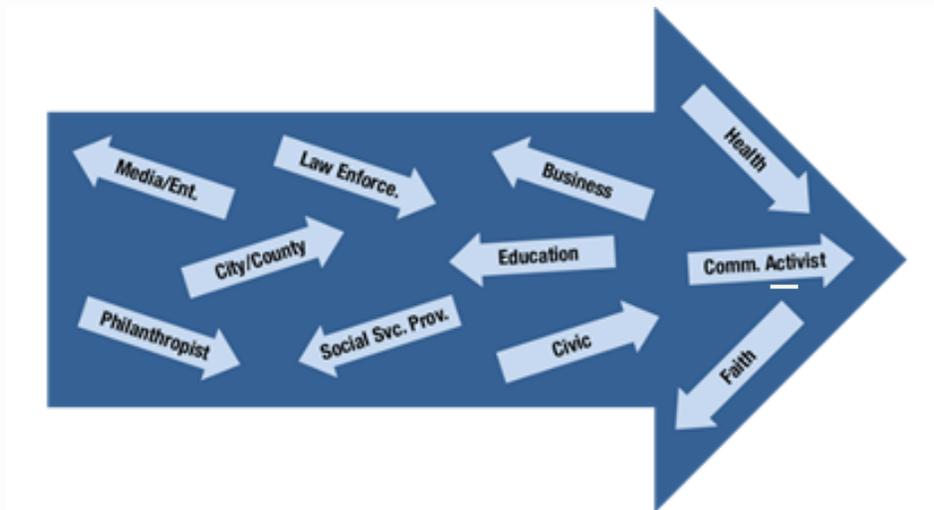
DISCUSSION GROUPS

The purpose of the two-hour discussion groups was to collect data from community leaders in diverse sectors that would help to identify the existing needs and the local assets that can be mobilized to promote and support father involvement. In addition to informing the mobilization process (e.g. Leadership Summit, Metro Atlanta Action Plan to Promote and Support Father Involvement), the data collected will be used to complement the secondary data in this report and in the development of the “community assets map” for metro Atlanta.

A structured discussion guide was revised by the MSM PRC team. The discussion groups were led by a facilitator and note takers were present. The groups were audio and video recorded. Twenty-six members of the metro Atlanta community participated in four discussion groups held via Zoom. These individuals represented six of the 11 sectors.

The four discussion groups used the same discussion guide to ask the same questions based on the objectives of the focus groups. MSM PRC team members (3) used a rapid qualitative analysis process to review the transcripts from the focus groups and summarize the key themes from each discussion. A summary and an analysis of the group’s responses are provided under each topic area/theme.

ELEVEN SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY



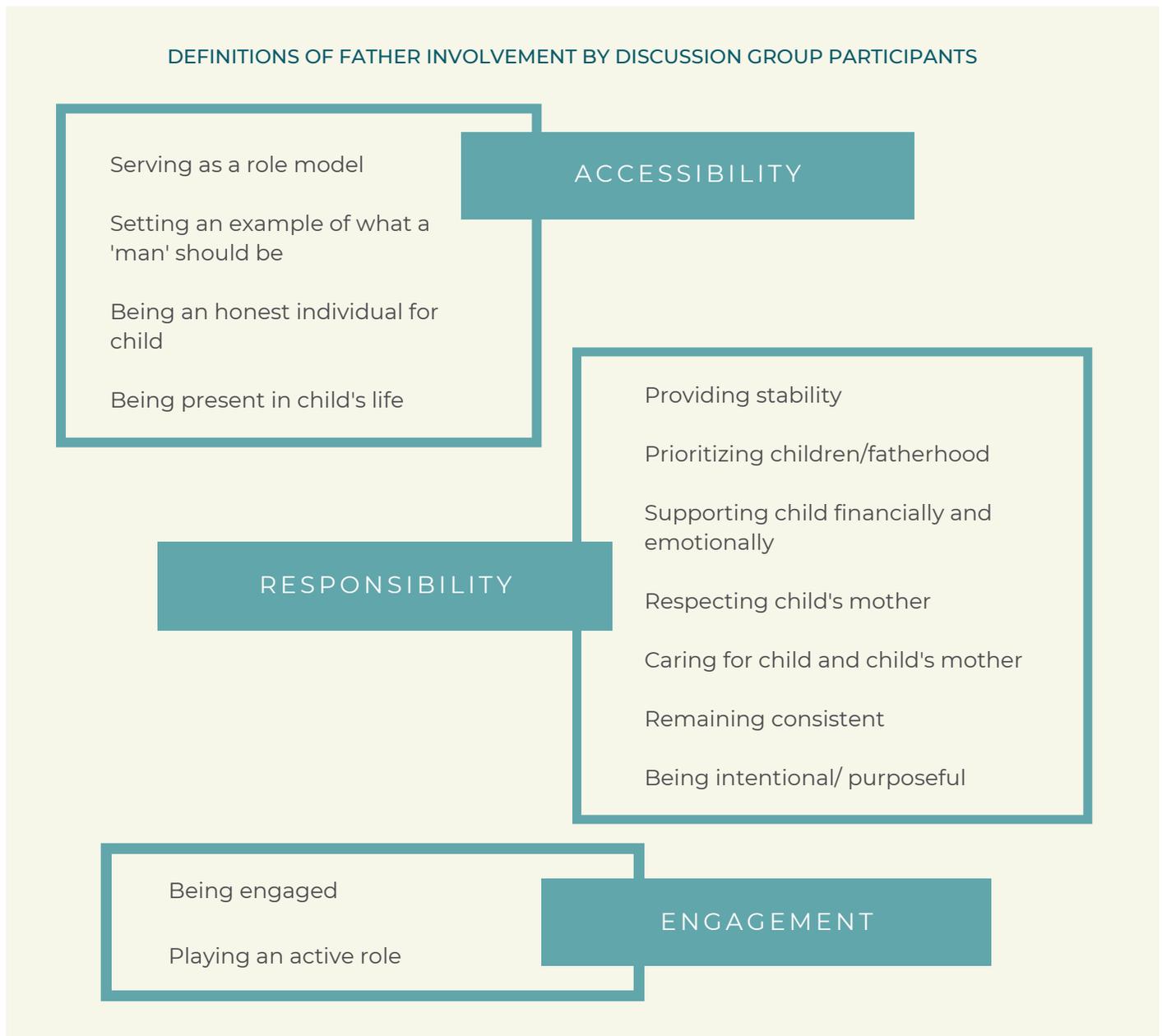
Source: National Fatherhood Initiative (2019). How to mobilize your city, county, or state, around responsible fatherhood. Philadelphia, PA.

