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Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



NRFC Webinar Series

Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration

Transcript

January 25, 2017

Moderator:

- Eugene Schneeberg, Senior Technical Specialist, Fathers & Families at ICF International

Presenters:

- Ann Adalist-Estrin, Director, National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated
- Mary Weaver, Executive Director, Dads Back! Academy, Friends Outside in Los Angeles County
- Tina Naidoo, Executive Director, Texas Offender Reentry Initiative; Operator.

Operator: Good day, and welcome to the Office of Family Assistance NRFC webinar conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I would now like to turn the conference to Mr. Eugene Schneeberg. Please go ahead, sir.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, operator. To everyone on today's call, welcome to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse webinar, "Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration." We provide these webinars and other resources as part of a learning community that you can contribute to and learn from. As always, we welcome [and] encourage your input and participation.

First of all, a few notes and reminders: This webinar is being recorded. The recording, a transcript and all the presentation materials will be posted on the NRFC website in the next few weeks, and you'll be able to access it there. So please check back to review as you can also find recordings and all materials from previous webinars at fatherhood.gov/webinars.

Now today, we'll have a Q&A session at the end of the webinar. If you want to ask presenters a specific question, please use the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen. We'll answer as many questions as time permits. If there are any questions that we don't have time to answer, we'll post written responses on the website, along with other materials.

Now you'll also see a Chat box on the left-hand side of your screen. You can use that to chat amongst yourselves or let us know if you're having any problems hearing the presenters. We encourage you to use that Chat box, but please only use the Q&A box for questions you'd like to address towards the presenters themselves.

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Now, we have a number of downloadable resources, including the presenter bios and a resource list that we've developed specifically for this topic, and we may update the resource list with other suggestions after the webinar. Please again, please check back to review those resources, once we post all the final materials at the fatherhood.gov website. Please note that we'll be adding a new section to our toolkit called "Working with Incarcerated Fathers" very soon. Once that's finalized, we'll notify our Listserv folks to let them know.

Lastly, we also have a Web Links box at the bottom of your screen, which provides useful links to relevant websites, including the presenters' websites, their organizations, as well as some other very useful resources.

To get us started, I want to invite Lisa Washington-Thomas from the Federal Office of Family Assistance to provide a few words of welcome and set the stage for our conversation today. Lisa?

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Thank you, Eugene. I want to welcome and thank everyone for joining today's webinar, "Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration." I'm very happy that you are using the Chat box. I always am very happy to see where our participants are. We have people from Maine to Florida and out west as well. Welcome, everyone.

I'm impressed by the number of people who registered for the webinar and who have actually signed on this afternoon. Your participation and interest shows the importance of supportive services for families impacted by incarceration. We believe that fatherhood programs, in partnership with other community area services, can play an important role in supporting incarcerated fathers and their families, particularly as these fathers return to their communities.

Today's presenters will share examples of programs that are engaged in this work, and provide tips on key strategies and resources. They will also share some key statistics that underline the importance of your work.

I hope you find the webinar informative and helpful. We'll be asking two poll questions during the webinar to get an idea of what you do in your programs. This helps our presenters frame their comments to fit your experiences.

We also hope that you stay until the end of the webinar and give us your feedback on today's conversation. We will use that information to plan future webinars. Please continue to send any ideas or questions about webinars or products that will be helpful to the field to info@fatherhood.gov. Again, we're anxious to hear your thoughts and your feedback on this webinar, potential topics or other products that will be beneficial to the field. We want you to send that to I-N-F-O at fatherhood.gov, info@fatherhood.gov.

We're particularly, again, interested in your feedback and the information we are providing and any topics that you would like for us to cover. Thank you. We use that information to make our programming better, so thank you very much and I turn this back over to Eugene.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Lisa. Many of you have been on previous NRFC webinars, but for those of you who this might be your first time, the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse is a Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance-funded national resource to support fathers and families. Our resources are available for dads, fatherhood programs and researchers and policy makers. You can access this information at www.fatherhood.gov. I also want to highlight that we've made available to you all a wonderful resource, which is the Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit, which can be accessed online at fatherhood.gov/toolkit. It's a great resource for those who are looking to start fatherhood programs, or "who's who" have existing fatherhood programs who are looking to enhance their work. As mentioned earlier, we'll be adding a new section to the toolkit on working with incarcerated fathers in the very near future.

Additionally, we've hosted quite a number of webinars in the past, and you can access all of those archived webinars at fatherhood.gov/webinars.

As always, if you'd like to reach out to us, please shoot us an email at info@fatherhood.gov. We also encourage you to use our 1-877-4DAD411, to the national call center where folks can call if they have questions related to parenting, custody, visitation, child support, any number of things. It's a great resource that's available to fathers, as well as practitioners. Please, follow us, tweet us, things like that, on Facebook at [Fatherhoodgov](https://www.facebook.com/Fatherhoodgov) and Twitter at [@fatherhood.gov](https://twitter.com/fatherhood.gov).

Our goals for today. We'll share information about the impact of incarceration on children and families. We'll also discuss strategies to help incarcerated fathers focus on parenting relationships and employment skills prior to reentering the community. We'll talk about ways to respond to the needs of the children of incarcerated fathers. We'll also talk about what programs are doing to help fathers as they return to the community. And last, we'll talk about resources where you can get more information, as I mentioned earlier, about the soon-to-be released section of the NRFC Responsible Father Toolkit.

Now, I want to take a moment of personal privilege just to say that the expert presenters we have on today I had the privilege of working with, over the number of years when I served as the director of the U.S. Department of Justice's [Center for] Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnership. I had the wonderful privilege of celebrating with each of these wonderful presenters as they were each recognized for their contributions to the field by the White House: Mary in 2012, Ann in 2013, and then Tina last year, in 2016. I also co-chaired the Children of Incarcerated Parents Federal Interagency working group.

I can say that each of these presenters were extraordinarily helpful to that working group. We sought their advice and guidance regularly, and so I'm so thrilled that we have all three of them on today's call. We searched far and wide for the best of the best, and we have them with us today. You all are in for a real treat. I know I'm going to take out my pen and paper and encourage you to do the same as I get ready to receive insight from these extraordinary presenters about both tested and proven approaches, and new and innovative strategies to support fathers and families impacted by incarceration. The individuals you're hearing from today are addressing this issue, not only talking about it, but their programs are having significant impacts throughout the country. I want to thank all of you who are on the line, who are doing the same in your areas.

Today, we have Ann Adalist-Estrin. She heads up the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated in Camden, New Jersey. We also have Tina Naidoo, who's the Executive Director of the Texas Offender Reentry Initiative in Dallas, Texas. And then, we have Mary Weaver, who heads up the Dads Back! Academy from the Friends Outside in Los Angeles, California. I'll say more about their bios as we progress forward.

I believe we're going to go to our first poll question. If you all wouldn't mind taking just a moment to answer this poll question, it would really help us get a sense for who's on today. It reads, "Which of the following best describes your experience working with fathers impacted by incarceration?" The possible answers are, "I work mainly with fathers and have done so for more than five years," or "I've done so for two to five years, or less than 2 years," or "I work mainly with other family members." We'll just take another minute to see how the poll responses come in.

