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Administration for Children and Families  
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National  
Responsible  
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



## NRFC Webinar Series

# *Employment and Economic Stability Services for Fathers*

## Transcript

**January 20, 2015**

**Moderator:**

- Nigel Vann, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC).

**Presenters:**

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

**Operator:** Good day everyone and welcome to the Employment and Economic Stability Services for Fathers Webinar. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Mr. Nigel Vann. Please go ahead sir.

**Nigel Vann:** Well thank you very much. And good morning, good afternoon, wherever you are. Welcome again to today's National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House Webinar; Employment and Economic Stability Services for Fathers.

If you've joined us before you are somewhat familiar with how this works. And, you know, we provide these Webinars and a variety of other resources as part of a learning community that you can contribute to and learn from. And so as always we welcome and encourage your input and participation. And we'll be explaining a little bit about how you can ask questions today and in the future.

So first of all I wanted to go over a few notes and reminders. And the audio for today's Webinar, as you just heard, is being recorded. You can hear the audio through your computer. And the recording, a transcript, and all presentation materials will be posted on the [Fatherhood.gov](http://Fatherhood.gov) website in the next few weeks. So we do encourage you to check back and review those.

At the end of today's Webinar we'll have a Q&A session, as we usually do. To ask a question for the presenters to respond to at the end, you can use the Ask a Question box that you see at the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. And we'll answer as many of those questions as we can at the end of the Webinar. If there's any questions that we don't get to, which does often happen, we will post written responses to those when we post the other materials.

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You also see there's a Chat box on the left-hand side and we encourage you to use that just to talk among yourselves, if you want to introduce yourself. But if you do have a question for the presenters please use the Ask a Question box at the bottom.

And you'll also see on your screen a Web Links box in the bottom left corner. That's got just links to the [Fatherhood.gov](http://Fatherhood.gov) website and then the organizations for each of our presenters. If you want to learn more about what they do you can also download from the Downloadable Resources box the bios for today's presenters and also a resources list with other resources pertaining to the topic.

So with that, I'm going to invite Damon Waters, he was a Program Specialist at the Federal Office of Family Assistance (OFA) who is the organization responsible for everything we're doing here. And they've given us the greenlight to do things, and Damon works closely with Lisa Washington-Thomas who's what you usually hear at the beginning of these Webinars. So Damon, if you'd like to say a few words to get us going here please.

Damon Waters: Thanks Nigel, and like Nigel said, I'm the half of Lisa Washington-Thomas and Office of Family Assistance. Thank you all for joining us for today's Webinar about Employment and Economic Stability Services for Fathers.

We're going to hear about strategies and resources that can help low-income fathers gain new employment skills, find better jobs and improve their overall financial situation. Many, perhaps most, of the fathers who participate in fatherhood programs are looking for assistance in the areas of employment and economic stability.

As Nigel pointed out in a recent NRFC (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse) eBlog, getting a job that pays a living wage in our twenty-first century economy is not easy. Particularly if someone doesn't have education or training that matches available jobs, has recently returned to the community from a time in jail, or the available jobs are hard to access with available public transportation. However, with the right approach and services, it is possible to help low-income fathers get a leg up on the employment ladder. Our presenters today are going to talk about lessons learned from research and practice that can help you in your work with fathers.

One way that fatherhood programs can increase the chance of success is to develop partnerships with community agencies and individuals. Again, as Nigel pointed out in his blog, responsible fatherhood programs can be a bridge between fathers and the community by serving as a key access point for clients and for employers, child support and others. You can work with agencies that provide job skills training to ensure that your program participants are qualified for available jobs. You can show employers how your program can help them hire and retain reliable, qualified employees. And you can work with your local child support office to make sure that child support orders are set and modified based on current income and employment.

I hope you find the Webinar informative and helpful. We've been asking [*sic*] a couple of poll questions during the Webinar to get an idea of what you do in your programs. Please take a moment to respond to those questions, as it can help our presenters frame their comments to fit your experience. And please continue to send ideas and questions to the clearing house team at [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov). Again, that's [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov). We'd love to hear from you. And now I would like to turn things back over to Nigel.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much Damon. And as you see on your screen we just got a slide up there just with some information about the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. For those of you who are joining us for the first time, the Clearinghouse is funded by the Office of Family Assistance to provide resources that support fathers and families.

And you can see a couple of Web links there. Besides just [Fatherhood.gov](http://Fatherhood.gov), there's a couple of things you can access there is our Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit; which has got various advice for — I'm sorry my screen just went blank.

I have to reboot it — which is covered with various advice for programs. And then also we have the helpline. I really do want to stress that. That's a number that you can dial to get more information about ways in which fathers and the mothers of their children can do with various issues that come up. It's a particularly good line for people who need mediation. We have trained mediators on the end of that line and they also have information that they can use to refer you to programs and resources in your own local area. And you also see on there our Facebook and Twitter handles and contact information for Lisa Washington-Thomas, again, our leader at OFA, and Kenny Braswell and Patrick Patterson, our Project Director and Project Manager respectively.

So today we're going to be talking, as Damon said, about ways in which fatherhood programs can help the men they work with in terms of employment; which is one of the major presenting issues as most of you probably know when fathers come to programs. But there's a lot of other guys also looking for help to sort out their child support issues or maybe co-parenting issues. And again, you know, quite often the answer to those kinds of issues comes down to getting a better job. And, you know, it's not just getting a job it's finding and keeping a job that pays a living wage. And, you know, that's not easy all the time.

So today we're going to hear from our presenters about lessons from research and practice as Damon said that's going to help you. So these are our goals today. We're going to share lessons learned and just have a conversation about ways in which fatherhood programs can provide as much support as possible for their fathers.

We're being joined by three very experienced presenters today. Dan Bloom has provided research at MDRC for well over 20 years. He directs MDRC's work on groups seeking to gain a foothold in the labor market including former prisoners, disconnected young adults, low-income, non-custodial parents, welfare recipients, individuals with disabilities and many others. He's currently directing two large-scale federal projects that are testing subsidized and transitional employment programs. And since he joined MDRC in 1988, he's co-authored more than 40 research reports and contributed articles to various published volumes on workforce and youth policy. So Dan will be telling us about ways that — he will provide an overview of past and current research that really throws light on how best to help low-income men in today's labor market.

We're also going to hear from two experienced practitioners who are going to share some of their knowledge and lessons learned about ways that they've been able to help fathers improve their prospects for steady employment and economic stability.

So first of all, after Dan, we'll hear from Halbert Sullivan, founding President and CEO of the Father's Support Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Halbert provides executive leadership, administrative oversight, fundraising, marketing and PR support for the Father's Support Center. The Support Center promotes father's involvement in their children's lives through intensive job training, group therapy, community service and parenting workshops. Since its inception in the 1990s the Support Center has served almost 12,000 fathers and their families; transitioning non-participating fathers to a position of involvement and equity in the lives of over 29,000 children. And so Halbert's going to be sharing some of the secrets to what he's done over a very long period of time. You know I look at Halbert as one of the real pioneers of his fatherhood work along with folks like Joe Jones of the Center for Urban Families and Wallace McLaughlin at the Center for Fathers in Indianapolis, Indiana. They've all been doing this work for well over 20 years and have large budgets and staff to keep that going. They're a role model for a lot of us.