The objectives of the discussion groups were to identify the following areas:

- the need to address father involvement in our community
- the services and programs for fathers that exist in our community and the service and program gaps
- the assets in our community that can be mobilized to promote or support father involvement
- effective strategies to promote father involvement in our community
- barriers that exist within our community that hinder father involvement

DEFINITIONS OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

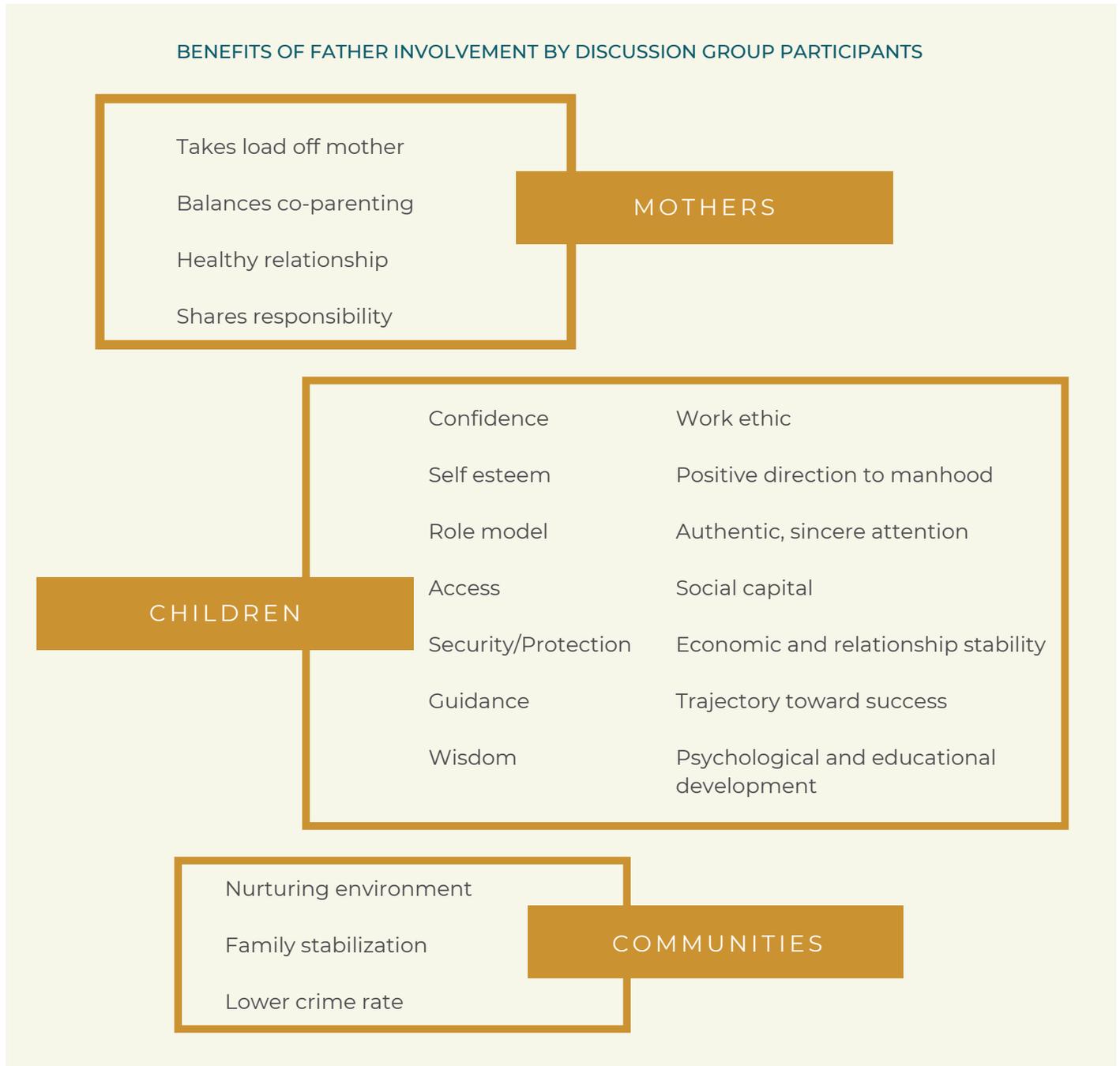
When asked, what does it mean to be an involved father, participants described various characteristics of involved fathers, including that fathers should be emotionally and holistically “well”. The participants described the typical themes of father involvement: availability/accessibility, engagement, and responsibility. Most shared definitions that fall into the responsibility category (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004).



Some participants in the social services group stated that there were no, or should be, no differences between mother and father involvement. It was understood by this group that fatherhood is “socially constructed”. Some participants shared that current conversations and efforts around fatherhood are “based on ideologies of patriarchy and gender roles”. It was agreed that fatherhood roles and definitions have evolved over time and definitions/roles differ by generation. Further, participants shared that fatherhood is a “continual learning process”.

BENEFITS OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Participants were asked about the benefits of father involvement to children, mothers, and communities.