[Pause]

Okay, it looks like most of the folks on the poll are working with other family members. Great! Well, this is a great opportunity to highlight and add to folks' knowledge working with fathers. Eighty percent [*sic*] of you said that. Great!

Well now, I have the privilege of introducing our first presenter. Ann Adalist-Estrin is — I count her a friend. I've known Ann probably five or six years now. I can say that she is one of our nation's foremost experts around working with children and families of the incarcerated. I've had the privilege of traveling with Ann, hearing her present, and now, you all get the benefit of hearing from Ann. Ann, thank you so much for participating, and I'm going to turn it over to you.

Ann Adalist-Estrin: Thank you, Eugene, my friend. I am so happy to be here on this call. It is the main role of the National Resource Center to train and inspire people out there who are working in the field. I'm extra happy to be included with my colleagues Mary Weaver and Tina Naidoo, and also to be focusing on fathers, incarcerated and returning fathers, because I don't get a lot of opportunity to really zero in on the fathers. I am very thrilled to be here. Thank you.

I want to start with the numbers, because it's what everybody always asks in the beginning. It's so confusing right now, because when you see the numbers of, on any given day, this is a *guesstimate* of how many children have an incarcerated parent. When you see 2.7 million, that's one in 28 children. It does include jails. It is a formula that's used based on a random sampling combined with a formula. If you ever see 1.7, it means they didn't include jails, and now we're starting to see 5-to-10 million children or we just say five or we say 10, or more than 10. That figure includes having an incarcerated parent at any point in your life.

On any given day, children in the U.S. that have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their life, not at that moment, and that's one in 14. You'll begin to start seeing a new statistic that's not on here, which is 37 million, because some of my colleagues are now adding together the number of children who experience parental incarceration from the beginning of what we call "mass incarceration" until now. It's an aggregate number. So just remember that sometimes the numbers don't include all forms of correctional supervision and sometimes they do include probation and parole. Often, they don't include non-resident care, but sometimes they do. It is confusing.

These two new reports, "A Shared Sentence" by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which is based by the way on the Child Trends report from 2015, "Parents Behind Bars," both of those have pretty good statistics in them that you can use, but keep in mind they are both based on the same data, and it's the study of children's health from 2013. Just a little note, that study was a random sampling telephone survey, where they called homes and said, "Can I speak to the responsible adult?" and then, asked the question, "Is parental incarceration an issue for anybody in your family?" The point is, our numbers are important, but they're flawed. It's likely that we're dealing with many, many, many more children of incarcerated parents.

Another question that we always get, of course, is "What's the impact?" And one of things that I really want you to take away today as a guiding principle is that this is not one monolithic group of kids or families or fathers. And we have to honor the themes, and the variations, as we look at impact, because there's [*sic*] similarities in some of the children and families and fathers, but there are far more variations than there are similarities, and that's really a significant point for me.

Some of the things we do know about caregivers is that most children of incarcerated fathers, particularly, live with their mothers. Most children of incarcerated mothers live with their grandparents. But for this population of fathers we're talking about today, most of them are living with their mothers, and the significance for reentry is that we don't have a lot of good research on the caregivers — very, very little. Turanovic and Rodriguez's study is one of the only ones that we have that really look at all the levels of stress — emotional, interpersonal, relationships changing, increased difficulty in monitoring kids — that the caregivers are living with. Just imagine that when dads come out of prison or jail, whether they're going home to that caregiver or in many cases not, they're going to be faced with a buildup of all of that stress for the caregiver. So caregivers can either be supports in the reentry process for fathers, or they can be gatekeepers as they resolve their own resentments, and that's significant.

Another piece of the data that I think we need to attend to is that over 50 percent of the kids who have an incarcerated parent are nine or younger. In a recent publication, we're seeing that it's a multi-site family setting on incarceration from HHS from 2016, that the younger the child, the more significantly connected the father-child relationship is. The fact that so many of these kids are young, infants, toddlers [, and] preschoolers is very important, and yet it's lost in a lot of the training and focus, so that I wanted to point out.

What else about the kids and their families? They are living with this unique stress of parental incarceration while parents are gone. It's the trauma of separation for most kids, even when they didn't live with the parent, combined with an ambiguous or unclear loss with grief that doesn't have like a casserole brought to the home like a death does; toxic levels of stress, which Harvard University child development researchers are telling us is more and more responsible for child well-being interferences; the economic hardships that are really being studied well and hard; the absence of the relevance of support; and then stigma and shame and conspiracy of silence, being told not to talk or who to talk to. And then, the loyalty conflict, like how do I talk about this parent to my friends, to my caregivers, to my teachers, to my coaches, when everybody around me seems to think I'm not supposed to remain loyal or loving to this person.

Kids have reported, consistently, these issues over and over and over again. We recently were involved with several federal agencies in bringing 14 young people from 19 states — no, 19 young people from 14 states — to Washington for a listening session, and over and over again, these children of incarcerated parents talked about these unique stressors.

We also need to remember that incarceration is the sort of part of a cumulative process of stress. It begins with arrest, and we need to understand more about the impact of witnessing an arrest for these kids as they go into the process. What about the pre-trial? Was dad out, or was he locked up the whole time? Were people supportive? Did people have to refinance their house or get their car sold, their only form of transportation, to pay for lawyers? What was going on during the pre-trial? Was the sentencing expected? Was there a plea bargain? Was there hope that was then turned in helplessness?

Then, incarceration seems to have two parts. [In] the beginning kids really struggle with abandonment and the stigma and the worry. Then they often come to a place where they're either very resentful, they allow that out. Then, there's some balance. And then, there's this idealization for a lot of kids where dad, poor dad, is up on a pedestal for some of these kids and couldn't possibly live up to that when he gets out.

The pre-release is full of anticipation in a good way, but fear and anxiety about, will he know me? Will I know him? Also, let me add in here for families, because so many of the incarcerated returning fathers have multiple families. So, which family is he going to go home to? The research tells us it's often the family with the youngest children, so the older kids really worry about that.

And then the post-release, all families in every focus group I've ever done say it's the hardest of all, because with all the celebration, even in the good times, there's chaos and change and ambivalence. I'll talk about that a little bit more in a minute.

It's no wonder that parental or familial incarceration is now one of the adverse childhood experiences that is listed as one of the things that creates toxic levels of stress for kids that, then creates an impact on brain development, because it effects the prefrontal cortex, because of flooding of cortisol that happens in trauma. And now, we know it happens in toxic stress as well. That means without a specific traumatic incident, but over time toxic levels of stress. This brain development change impacts all the behaviors. It changes the way that kids have impulse control, cause-and-effect thinking, predictability and emotional regulation, which of course — many of you, I see that lots of you are working with children in school settings — that it interferes with school confidence and school success, and ends up getting kids in trouble.

But I really want to spend the last few minutes I have talking about what we don't typically do, which is talk about protective factors, resilience and the good stuff. Our former Surgeon General, David Satcher, said, "Risk factors are not predictive factors, because of protective factors." We need to pay attention to what those are.

