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Fatherhood Initiatives: Connecting Fathers to Their Children

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Summary

Long-standing research indicates that children raised in one-parent homes are more likely than children raised in homes with both biological parents to do poorly in school, have emotional and behavioral problems, become teenage parents, and have poverty-level incomes as adults. In an effort to improve the long-term outlook for children in one-parent homes, federal, state, and local governments, along with public and private organizations, have supported programs and activities that promote the financial and personal responsibility of noncustodial parents to their children and reduce the incidence of parental absence in the lives of children. Fatherhood initiatives include campaigns that seek to encourage noncustodial parents to connect with their children; counseling and training on "soft skills," including relationship skills, to help noncustodial parents connect with them; and employment and training services so that they can help financially support them.

Over the years, sources of federal funding for fatherhood programs have included the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, TANF state Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) funding, Child Support Enforcement (CSE) funds, and Social Services Block Grant (Title XX) funds. However, the need for a specific funding stream for the program was identified in legislation as early as the 106th Congress, and President George W. Bush included funding for such programs in each of his budgets. Ultimately, funding for a competitive Healthy Marriage Promotion (HMP) and Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grants program was enacted as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171). Between FY2006 and FY2010, the act provided up to $50 million per year for the RF grants and about $100 million per year for the HMP grants, but the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-291) subsequently altered the split between the programs to $75 million each. Funding for these programs has been extended on multiple occasions since that time, usually through provisions in appropriations acts. Most recently, on May 5, 2017, funding was extended through the end of FY2018 by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

Most fatherhood programs include media campaigns that emphasize the importance of emotional, physical, psychological, and financial connections of fathers to their children. They also include elements such as parenting education; responsible decisionmaking; mediation services for both parents; information on the CSE program; skills development related to conflict resolution, coping with stress, and problem-solving; peer support; and job-training opportunities. RF grantees include states, territories, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and public and nonprofit community groups (including religious organizations).

The 42 most recently awarded RF grants, which are scheduled to run through FY2020, have included a new emphasis on key short- and long-term outcomes intended to enhance evaluation and strengthen program design. According to the Office of Family Assistance (in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services), it is expected that the new RF grant-funded programs (and their evaluations) will increase the understanding of policymakers and others of what works and why.

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Introduction

While 69% children in the United States live in homes with two parents, an estimated 27% of children are maintained in one-parent homes.[1] Most children in the latter group are in homes maintained by the mother only. In 2017, 23% of children lived in mother-only households, a statistic that has roughly doubled since 1970 (when it was 11%).[2]

Long-standing research indicates that children raised in one-parent homes are more likely than children raised in homes with both biological parents to do poorly in school, have emotional and behavioral problems, become teenage parents, and have poverty-level incomes as adults.[3] Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that although children with absent fathers are at greater risk of having the aforementioned problems, most do not experience them.

In an effort to improve the long-term outlook for children in one-parent homes—particularly those with low-income noncustodial parents—federal, state, and local governments (along with public and private organizations) have supported programs and activities that promote the financial and personal responsibility of noncustodial parents to their children and reduce the incidence of parental absence in the lives of children. These "fatherhood initiatives" include campaigns that seek to encourage noncustodial parents to connect with their children; counseling and training on "soft skills," including relationship skills, to help noncustodial parents connect with them; and employment and training services so that they can help financially support them. (Although most people refer to programs that seek to help parents initiate or maintain contact with their children and become emotionally involved in their lives as "fatherhood" programs, the programs generally are gender-neutral with regard to who may participate. Their underlying goal is participation of the noncustodial parent in the lives of his or her children.)[4]

This report provides an overview of the federal government's financial support of fatherhood initiatives, including through the Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grant program. It begins by providing a legislative history of this financial support and a summary of allowable activities under the RF grant program. This is followed by an explanation of some of the research and evaluations that have occurred via demonstration programs. The report concludes by briefly examining the role of governmental child support enforcement (CSE) agencies in fatherhood programs, initiatives to promote and support father-child interaction outside the parents' relationship, and recent developments with regard to work-oriented programs for noncustodial parents.