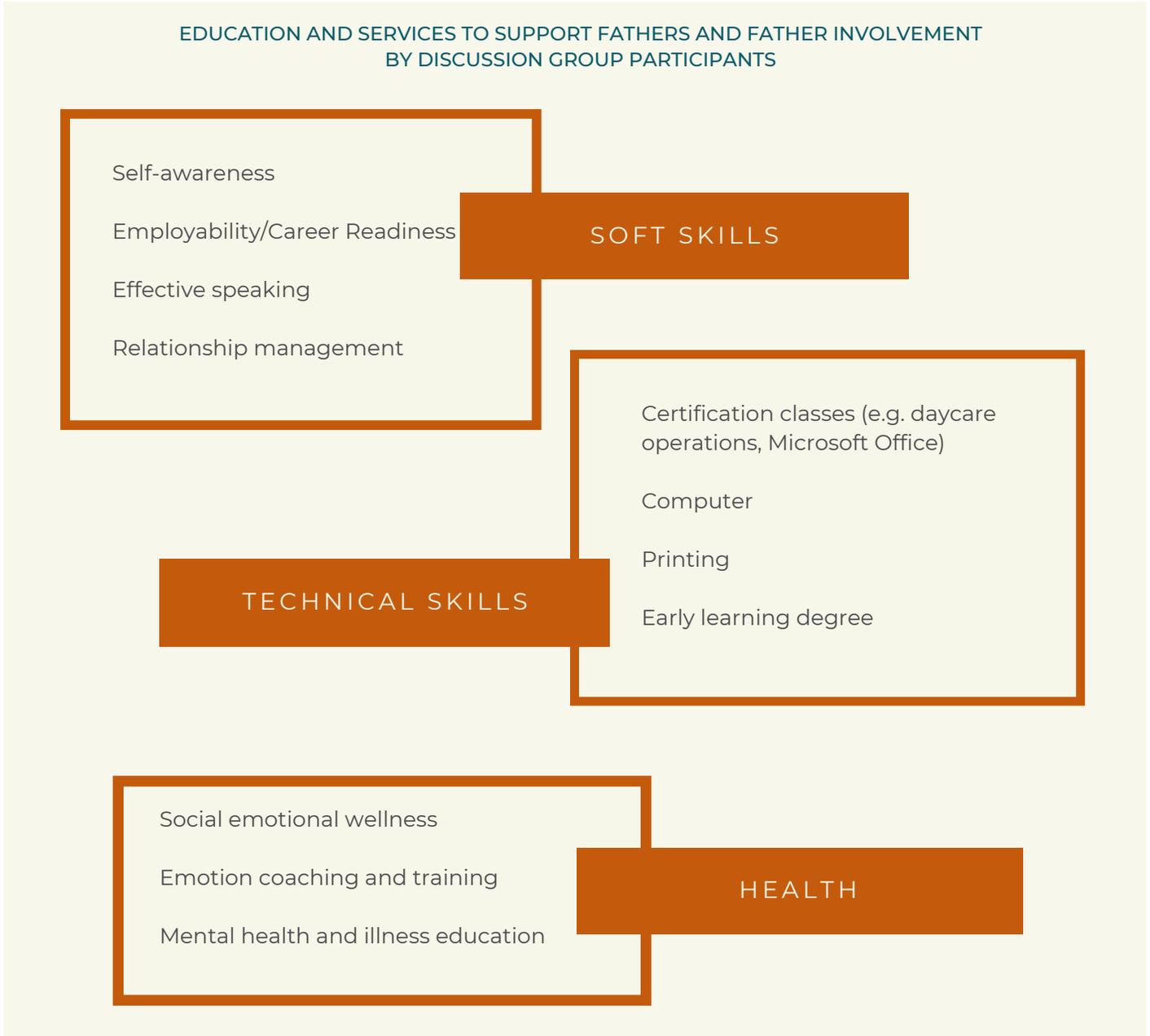
One participant shared:



When you look at the pediatric literature, about two parent families and the disparity in education in financial outcomes between children that are raised in two parent family versus one parent family the difference is almost obscene how bad it is. So I mean from just that perspective children just do so much better psychologically, educationally, and it leads them on a much easier pathway to success.

ASSETS & RESOURCES FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Participants in the education, social services, and civic sectors offered various existing programs and services to support fathers and father involvement. Besides parenting programs/skills, the types of education or services provided soft, technical, and health skills.



There were several resources for job placement or workforce development. One participant also shared about services to assist with legitimation. One of the government officials shared about an initiative in Clayton called Men Standing in the Gap where men go into schools and participate in various activities with youth and serve as positive male role models. A health sector participant shared that there are professional organizations' statements that support father involvement, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics. Participants also stated that organizations such as churches, 100 Black Men, Big Brother Big Sister, Georgia Office of Child Support Services' Fatherhood Program, Fatherless Generation Foundation (i.e., reconnecting children with their biological fathers), Georgia State University History of Fatherhood Initiative had additional resources for fathers or promoted father involvement.

BARRIERS TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Participants were asked about barriers to promoting or supporting father involvement in their sectors or with leaders in other sectors. Some participants shared how the way conversations around fatherhood are framed (e.g., are fathers relevant or needed), assumptions that mothers are more “in-tune” with children, and negative social media serve as barriers. Participants also shared about policy/legal barriers, such as legitimation. Participants shared that the lack of collaboration

among programs and services is a barrier. Sustainability of the services or programs for fathers was also noted as a barrier, with an awareness of the need to seek “funding from sources outside of government”. Further, one participant shared that ‘not communicating the long-term impacts and potential for self-sustainability of these programs and services” is a barrier. One participant shared how leaders may not promote or support father involvement or are “reluctant”

because of fear of “accountability.” Another participant shared how programs and events are not “boldly” marketed as services for fathers.

Additionally, participants shared that systemic and structural issues in society (e.g., wealth, education, employment, criminal justice system) act as barriers to father involvement. One participant shared that there is a lack of government support for mental health service initiatives that fathers need.



Our programs are not geared towards fathers or the dynamics of fatherhood so, for example, the fatherhood initiative switched to strong families initiative.--- that's a totally different message you know where you're saying strong families well strong families means you know I'm gearing towards the 80% of head of households that are female. We have to express to our fathers, that your presence is needed and welcomed and wanted.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE OR SUPPORT FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Participants shared that education, mentorship for fathers, and making sure fathers know that they are believed in and supported would support father involvement. Participants also shared that establishing a fatherhood taskforce, collaborating with State legislators, hiring more male case workers, having more men invite other fathers to events, and aligning the cause of fatherhood with funding are strategies that could promote or support father involvement.