On anybody's list, in any other arena, when you're not talking about criminal justice, the top of this protective factor list is parents and primary attachment figures. In every single other discussion about protecting kids and resilience, let's support and bolster parents and primary attachments. That helps kids develop other adult bonds, develop skills and

confidence, leading to emotional competence, and it also allows for faith, hope, and the ability to find meaning. But we don't really do that with the families involved in the criminal justice system. We actually don't necessarily include the parents as protective factors.

So I want to say that this is where I want to spend our last few minutes. We can do that. We can support, promote reentry success by supporting incarcerated parents while they're still incarcerated as protective factors. Joyce Arditti and also Lynne Haney, in a forthcoming book about fathers, talks [*sic*] about parental identity, that when fathers can stay feeling like a father while they're incarcerated, they have better reentry success and better outcomes for kids.

How do we do that? When we can include them in school and child welfare case planning by phone. When visiting contexts [*sic*] inside of prisons and jails support parent-child relationships. And when visits support before-and-after visits. I had the pleasure this last year of visiting the Family Connections program in New Hampshire where they have the opportunity for these things for fathers, and it's awesome to watch how it helps fathers keep their sense of identity as parents.

Holly Foster talks about family embeddedness as being a predictor for reentry success, meaning the sense of being connected to the rest of the family, which means the caregiver in many instances. Programs like the Osborne Association in New York, and I'm sure also Dads Back! And Tina's program, that can include the caregiver in the process. For most families, embeddedness increases parental identity and helps create protective factors for the incarcerated parent.

In the '90s I wrote an article called "Homecoming," and its children's reactions to the reentry process for parents. I rewrote it again in the 2000s doing research to update it. Didn't need it. It was exactly identical when I talked with families. Right now, as many of you are on the line may know this, but my son-in-law was incarcerated this last year and came home in December, so after many years of being a professional talking about this, I'm living this reentry process in my home with my two grandchildren, who are six and seven.

There's a honeymoon process, and then, that turns into suspicion. Where are you going? Why are you doing that? That leads to resistance where kids are testing "How bad can I be, and will you still love me?" which can lead to an expression of feelings and some resolutions, but it can also lead to withholding feelings as kids worry that they're going to upset their parents.

Here's some formerly incarcerated fathers' advice to all of you:

- "I wasn't prepared for my son's anger, and I wonder why it didn't come out 'til I got a job."

Some kids are not going to show their feelings until they know everybody else is fine in the house.

- "My wife stuck by me, but she was set in her ways of parenting that she took on when I was gone, and didn't realize she was leaving me out or challenging my decisions."
- "No one understood how hard it was for me coming home, because I thought I hadn't changed at all, and was really hit hard by the fact that I had."
- "I had to deal with how different my kids were while I was jumping through the hoops of parole struggling with my own adjustment and trying to mend relationships I had destroyed, and it was overwhelming, but I was also under a microscope feeling like anything I did could land me back in jail."

These are real fathers talking about real issues that hopefully we can begin to include in parenting curriculum and including caregivers in that process, so that they understand that these are the realities for fathers coming home.

So their advice?

- Remember these stages of adjustment. They will help you;
- Learn about your kid's feelings and talk to them, talk to them and talk to them. It's so much easier to bury the feelings, but it's so much better to talk to them;
- All the fathers say that the kids who knew the truth and were able to talk about it openly did better, because then you didn't have to deal with the aftermath of the lies and trying to dance around what you told your kids;
- Be prepared to have to adapt your expectations as a parent;
- Communicate with the other adults in your child's life;
- Learn to express concerns and hear constructive criticism. That, the dads say is the hardest, because they don't really want to be criticized; [and]
- Finally, be patient with yourself and your family.

These are the most common pearls of wisdom that incarcerated fathers want to share.

A word to program providers. Some of you will be serving children of incarcerated parents purposefully, so including reentry, and that is an absolute essential. Some of you are serving at risk youth and only serving children of incarcerated parents. Incidentally, some of you are just serving all kids and the kids of incarcerated parents are sort of unknown. Many of you will serving either the caregivers or the incarcerated parent and the children are peripheral. Some of you will not be serving, but would like to. Depending on what your service variations are, take in what you hear today from myself, from Tina and from Mary, and try to incorporate it either purposefully or as an incidental part of your program, but including all the members of the family; all the stakeholders in the work that you do is pretty important.

We have an overarching ARCH at the Resource Center when we talk about training, which is the vast majority of what we do: Attitude, Relevance, Complexity and Healing.

- The Attitude means be self-reflective and make sure that some self-reflective exercises are part of all of your staff development;
- Relevance: nothing about us without us. Nothing can be relevant unless those formerly incarcerated fathers are involved in designing the program, defining the problem first of all, and designing the solutions;
- Strive for comprehensive, collaborative initiatives, because this is not a simple one size fits all issue. Honor the Complexity; and finally
- We're learning more and more about trauma, so to be trauma-informed and trauma-responsive in all the work that you do. I know I did some trauma training for Mary out in California that was so awesome for her staff.

That's the ARCH that we use.

Thank you. This is how to reach me and a little bit about the Resource Center, and I will turn it back to Eugene. [Contact: ann.adaligestrin@rutgers.edu, <http://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu>]

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you so much, Ann. I really appreciate you giving us so much to think about. I want to encourage folks to, if they have a question, use the Ask a Question box on the bottom right side of your screen. We are collecting those, and we will pose them to the presenters at the conclusion of our last presentation. I also want to flag the Downloadable Resources box, which is in the middle of your screen, where you can go there and read and download all of our presenters' full bios.

All right, here's our next poll question. It should be popping up on your screen. "Which of the following best describes your experience working with families impacted by incarceration? Do you work mainly with children and have done so for more than five years? Have you worked mainly with children for two to five years? Have you worked mainly with children for less than two years?" Or "Are you working mainly with other family members?" If you can just take a moment to answer that question, that'll be great and be helpful for our presenters to get a sense, again, for you all's experience working with children.

[Pause]

The responses are coming in. It looks like 75, 77 percent of you said, "I work mainly with other family members." Okay. Good to know. Helpful. Great. Thank you all for taking the time to do that.

Now, our next presenter is Mary Weaver. As I said before, Mary's the Executive Director of Friends Outside in Los Angeles County. Mary was initially exposed to the criminal justice system while performing community service for Friends Outside. She joined the organization on a part-time basis and later became Executive Director in 1990.

In addition to her duties for Friends Outside, Mary is also experienced as the Co-Chair for the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP) and working on their employment subcommittee. She also served on the steering committee for the Pasadena Reentry Council. I met Mary several years ago. I had an opportunity to participate in an event in which Mary was recognized as a Fatherhood Hero by the White House Office of Public Engagement. You all are, again, in for a real treat as Mary shares about the important work that she does and the lessons learned, so Mary, the floor is yours. Thank you.

Mary Weaver: Thank you, Eugene. Good morning, everybody. It is an absolute honor to be here and a thrill to see the interest in this work.