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[1] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2017, Table C3. Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old: 1960 to Present, Internet release date: November 15, 2017. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/cps-2017.html.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), see also L. Bumpass, "Children and Marital Disruption: A Replication and Update," *Demography*, vol. 21 (1984), pp. 71-82; Rebecca A. Maynard, ed., *Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report on the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing* (New York, 1996). Also see Sara McLanahan, Laura Tach, and Daniel Schneider, "The Causal Effects of Father Absence," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2013), pp. 399-427.

[4] The responsible fatherhood grant opportunity information documents have included such language as the following: "The projects and activities assisted under these awards must be available to mothers and expectant mothers who are able to benefit from the activities on the same basis as fathers and expectant fathers"; Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance, *New Pathways for Fathers and Families*, HHS-2015-ACF-OFA-FK-0993, p. 9.

Legislative History Overview

Low-income noncustodial parents historically have had little opportunity to participate in public assistance programs. Most of the policy discussion about low-income children that had occurred as part of the "welfare reform" debates between the 1960s to 1990s was focused on single custodial mothers and their children, not on the fathers of those children. This changed to some degree with the enactment of the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193), which established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The third finding of that law states: "Promotion of responsible fatherhood and motherhood is integral to successful child rearing and the well-being of children." In addition, three of the four goals of the TANF program included in the law were consistent with the components of most fatherhood programs: ending welfare dependence by employment and marriage, reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. This meant that states could spend TANF funds on fatherhood programs, and the law further allowed any services aimed at reduced nonmarital births or encouraging two-parent families to be free of income eligibility rules.

> *While fathers must fulfill their financial commitments, they must also fulfill their emotional commitments. Dads play indispensable roles that cannot be measured in dollars and cents: nurturer, mentor, disciplinarian, moral instructor, and skills coach, among other roles.*
>
> **Source:** Executive Office of the President, *A Blueprint for New Beginnings—A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities* (February 2001), chap. 12, p. 75. (Administration of President George W. Bush)

During and soon after welfare reform, fatherhood-related changes were made to certain programs. For example, with regard to the CSE program, visitation and child support had historically been treated as legally separate issues, with only enforcement activities being under the purview of the federal government. However, the 1996 welfare reform law appropriated an additional $10 million per fiscal year in CSE funds for states to establish and operate access and visitation programs.[5] In addition, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-33; enacted the year following welfare reform) included a $3 billion "Welfare to Work" grant program, which expired in 2000, to fund employment services for mothers leaving cash assistance who were long-term recipients. This grant was also available to fund employment services for unemployed or underemployed fathers of those mothers' children.

The next significant legislative development for fatherhood programs occurred during the 109th Congress with the enactment of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171; DRA). The DRA included a provision (in Title IV-A of the Social Security Act) that provided funding for competitive Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grants to public and private entities, and also a Healthy Marriage Promotion (HMP) grants program.[6] The law provided up to $50 million per year (FY2006-FY2010) for RF grants, and up to $100 million per year for HMP grants.[7] Subsequently,

[5] The child access and visitation program (Section 391 of P.L. 104-193) has funded the following activities since FY1997: mediation, counseling, parental education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement, monitored visitation, neutral drop-off and pickup, supervised visitation, and development of guidelines for visitation and custody. In FY2013, about 105,000 parents/guardians received services. The most common services were parent education, mediation, parenting plans, and supervised visitation. Most states used a mix of services. Most of the service providers were Human Services Agencies. Individuals were referred to services by the courts, CSE or welfare agencies, and others, as well as by self-referral. Services were both mandatory and voluntary, as determined by the state. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Access and Visitation Grant Program, FY 2013 Update*, Washington DC, November 2014.

[6] Section 403(a)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(2)).

[7] While the purpose of this report is to discuss responsible fatherhood programs and the RF grants associated with

the RF grants were awarded to 90 organizations to operate fatherhood programs. In addition, 13 other organizations received reentry program grant funding specifically for incarcerated fathers and formerly incarcerated fathers.