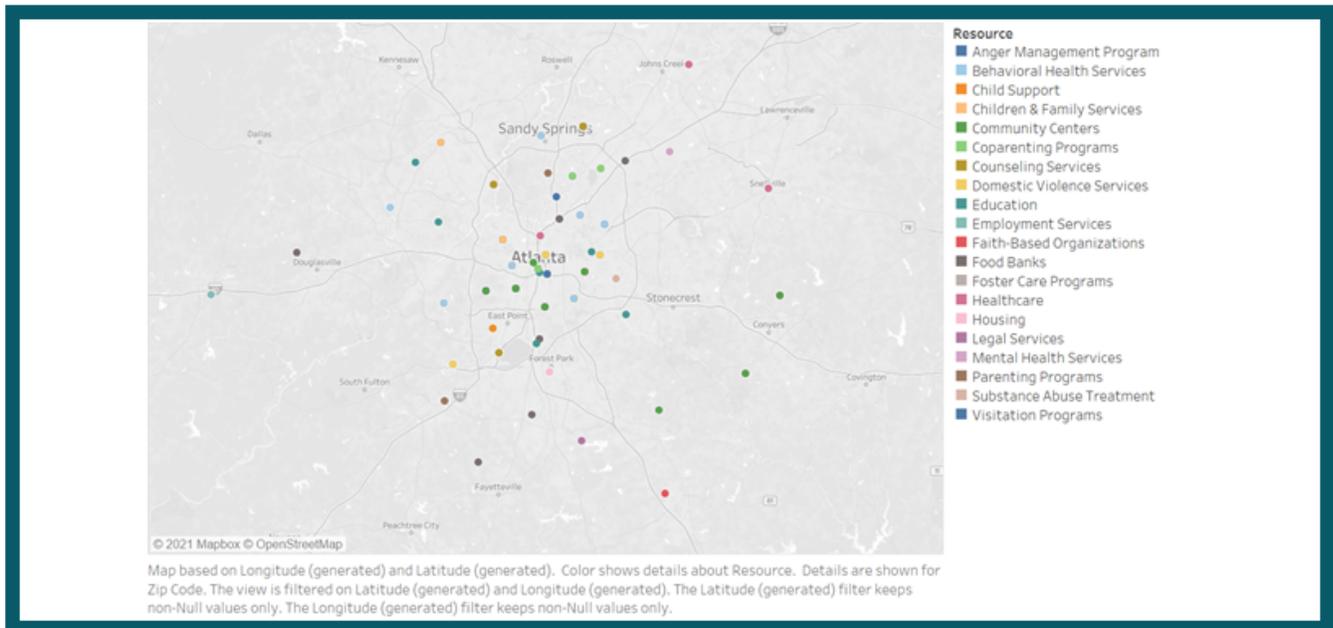
GAPS IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR FATHERS

One participant shared, “Resources also play a major part on how to be a father.” When participants were asked about the gaps in programs and services for fathers in metro Atlanta, they shared that fathers are often “forgotten” and programs and services need to “meet fathers where they are”. Participants shared that fathers need legal representation and education about child support and drug/alcohol intervention services.

ASSET MAPPING

Information about programs and resources specifically for fathers were collected through discussion groups, an environmental scan of existing program websites, and an agency resource survey. These assets were then shared in a spreadsheet and mapped. The table below shows how many of each type of resource was included on the map.

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES FOR FATHERS IN METRO ATLANTA



NUMBER AND TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR FATHERS

| TYPE OF RESOURCE | COUNT OF RESOURCES |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Behavioral Health Services | 7 |
| Child Support | 1 |
| Children & Family Services | 5 |
| Community Centers | 14 |
| Co-parenting Programs | 5 |
| Counseling Services | 8 |
| Domestic Violence Services | 8 |
| Education | 25 |
| Employment Services | 11 |
| Faith-Based Organizations | 7 |
| Financial Support Services | 1 |
| Food Banks | 17 |
| Foster Care Programs | 3 |
| Healthcare | 17 |
| Housing | 10 |
| Legal Services | 7 |
| Mental Health Services | 7 |
| Parenting Programs | 8 |
| Substance Abuse Treatment | 6 |
| Visitation Programs | 1 |

NFI states that there are several goals and objectives of the leadership summit:

- Helps leaders from across sectors combat father absence and promote responsible fatherhood
- Helps leaders capture a vision on how to promote responsible fatherhood
- Will shape an action plan to promote fatherhood in all areas of the community
- Understand why father absence is a crisis and why fathers are important to the well-being of children
- Realize that the consequences of father absence affect the leaders as well, therefore, every leader has a stake in promoting responsible fatherhood
- Identify ideas for how to promote responsible fatherhood
- Understand that they as leaders can do something to promote responsible within their sector
- Learn about NFI's ability to help the community build capacity to serve fathers and families

PHASE 2: LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Our team departed from these NFI goals and objectives to focus more on “father involvement” or “father engagement” vs “father absence”. We embraced an assets-based, strengths-based perspective for the fathers in our community.