And another role model we have is Carl Chadband, Chief Operating Officer with the Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action, or as we fondly refer to it, KISRA, based in Dunbar, WV. Carl has a background in education and community economic development with extensive experience developing partnerships between non-profits and federal and state agencies; which is really a key skill for getting this kind of work done. Carl has managed employment programs for ex-offenders and non-custodial fathers. And he's also got experience in media, marketing and technology management. He's talking to public school systems in Delaware and New Jersey as well. He's a

certified GED instructor and a certified Program Return on Investment trainer for Wall Street. You can learn more about them from their downloadable bios and also their websites.

So now I'd just like to move us to your first poll question before I bring Dan in. So Enzo, can we get the first poll question? As you'll see here what we're asking is, and again, this is just to help the presenters frame some of their remarks to have a view of the kind of things that you're doing in your programs. "So which of the following best describes your employment services for fathers?" Just please check one of these boxes. "Which of the following best describes your employment services for fathers?" You can say: we provide job readiness services only; we provide job readiness services and work closely with employers to find jobs for our participants; we work with a community partner who provides most of our employment services; current focus is more on helping our fathers with parenting and other relationship skills; or you can check the Other box. I'll just give you a couple more seconds to respond to that. So we've got a fairly even mix between second, third and fourth options there. Okay, well thank you very much. That's very helpful.

And so with that I'd like to turn the time over to Dan Bloom to tell us some of his insights from all the research he's been involved in and other research he's familiar with. Dan, the time is yours.

Dan Bloom: Thanks Nigel. Thanks very much for inviting me to participate. So I was asked to talk about what's been learned from research on employment and fatherhood programs. I thought I'd spend just a minute talking about where the evidence comes from. Listing on this slide are a few things that I think are most important. So practitioner wisdom — that's what I've learned and others have learned from talking to folks like you who are on this call; probably the most useful source of information in some ways. Descriptive studies are studies that, you know, basically as they sound, they describe what studies do but they don't necessarily try to figure out the outcomes or impacts of the programs on participants. And then what I'm going to mostly talk about today are evaluations, formal evaluations that use what's called a random assignment design that many of you are probably familiar with where individuals are assigned at random using a sort of a lottery-like process to either a group that has access to a program or to a group that just has access to whatever else exists in the community but does not have access to the program being tested. Sometimes call that a control group.

There've been — I'm going to sort of extrapolate evidence from lots of different kinds of studies. Some of them particularly were of study programs that targeted fathers, often in the child support system; other programs that served fathers but didn't necessarily target them so they were one of several populations. And then all the way down to programs that primarily served women, often in the welfare-to-work context and there are obviously some differences there. But I think some of those results can be helpful as well.

So just to start with a few key points to remember and these are probably obvious to many of you on the phone. We focus so much on the participants in our programs, barriers that they face and so on, but I just thought it was important to say even though we all sort of know it intuitively that context matters so much in terms of determining what it is that we can do and the success that people, that programs can have. So I'm thinking about factors like the decline in manufacturing jobs that used to offer relatively high wages for people without post-secondary education. There are many, many fewer of those now. Criminal justice policies and child support policies which vary a lot from state to state. Those can obviously have a great deal of effect on participant's outcomes and their ability to succeed in programs.

Employment discrimination; which many studies have documented and, you know, people's ability to get jobs are affected by discrimination among employers in the labor market. So all of these things are hovering around in the background and affecting everything that you all do every day. And I just wanted to make sure we sort of say that first. A couple of others things just to note — low-income fathers are a diverse group in terms of employability. And you know that from your programs. These are not folks that need the same thing; they have different levels of ability to get jobs with or without assistance. And so that diversity is an important factor in designing programs.

The second thing is that when we do studies where we actually — some individuals are randomly assigned to a control group — one of the things we find is that many people actually get jobs even without the services of the program that we're testing. But for a lot of people the problem is not so much getting a job, it's getting a job that pays enough to support themselves and whatever family obligations they have, and then also keeping jobs. So we see lots of people getting jobs, very few are able to retain them. The reason where job retention may be a problem could be related to characteristics of the individual, so maybe they don't have the skill-set that's required to keep a job. But it also may be characteristics of the jobs themselves. The jobs may be unstable and, you know, by their nature; so just a few things to keep in mind.

So how could we improve employment among a population that we're working with? And these are just the most general ways. So the first categories we can do something which they call the supply side; which is the supply or labor. This is [sic] the individuals that we're working with. And we can do things to try to build their skills, to build motivation. But anyway variety of activities that involve sort of changing that individual and their ability to get or keep a job. We can also provide services that connect people with jobs in ways that they might not be able to do on their own. We can sometimes do things that actually change employer's hiring decisions; so they change who employers will hire among the variety of different people that they're looking at to fill a particular job. There are strategies to try to make work pay and what I mean by that is, you know, jobs pay what they pay but there are in some cases ways to supplement those earnings when people are working in low-wage jobs. The best example of course is the Earned Income Tax Credit which often does not provide a lot of benefit to people in fatherhood programs unless they're custodial parents. But that's sort of the idea that I have in mind. And then there's creating jobs, subsidized jobs of various kinds when there aren't enough jobs in the private labor market to — for people who are looking.

So what are the kinds of employment services that are used to try to achieve those objectives? You know the basic categories that will be familiar to everyone. I lump together a bunch of things in the first bullet; job readiness, skills, instruction, job search assistance, job placement assistance. Obviously one of the big points of variation across programs in this is the extent to which the program is actually helping individuals apply for particular jobs. Is the program out there identifying job openings for people that they can apply for? Or is it more training people to look for jobs? And that's, you know, that's obviously a key distinction; basic education which could be GED or pre-GED instruction for people who don't have a high school diploma; various kinds of occupational training which I'll talk about a little bit later.

As I mentioned subsidized employment, this is actually creating jobs. Some kinds of programs are called transitional jobs; those are temporary, subsidized jobs that help people learn basic work skills. On-the-job training [OJT] is another model that's been around for a long time. It's a version of subsidized employment where typically a program will pay half or so of an individual's wages when they go to work for a finite period of time so the employer — it's sort of an incentive for the employer to take a risk on somebody potentially or spend some extra time on training somebody who may need some extra support. And then earnings supplements that I mentioned. These are rarer, they're an income tax credit is obviously out there but sometimes programs are able to — if they have funding — provide special earning supplements that are able to at least temporarily supplement low wage earnings by participants who find jobs.

So these are some very, very general findings about all these different types of services that I just talked about. And they're from a variety of different studies. But job search assistance can definitely increase employment rates or it can at least speed up employment rates. I've seen that in many, many studies. The issues tend to be job quality, so if you're not really doing much to improve somebody's skills they may only be able to get fairly low paying or unstable jobs. As I mentioned job retention tends to be a problem.

Another issue, which I refer to there as staff skills is that we often find that the individual program staff do not necessarily have the skill set to work with employers. So they may be very good at working with participants. They may have great ability to connect with participants and have more difficulty working in the employer community. And so sometimes programs have difficulty finding staff who have the right set of skills to go out to — into the labor market to identify jobs for participants.

Sectoral training programs — so this is occupational training that is focused on a particular employment sector, has very strong involvement from employers in that sector in terms of, you know, designing the curriculum and making sure that what people are learning is relevant to the work they would actually be doing. There was a very well-known study by public/private ventures of sectoral training programs that had very good effects in terms of increasing people's employment and their wages.