During the 111th Congress, the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-291) extended funding for the HMP and RF grants through FY2011, but altered the split between the programs to $75 million each. Subsequently, RF program grants were for three-year grants to 55 organizations, and an additional 5 organizations received reentry program grants. Beyond FY2011, when the funding in the Claims Resolution Act was set to expire, the HMP and RF grants received a series of short-term funding extensions, usually through provisions in appropriations acts. (See **Appendix A** for a list of these extension laws.) A third round of RF grant funding was announced during this period on September 30, 2015, which awarded five-year grants to 39 organizations. (Subsequently, two organizations dropped out of this most recent round of RF grant funding, reducing the total number of participating organizations to 37.[8]) Five other organizations received reentry program grant funding.

Most recently, on May 5, 2017, funding was extended through the end of FY2018 by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31). (See **Appendix B** for a chronological legislative history of the RF program.)[9]

In addition to federal funds explicitly provided for RF grants, there are several other potential sources of federal funding for fatherhood programs. These include federal TANF funds and TANF state maintenance of effort (MOE) funding, which are potentially the largest sources of federal funding for fatherhood initiatives. (Other sources are CSE funds and Social Services Block Grant funds.) The TANF block grant to states is currently funded through FY2018, at an annual level of $16.5 billion. In addition, the state funding or MOE requirement (at the 75% level) is about $10.4 billion annually.[10] Due to a 71% reduction in the cash welfare caseload since FY1994, together with the fixed block grant funding, funds that otherwise would have been spent for cash assistance are now available for other purposes. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), about half of all states use some TANF funds for responsible fatherhood programs.[11]

What Are Fatherhood Initiatives?

The realization that one parent, especially a low-income parent, often cannot meet the financial needs of her or his children is not new. In 1975, the CSE program was viewed as a way to make noncustodial parents responsible for the financial support of their children and recover the costs of public assistance to children and custodial parents.[12] With the advent of welfare reform in

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them, the congressional context for considering these grants has historically involved both the RF grants and the HMP grants. Consequently, when discussing the initial establishment and reauthorization of the RF grant program, this report provides information on the amount provided for both grant programs.

[8] The list of grantees as of September 2017 is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/2015_2020_healthy_marriage_responsible_fatherhood_grantees_09_2017_0.pdf.

[9] For a detailed history of the responsible fatherhood policy arena, see Kathleen Sylvester and Kathleen Reich, "Making Fathers Count: Assessing the Progress of Responsible Fatherhood Efforts," Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002.

[10] For additional information, see CRS Report RL32748, *The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Primer on TANF Financing and Federal Requirements*.

[11] Ibid.

[12] For an overview of the origin and purposes of the CSE program, see CRS Report RS22380, *Child Support Enforcement: Program Basics*.

1996, Congress agreed that many fathers were in the same financial straits as the mothers of their children who were receiving cash welfare. Thus, the 1996 welfare reform law mandated that each state enact laws authorizing that state to issue an order, or request that a court or administrative process issue an order, that requires noncustodial parents who were unable to pay their child support obligation for a child receiving TANF benefits to participate in TANF work activities. Today, while the CSE, TANF, and RF programs remain separate entities, all three interact in a variety of ways with regard to the role of noncustodial parents in the lives of their children.

Since their inception, fatherhood programs have sought to strengthen positive father-child engagement, improve healthy relationships (including couple and coparenting) and marriage, and improve employment and economic mobility opportunities for noncustodial fathers. For the purposes of the RF grant program, federal law specifies the following four activities.[13]

(1) Activities to promote marriage or sustain marriage through activities, such as

- providing information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement for children;
- enhancing relationship skills;
- education regarding how to control aggressive behavior;
- disseminating information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse;
- marriage preparation programs and premarital counseling;
- skills-based marriage education;
- financial planning seminars; and
- divorce education and reduction programs, including mediation and counseling.

(2) Activities to promote responsible parenting, such as

- counseling, mentoring, and mediation;
- disseminating information about good parenting practices;
- teaching parenting skills; and
- encouraging child support payments.

(3) Activities to foster economic stability, such as

- helping fathers improve their economic status by providing activities such as job training, employment services, and career-advancing education; and
- coordination with existing employment services such as welfare-to-work programs, and referrals to local employment training initiatives.