I want to start off by giving you just a little background about Friends Outside in Los Angeles County. We also call ourselves FOLA. And then, I'll go into our reentry fatherhood programs, which we've been conducting since 2008.

Friends Outside in Los Angeles County is a non-profit. We have been around since 1972. The intention of the organization when it began was to address issues that came up for children and families when somebody was incarcerated. In 1978, we started to realize that we also needed to be working with the actual inmate and the reentry population in order to work with the family as a whole unit. So, we have been working inside Los Angeles County jails since 1978. To my knowledge, we also run the longest running reentry employment program in the county.

Our formal reentry fatherhood programs began, as I said, in 2008 through a couple of different grants. More recently, we've been very honored to have two contracts with the Office of Family Assistance or OFA. In 2011, with those funds, we started a program called Dads Back!

A couple of things about that program: one is that we define reentry very broadly. We tend to look at having a criminal record as being a lifelong issue to deal with, for a number of reasons. Anything we can do to break down any barriers to participation, we do try to do. And by that, what I mean is that it doesn't matter if somebody got out 20 years ago, maybe never was incarcerated but has a criminal record, on parole, on probation, got out yesterday; it doesn't matter to us. In our experience, most of the fathers are non-custodial. In the Dads Back! program, there are three required components, which are parenting, employment and healthy relationships. We did provide the components on an elective basis for the fathers, meaning that they could take all or just one of them. They could take them in the order in which they chose.

The successes that we had with the program — we did have a great job placement rate. I think it was four times what we were contracted to do. We also were able to help reduce or freeze child support payments. This was for the inmates.

Just to talk a little bit about what that means, at least here in Los Angeles County, when somebody is arrested and they have to make child support payments, there is a process to help them appeal to the governing agency for child support payments to freeze the payments, because the inmates are either not earning any money or they're earning very little money. However, the process is not user-friendly, shall I say. So what we did was we had a case manager going down to the jail to work with the fathers providing our workshop on parenting, but also working with the fathers while they were incarcerated to complete the paperwork and to get it to the Department of Child Support Services, so that they could get

those payments stabilized until they were able to get out, so that when they got out, they weren't facing payments that had increased greatly while they were incarcerated. We thought that was an important service.

Another thing we were able to accomplish through the program was increased contact between the fathers and their children, both at the jails. We assisted with visitation, and also when they were released.

A couple of lessons learned through Dads Back! — One was that was that the fathers were coming in with employment as their primary need. We were tending to lose them once they finished the employment component of Dads Back! Although we wanted to help them with this, we were especially interested in also providing the fatherhood services. That was something that we had to look at.

We also recognized that our marketing was not very good. We were so familiar with the job placement and the job readiness arena for reentry that our marketing was geared to that, and our language when we went out to present was geared to that. We also recognized that we needed to rethink how we were presenting the program, so that the primary interest in the fathers was not employment.

In 2016, we were very fortunate to receive a second grant from OFA, and we call that program the Dads Back! Academy. What the Academy is, in a short sentence, is a cohort-based, intensive, immersion experience with supportive services and stipends. To break that down just a little bit, the cohort-based component of it means that all the dads come in one group. They work together for one month, very closely for the whole day, during which time, of course, they are forming bonds.

We also recognize that part of the reason the dads were coming in for employment was because many of them had just gotten out of prison or jail, and they did not have money, and they did not have any way by which to earn money. So we took a hard look at that and realized that when you ask somebody to come and participate in a program, and they can't even buy food, they may not have housing, they might have [a] tooth that needs to be fixed — We decided that we would also include a lot of supportive services — case management. If we could not provide the service, our case managers would help them get where they needed to go in order to deal with some of these very basic needs.

We also decided to treat the Academy as a quasi-work experience, meaning that when they complete two weeks, they are given a small stipend check. When they complete the Academy itself, they receive another check. Obviously, this helps to deal with the fact that they do not have many, many times when they come to us. The Academy is located in South Los Angeles, which has traditionally been a high-need, high-crime area, although with many, many positive things about it.

Today, what I'm going to be sharing with you is an overview of some of the data that we are showing from our federal data reporting system for the Academy, as well as our local evaluation, some of the data we're being to bring in. This is a six-month-old program at this time point in time.

[pause]

The intake statistics right now, as of the end of December: We have 64 dads enrolled to date. Our annual goal is to serve 170. At intake, more than half of the dads showed that they were struggling to afford the cost of basic household necessities. Twelve percent were never able to afford them. Forty-two percent indicated that they could sometimes afford them. This certainly backs up our initial planning when we were doing the Academy that this was something we needed to accommodate. Two-thirds of the fathers stated that they were unable to do anything with their family each week, with 36 percent of them saying they rarely could do anything together with their family, 32 percent saying they never were able to do anything with their family. I think this speaks to the challenge of the fathers maintaining relationships while they are incarcerated. They are often damaged during that time.

The main reasons that the fathers are able to get to us is as a result of our staff outreach events and word of mouth. The most common reason for enrolling was to learn about becoming a better parent, which we thought was very important. And we realized we had done a pretty good job of moving from them coming to us only for employment, to becoming a better parent.

The Academy, as I mentioned, is one month. It goes Monday to Friday, 9 to 4. Components include case management; family engagement nights, such as Reading with Dad and Cooking with Dad; life skills, including a computer lab, personal finance and budgeting classes. We have three curricula: TYRO Dad, Within My Reach, and P2P [Parole to Payroll], which is our own employment curriculum. We also have alumni support groups to keep the fathers engaged after they graduate from the Academy and an alumni council. We always have the voice of the fathers in the planning.

The curricula we just mentioned are listed a little bit here with a little information. TYRO Dad is the parenting curricula. Healthy relationships (Within My Reach) is the curriculum we use. And we use our own curriculum [P2P] for job readiness, which we find is very, very important for the fathers. Many of them are not job-ready at all when they come out of jail or prison. They need a lot of assistance during that period to get a job.

A couple of just pieces of information that we've heard from the fathers, and I think these are some of the more important quotes when it comes to the parenting component: "I used to be known as a number, but now I'm a man. A man who gives respect, who loves and cares. A man who's grateful. A man of morals." [Second quote skipped] The third one there, I thought, really stood out to me: "You're responsible to discipline your child, but without hitting them, and to communicate with them." From our healthy relationships, one of the fathers said, "We come from lonely places where there's no physical contact or friendship, and we got together and broke that." Another father said, "Today was a wonderful day. It started off with laughter, handshakes and smiles. We are all a part of the crowd." I think this speaks to the power of the cohort approach to the program. For our P2P employment, one of the highly-valued components was, "I learned what to say about criminal record on my resume and during a job interview."

Some of the things appreciated by the fathers were the mock interviews for them to go out and seek employment; learning how to do a budget; and our staff comments on how they see the communication skills developing with their family, such as through the family engagement nights.

And just a couple of parting thoughts. How important it is to be non-judgmental and real with the clients — For the most part, these are people who have survived, and they're very, very good at reading people. I hear people sometimes talk about being afraid of them, and that always shocks me, because we have in 40 years, we have had very few problems. They're coming to us voluntarily and very, very appreciative of the services they are getting.

