



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

National  
Responsible  
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



## NRFC Webinar Series

### *Employment and Economic Stability Services for Fathers* Response to Questions

**January 20, 2016**

**Moderator:**

- Nigel Vann, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)

**Presenters:**

- Dan Bloom, MDRC, New York, NY
- Halbert Sullivan, Fathers' Support Center, St. Louis, MO
- Carl Chadband, Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action, Inc. (KISRA), Dunbar, WV

This document addresses questions presented, but not addressed, during this NRFC Webinar. For questions addressed during the webinar, please refer to the Webinar Transcript. For more information contact NRFC via email at [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov).

### Submitted Questions:

**What are some things that programs can do to help bridge the gap between subsidized jobs and permanent/full-time employment?**

**Dan Bloom:** In some models, individuals in subsidized jobs have some possibility of rolling over into a permanent position with the same employer where they work in the subsidized position. This is probably ideal, but it is hard to pull it off because it means placing people into actual open jobs. Some programs use two stages: Stage 1 is a traditional subsidized job with the program sponsor or another nonprofit where there is no possibility of rollover. In stage 2, participants who do well move on to a second subsidized job that is a more "regular" job with the possibility of rolling over. If none of this is possible, then at the very least the program needs to make sure that participants have access to strong job developers who will use the participant's experience in subsidized employment as part of his/her marketing pitch to employers. Many programs focus so much on making the subsidized jobs function that they forget about the back end.

Finally, I think it is important to focus on what Carl said about social enterprises. Those entities can provide jobs for participants and also earn revenue to support wages. In theory, social enterprises can offer permanent employment, but there is always pressure to move people to other positions in order to free up slots for additional participants.

**Can you explain a little further what you mean by "having your staff cross trained?"**

**Carl Chadband:** Teach every person about each job. If you have staff turnover, you don't have to wait a month to fully

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replace that person. Essentially, you train staff to be program specialists even though they may focus in only one area of the project.

### **How important is it to include financial literacy/empowerment education as part of employment efforts?**

**Carl Chadband:** It is important. However, for clients who have low or no wages it is hard for them to demonstrate what they have learned from your courses. We use both Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace (DVD) and FDIC Money Smart (free).

**Halbert Sullivan:** Financial Literacy is very important for the population we serve. Most of our fathers do not have savings or checking accounts. They have no credit history, no life insurance, and no savings plans for their future or their children's future. Many of our fathers have never put together a budget (a realistic budget that can be supported by the income they receive or a budget that will help to direct their future). In addition to a financial budget, financial literacy should include discussion of "family planning."

### **How and where do you recruit fathers for the program?**

**Carl Chadband:** We recruit fathers directly and indirectly. I advise targeting organizations or businesses that may have contact with potential clients. For example, Senior Centers may be an unusual place to recruit but it is a natural fit for grandsons and sons to visit. You can also get a small stick-on flyer and partner with a local pizza or delivery place to add your program information on their food boxes when they deliver. The same is true for a Krispy Kreme doughnut shop. Other places to think about include: Head Start, Barbershops, Birthing Units in hospitals, Little League (baseball, football, basketball), Job Corps, Birth to Three, etc.

**Halbert Sullivan:** Most of our recruiting is accomplished through our street team. We have put together a team of street recruiters that include staff, volunteers and past graduates of the program. The use of the past graduates is very important. Over 45% of our fathers are walk-ins due to word of mouth; after 17 years we are very well known in the community for the work we do with our fathers. We also hand out information at health fairs and employment recruitment fairs. We man informational booths throughout the city/county working with other community based organizations. In addition, our marketing strategy includes paid advertisements on the radio, bus and metro, and some billboards. Messaging is very important when using paid advertisements.

We also receive referrals from other organizations working with families, such as Child Support Enforcement, Child Support Court, Family Courts and Probation/Parole. These organizations can simply make referrals; they cannot mandate a father to participate in any of our programs.

### **What are your greatest challenges to recruitment?**

**Carl Chadband:** Finding the right message that resonates with your target population. A great benefit before we hired a marketer was to use fatherhood ads and PSAs from the Ad Council and customize them with our program information. If you do this you can have them air on the radio free of charge.

**Halbert Sullivan:** We have been recruiting for over 18 years. Our greatest challenge with recruitment is keeping the fathers connected and involved once they have come in and signed up. We hold classes 6 times per year. The challenge has been how to keep interested fathers engaged until the next class actually starts. Another great challenge has been securing the funds to help for our marketing.



### What incentive(s) have had the greatest impact in your recruitment efforts?

**Carl Chadband:** Bus passes, curriculum completion, work clothes, and transitional jobs hourly wages.

**Halbert Sullivan:** Our employment placement rate, our ability to help when the father has child support issues (e.g., modification, incarceration, and driver's license being revoked), and our ability to assist with visitation. We also provide a daily lunch for participants, weekly attendance prizes, and bus tickets.

### How do you gain the fathers' trust to get them involved in these programs?

**Carl Chadband:** Be genuine. Don't give them anything except hope. Let them earn their way back to the path of success since they are often the main reason why they find themselves where they currently are. You can't work harder for your client than they are willing to work on their own behalf.

**Halbert Sullivan:** Tough question. We gain trust by being truthful with them up front. We do not make any guarantees to our fathers. Our educators/facilitators are all past graduates of the program and they are the first contact for participants. We also invite past graduates to a class so they can share their experience in the program and how things turned out for them as they went through and when they completed.