The issues with this kind of program tends to be, first of all, as I said the employer involvement is critical. This is not just training people out there to do whatever, this is training people in the context of an employment sector where they're literally learning the skills that they need to succeed in that sector. These programs tend to use a lot of screening both for motivation and for literacy and numeracy. That can sometimes disqualify some of the participants that are in the programs that you're working on. So that — the programs that you run rather. So sectoral training is a fantastic opportunity but it's not necessarily available to everyone. And there often is a need for some kind of bridging-type program that can get people up to the level that they need to get to in order to qualify for the sectoral training programs which are, you know, terrific opportunities.

The other big issue of course is that people need to pay the bills and feed themselves and their families while they're in training. And sometimes these training programs can last a number of months and require a lot of time, a big time commitment. And so the challenge is always how do people support themselves while they're participating in training. But even with all those caveats these can be very effective programs if they exist in your communities; often provided by community colleges or non-profit organizations.

Transitional jobs programs which I've studied a lot; these are temporary, subsidized jobs. We have found that these programs can be very good at putting people to work very quickly. In some cases when targeting people who are coming out of prison they can reduce recidivism, not always, but sometimes.

The challenge has been — number one is always cost. Any program that pays people's wages tends to get costly very quickly. But the other challenge is that when we have followed people long enough so that we've gotten past the point where people are in their temporary, subsidized jobs we tend to find that the employment outcomes of people who are in transitional jobs are eventually not really better than people who were in a control group that got just some basic job-search help but didn't get a transitional job. So there's a real challenge in trying to translate the experience that people get while they're working in a transitional job into long-term improvements in their employment outcomes. That has been — that's a real big challenge. But these are terrific programs that can put people to work quickly. And that's one of the goals often is to get people to work and get them some work experience and put some money in their pocket. OJT programs which I mentioned before, subsidized private employers so that usually pay the half their wages for a particular period of time. Then a number of studies of these rather old, like from the 1980s, they were fairly positive results. The trick has always been that these have been small programs, hard to operate OJT on a large scale. They've tended to be selective in who they target.

I think all of you know that any program, any service that's sort of making a deal with an employer tends to want to send the strongest participants because they don't want to burn relationships with employers. And so OJT programs tend to be somewhat narrow in who they serve. Earning supplements, these are as I said are special programs that provide supplementation to people who are working in low-wage jobs. These have been very consistently effective in programs that we've looked at in terms of both providing people an incentive to work and helping them keep jobs because they've got more slack, you know, more income.

The issues are obviously the cost, subsidizing wages through — it usually is often beyond the budget of an individual program. And the evidence we have is mostly for women and welfare-to-work type environments. We're now doing some research to learn more about employment — about earning supplements for a more male population including many fathers.

Basic education programs can definitely increase GED receipt. There's a lot of examples of programs that can help people get GEDs. I realize it's not always called a GED in every state anymore. The issue is that the GED, there's a lot of research showing that the GED in and of itself does not seem to have a huge payoff in the labor market. And that's problematic although a real advantage of the GED is that it is often the gateway to either post-secondary education or training. So in many cases people cannot access a community college program or other training without a GED. So it is very important in that sense. But the GED by itself does not seem to make a huge difference in terms of people's labor market outcome.

And then the last thing I just want to say is there's not — we've done a number of studies of various kinds of post-employment case management or coaching. These are services where staff are assigned to individuals who found jobs and are trying to follow up with them to try to avoid them losing their job. We don't see a lot of evidence that that has made a big difference. I think the most difficult thing is being able to predict and prevent job loss. It often, you know, mostly probably happens before staff are even aware that there's a problem. The individual's already out of a job. And I think in some cases we've found that it may be more effective to focus on staying in touch with participants and rapidly re-employ them when they lose jobs rather than to focus a lot of energy on trying to prevent job loss. Because I think it's just — it's a very, very difficult thing to do. People lose jobs for a lot of reasons and some of them are not, you know, necessarily something that programs can do a whole lot about.

So some of the key open questions I just want to put out on the table. And these are areas where I don't think we have very good evidence and they're probably things that you encounter every day. Number one, I talk about the diversity of the population and we don't know a whole lot about the best way to match participants with appropriate employment services. You have a menu of employment services; you have a group of participants. How do I decide what works best for whom? The one thing I will say that in my experience, assessment — up front assessment — is very important but it can easily become a bit of a black hole where people are assessed and assessed and never actually get to program services. And may just drop out of programs because they're eager to get a job and they feel they're being assessed.

The other thing is assessments — again while very important — a lot of programs don't have a good mechanism in place to actually use what they learned from the assessment. They learn lots of things but it's not necessarily clear how that is applied in determining the program services that somebody will get.

Another question is, many of you, I assume, are providing a variety of services like parenting, life skills, co-parenting, those kinds of services. And the question is how do you fit employment services in with those other services. And I'm sure we'll hear a lot from Halbert and Carl about some of those kinds of issues. But I think it is a challenge many people come to programs for different reasons. Many of them maybe they came because they wanted to get a job and there are other services that they also would be helpful for them. And the question is how do you sequence that and how do you combine all that.

Which of the ancillary services and support that you provide are most important? The reason I put this on the list is that these things can be costly. And so it's very useful to know which of the ones that make the most difference — I don't think we know that answer from research. I'm talking about everything from transportation assistance, childcare assistance, you know, referrals for mental health, drug treatment — all those kinds of other services that are not directly about finding a job, but can have a huge effect on somebody's ability to find it and keep a job. And then something that we're looking at a lot is whether employment services can be bolstered; whether the impact of

those services can be bolstered by addressing cognitive behavioral issues. And I mean these are issues that in the way people think that can affect the way they act. And can lead to behaviors that make it very difficult to find jobs. Various kinds of cognitive behavioral interventions are used heavily in the justice system to help people reduce behaviors that can get them in trouble with the law. It may be that many of those same kinds of behaviors are the same sorts of behaviors that cause people to lose jobs. And I know many programs use versions of these kinds of services in conjunction with more traditional employment services. And one of the things we're trying to study right now is how those kinds of services can bolster an employment program.

I just wanted to leave off with a little bit about some studies that are underway because there's going to be a tremendous amount of information coming out over the next couple of years. And everything that I just said might be completely changed. There's the PACT Project which HHS [Health and Human Services] is running which is evaluating a set of responsible fatherhood programs. I think Halbert's program may be part of that. There's the CSED Evaluation which is through the Office of Child Support Enforcement which is looking at child support-led employment programs in a number of states, also using random assignment design. I'm involved in these two projects that are evaluating transitional jobs programs for non-custodial parents and people released from prison and other groups. We're going to start having results this coming year in 2016 from that project. New project that MDRC's involved in called B3 or Building Bridges and Bonds, that's going to be testing essentially components of responsible fatherhood programs so not necessarily entire programs. But trying to get some evidence about some of the issues I mentioned before about specific pieces of programs. There's the Paycheck Plus Project that MDRC is running. We are essentially testing an expanded EITC [Earned Income Tax Credit] for childless workers. I use the term childless workers but many of them are not childless in the sense that they're non-custodial parents; they're just not custodial parents. And we are — the regular EITC that people are eligible tops out at I think about \$500. But in New York City, and now in Atlanta, we are testing for a select group of a few thousand people, we are testing an EITC for childless workers that goes up to as much as \$2,000 a year. So much larger than what they're currently eligible for. And we're looking at how that effects things like employment outcomes, material hardship, child support payments, criminal justice outcomes and a whole variety of things; very exciting project.