Celebrate their accomplishments. Many times a certificate they get may be the first something that they have earned since grade school or since middle school. Celebrate them a lot.

Provide incentives when you can. We all respond to incentives. Just like us, if you can offer them a gift card when they show you something that they've reached a milestone, try to budget for that. We do think the cohort approach works well.

And my final thought is, hire them. In my experience, persons with criminal records are some of my best employees. Forty-five percent of our staff have criminal records, and when you bring them in, I think you can see what a great difference it will make in trying to work with the very population from which they come.

Thank you so much.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Mary. Thank you so much for sharing your insights with us. As a reminder, you can type your questions for Mary, Ann, or Tina in the Ask a Question box in the bottom right side of your screen.

Now, we're going to turn to our third and last poll question. If we can pop it on the screen. Okay. It says, "I think the biggest challenge faced by fathers returning from incarceration is: finding a job with decent wages; establishing a good co-parenting relationship with their children's mother; gaining the trust of their children; locating adequate housing; managing child support obligations; understanding their voting and general citizenship rights; or not sure." Just take a minute to fill that out. I appreciate it.

[Pause]

The numbers are coming in. It looks like the majority of you are saying that you think the biggest challenge faced by fathers returning from incarceration is finding a job with decent wages. Nearly two-thirds of you indicate that. Thank you very much.

All right. Well, now to our last presenter. Tina Naidoo is Executive Director of the Texas Offender Reentry Initiative, also known as T.O.R.I. Tina is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and serves as an E.D. at T.O.R.I., a prisoner reentry program of the Potter's House Church in Dallas, Texas, led by Bishop T.D. Jakes. T.O.R.I. has reduced the rate of recidivism by serving over 10,000 returning citizens and their families over the past 11 years.

I've had the great privilege of knowing Tina for some time, and know that not only does she care deeply about people she serves, but she's also very gracious in sharing the lessons that they've learned at T.O.R.I. wherever she goes throughout the country. So Tina, thank you so much. The time is yours.

Tina Naidoo: Thank you, Eugene. Thank you, I appreciate it. I just want to get started, and I want to say good afternoon to everyone, and thank you for being a part of this webinar. It says a lot just even looking at the polls that you're interested in this, and I hope that we can bring some insight from the work that we're doing in reentry.

Just to give you a little background about T.O.R.I. T.O.R.I. is our acronym for the Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative. It did come out of a church here in Dallas, Texas, headed and founded by Bishop T.D. Jakes. Since that time that the church was founded back in 1996, we did a lot of work with prison ministry, and we were doing a lot of work behind prison walls. In about 2004, we were approached by our city [and] our county leaders to really do something about reentry because, for a lot of reasons, our messages were going behind the walls, but when people were returning home, they really didn't have the assistance they needed to help with successful reentry.

So Bishop Jakes convened a meeting in our congregation, and asked anyone in our congregation who was in the criminal justice field — judges, lawyers, social workers, counselors, business individuals, just anyone that could really — educators that could really contribute to a strategy on how we could help ex-offenders returning home to reintegrate into the community. That's how the T.O.R.I. program got started.

Our mission is to guide and empower ex-offenders to maximize their potential, increase their opportunity for successful reintegration, and basically to become productive citizens of their communities by lowering recidivism. Over the past 10 years, and Eugene just said this, we've had the ability and the opportunity to serve over 10,000 here in Texas.

One of the first things that we noticed right off the bat was just some of the basic human needs that needed to be met. We kind of gathered that from the hierarchy of needs, but looking at just basic things like housing, food, family, mental health, healthcare, spiritual needs — these are all the common thread that we found among those we were serving that were coming home. And so that is how we built our model from the very beginning, was to start looking at these areas from a very basic human level.

Here in a second, I just wanted to show you a quick video that Bishop Jakes was in attendance for one of our Father's Day breakfasts. We do a couple events throughout the year to engage the family. This one in particular on Father's Day, we typically do a Father's Day event or a breakfast, and Bishop Jakes was speaking at it.

One of the things he really spoke to was the importance of a father's voice in the children's lives. One of the statistics here in Texas is that 70 percent of children with an incarcerated parent are likely to be imprisoned themselves. So even though T.O.R.I. went in with the approach to just help the adult offender, we realized that they were also bringing their family in for class. They were bringing their family in as they were getting help, and so we saw this need to also impact the children of those that were formerly incarcerated.

If you'll give us just a second, I think the video is loading, and they're going to play a quick clip of Bishop Jakes addressing the men at the Father's Day breakfast.

[Pause]

[Video begins]

Bishop T.D. Jakes: See little kids think Daddy's important. The way the house is set up, that is important. So anything Daddy gives attention to is important. If Daddy doesn't give attention to me, then I must not be important.

[presentation moves on]

Eugene Schneeberg: Okay. Tina, I think you can continue.

Tina Naidoo: Yes, we can go to the next slide. All right.

Okay, so some of the numbers is — the speakers on this call have showcased these numbers, and we know that these can also have a margin of error, but one of the things we realized is the impact of the father absence in the home does affect juvenile detention rates. It does impact suicide. It does impact behavioral disorders and educational attainment. A lot of our programming is around trying to fill in those gaps, and so as we continue, I'll show you some of the things that we've done, as far as family strengthening programs.

When we saw that gap, we said, okay, we've got to do something to figure out how to help support the father, but also support the children. Some of the research has shown that when you create these family strengthening programs, you see a decrease in drug use. You see fewer physical and emotional problems, a decrease in recidivism among fathers. And some of the type of programming that they alluded to in this was diversion programs that help fathers pay for child support, which is huge; faith-based programming that connect the fathers once they're released; support groups; mentoring programs; then of course, services that address the more basic human needs, such as the housing, food and employment. So it's just a huge gamut of wraparound services that we use in this family strengthening piece.

Of course, a crossover between these efforts is needed to best support the couples and the families after they are released from prison. I think a lot of times when you're in prison or when you're institutionalized, it's a very controlled environment. When you come out with as much zeal to change your life and to attain the highest goals, all of the elements hit you. And when those elements hit you, it's really important that all these other pieces that we built in pre-release have that crossover fit whenever they're in post-release, and that they're able to still access those services. That's one of the things we've really noticed as an essential key to success.

One of the other tools that we have started using is a faith-based tool. It's called the KLLP, and it stands for the Kendall Life Languages Profile. This is basically a communication instrument. It helps the individual to reveal their communication style, their character, their passion, and their effectiveness. We started to really work with the individuals when it came to family reunification. This tool helped us to counsel with families, because it really helps the individual to understand how they are naturally built to communicate, but also that they can communicate differently, and they have the ability to do it — they just have to learn it.

One of the things this tool helps us with is marriage relationships, husband and wife, parents that are parenting, parent-child relationships, and employer-employee relationships. This has really helped our clients to give them some grace for themselves. A lot of things that are criticized, that are judged because of the way they communicate or the way they interact, they're able to understand that this is something that also they're naturally built to do, or that it was based on the environment. These were things that they learned. We do a lot of workshops around this particular tool, and we also let each of the clients take this assessment as a life-long tool for them to use to improve their communication.

