



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance



NRFC Webinar Questions & Responses

Achieving Economic Stability:
Strategies for Successfully Connecting Dads to Jobs
April 26, 2012

Presenters

- **Ben Seigel:** Deputy Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Labor
- **Dr. Ronald Mincy:** Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY
- **Brad and Kathy Lambert:** Co-Founders and Co-Executive Directors, Connections to Success, St. Louis, MO

This document addresses questions during the NRFC Webinar and is organized by Topic. For more information contact the NRFC via email at info@fatherhood.gov.

Topics

- **Job Clubs**
- **Re-Entry**
- **Connections to Success: Programming & Partnerships**
- **Funding**
- **Program Evaluations & Outcomes**

Job Clubs

Question: How successful are the Job Clubs?

Response Provided by Ben Seigel: The Department of Labor (DOL) has gathered anecdotal evidence, including success stories and a small sample of self-reported quantitative data, which reveal job clubs are very successful in engaging discouraged job seekers and helping people land jobs. They are looking at doing a more formal evaluation of the job club model later this year. For more information about DOL job clubs, go to www.dol.gov/jobclubs.

Question: How do we direct unemployed fathers to Job Clubs?

Response Provided by Ben Seigel: Visit www.dol.gov/jobclubs and click on the resources section. From there click on the Job Clubs folder. There you'll find a job clubs state directory. Click on your state to see a list of job clubs with contact info. You can also reach out to your local One Stop Career Center (via www.servicelocator.org). Many of these centers also have job clubs. You can also start a new job club in your community – contact Ben Siegel at DOL and he can work directly with you:

- Email: seigel.benjamin@dol.gov
- Telephone: 202-693-6032

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

Re-Entry

Question: From the web links that Ben Siegel (DOL) shared, is there reference to felony friendly employers?

Response Provided by Ben Siegel: Here are links to some resources that provide useful information on talking to employers and other valuable resources for job development with formerly incarcerated:

- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders community of practice, a practitioners' tool for reentry programs: <https://rexo.workforce3one.org/>
- Reentry Mythbusters developed by the Federal Interagency Reentry Council: http://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1090/REENTRY_MYTHBUSTERS.pdf
- Federal Bonding Program – find your state contact: <http://bonds4jobs.com/>
- Hiring incentives for employers: <http://www.doleta.gov/business/GovernmentIncentives.cfm>
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently released updated guidance on employer use of arrest and conviction records in hiring decisions: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm

Connections to Success: Programming & Partnerships

Question: How do fathers find out about – or how are they referred to – your program?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: Kansas Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) mails letters to men involved in their programs (TANF, food stamps, cash assistance, child support enforcement) to explain about the fatherhood programming. Referrals also come from SRS case managers along with word-of-mouth from existing participants.

Question: How do you handle other needs of the fathers and families with whom your program has contact – for example, if the family has immediate housing needs or domestic violence is a concern?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: Connections to Success (CtS) has established many community partnerships to address other needs and services not provided by CtS, including housing, substance abuse treatment and health. Referrals are made by case managers. Our domestic violence partner provides training to the men in our programs, as well as serving as a referral source for victims of domestic abuse or those who need a batterer's intervention program.

Question: Does the Connections to Success program purchase the abandoned homes and then resell them or can the participant make the house their own home?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: Our partner, Jackson County, takes ownership of the properties at the beginning of each project and then selects a low-income family in the community to award them to upon completion. The new home owner enters into a seven year agreement to make a nominal payment upon which the property becomes theirs.

Question: Do you use a formal Healthy Relationships curriculum? If yes, please identify. If no, what topics do you cover? Please estimate the amount of time that you devote to the issue of healthy relationships. Thank you.

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: We use the Ready for Love curriculum from the National Institute of Relationship Enhancement (IDEALS/NIRE) located in Bethesda, Maryland. Each participant completes 16 hours of healthy relationship training.

Question: Does the Connections to Success program offer case management services?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: Yes.