And then there are a number of projects going on. The PACE Project is an HHS project; Work Advance is something MDRC is doing that are testing various kinds of career pathways programs. These are different kinds of training programs for a variety of different populations. And hopefully we'll be able to learn more about the whole occupational training area from those projects. So, I'm going to leave it at that and hopefully we can come back to some of this in the discussion. There's my contact information if anybody wants to get in touch. Send it back to you Nigel.

Nigel Vann: Okay Dan, thanks very much. And that just set the table very well, yes. I think as Dan said, you know, there's a lot of key questions here that we're going to be addressing in the rest of the Webinar. I think particularly how to involve employers, the right kind of staff skills.

I do want to mention again in the Downloadable Resources section you can download the Resources List and that has further information on a lot of work that Dan's doing with MDRC. Also, a lot of the ongoing research projects that he mentioned you can find links to more information on that in the resources. They're all under the Administration for Children and Families Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, OPRE.

And so we've got the resources there from OPRE, from the Clearinghouse, also from the Office of Family Assistance, from MDRC, from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Fatherhood Research and Practice network and a lot of others. And one thing — again we encourage you, you know, to think of this as a learning community. As you look at that resources list, if you see resources that you're familiar with and you're thinking why aren't they on this list send them to us and we'll stick them on there if it's applicable.

So one other thing I wanted to say as I introduce Halbert. Halbert and Carl are both current Office of Family Assistance grantees and have been for quite a while now. And I'm guessing there's quite a few folk on the call who are new Office of Family Assistance grantees so I did just want to preface some of what you're going to hear from Halbert and Carl in terms of what they do at their organization. And have been building this over a number of years. And they do leverage a range of resources to provide these services. So you can't necessarily do everything that they're doing through your new Office of Family Assistance grants. If you want to do anything that you're not sure about, as always, you have to talk to your Federal Project Specialist. So I just wanted to put that caveat up front there. And then let's bring Halbert to the table to share some wisdom about what works in St. Louis. Halbert, time is yours.

Halbert Sullivan: Good morning. Or should I say good afternoon? First, I would like to thank the National Fatherhood Clearinghouse for this opportunity. And a special thanks to Nigel whom I've known for many years.

In the bio you've gotten enough information about me. I won't repeat any of that. We are a fatherhood organization. We were created as an agency to address the issues centered around fatherlessness and to improve outcomes for children using the father as a vehicle to do so. So it's this way we build all of our methods and strategies around how we could improve the lives of children, families and communities as is indicated in this mission. My team, we were created in 1997 and if you look at these goals we're still working with the same goals. We feel that they're still applicable for the work that we're doing today.

I want to bring special emphasis to the third bullet which talks about both parents. We have created as part of our programs — we currently have a youth program. We also have what we call a Parenting and Partnership Program. That's a program that works with the mothers of the children. We created this program because, as I say, our main focus is to improve outcomes for children. And to do so we decided to work with the moms to enhance the likelihood of us creating doable and inclusive co-parenting agreements that might lead to a little bit more visitation for our dads. Our youth program — we created that so that we can sort of be a preventive — to get in front of this thing that we keep calling deadbeat dads; to help youth to understand what our responsible behavior — goal setting and things of that nature for their life.

We've been around for a while. We have experimented with a lot of different approaches. But from the very beginning we started out using this so-called cold-hearted process. We've been using the same approach for 17 years. Now when I say when you — we looked at a few different approaches. We provide our services day and evening. And we have another project that we call our Father's Web. And that was one of those projects that is a project where guys just come in a couple times a week for a couple of hours. Well, for those guys who choose to come they seem to enjoy but we could not deliver a lot of content through that type of setup. Cold-hearted approach allows us — I think we've got about 210 hours per week, over a six-week period of time to deal with our dads, their situations and employment.

So we focus in on parenting and that's because we want to enhance the interaction between our dad and his child. Responsible parenting is a great thing. However we feel very strongly that part of being a responsible dad is that you have a job. Well during this six-week intervention we weave in our employment readiness; information as well as our employment readiness activity. And for us, we use the repetitive learning process. The employment readiness activities are very important. A dad that spends time with his child, fathers love their children and they want to be able to be providers. The population that we serve shouldn't be any surprise to anybody. We work with both dads; either the custodial dad or the non-custodial dad.

However, we're looking at a — we're working with a low-income population fathers. Naturally, if your income level is higher than say \$40,000 we would not be able to allow you into our program. That was unless you've got about eight kids or something like that, then that would put you below the federal poverty guidelines. We work with dads of all ages through our youth program. We've had dads that were as young as 13 years old. And as you know a vast

amount of our dads have child support issues. Many of those issues are centered around needing a modification or trying to get some help with their drivers' license, to keep goals or prevent them from being taken away.

One of our newest programs, we've been around — we've been working with re-entering citizens for at least the last 13 years. However, we receive funding to bring more structure to that. We work with a little over 300 re-entering citizens per year. During that process, naturally for the fathers, they have to participate in a responsible fatherhood program. But they receive our job training, stopping abuse intervention and as well as employment placement, and case management. We have a partnership with our Department of Corrections, which allows us to go into the prison system and begin working with our dads at least six months prior to them being released. You heard Nigel talk about how we've been around for a long time. And many of the things that we have in place; some may not be able to put in place. But I would suggest that those who are working with this population, and any population, that they get some type of therapeutic approach to working with their client population. What you see on the screen is our therapeutic approach. And it all involves stepping out for our fathers to change their mind-set.

We work with, as I stated, the low-income population coming from a very urban setting as well as having backgrounds of criminal behavior. My method or strategy is to help the dads to begin to work on themselves in changing how they view themselves, changing how they view them situations and just grasp, hold to what is occurring, in so-called normal society, around them. We move forward once we get into — this is the method or technique that my social service team will employ. The facilitators will employ as well as my career advisors will employ in their interaction with our fathers.

A few of the services that we start off with at the Father's Support Center we have a whole host of services. Our guys again — eight hours a day with us, five days a week for six weeks. Services are provided as though you were in high school. First period from 9:00 to 10:00 you've got English, second period you've got science and so forth and so on. So we have a variety of services all built around responsible behavior, but also we have services intended to meet some of the emergency or crisis needs. Many of our guys will come in, some of them will be homeless some of them will be on drugs. And we have different services that we can provide that will address homelessness. Very limited temporary housing situations. We can also support for the emergency assistance and pay for housing for a short period of time.

Our fathers will start out with putting together their Career Pathways Plan. Their plan would also include a single care coordinated plan which is pretty much a goal-setting [inaudible] or IEP, depending on the language that you're used to using. Fathers that are participating in our department stability, they get mentoring. The mentoring and the job coaching is pretty similar. The earlier statement was asked, we work very closely with our employers for one thing. So mentoring and job coaching is very similar. It allows us an opportunity to maintain a relationship with the employer, and thus maintain a relationship with the guys that we place into employment.