Just a few things that we've done, as far as events to strengthen the family as a whole, and we call them family reunification events — We offer parenting classes onsite, but we also do a Father's Day breakfast. We do a Mother's Day tea [and] community block parties. We do a Thanksgiving potluck where we bring the families together. We participate in Angel Tree, where our clients are actually the ones that buy the gifts for children that have family members that are incarcerated, so it's also a learning tool for us, for our clients and their children to also be able to participate in something that they're giving and being a part of, because they can relate to it. Of course, mentorship is another one that we offer to strengthen the family.

In this next video, and I'm hoping y'all get to watch this, this is a local news station here in Dallas that followed one of our clients from the beginning of entering our program toward the end, and his impact on his child and his child's impact on him. If you can turn your attention to this video, hopefully, we can hear it.

[Video begins]

News anchor Cory Smith: A mega church in Dallas held more than just your normal Sunday services today. The Potter's House was filled with graduates and families from the Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative, otherwise known as the T.O.R.I. program. It's a year-long program at the church that teaches former inmates critical life skills so they won't become repeat offenders.

[On screen: T.O.R.I. graduation ceremony]

Horace Tubbs: I already had a lot of confidence, but they reassured that they gave me the opportunity to get me some glasses [and] help me get a job.

Cory Smith: One-hundred-twenty men and women graduated in the T.O.R.I. program today.

News anchor Amanda Guerra: Well, Cory, one of those men who graduated is 26 year-old Alex Bailey. He ended up in prison after — of course — committing a crime, but as NBC 5's Chris Gutierrez explains, having a daughter changed his life.

[On screen: Alex Bailey, daughter and niece at the park and at home]

Alex Bailey: Hold on.

Chris Gutierrez: On a Saturday afternoon, nothing brings 6-year-old Harmony happiness like a trip to the park —

Alex Bailey: Can't keep up with her.

Chris Gutierrez: — with her cousin —

Alex Bailey: Perfect day.

Chris Gutierrez: — and her dad.

Alex Bailey: [to kids] You ready?

Harmony and niece: Yeah! Yeah!

Chris Gutierrez: Alex Bailey doesn't take moments like this for granted.

Alex Bailey: I was locked up for six-and-a-half years for aggravated robbery.

Chris Gutierrez: While in prison, Alex became a father.

Alex Bailey: It's taught me to be more considerate, more gentle [*sic*], and it is kinda illustrated unto me through her how precious life is.

[On screen: T.O.R.I. class sessions, graduation, Tina Naidoo]

Male #2: All right class, welcome.

Chris Gutierrez: At the urging of his grandmother, Alex signed up for the Texas Offender Reentry Initiative, or T.O.R.I. It was started by Bishop T.D. Jakes of the Potter's House. Tina Naidoo is Executive Director.

Tina Naidoo: People coming home from prison, they're a very forgotten people. And for some reason, our expectation is that in two weeks they should find a job, and in 30 days they should have a place to live.

Female #1: Lord, help us to stretch our hands out to our daughters and our sons and our granddaughters —

Chris Gutierrez: It's a voluntary program, not court mandated, and there are classes like this one for parenting.

Tina Naidoo: We get to pray with them. We get to continue to give them the message of hope, but also meet their practical needs like housing and employment, education —

Chris Gutierrez: Since 2005, more than 10,000 ex-prisoners have gone through T.O.R.I.

Tina Naidoo: We bring those families back together and walk through things like trust issues.

[On screen: Alex Bailey and children at the park, Uncle Jonathan Stewart]

Jonathan Stewart: Different man. Different man. Totally different man.

Chris Gutierrez: T.O.R.I. helped Alex find a job and bond with his daughter.

Jonathan Stewart: [holding daughter] Didn't you say you were going to get me? Huh?

Chris Gutierrez: Alex's uncle says he sees the difference.

Jonathan Stewart: It's exciting to see progression. It's exciting to see change for the better.

Alex Bailey: Girl, we can see you. [to Chris] But everyone needs a second chance — everyone.

Chris Gutierrez: Faith and fatherhood, the combination that Alex says will keep him from repeating his mistakes.

Alex Bailey: God will make a way regardless of the fact, you know.

Chris Gutierrez: Chris Gutierrez, NBC 5.

[Amanda Guerra and Cory Smith talking in News Studio]

Amanda Guerra: His daughter is awfully cute. Now, Alex Bailey is looking for an electrical apprenticeship program to further his skills. T.O.R.I. says only 11 percent of its ex-inmates in the program get in trouble again. Normally, that rate is 52 percent.

[End of video]

Tina Naidoo: All right. I hope you enjoyed that video. I wanted to, before we move to the next slide, talk to you a little bit about the graduation that T.O.R.I. does every year.

Sorry I just saw a note from Nigel.

Really quick, the video itself was just a recap of a story of one of our graduates. Every year, T.O.R.I. does a graduation. It's a 12-month program, but we only offer the graduation once a year for individuals to walk. The reason we formalize the graduation was that we realized that, as a lot of our clients were taking classes and going through the T.O.R.I. program, they were taking these certificates and putting it on their walls at their homes and their apartments, and they really valued the completion of these courses that they were taking. In speaking with them, a lot of them said, "You know I never completed anything in my life. This is the first time I've ever completed something." We took that and said we really wanted to formalize the graduation, because a lot of our clients didn't complete high school or got caught up in high school or college, earlier than college.

So our church, the one that Bishop T.D. Jakes is actually the pastor of the church, he allows this one Sunday every year to basically take over the whole service. We use that platform to really bring about some criminal justice awareness and education to our congregation at large, but we also use the service to do a formalized ceremony where we have caps and gowns. Our elected officials, our judges, they're all in the service, and our judges are the ones that actually pass out the diplomas as certificates of completion for the clients.

So it's a really big event that a lot of the families attend, and we've heard from parents of our graduates that, "This is something I've been waiting a lifetime to watch, to celebrate our graduate, to actually see them complete something, and that the trajectory of their life is towards success and not going back to prison." We really celebrate those moments with them, but this one in particular really brings the family together and definitely celebrates our fathers and gives the children a different outlook about their parent as well.

So moving on to the next slide here. Last year, T.O.R.I. had the privilege of receiving a Second Chance Strengthening Relationships Between Young Father and Their Children grant. We are just ramping that up where can take a portion of our program and just really focus in on young fathers and their kids, and it's like ages 18 to 24. We've also got a research partner there as well, so we're hoping that we'll be able to come out with some good information for you in the next

three years to really focus in and to help fathers to successfully reintegrate back into the community and lower the rate of recidivism.

That was my final slide for our presentation. If you have any questions, we'd be happy to answer them. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share with you about our program.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you so much, Tina. I really appreciate it. Also, at the very end of this webinar I will be posting a slide that will have everyone's contact information. Now, we want to go through question-and-answers, so we had some questions that came in for each of our presenters. I'm going to start with Ann. First question for you is, in essence, "The effect of childhood experience is parental absence due to incarceration is similar to a child who experiences loss or grief as with a death of a parent. Can you comment on that, Ann?"