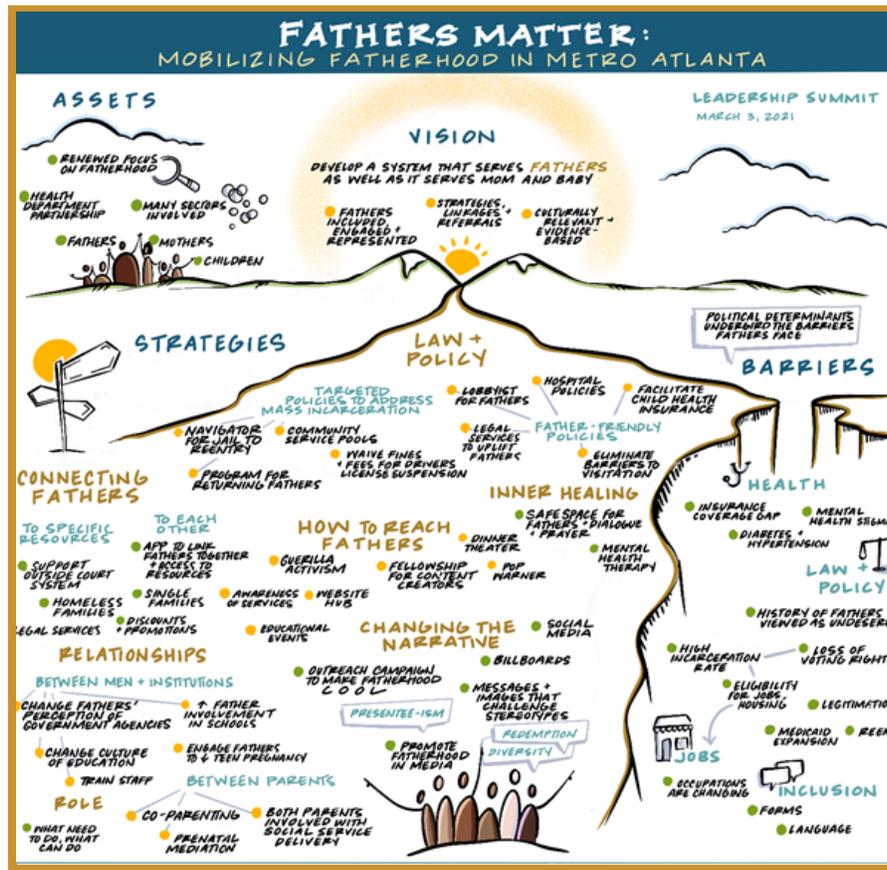
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT PLANNING

The steps required to host a leadership summit include creating a multi-sector committee and holding planning meetings. After the NFI CMA workshop, a leadership summit planning committee began to meet weekly to develop the invite list, invitations, agenda, and flyers for the virtual leadership summit. We developed a flyer and agenda for the leadership summit to occur on March 3, from 9am – 1pm. It was decided to call the summit and initiative the Fathers Matter: Mobilizing Fatherhood in Metro Atlanta. Registration was set-up via the Zoom virtual platform where 264 individuals registered and 186 attended.

The leadership summit facilitated discussion guide was revised to include virtual instructions for helping attendees brainstorm strategies and then voting on the top three strategies. Since there were some technical details involved with the virtual meeting, each sector (11) had a facilitator to lead the discussion and a co-facilitator to handle the technical aspects of the group (i.e., recording, using Zoom Whiteboard, tallying votes). There were two meetings held to train facilitators and co-facilitators.

During the meeting, Rio Holaday was enlisted to provide a graphic recording of the meeting, which resulted in a visual of everything shared during the summit.

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT GRAPHIC RECORDING



LEADERSHIP SUMMIT EVALUATION

After the summit, attendees were asked to complete an evaluation to provide feedback on the event and to indicate whether they would like to serve on the multi-sector action planning committee. There were 48 responses to the evaluation.

| QUESTION | STRONGLY DISAGREE | | AGREE | | STRONGLY AGREE | |
|---|-------------------|----|--------|----|----------------|----|
| | | n= | | n= | | n= |
| The objectives of this summit were clear. | 6.25% | 3 | 12.50% | 6 | 81.25% | 39 |
| The information was presented clearly. | 6.25% | 3 | 12.50% | 6 | 81.25% | 39 |
| The information was relevant to my work. | 6.25% | 3 | 22.92% | 11 | 70.83% | 34 |
| The summit was organized. | 4.17 % | 2 | 22.92% | 11 | 72.92% | 35 |
| The breakout sessions were productive. | 4.17% | 2 | 18.75% | 9 | 77.08% | 37 |
| I am satisfied with the overall event. | 4.17% | 2 | 16.67% | 8 | 79.17% | 38 |

Participants were also asked to share any additional comments about the summit or anything else they wanted to share.

as mentioned in the chat, super great energy around today's summit - makes for great hope for wonderful outcomes for us all as we move forward to implement strategies - thank you, again!

Wonderful, insightful, well presented. Excellent breakout sessions to further explore strategies for implementation of Father Involvement. Looking forward to moving forward with this group and making lasting impact on our Fathers

The Fathers Matter Leadership Summit is so important to the continued uprising of raising healthy, educated aware youth in America, particularly in the black community. The concept of parenting is a challenge in itself, creating a model that can be utilized and replicated as a parenting tool, is invaluable.

This summit was very informative. With the collaboration of the collective ideas and work, I believe Fatherhood can and will have a opportunity to promote and change the narrative of Fathers.

I didn't really know what the summit was about beforehand- having the agenda ahead of time would've been nice. It was overall very informative and encouraging.

I'm glad I attend and look forward to continuing to work with this group.

Excellent

a profound richness and diversity of thought, ideas, strategies.

The Summit provided a great opportunity to bring together stakeholders from different sectors that can contribute valuable strategies and suggestions on how to improve responsible fatherhood. Great suggestions were made and documented and I'm looking forward to collaborating with others on implementing some of the strategies, particularly in the Metro Atlanta area.

Thank you for all you do. We need more of these kinds of session throughout the year.

This was an incredible summit and I am sooooo excited to see how the strategies play out. Thank you for this great work!

Informative and engaging.

This was amazing !! Please please include me in future meetings

I love the way most of the time was spent in breakout sessions working on identifying problems/solutions.

Great content and well executed. Thanks!

Looking forward to how we continue to engage and move forward with actionable steps.

I really appreciated the statistically information provided that supported the need for more focus on the physical and mental health of fathers in GA. I saw great value in linking the survival and stability of fathers to the stability growth of their children.

I was honored to be a part of such an important event. It was well organized and the mixture of professionals was very impressive!