When we look at job readiness, we dig a little bit deeper into our job readiness piece. Our job readiness piece is not just about how to fill out applications or how to put together a resume. We do assessments and we will begin it with literacy where it's needed. The other key piece for our job readiness piece, if guys have their adult basic education or their GED, high school diploma, we do another assessment to test what vocational skills that they may be interested in. And during the process we would help the guys to complete a FAFSA, which is a Pell Grant application. But we also have some funding that can pay for some vocational skills training. And it is my contention that as my previous speaker mentioned, that guys need employment. And they need to be — those who come to us are I would say about 85%, 90% of them are unemployed. So they need some income ASAP. And we would encourage them getting that income. As a matter of fact we'll help them to get it. But we also want them to participate in the vocational skills training so that they can, at some point, be able to afford to pay child support and live on their own. And pay for their own livelihood, their own living.

The next line is just a simple overview. We created our own employment readiness training curriculum. And this curriculum is not rocket science by any means. This is anybody could utilize some of the content that's in this curriculum. As a matter of fact, we borrowed the curriculum content and topics from initiatives that were taken from the original Workforce Investment Act [WIA]. To concentrate on personal development, that again that's an opportunity to get to the change of attitude and behavior as it relates to employment. Most of our guys feel as though a minimum wage job is below them. Well we'll work with them to get their attitude changed. A minimum wage job is better than no job is better than no money. The different topics that are covered, those — on the next slide we'll go into a little bit more in depth the type of material that we think has been very successful in helping our guys to begin to view themselves and their future differently.

As stated before, most of the interaction that we do with our men throughout the six weeks there that they're with us is to get them to change the way they view themselves and their situations. We want them to get the mindset that they are not a victim. They are not being victimized. If a person can stop viewing themselves that way, they are more likely to get motivated and move in a better direction.

One of the main sections that we really drill in is that Section 2. We really want our guys to understand work ethics. The men will come to us, again, five days a week for six weeks, which, and they're supposed to begin class at 8:00 a.m. in the morning. However, if you ask one of our fathers what does 8:00 a.m. mean, it means you're late because we really want them to get here early. Most of the population that we work with will have problems on their jobs because they're always late and/or always absent. So we really, really drill that in so they understand the value that they bring to the company by being on time.

The next slide, Section 3, deals mostly with how to conduct yourself. A significant amount of people think that these guys or people should know how to conduct themselves on a job. But yet their history shows that they don't know how to conduct themselves on a job. So we don't take it for granted that they should know how to. Because you can see from these topics, they're very basic. The important piece is that we cover it. The other important piece is that we have the guys to actually interact. We do a lot of modeling. We do a lot of roleplaying. We do a lot of role reversal where a guy might be facilitating a topic, and we allow them to really, really get into it so they can feel it and know what it seems like. One of the things we talk about when we say *feeling it*, one of the things we'll do is a mock interview. And we'll record those mock interviews so that they in turn can come back and they can critique themselves on what occurred during that interview.

The next Section 5, most of Section 5 is centered around communications. With our population that we work with oftentimes communications for them is about them talking. What we have to get our fathers and our population to understand is that listening is the most important piece of communication. So we work very hard, and every couple of two or three topics we have them drill down. And again there is the roleplaying and the interaction.

Other ones that we will address deals with their health. We put in a health component here basically so that fathers can begin to think about their health, and in turn think about their child's health. We want them thinking about the child's health but we have many of our fathers who have gotten employment and they may have had the child that they're current living with on his or her insurance. However, they don't have their outside children on any insurance. We want them to understand also about nutrition. How to be healthy. We're trusting or hoping that this will impact the entire family.

Then, mentoring and coaching. Highly important. The coaching piece allows us to maintain contact with the client. While they'll come to us five days a week for six weeks — our project actually has interaction with our dads for an entire year, and we're gathering data during that year. A little overview again of the variety of services that are provided to our dads. You see a couple of them where they said — where we talked about referrals and there with mental — or with the substance abuse and the mental health. We actually have some resources where we can pay

for those substance abuse when those dollars as they run out we have relationships in the community that would accept our referrals.

The most problematic piece that we have encountered again is the housing piece. We do work with a regional housing group. However, housing for dads is very limited. The transitional housing is still very limited, but because we've been around for 17 years, we do get a lot of cooperation with providing some housing for our dads. And again, we have some money that we call Emergency Family Assistance dollars, where we can help to house a guy for a small period of time until we can get him employed.

Part of his involvement with us, although it may be in the employment program, again, everything we center around family assistance. I mean family reunifications. A dad who is involved and has family solidity is more likely to maintain employment than a guy that's just out here hanging on the corner.

We have a great, great MOU [memorandum of understanding] with our local — or with our state Child Support Enforcement Agency where we can bring many different interventions that would ease some of the pain of our guys dealing with Child Support Enforcement. Recently, the MOU included that a guy can pay as little as \$20.00 a month for a period of time. And then after he's got employed, after about three months, then they'll start bringing that up. We can intervene with any criminal prosecution that he might incur if he can get to us before he gets to the court.

We also provide transportation assistance. Very important. We hear all the time that this guy, this person should just get a job. Well if you sit back and examine how much it costs for this low-income to no-income person to go and get a job — here in St. Louis, a one-way trip on the Metro link costs you about \$2.50. And it's very difficult for these people because oftentimes they have no money. So that transportation assistance is highly important in your job placement activities.

We're taking a look at our staff, at staff, our employment team. The first person you see here is the employment career advisor. This career advisor essentially is a case manager. This person helps to keep the fathers on track with the Career Pathways and a single care coordinated plan. The career advisor also is responsible to move a father from one job to another job.

Here at Father's Support Center employment is very important, and the guy completing our project, he may find himself in a temporary employment. Temporary job or a minimum wage paying job. Well, the career advisor, their main job is to keep tabs on this father, keep tabs on their employment, and help that father be able to move from that temp job into a permanent job.

We also employ what we call accounts managers. Our accounts managers are actually responsible for the development of employment opportunities. But as you will see with the next slide that I put up, each one of our accounts managers, they manage anywhere from 50 to 60 employers, and their job is to develop opportunities for our guys. Our accounts managers, when they are developing that opportunity with the employers, they do not sell our products as a social service agency. Employers are interested in their bottom line. And so how the accounts managers sell the service is what can we do for your agency. We have a different type of a brochure that these accounts managers are armed with, and this brochure speaks to the training that the guys will have incurred while they are in our program. We'll talk about the attitudinal training that they'll get, the effective communications training they'll get. But they'll also talk about a number of different certificates. This brochure will talk about a number of different certificates that is available to our guys as they go through our employment residency, certificates such as the couple service certificate training, first aid and CPR training, lead abatement training, Microsoft certification training, A+ certification training, CAN/CNA training, face serve training, forklift and OSHA training. These types of things are placed on that brochure so that the employer knows that this guy has, or can, impact his bottom line because this guy will come with certain training that the employer may not have to put in place for this man to be successful, or this person to be successful at the workplace.