Ann Adalist-Estrin: Yeah. First, let me apologize for the sirens. I can't get rid of them outside my window.

I can. I think that the best information we have is from the ethnographic work that people have done in actually talking to kids and families, that it's called an ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief, because a death is clear. There may be unanswered questions about why, but it is clear that it is final.

The grieving and loss for incarceration is different in three primary ways. The first way is that it isn't final. It isn't always clear. The second reason that it's really different is that until recently, there have been very few relevant and specifically designed grief curricula or processes for children. It's what we call the lack of relevant support. So kids have said things like, no more grief groups, please. Don't send us to school grief groups, because we come out of there having talked to people about their dead brother and that's really different.

And the third reason it's really different is because of the stigma and shame that's associated with parental incarceration that, with some few exceptions, is not associated with death.

So our experience and our conversations with kids and families tell us that while it has some similarities and that kids may have some of the same feelings, it is a very different loss. Then, the disenfranchised grief piece is about how there are no sanctions and specific rituals that help with that loss as there would be with a death.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Ann. I appreciate it. Thank you to everyone who asked a question. If you still want to ask a question, you can type it into the Ask a Question box on your bottom right. This next question is for you, Mary. This question is about the Dads Back! program. "Did you receive state funding for that program and/or what are your other funding sources?"

Mary Weaver: The Dads Back! Academy is funded through a grant from the Office of Family Assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Eugene Schneeberg: Great. "Do you operate programming outside of the state of California?"

Mary Weaver: No, we only work inside Los Angeles County. We do have some sister organizations — Friends Outside was founded in Northern California, so there are a few other Friends Outsides. We all work within our designated county.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Mary. Tina, the next set of questions go to you. First is, "Do you still have programs that go into prisons, and if so, how does T.O.R.I. interface with those folks?" Then the next question is, "Do you have relationships with employers who are willing to hire returning citizens, and if so, how did you establish those relationships?" Two questions.

Tina Naidoo: Okay, sure. On the first question, we still have a prison ministry that's pretty strong here at the church. It's run by volunteers and our pastoral department, so they do still go inside the prison. Our T.O.R.I. team also pairs up with them to do some pre-release work for those that are within six months of release, and so we work hand-in-hand with them to identify people that would be eligible for specific programming for T.O.R.I., or they're releasing back to certain counties that we're serving in. Yes, that is still going very strong.

As far as employment, one of the things from the very beginning that we've had to do from a very grassroots level is engage with employers one-on-one, speak with their HR departments, look at business owners that are in our community and our congregation, and really bring education and awareness to them about our clients and change the public stigma. We also do participate in the job fairs and bring employers in and do mock interviews, help with the resumes, do job readiness and coaching for our clients.

But one of the things we are starting to do right now just from a grassroots level also is, after the Fair Chance Pledge, when many of the corporations signed up and said that they would also give a second chance, we're on a local level going to those larger corporations like Uber and Amazon, FedEx, UPS, and talking to their HR departments, educating them about the Federal Bond[ing] Program, the incentives that we may have, like an apprenticeship program we may have, to help them to gain trust in our clients to hire them. We talk a little bit about that, but we also — it's also based on our credibility in the community, I have to say, because a lot of times, I tell our clients it's almost like we're cosigning for them. Many employers will trust us and the work that we do, so they'll give an opportunity to a client that way.

So those are some of the ways that we approach the employment barrier here in our community.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Tina. Here's a question that anyone can take a stab at. The question is, "Do any of your programs work to assist fathers to engage with the children's schools or school districts?"

Tina Naidoo: This is Tina. I'm just talking from Dallas, I know that our Big Brothers, Big Sisters and some of the local churches here do an Adopt-a-School program to bring in mentors. A lot of times, we try not to reinvent the wheel. If existing organizations are doing programming, we try to come up beside them to do that, to help the children of our clients or of those that are incarcerated. So we try to help support them in that capacity, if they're already doing a mentorship program or adopting a school.

Ann Adalist-Estrin: This is Ann. I would say that requests from schools are probably the second or third most common request that we get for information and training. We do a lot of that. There are school districts all around the country that are now doing training.

Hopefully, an outcome of that training is more engagement with the incarcerated parent and the returning parent. So, things as I suggested involving incarcerated parents by phone, if that's possible, on the corrections side. That's usually where that can get tripped up. But if they can be involved in IEP meetings and have report cards sent to them, there's no reason why if the caregiver allows it that report cards can't be sent in.

Some of ways that schools can connect with incarcerated parents, we've had one school district in Illinois, young children in the elementary and early childhood program, they do a mystery reader where somebody from the family shows up and reads books. So this particular child's father was incarcerated, but in his facility, they had a books-on-tape messages program. He was the mystery reader on tape, and it created a whole situation where the kids were writing letters to him to thank him, and creating good will, and also helping the children understand better what their classmate was going through.

There's lots of examples like that that we have of schools beginning to do parent engagement work. The biggest obstacle I would say is the caregivers who have not told the children the truth, so then that gets — it poses a real challenge to schools trying to support the kids.

Mary Weaver: This is Mary. I'll just chime in with our experience a little bit with the schools. It seems to me as though there's just a lot of demythologization, however you say that, that needs to happen. We hear input from school districts that, we don't have families like that in our school district, or they just have sort of an image sometimes of the fathers that they tend to think don't either — they shouldn't be involved with their children. Sometimes people think that visits to the jails are a bad idea, so I think there's a lot of education that needs to happen.

We have something we put together with Occidental College, which was intended to help educate people, and I'm more than happy to provide that document, if people could use it to try to develop stronger relationships with places such as schools.

Eugene Schneeberg: All right. Thank you all. One question that came in that is, "Do any of you have tips for individuals who want to partner and work with local correctional facilities, who are looking to establish partnerships with correctional facilities?" Did you all have any tips on how to initiate those?

Tina Naidoo: This is Tina, again. I know that we started with our faith-based group, our prison ministry that was already in the prison. Because they had been there for so long or had already worked within the prison, they had relationships with the institution staff, and we built on that, or went in beside them and built that relationship based on what they had been doing in the prison.

The other thing is that there's a lot of institution staff, but also parole and probation and community supervision. If you speak with their departments, they'll tell you that the need is so great that they welcome the opportunity to have people come in and assist them to fill in those gaps that they can't do. That would just be an avenue that has worked for us, and something that I think I would suggest for you to do.

Eugene Schneeberg: Great. Ann, you mentioned reading on tape, "Can any of you all talk about how you all perhaps use different types of technology to keep our fathers and families connected?"