While I had to log off for other events, the time that I was able to participate was well spent. The Education breakout was very engaging and informative. The policy ideas and recommendations were all forward thinking and should be advanced. This is a commendable effort.

Thank you

Absolutely Outstanding Summit Event!

There was a lull in between the breakout sessions and the general session without explanation or instructions on what to do while waiting.

I was in the Social Service break-out session and it was extremely well organized and efficient. Great Job!

The opportunity to connect was awesome!!

It was very good to hear from other organizations and hear about resources around fatherhood initiatives.

This summit is so needed and on-time for our fathers and their needed fatherhood supports! Great way to keep us all on tasks as it relates to Fatherhood in GA!

Excellent Session!! Building strong parents leads to strong children.

Great summit, informative, engaging and timely. I am looking forward to the results and implementations of strategies .

This was a great start but lets finish. One huge problem in or community is that we are great marchers and talkers but lack in action. I am all in on two levels.

This was a very engaging summit that was well planned and well executed.

The summit was great! very organized, useful information was shared and lots of positive energy

Great Summit. Information delivered was clear and provoke discussion

PHASE 3:

ACTION PLANS

This phase of “Anchoring the Fatherhood Initiative” included sharing the vision, reviewing the CMA, sharing the goals and objectives of this phase, identifying new leaders to increase diversity, and reinforcing the importance of the multi-sector approach. Action planning included helping the group to identify short-, mid- and long-term actions for each strategy, re-prioritizing the list of activities, and creating a sustainability/funding plan.

MULTI-SECTOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

While 36 attendees indicated that they would like to be a part of the multi-sector advisory committee, invitations to join the committee were sent to all who registered for the leadership summit and/or participated in discussion groups. Doodle polls were used to identify convenient times that most participants can meet on weekly basis. It was decided that 1 ½ hour meetings on Wednesdays at noon and Thursday evenings at 5p would work. The group met from March 10- March 25, twice per week, to collaboratively develop and revise 7 action plans. Typically, there were about 30 leaders on Wednesdays and about 10-15 on Thursdays. All sectors, except for media and philanthropy, were represented.

While NFI recommends that each sector develop its own action plan, we invited leaders from multiple sectors to collaborate on the same action plans based on the 7 strategies that came out of the leadership summit:

- Connecting Fathers to Resources and to Each Other
- Reaching Fathers
- Improving Relationships (Between Men & Institutions; Between Co-Parents)
- Supporting Inner Healing
- Reclaiming the Narrative
- Addressing Mass Incarceration
- Implementing Father-Friendly Policies

We facilitated this process by creating a safe and trusting environment for leaders to share, collaborate, and network. We built trust by conducting community builders (i.e., icebreakers) before starting the action planning process. We embraced a participatory process by breaking the committee into small groups to work together on the action plans and allowing access to action plans in between meetings in case members wanted to share or edit. Action plans contain activities that will be carried out in 3, 6, and 8-12 months. The final action plans are below.

CONNECTING FATHERS Connecting Fathers to Resources and to Each Other

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|---|---|--|--|
| Develop Publication/App (online platform) that connects fathers to resources and utilize social media to market | Wykinia Culbreth & Natasha Worthy (Strong Fathers, Strong Families Georgia Coalition) | June 2021 for publication (App/website may need longer to develop) | Grants/funding for app Community partnerships |
| App or website that provides mentors and peer mentoring opportunities | Norma Joy Barnes (Community Council of Metropolitan Atlanta) | Ongoing monthly activities (events) | Technical expertise |
| Participate in talk shows on radio and television to provide fatherhood resources | Leroy Tre' Hutchins (DECAL) | | Media (tv, radio, online) |
| Peer-to-Peer Program – Fathers can be trained to become leaders among fathers | Paul Vaughn (100 Black Men) | | Marketing/Outreach Materials to recruit fathers and mentors (postcards, flyers) |
| Community Activities for mentors/fathers/father figures | Lawrence Wilbon (Fathers Incorporated) | | Curriculum to train mentors and facilitate ongoing discussions |
| Develop PSA to raise awareness of resources available and how to access | Thomas Clem (Metro Atlanta Chess Partners) | | United Way |
| Convene street team to meet fathers where they are in the community; (Marta, barber shops, clubs, etc.) | | | Black Man Lab - Atty Davis Fathers On the Green (Golf Lessons - Shon Rollins) |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

Leverage father ambassadors with early childhood programs, Continuously reaching out to the partners with active fathers that we're aware of. Once the "outside of school/program relationships" have been established, the fathers will assist with getting other fathers involved as well. Networking through relatable life experiences- mentorship program will develop here. Can also tie into the "Inner Healing Group" for additional mental health resources

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective?

How many fathers have attended each month; how many are returning; how many are new; increasing father participation.

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Monthly status checks via event sign in sheets.

How will we evaluate success?

Surveys to assess the increase or stand-still of father, father-figure participation.

REACHING FATHERS Meeting Fathers Where They Are

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|--|---|---|---|
| Develop alternative events (like a performing arts event) to attract fathers. | Dinner theatre – dr. candi dugas | June 2021 for publication (App/website may need longer to develop) | Grants/funding for app |
| Develop and share culturally sensitive marketing material during outreach; Employ trusted neighborhood/ community individuals and programs to distribute | Entertain/Sports – Lawrence Wilbon & Pastor Brian McCrory | Ongoing monthly activities (events) | Community partnerships |
| Proclaim a Fatherhood Week (the week of Father’s Day) to launch the initiative and all the planned upcoming activities across the initiative | All Pro Dads - School meetings (virtual or at-home video) | | Technical expertise |
| All Pro Dads events – both in school and in community venues across age levels. | Drive In Event – Dexter Cooper, Shavon Walls, Kephania Henderson | | Media (tv, radio, online) |
| Graduations as a way to reach out | Shon Rollins can contact Parks & Rec in each county to get authorization to use the park on dates/times | | Marketing/Outreach Materials to recruit fathers and mentors (postcards, flyers) |
| Connect with fathers at non-traditional venues/events (barbershops, clubs, carwashes, ball games, parks) | Merlin Knight can take on the grill | | Curriculum to train mentors and facilitate ongoing discussions |
| Father-Son / Father Daughter (or child) events | Gwen & Dena flyer and spreading the word | | United Way |
| Host community events (parks, block parties, BBQ’s, chess, drive thru movie, etc.) | Clem Metro Atlanta Chess Partners | | Black Man Lab (Atty Davis 404-391-1083 mdais@davisbozemanla.com) |
| | Norma Joy Barnes | | Fathers On the Green (Golf Lessons - Shon Rollins) |
| | AmeriGroup (Kris Favars) | | |
| | Healthy Start (Michael Stovall) | | |
| | Fatherhood Program of Division of Child Support Services (Usher Walker) | | |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