Question: Do you (Connections to Success) have a partnership with a health care provider, and if so what's the nature of the partnership?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: CtS partners with local health care providers that offer general medical and behavioral health treatment. All services are free of charge to CtS participants. CtS also partners with Lenscrafters through their national "Gift of Sight" program. We also work individually with doctors and dentists who provide pro bono individual health care.

Question: What was the arrangement with the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) that you mentioned, where participants receive a reduction of some sort in their payments?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: Yes, we partnered with the Kansas OCSE and through that partnership, came to an agreement that OCSE will provide participants with a \$50 credit for the first 15 hours of training, followed by \$25 per hour for the remaining time; capped at \$1850, for each hour of participation in the Connections to Success program. To date, over \$11,000 in arrearage forgiveness has occurred for those amounts owed to the state.

Question: What is your initial pitch when you reach out to a business about hiring fathers who have completed your program? How do you approach employers and develop relationships?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: We first find out the employer's needs by meeting with them one on one, and we also identify and research high growth and high demand jobs. Then we explore how we can meet those needs. We educate employers on what we do and address things like turnover rate and employees who show up on time. Often, employers really want employees with life skills, which fathers can gain through our program if they are lacking certain skills. We also point out to employers that our participants have been thoroughly vetted and there's an umbrella of support to help with external barriers like transportation, stable housing and health concerns.

Response Provided by Ben Seigel: DOL has employer incentive programs like the Federal Bonding Program, which has a 90% success rate. This requires the candidate to obtain character references as part of the process, which demonstrates some soft skills to the employer. It also provides insurance to the employer. You can contact DOL to find out which employers are using these bonds.

- DOL is working on making sure employers are doing an exhaustive search for American workers before using foreign workers via the H2B foreign worker visa program (e.g., for landscaping, hospitality, seasonal jobs), and you can approach these employers about your program participants.
 - Seek out employers who use the H-2B foreign workers visa program. H-2Bs are used in many sectors with seasonal jobs such as landscaping, tourism, and forestry work. DOL encourages these employers to exhaust local hiring options before filing for H-2B visas. Learn more here: <http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/h-2b.cfm>.
- You can connect with your local DOL Office of Contract Compliance and work with them to develop relationships with federal contractors.
- As mentioned in response to a previous question, be informed about the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance on employer use of arrest and conviction records in hiring decisions: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm. This will help you have an informed conversation about an employer's hiring practices. Employers are advised to develop a "screen" that takes into account: 1) nature of the crime, 2) time elapsed, and 3) nature of the job.
- Seek out employers with commitments to increasing diversity. A good place to look is federal contractors and sub-contractors. The DOL Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs

(OFCCP) works with federal contractor and sub-contractors to ensure equal employment opportunity practices and diversity. Find your local OFCCP office and develop a partnership for reaching employers: <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp>.

Funding

Question: Where does the funding come from to pay participants in transitional jobs?

Response Provided by Brad and Kathy Lambert: From our fatherhood grant.

Question: Can Tribal agencies apply for DOL grants?

Response Provided by Ben Seigel: Yes. Under Section 166 of the Workforce Investment Act, Indian and Native American entities are eligible for grant programs as agencies administering WIA programs. In addition, DOL has specific grants for Indian and Native American programs: <http://www.doleta.gov/DINAP>.

Program Evaluations & Outcomes

Question: What data would you recommend collecting to determine an increase in earnings due to program participation?

Response Provided by Dr. Ronald Mincy: Collect earnings data at least six months prior to enrollment, at enrollment, and at both six and 12 months after enrollment. You want to show any change in earnings over a period beyond immediate enrollment. If you are a federal grantee, you will want to clear your data collection methodology with your federal project officer.

Question: Is it possible that the increased earnings seen for the full sample was due to entrepreneurship?

Response Provided by Dr. Ronald Mincy: No, it was due to job placement, not increases among those already employed. Self-employment is currently a gray area in need of research. Some areas like New York City have a huge informal labor market, and it becomes very difficult to negotiate child support modifications and court understanding when a father is not working a formal job.