Ann Adalist-Estrin: Well, this is Ann, we got an interesting request from a state department of corrections recently. I believe it was Tennessee, that they are going to start, and maybe they already do, having tablets preloaded with all kinds of information. And they wanted to know about — and of course, incarcerated persons have to purchase them and then rent them, so there's a cost involved, which can be frustrating. But they wanted to know about various avenues around the country, the different ways that people were using technology to help the kids stay connected. Most incarcerated people do not have access to the Internet, although, in some facilities, I understand there are kiosks where you can send an email, and then you have to wait until you get one back. But kids who can access electronically in some way their parent, either by getting an audio recording or doing some sort of email, even when it's delayed, do actually really appreciate that.

I think, unfortunately, that we live in a technology-driven society where hard mail is just not a standard anymore, and kids really are reluctant. They just don't want to write letters. Yet, for incarcerated parents that's really, often the only way that they can communicate.

Eugene Schneeberg: Does anyone else want to take a stab at that question around the use of technology? I would just say, before we go onto the next question, I know that several states and also the Federal Bureau of Prisons is also increasingly using video visiting as a new means to keep families connected, so that's something to explore if your state is doing that as well.

Ann Adalist-Estrin: This is Ann. If I could just say, I think that the challenge is to work with states and governments that video visiting does not replace in-person visiting. Many of the providers of the service are insisting on, if they sign a contract, that they have to not allow in-person visiting. So that's a challenge for a lot of systems, because I think the in-person visiting is still key to the relationship.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Ann. A question came in for anyone: “Do we have research that shows what percentage of fathers were actively involved with their children before incarceration?”

Ann Adalist-Estrin: I would say that we don’t really have an accurate statistic about that. There’s a *guesstimated* percentage of somewhere between 40 and 45 percent of fathers lived with at least one of their children, and then in some settings, it says in six months prior to incarceration and in others, it’s a year prior. But that’s the problem is that, the studies are not clear about whether they’re talking about ever lived with them, or how recently to the incarceration and how close to it they lived with them.

Also, because of multiple families, many of the children of the same father did not live with them before. And my final point about that is that there’s really no way that any research at this point can help us understand the active-engaged-with-their-kid part, because I’m divorced, and my ex-husband was actively engaged with my kids without living with them. So that’s something that we have to try to figure out a way to assess, and we haven’t really done that.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Ann. A question came in, maybe this might be for you, Ann: “Do you have ideas about how someone could access training for teachers, elementary or high school age?”

Ann Adalist-Estrin: Yeah. I mean, a lot of my colleagues around the country are doing training. It’s requested, so there’s lots of organizations on our radar, and we will either send people to those local or state programs or projects. We also do lots and lots of school training, so people can either contact us, and we can tell them what’s in their general area in terms of people that have them [dads] doing this kind of training. Training teachers sometimes, I mean some of the projects we’ve done are doing Train-the-Trainer training for training staff at school districts to actually do ongoing trainings. Then, some of them are just trainings for our school counselors, our school social workers or all staff.

Eugene Schneeberg: Okay. We have time for one more question, which was addressed to Tina: “Does the T.O.R.I. program have ongoing assistance once participants graduate, and how does T.O.R.I. stay engaged with those participants?”

Tina Naidoo: We did create a T.O.R.I. alumni group that meets once a month, and it’s kind of like a support group or a lifeline for graduates, but we also keep enrollment open if they graduate, but still have not found a job or still need help with housing and those types of things. So we continue the services, even though they have graduated.

As far as staying in touch with everyone that’s — we don’t have that in place, but we do have opportunities for them to stay engaged with us, and that’s how we stay connected with our graduates. For a lot of reasons, as you probably know this, but for a lot of reasons, they can’t succeed in just 12 months. Twelve months kind of gets you back on your feet, but there’s always that additional couple of years that we work with the certain few and continue to be their lifeline to successful reentry.

Eugene Schneeberg: Great. Thank you, Tina. All right. Well, we have four more minutes left in this webinar. We want to alert you to the fact that we have a feedback form at the bottom left hand of your screen. If you all while we’re wrapping up, if you wouldn’t mind clicking on that. It says Feedback Survey. We really value your insight about this webinar, and it really helps us plan for future webinars. If everyone can click on that feedback survey, that would be great.

I want to take this time to thank all of our presenters, Ann Adalist-Estrin, Tina Naidoo and Mary Weaver. At this time, I want to give each of them an opportunity for one closing thought, and also Lisa Washington-Thomas, who’s on from OFA. Lisa, if you have a closing thought. Let’s start with Ann. Do you have a closing thought for us?

Ann Adalist-Estrin: I do. For all of you that are primarily working with children and the families, not to forget about reentry, because a lot of times people do. If you’re not focused on reentry, they think that programs for children of incarcerated parents would then, of course, end when the parent’s not incarcerated anymore. The families themselves

sometimes promote that. That's backwards. That's going to try to be okay now, especially with incarcerated parents returning to a specific home. Just don't forget that reentry is as important as the incarceration period, if not more so.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Ann. Mary, do you have a closing thought for us?

Mary Weaver: Yes, I think just want to emphasize the concept of having the father as the targeted population involved in every step of the way. Input we have had from the fathers has been, I would say, the most important input in terms of designing the program and enhancing the program, taking it to the next level. I just would like to say that that has been important to us. And I think it might be helpful to others as they develop their programs.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Mary. Tina, one final thought or takeaway?

Tina Naidoo: Sure. I think all of the parts of this puzzle *per se* are very important, and there's just so many moving parts. I know that when we first tackled the issue, it almost seems so large that you can't get your arms around it. One of the analogies we use is that it's like an octopus and has a lot of tentacles. If you grab the one that you're really good at and you hold that one down, all the other parts come together, or you work beside them. That's been the way that we go at it, and especially for our clients, it's very tough when all the elements hit them when they get home. Everything that they hoped and dreamed for doesn't always come to pass. Our mantra at T.O.R.I. is that you'll win if you don't quit. That's my last nugget for you guys.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Tina. Lisa, do you have a final thought or takeaway?

Lisa Washington-Thomas: Yes, I do, Eugene. I just want to thank you, Eugene, Nigel and Jackie for organizing the webinar, and definitely thank Ann, Tina and Mary for your informative presentations. I know that Ann looked at the Chat box, and I also want to thank the people online, because there was a lot of positive comments, a lot of connections that were made in the Chat box. You can tell that not only is your information, Tina, Ann and Mary, useful because of the presentation, but you spawned or encouraged people to connect while you were speaking. I think that's going to help the families we serve much better.

So thank you for all the people who participated in the webinar, who participated in the chat who made connections and asked questions. Thank you for the presenters, and thank you for organizing it. I think this was very helpful, and I am so appreciative of everything that you have done this afternoon. Thank you.

Eugene Schneeberg: Thank you, Lisa. I just want to remind folks as we close that, if you didn't get a chance to have your question answered, we've recorded those, and we'll be circulating them to the presenters and making those answers available within the next few weeks, as well as the archived recording of this webinar will also be available on fatherhood.gov. We will send out a message to our Listserv when that's available.

Again, thank you all so much for taking time and investing in such an important topic. Thank you to our presenters. With that, have a good afternoon everybody. Bye-bye.

Operator: Once again, that does conclude today's program. We thank you for your participation.