The other piece again that we look at when we look at our employment piece is the GED, and I should say literacy and pre-GED. Many of our guys either have problems reading and problems with comprehension. Comprehending what they read. We actually have a GED high set instructor on staff. But at the same time, we will work with other adult basic education providers and we're working through the St. Louis Public Schools and we're working through the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment, which we call SLATE. That's our local WIB [Workforce Investment Board] fast emerging job center, and they assist us too with our GED referrals/placements because that's how we get guys jobs. Depending on when the job is hiring them for, we will need different outlets. And once we get a guy involved with either one of these St. Louis Public Schools, ABE, or SLATE, the social service case manager and the career — the public career advisor, they maintain contact with this father.

In many different ways, either through visiting the job, hence job coaching. Visiting the GED site, and/or letters and phone contact. I don't know if I mentioned it earlier, but data, data, data, data, data, data, data, data. I do know I had it on one of my earlier slides. Our data is established to learn more about naturally our successes, right. But we have our own system. It's called A-pricot. A-pricot is pretty similar to efforts to outcome, it's just a little bit more friendlier [*sic*] to use. But we are able to build different things into that system to learn a little bit more about the effectiveness of our program, but we also do pre- and post-tests, client satisfaction surveys, so we can learn from a client perspective what's successful, but we also can learn more about clients' attitudes.

Nigel Vann: Excuse me, Halbert, but I just wanted to pop in now and make sure we have enough time for Carl. I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I think you did talk about your last slide a little bit, right, so did you think we could pass it on to Carl now and then come back and hear about the final slide at this time at the end?

Halbert Sullivan: Well, as you pointed out, I have touched on that so we can move forward.

Nigel Vann: Okay, thank you very much. So I really appreciate the presentation, yes, you've got so much information to share Halbert, that's great. We do just need to do another quick poll question, if you could pull that up Enzo and then we'll go to Carl.

So as you see, this is just asking you "what is the main challenge you face in delivering employment services for father?" And you can respond there's a lack of jobs in our area, there's a need for more job training in specific employment fields, finding jobs for participants with criminal records. And accessing support services to help participants overcome barriers as well as job retention is the fifth option. I'll just give you another second on that, and then we'll go to Carl to hear about what they've been doing in West Virginia. So Carl, the time is yours.

Carl Chadband: All right, thank you very much. I first want to thank the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, my distinguished co-presenters, who I'm big fans of, especially Halbert. He is definitely a pioneer in the field of fatherhood.

And also our support that we receive from the Office of Family Assistance, Damon, who's a good friend of mine as well. So without delay, I am the COO of the Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action, and hopefully I can give you some information and help you avoid some of the heartache and heartbreak that we've had over the years since we've been working with fathers. Congratulations to any new grantees that are on the line. We've been doing this work as a nonprofit since 1993 where we started, and we just basically started helping kids who could not read the Bible at the time.

We are a faith-based 501(c)(3) of Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church here in West Virginia. And unlike most programs that serve in a county or one site, we serve in about 20 counties throughout the state of West Virginia. So we've mainly focused on four areas of our framework. Our services fall within this framework of HEAL [Healthy Eating Active Living]. We're trying to heal communities. So we have health initiatives, we have employment initiatives, asset development initiatives, and then learning opportunities. So what that basically means is because of the work that

we've done, in particular around structuring families and working with fathers, we were approached by a health agency, by our local DHS, or DHHR [Department of Health and Human Resources] where you're located. Because of the amount of men that we were serving, they asked us to set up a clinic so that we could provide physical exams for them and their children and also we can do fee-for-service. So that may be an opportunity that you want to look into with your own agency to see if you can, outside of your grant, look forward to sustain your efforts for your agency.

The other opportunity that you may want to look at for your agency is to become a socially necessary service provider. Again, that's the fee-for-service. Maybe some of the training that you're doing you don't have staff that are on a hundred percent of the time or you could hire some other folks throughout your agency to be designated as a service provider for your DHHR or DHS, working with the clientele that you currently have.

From the top, Dan had mentioned some information about Public Pride Adventures around transitional jobs and working with them, and I'll get into that a little bit. They actually coined a term, there's a difference between a deadbeat dad and a dead broke dad. And I think a lot of the folks that we will encounter are actually dead broke dads. Everyone knows a deadbeat dad doesn't really want to do anything, wants to sit around on his butt in his shorts. But the dead broke dad is the guy that wants to be involved with their children, however needs some kind of opportunity or some kind of break or some kind of skills training in order to realize that. So we'll continue on with the PowerPoint presentation. Again, we started in 2003. I was the first fatherhood specialist on with KISRA, and we've been doing it until present day. Through our new grant we have, it's called ReFORM, and this is our third time being funded.

We typically serve nonviolent, nonsexual offenders. We assist them to reintegrate into the community. Of course we have employment training and placement programs. But as mentioned by the first presenter as well, we focus on cognitive behavioral skills. Just to stop a little bit there, there's a term that we like to use whether you're working with folks who are incarcerated or previously incarcerated, returning citizens or folks that just have a checkered past as far as work history, we have to do something in order to get the way that they think to change. We like to say: "The stinkier their thinking, the more services they need." So on the reentry side, we have an assessment tool which is called the LS/CMI. If you look it up, it's just L-S, slash, it should be front slash, C-M-I. And that stands for Levels of Service/Casement Management Inventory. And that basically focuses in on how high of a criminal tendency a person has. So that will focus in on mainly six domains. It goes everything from antisocial and prosocial contacts to educational level, the amount of sensors that they have on their background, so forth and so on. So that may be something that you want to look into as an assessment if you're working with ex-offenders. If you're working with a person who doesn't have any criminal background, we then have — so that LS/CMI drives our case management for the fathers that we work with. But if you have a person that doesn't have any criminal background, we have more of a goal-based approach that drives their case management. So that's just some food for thought for you.

We also help with challenges as the other programs do around substance abuse, mental illness or co-occurring disorders, housing and employment. If you're talking employment, you can't talk employment unless you talk about the other issues that surround employment or impact the employment such as housing, income, food, healthcare coverage, their level of education, their literacy, their mobility, disabilities, mental health, their substance abuse history, legal, safety, credit, life skills, I mean the list goes on, all these things that impact employment. So we found out a long time ago that we couldn't only say, hey, come over here, we'll get you a job. Because I can get any guy a job today, but they'll lose it tomorrow because of how they think or the baggage that they're carrying. So when guys come to us there are a lot of cons. They're in emergency mode. They're in high toxic stress mode, very traumatic awareness or sense. And we have to get them to slow down and say, listen, it's because of the decisions that you made to this point prior to coming to our program that you still have to deal with. There's no magic wand that we can wave right now in order to speed up that process, but you do have to deal with the consequences of some of your decisions that you've made in the past. And we don't want to hold you to your past. We want to help you with a game plan to go farther and further, but you do have to pay your dues so to speak. So to Halbert's point earlier about folks not wanting to have a minimum wage job or that being beneath them, you have to start somewhere.

And that is our message to them as well. So here from our CEO, Dr. Foster, there's a quote by her about helping with resources to allow ex-offenders to build careers, not just a job. Pushing ex-offenders and fathers to get low wage or dead end jobs increases their likelihood to go back to the ways that got them into the problems, in that situation in the first place. So we also focus on skill building, hands-on training, job development. We have case managers, job coaches and instructors. But if you're in a more rural area we have specialists, where a specialist kind of is a jack-of-all-trades and they do a little of everything.