Presentations and activities will be cross-sector – judicial, public health, social services, faith, media, educational partners, private trade schools, temp services; Address mass incarceration; Police Officers do outreach and workshops (off-duty/plain clothes, younger officers). Maybe someone who grew up in the neighborhood, familiar with the local community; Health Fairs and Informational sessions (educate dads on infant care); Various business sector outreach; Anyone with knowledge of the other sectors could be present at the event to talk.

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective? Quarterly

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Positive survey responses; high number of attendees; number of fathers attending events.

How will we evaluate success? Surveys (on-site; text), attendance numbers; connection/referrals to resources (survey)

IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS Improving Relationships Between Fathers, Mothers, and Institutions

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|--|---|---|---|
| Each One, Reach One – conduct asset-based training for helping professionals; communication skills training | Latrice Rollins | June 2021 for father education & male-female collaborative activities (ongoing) | District Superintendent Office/ Atlanta Sports Organizations |
| Sensitivity training for judicial systems or other systems that impact fathers | Dwayne Goodson | | School Administrators/Parent Engagement Coordinators |
| Father Education with government representatives and resources (addressing custody/visitation; Child Support Town Hall, DFCS education) | Keith Schumacher | School activities September 2021 (ongoing) | School Boards |
| Conducting healing circles with fathers, mothers and children | Marcy Walker | Training to multiple helping professionals across sectors - December 2021 | Community partners |
| Create welcoming spaces in schools - Fathers supporting students on the 1st day; various events; breakfast, donuts | Rochelle Lindsey | | Strengthening Families Model & other curriculum |
| Encourage father/male specific programs and mother/women-focused programs to collaborate regularly to facilitate better relationships, communication, and integrated family services | Brenda Coleman- (National CARES Mentoring Movement) | | National CARES Mentoring Movement's |
| Tailor early learning activities (workshops for fathers; legal aid; legitimation) | University for Parents | | Culturally Relevant Healing Curriculum and their Facilitators |
| Make special effort to thank fathers and father figures for participating in activities | Carl Route | | Faith Based Organizations |
| Encourage fathers to participate in weekly fatherhood and networking class at the University for Parents | Lawrence Wilbon | | Fraternities & Sororities |
| Promote a family centered mentality | Ade Oguntoye | | Psychologists and Clinicians |
| Re-examine & honor the role of the father | Gabysol Quiroz | | Families First |
| Change standard child visitation decisions to only refer to the father | Merlin Knight | | |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

We will leverage existing town halls by government agencies to invite fathers and support content presented; We will leverage existing Million Father March in school districts and All Pro Dads to create welcoming spaces for fathers; We will utilize the culturally relevant healing circles curriculum developed by Susan Taylor and the National CARES Mentoring Movement. We will work across sectors to provide training to helping professionals.

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective? Monthly

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Increased knowledge and awareness of helping professionals; Improved perception/attitudes about fathers; Improved perceptions by fathers about agencies; Increased resources/support for fathers; Improved relationships between parents (reduced conflict)

How will we evaluate success? Surveys of helping professionals, fathers, and mothers; testimonials

INNER HEALING Supporting Inner Healing of Fathers

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Father Outreach Programs that focus on marginalized fathers (such as men who do not belong to faith-based organizations, unemployed, formerly incarcerated)</p> <p>Father roundtable events (County-Based)</p> <p>Virtual group therapy sessions with other fathers</p> <p>In person counseling: Faith-based and Non-Faith based (participant focused on processing experiences, traumas and strengths)</p> <p>Father Workshops (leader-led that focus on skill development)</p> | <p>Kephanie Henderson (Collaborate with Research Department)</p> <p>Neomia Coleman (Title I Parent Liaison Committee and Dissemination)</p> <p>Dr. Evans-Barton (Minister, Fatherless Generation Foundation)</p> <p>Lorenzo Lewis/Kentrell Porch (Confess Project)</p> <p>Brian McCrory, Sr. (Pastor)</p> <p>Lamont Jones (Fathers Incorporated)</p> <p>Lynnette Allen (Fulton County Board of Health)</p> <p>Carl Route (ROBE)</p> <p>Angelia O'Neal (MENSWEAR)</p> | <p>Thursday, June 17, 2021</p> <p>Ongoing (Monthly)</p> | <p>Community Partnerships (including faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations [Black Fraternal Organizations, Men's Organizations] city/county government)</p> <p>Marketing (Graphic/Video production)</p> |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

Connect with the counties. If there is something that exists, perhaps we learn how to refer into it and what are the requirements; Collaborating with How to Reach Fathers Group in this initiative with activities like the dinner theatre; leverage the Confess Project Barbershop Mental Health Movement and Fathers Incorporated Father Community in Atlanta.

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective?

Quarterly

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Survey Fathers Across Our District – Collaborate with committee and research to develop the survey to determine what topic areas fathers need support with; What are their pain spots with parenting, becoming a father --- their own upbringing, reconciliation with the family after incarceration, self-love, faith, etc. Number of fathers referred and reported (tracking tool) by agency resource center that complete a session; satisfaction survey

How will we evaluate success?

Adoption of the Program or Service as a staple within the District's activities on a rolling basis; Program or Service becoming a part of the parent resources services specifically for fathers.

RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE Reclaiming the Narrative about Fatherhood

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|---|--|---|--|
| Dads like Me Campaign representing fathers of various cultures and lifestyles | Latrice Rollins | Sharing on existing platforms - June 2021 | Grants or other funding sources |
| Prepare a media campaign (major networks, BET, Essence Festival) for women to vocalize the importance of making the process easy for men to be involved in their children's lives | Akilah Thomas Vonda Brown Dr. Torri Evans-Barton | Creating new videos/campaigns - September 2021 | Community partnerships/coalitions |
| Prepare a campaign hearing from children about the absence of fathers | Anthony Walker | | Storyboarding/content development, graphic, and video expert |
| Sharing father data and stories across multiple partner media (podcasts, social media, YouTube) | JL Adolph Javin Foreman | | Media support |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

We will leverage existing media platforms and campaigns, including "Fatherhood is Brotherhood."

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective?

Quarterly

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Social media analytics (number of views, likes, shares, comments)

How will we evaluate success?

Social media analytic data summaries

IMPLEMENTING FATHER-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Implementing Father-Friendly Policies Across Sectors

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|---|--|--|---|
| Review policy and conduct policy review to determine barriers to father engagement and legitimacy. | Latrice Rollins | June 2021 for advocacy day and policy review | Marketing/Outreach Materials |
| Demonstrate how the policy issues are impacting the community, revenue loss as a result of the systemic issues | Marcy Walker | December 2021 for policy adoption | Public Policy/Law Expertise |
| Develop an online advocacy/"dads in action" Capitol event (invite fathers, policymakers, court systems, women's groups, civic groups, sororities) to increase awareness | Torri Evans Barton | | |
| Provide lobbying/advocacy training | Roosevelt Muhammad | | |
| Collaborate with court system on legitimation and paternity testing | Sundjata Aya | | |
| | Calvin Williams | | |
| | Paula Myrick | | |
| | Stacey Bouchet | | |
| | Skye Washington | | |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

We will leverage existing policy work (Moynihan Institute, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute). The marketing and awareness campaigns could support the legitimation and paternity acknowledgement challenges that fathers face. Fathers participating in and on workgroups as part of other strategies could support/play a role in the recordings.

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective?

Quarterly with monthly check-ins.

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Draft policies or statements/briefs written; formal review and release of policy documents; developed campaign; adopted and implemented policies

How will we evaluate success?

Adoption of any father friendly policy by an agency, organization, or the state

ADDRESSING MASS INCARCERATION

Addressing Mass Incarceration and its Impact on Fathers

| ACTIVITIES <i>What will be done?</i> | RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Who will do it?</i> | DEADLINE(S) <i>By when? (Day/Month)</i> | RESOURCES <i>(Funding/Time/People/Materials)</i> |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Establish partnerships between government & nonprofit agencies i.e. DA, Public Defenders, Probation/Parole, DFCS Child Support, Housing, DOL *Resources going in/leaving "incarceration"</p> | <p>Thomas Cotton</p> <p>Kerrel McCrimons</p> | <p>June 2021 for partnership & policy reviews</p> | <p>Public Policy/Law Expertise</p> <p>Funding</p> |
| <p>Create legislation & emails to lawmakers to redirect GA lottery revenue for non-violent offenders; allocate funds to CBOs FF programs [MH, Job Placement, GED, Substance Abuse Treatment, Coaching]; prepare offenders for re-entry into society Counseling]</p> | <p>Paul Vaughn</p> <p>Dwayne Goodson</p> | <p>September 2021 for discussions with schools</p> <p>December 2021 for court system activities</p> | <p>Communication Materials</p> <p>Restorative Justice process</p> |
| <p>Identify students in APS who are "at risk" via teachers/counselors and connect them & families to prevention services; require schools to become more accountable for "at risk" students by creating youth intervention and mentoring programs in the school: to reduce school to prison pipeline.</p> | <p>Ethel Gibbs</p> <p>Wesley Bugg</p> <p>Rev Jeffrey Benoit</p> <p>Angelia O'Neal</p> <p>Carl Route</p> | <p>March 2022 for nonprofit organization</p> | <p>Marketing & Social Media</p> <p>Curriculum</p> <p>GA Legislative Black Caucus</p> <p>Prominent (Black) Lobbyist</p> |
| <p>Influence local/state courts to adapt "Alternative Sentencing/Jail Diversion" policies to reduce imprisonment for non-violent offenses.</p> | <p>Roosevelt Muhammad</p> | | |
| <p>Create 501© 3 organization which will not only fund bail for non-violent offenders but address critical factors which hinders success & provides rehab for these fathers/men with accountable core curriculum; Create crowdfund/ fundraising campaign to pay bail fines.</p> | | | |

How will we weave these activities across sectors? Are there initiative or other efforts we could partner with?

We will leverage Moynihan Institute policy work, and work with the Implementing Father Friendly Policies and Reclaiming the Narrative strategy workgroups. We can also work with existing reentry collaborative in our counties.

How often will progress be reviewed for this objective?

Quarterly

What will we consider as evidence of success?

Adopted and implemented systems and policies, numbers of fathers who do not recidivate, numbers of fathers and students who are connected to services and complete programs.

How will we evaluate success?

Surveys, interviews, policy documents

RECOMMENDATIONS

The momentum of this initiative must continue. Therefore, each action plan will have its own multi-sector implementation committee to carry out and evaluate the progress of each proposed activity with the support of the Strong Fathers, Strong Families Georgia Coalition. It is recommended that leaders from the media and philanthropy communities be invited again to participate in these efforts. Leaders will be provided with communication materials to ensure that common messages and language are being used across sectors and leaders to invite others to this very important work. Assets or resources identified in this process will be vetted for father-friendliness prior to sharing with fathers in our community.

In March 2022, a leadership summit or event will be held to share the progress of this initiative and begin the process again to develop new or revised action strategies to promote or support father involvement in metro Atlanta.

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