The other thing that I would suggest for your programs as it relates to assisting folks with employment is have as much of your staff cross-trained as possible. Okay, let's see. There's a quote up there on the side. I don't know if you guys can see that as well.

We also do support services, mentoring, transportation, housing, childcare assistance, and those that are listed there as well. One of — we are also a Second Chance grantee as well. We've been that for the second time. We are an AFI grantee. These are all resources that you can look up that will help with employing the men that you work with. So if you ever get a chance to look up AFI, that's Assets for Independence, typically they have IDA programs. IDA is an Individual Development Account. With that account you can — in our program how it works is in six months a person could save \$500, and we would match their \$500 eight to one — actually six to one — no, it was eight to one, and it would be \$4,000 with combined, with their \$500 in order to go toward a down payment on a home. It has to develop some kind of asset. A down payment on a home, to start a business, or to go to school. So, if you look up Assets for Independence, that may be a supplementary resource that you can add to some of the services that you currently have. Okay.

The main thing that I — I don't really want to get into the weeds of all of our program of what we do. I think we all will do the same things. We're going to be doing something on economic stability or helping folks get employed. We're going to do something on relationship skills or healthy marriage or whatever it is, and we're going to be doing something on workforce development, and then some things on parenting or relationship education.

So all of those things will be the same. I will challenge you to identify a cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum. The one that we currently use is called The Courage to Change. And it has a bunch of different topics that you could review. Again, any of my suggestions or the presenters' suggestions, check with your federal program specialist to see if it's something that you could change in your program, if they're in favor of that, or if you have to stay in current accordance with the guidelines that you agreed to on your federal contract. So what we did on our — we started our Growing Jobs project that previously came on our last grant. We had an awesome federal project specialist that we kept saying, hey, these guys, they love our programs, they've gone through all the courses, we keep betting them. We get high marks on our inventory. Our surveys, satisfaction surveys from them. And they keep saying the same thing, Chadband, nobody will hire me. So what we had to do was we said, look, we have to try and ensure a way for these guys to get hired.

So what we did, we started creating jobs. So the thing that we started off doing with our Growing Jobs project, it was three phase. You can see a small picture. This is across from our retirement center where most of our programs occur. We set up three greenhouses and a packaging facility in the back where we grow food. So we a lot of times when you're working with these guys, they'll tell you they don't have — they've never had a job. They've always worked under the table. So we took advantage of some folks and their transferrable skills. We taught them how to grow something legal instead of something illegal. Definitely got both sort of transferrable skills, and then also a way to start a social enterprise that typically focuses on the three P's, people, the profit and the planning. So you're not strictly worried about the bottom line of the business but you're trying to create jobs for fathers, also get more locally grown produce into your local area, and also produce the carbon footprint that's out there where in West Virginia we may be getting produce from Mexico or from California.

We also had — so we had a farm there. We also had — or have — we have a food truck where folks can do culinary skills, and then we had a culinary skills kitchen where folks would learn serve face certification, knife skills, culinary math and fabrication. So the goal was to be training folks on the farm, teaching them there to see if they liked that. If they wanted to go into catering they could go into our culinary skills program. And then, if they just wanted to be their own boss, which a lot of them want to, they could see if it was for them by using our food truck and they could go out on their own and try that as well. So this is what our farm previously looked like. We had a bunch of flowers in one and we had some produce in the other one. We originally just started with two. But if you go down this path, and we can talk about this on a whole 'nother Webinar about social enterprise or doing social enterprises for the help of folks that you work with or your agency, we actually converted our houses from using soil to hydroponics. So you can see some of the jobs that we did actually create and that we — the 32 participants they would complete going through that. Annually we were serving 2,000 fathers per year, just to give you a feel for what we were doing. Our current numbers for this round is around 800 so we'll be serving about 800 fathers, just to give you a little context. So once we — of course you want to — you have to get the first, the right people on the bus if you're going to do a social enterprise and you're trying to create jobs for the fathers that you work with or the men that you work with. So we had to hire in some consultants to help us on how to grow. We also took full advantage of our 1890 Land Grant Institution. West Virginia State University has been a great partner of ours. They actually gave us this hoop house, this third hoop house here. So we're doing hydroponic, hypoponic and aeroponic growing. That is basically all soilless growing in order to help create more jobs in our community.

Also, so I won't bore you with all the great things that we grow. I mentioned some of this previously and trying to get us on time so we can hear from you as well. But we do go to farmer's markets. We do — we are an aggregator. We did seize the opportunity to create something that other farmers who didn't have the capital or the resources that we had to actually come to our facilities and they can box or package their produce or also participate in value-added products. So the simple concept of growing hydroponically is you can see how many head of lettuce. You have here about 16 per row, 16 to 20 per row, and then I can get 150 in a house. So you're looking at about 118,000 head of lettuce in two greenhouses. And you usually can charge anywhere from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a head per for lettuce. On the vertical farm that we set up on the west side of Charleston, which is a unique concept because a lot of times people don't have land, one of their program is operating.

You can use an old building. So we're growing in a warehouse. And we'll actually produce — when you saw the picture here about this one right here, you're basically using, like if you were in Sam's Club, the pallet rack, so you have six levels of growing. You're producing on each level. You're using lights to grow as well. And in the facility that we have we'll produce about seven tons of leafy greens per year. So those kinds of things are what we're using to try and sustain not only our program but our agency. Again, have a conversation with your federal project officer to see if that is something that you guys could explore. If not, go to your local bank. They have CRA dollars, which is Community Reinvestment Act dollars, where they can help you design or pay for a feasibility study.

You want to hit these banks — hit is not the word whenever you're doing development, but since everybody on the line is family, you want to hit the banks up in January because that's when they have the majority, the lion's share of their CRA dollars available. So I would make my way to any bank that's in your serving in their community, they have to reinvest dollars back into the communities where they are placed and where they serve.

You also may want to partner with your Department of Agriculture. Also some of the great partners that Halbert mentioned: Child Support, the Department of Corrections, your regional jails if you have a regional jail, and also your local hospitals. There are many opportunities for you to step in, if you really believe in the work that you're doing, you're training these guys and you think you have quality individuals, you can broker deals with large businesses and small businesses to take over shifts for Walmart. I know the Ridge Project, you did that out of Ohio and had been very successful with that. I know in Chicago the Safer Foundation has started a staffing company where they employ their guys as well.

So there are many opportunities, if you really believe in God, you should hire them also, a lot of you are in the process of hiring staff. I remember going to a training for the National Conference for our Second Chance Act grantee. And these are the folks that advocate the most for folks that have a checkered past or criminal background, and they asked a show of hands for all of the grantees that had a person on staff with a criminal background, and no one raised their hand. So we immediately came back to West Virginia to try and practice what we preach. So I would encourage you to hire the target population that you're trying to serve with the grant dollars that you have. So right now, Nigel, I'm interested to open up the floor or pass it off to you. There are other things I could talk about, but for the interest of time I wanted to make sure we had enough time to get to the folks that were on the line.

Nigel Vann: Okay, Carl, thank you very much, yes. And, you know, as Carl indicated, we could continue this conversation for a long while, and it feels that we really just sort of scratched the surface.

I would like to underline what Carl just said about, you know, looking to hire participants, because in my experience sort of, you know, visiting programs, I think some of the most effective staff are guys who have come through initially as a participant and then really get to give back to others. So we are getting pretty tight on time and we've got quite a few questions. As I said, questions that we don't get to today we will ask the presenters to provide us some responses in writing and then we'll post those.

But I did just want to quickly circle back to Dan with at least one question. So Dan, there was a question while you were talking about the high school diploma. You know, you had mentioned the GED doesn't seem to have much of a direct payoff in the labor market. Is that the same for the high school diploma?

Dan Bloom: No, I mean I think the research that's been done has actually compared people who get a GED to people who get a regular diploma and has found that from the employer's perspective, the GED is sort of considered somehow lesser than a traditional high school diploma. It may be because they have a perception that people who have gotten a high school diploma, you know, had a certain level of sort of stick-to-it-iveness that allowed them to make it through all the credits that they needed. So I think it is, I think it is — people do — the research has mostly I think found that the GED and the high school diploma are not equivalent.

Nigel Vann: Okay, okay. And there were a couple of other research-specific questions. This one may be too complicated. If it is we can respond later. But there was a question asked if you'd seen the difference in the results in terms of employment retention based on the prime refocus of the program. You know, for instance if there was a program focused on child support arrears instead of parenting or relationship stuff, do you think that makes a difference in employment outcomes?

Dan Bloom: I don't think we have — you know, I don't think there have been enough studies to really be able to say that. The one area where I think employment retention has definitely been affected is the programs that have managed to supplement people's earnings when they were working in low wage jobs that have definitely had effects on employment retention. But in terms of that particular question that you asked, I don't think we have, you know, evidence on that.

Nigel Vann: Okay, thanks Dan. And we also had quite a few questions on recruitment. I wonder Halbert if you could just sort of very briefly talk about what has perhaps been the key for you in recruiting guys and gaining their trust to come into the program.

Halbert Sullivan: Well, the key thing for us is that we do hire guys that have completed our program. And during our recruitment process we use many different ways. The main — one of the main things is the street outreach. Where not only do our guys who complete the program go into the street, passing out flyers and talking to people, but they are also paired with a professional so that we can answer some questions if asked on the street. Most of our guys come from word of mouth. We've been around about 18, 19 years, and so we've done some good work. We

also have a great relationship with family court, as well as Child Support Enforcement, where we will get referrals there from those entities. But the key thing is those past graduates. Guys who have completed the program volunteering to hit the street to enhance our recruitment efforts. Anything else?

Nigel Vann: No, that's perfect, yes I'll shoot some more questions at you afterwards to respond to so we can get that. And Carl, if you could just again very briefly, could you just say something about how you've worked with other employment and training providers in the community?

Carl Chadband: Sure. I had to take my phone off mute. We work with a bunch of different employment trainers in the area. We see that there's a lot of folks out there that need help and it's not just going to be our agency that does that, so we really leverage the power of partnership in order to work with them. We use them and we host job fairs annually — actually semi-annually. We also have an annual conference where we have a job fair built into our conference as well.

So we also for that, it would be good to have a town hall meeting with employers, and one thing that we've found is we had to go from being an advocate to practicing what we preach. So employers are expecting you and your agency to go out and say hey, hire these guys, they're great. Let me tell you about this Federal Fidelity Bonding Program that will bond these individuals, and they also get a tax credit. But they also want to see that you have some skin in the game. So when you can say hey we hire our own participants, as Halbert has stated, it carries a lot of weight. Because know — a lot of these folks don't want to be known as the ex-offender employer or the place that hires *those guys*. So you have to practice what you preach. You also want to have town halls where employers are able to get together and talk to themselves to say who they are hiring and how their experience has been with the jobs from your program as well.

Nigel Vann: Okay, well much appreciated, yes. And did you see in your — in the Chat Box there you'll see that Jackie Rhodes, from our staff is sharing some information about our Responsible Father Toolkit that's got a lot of other key stuff for you there.

On your screen you see contact info for each of the presenters and also for the Clearinghouse. And I forgot to mention it upfront but we're having a few problems lately with the [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov) e-mail address. So if you did want to send us any comments, questions, ideas, which again this is a learning community and we welcome all your input and we'll try and respond to everything. You might copy Enzo there, one of our colleagues, and just to make sure that we see your message in a timely fashion.

So with that, we are at time here. I do want to pull up the evaluation questions. Enzo, if you could just pull those up for everybody to respond to real quickly. And if you'd bear with me and stay on the line I'll give each of the presenters the opportunity to say just one final thought, one take-home message, and just really no more than one or two sentences, but I would like to give them that opportunity. So if you have time to stay and listen to that please do. If not, we certainly appreciate your time and look forward to talking to you next time, and we'll be responding to any e-mails. So I see the people that responded to that first question. If we can go to the second question. The second question is just asking whether you strongly agree, agree, et cetera, with the presenter's effectively communicated expertise. And one more second on that, and then let's have the final question.

And so, while we're doing this presenters, if you could just think about that one, really one sentence final word of wisdom you want to leave people with. I'll go back through you in the order that we had the presentations. So in fact, Dan, if you'd like to start now while folks are just finishing up on the poll, so if you could just leave us with one final thought, one key thing you'd like people to take away from this?

Dan Bloom: I don't know if I have any pearls of wisdom. I would just say stay tuned because there's a lot of new evidence coming out over the next year or two and we should be learning a lot more, so hopefully Nigel you'll be able to help communicate to folks what's being learned.

Nigel Vann: Absolutely, yes, and, you know, for anybody who's not on our listserv, make sure you do send us your e-mail address and we'll put you on there and we'll keep you updated on all the stuff that Dan was talking about earlier. Halbert, final word of wisdom?

Halbert Sullivan: When working with your populations, make sure who your populations are. When we work with the low-income population, we learn that the more frequently the interaction from the agency, the better your outcomes are going to be for that person. So my word of wisdom is to create a project that has a lot of frequency, a lot of touches from the agency to enhance a good outcome for your client.

Nigel Vann: Absolutely, and, you know, one of the questions that we didn't get to respond to fully was how to you build trust with dads, and I think that answers that pretty well as well, for sure, yes. So Carl, you get the final word.

Carl Chadband: Sure. Be a family. It's the community. We're all in it together. We go as the field goes. And any of the presenters will tell you, please feel free to call them. Also, be a researcher, you know, and a practitioner. Take advantage of the website links that were offered to you. There is some great research coming out that is now bridge research. It's not just for folks who are Ph.D.'s, but it's also for individuals who are practitioners as well. So find out what the latest trends are and stay ahead of the curve.

Nigel Vann: Great, I really like that. Yes, I like the whole idea of family, because we are, you know, I certainly feel that, and Halbert said, he and I have known each other for a long while. I met Dan back in the '90s and I've known Carl a pretty long while as well now, so what we try and do through the clearinghouse is be a vehicle to share these kind of resources and update you, and, you know, I think talking to family, that means in this context, it certainly means employers as you've heard, you've got to have employers on board with you. It means all the other folk in the community you can help with the supportive services to overcome barriers. It means the researchers that we can learn from, et cetera, et cetera. And so with that I bid you farewell for now, and we will be in touch, and please stay tuned to our website, and we hope to talk to you in the near future. Have a good day everybody.

Dan Bloom: Thank you much. Thank you much, good to hear from you Carl.

Operator: And that does conclude today's conference. Thank you for your participation.