(4) Activities to promote responsible fatherhood that are conducted through a national clearinghouse that provides access to curricula, webinars, research products, and other resources to improve the implementation and success of responsible fatherhood programs.

In addition to the federal funding through the RF grant program, many states and localities, private organizations, and nonprofit agencies also operate fatherhood programs with their own funds. These programs might differ from those funded by RF grants in terms of their focus and activities, although the general overarching purpose remains the same.

Most fatherhood programs include media campaigns that emphasize the importance of emotional, physical, psychological, and financial connections of fathers to their children. In addition, to

[13] Section 403(a)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(2)(C)).

counterbalance some of the procedural, psychological, emotional, and physical barriers to paternal involvement, fatherhood programs often involve courses or other program elements that include many of the following components:

- parenting education—the responsibilities of parents to their children; children's need for affection, gentle guidance, and financial support; the importance of being a proud example and respectful of the other parent; and the need to recognize developmentally appropriate behavior for children of different ages and respond appropriately to children's developmental needs;
- responsible decisionmaking (with regard to sexuality, establishment of paternity, and financial support);
- mentoring relationships with successful fathers and successful couples;
- mediation services (communicating with the other parent, supervised visitation, discipline of children, etc.);
- understanding the CSE program;
- conflict resolution, coping with stress, problem-solving skills;
- developing values in children, appropriate discipline, participation in child-rearing;
- understanding male-female relationships;
- peer support;
- practical tasks to stimulate involvement through parent-child interactions, such as fixing dinner for children, taking children to the park, playing a game, helping children with schoolwork, listening to children's concerns, and setting firm limits on behavior; and
- job training opportunities (skills development, interviewing skills, job search, job-retention skills, job-advancement skills, etc.).

On September 30, 2015, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF, an HHS agency) announced that it had awarded over $55 million in RF grants, which included 39 New Pathways for Fathers and Families grants and 5 Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility (ReFORM) grants.[14] (Subsequently, two New Pathways for Fathers and Families grantees dropped out of the program, reducing the total number of participating organizations to 37.) These grants are for the five-year period FY2016-FY2020 (with funding contingent upon the subsequent availability of appropriations).[15] The most recent grant awards represent the third round of such funding since the program's inception in 2006.

Fatherhood programs have offered varied approaches to serving families, resulting in deeper insight into which organizational structures, implementation strategies, and service delivery models might offer promise as effective and replicable strategies. Organizational structures included state and local government agencies, community-based organizations of varying sizes,

[14] For a list of the grantees as of September 2017, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/2015_2020_healthy_marriage_responsible_fatherhood_grantees_09_2017_0.pdf. In addition, note that 45 Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education program grants and a National Center for Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education grant (in combination, totaling over $55 million) were also awarded for FY2016-FY2020.

[15] Noncompetitive continuation grants are to be offered for each of years two through five of the project/program period.

universities, and faith-based groups.[16] To help fathers and mothers meet their parental responsibilities, many policy analysts and observers support broad-based collaborative strategies that go beyond welfare and child support agencies and include schools, work programs, prison systems, churches, community organizations, and the health care system.

Research and Evaluation

Research findings indicate that father absence affects outcomes for children in terms of schooling, emotional and behavioral maturity, labor force participation, and nonmarital childbearing. These findings hold when income is taken into account, so the negative effects of father absence are not limited to those created by reduced family income.[17]

Much of the research into the efficacy of fatherhood programs examines, at least in part, child support-related issues and outcomes. Both advocates and critics of the CSE program largely agree that parents should be responsible for the economic and emotional well-being of their children. They generally agree that many low-income noncustodial parents are unable to meet their financial responsibility to their children and are barely able, or unable, to support themselves. They also generally agree that some noncustodial parents do not know how to be responsible parents because they were not taught that knowledge or were not exposed to enough positive role models that they could emulate.

Below are several examples of research that has been or currently is being conducted related to fatherhood issues and programs. Many of these are demonstration programs with the purpose of helping low-income men become responsible fathers by gaining employment or job mobility and by teaching them life skills so that they might reconnect with their children in a positive sustained manner. Others are long-term studies that, for example, monitor the population that is served by these programs, but do not evaluate the efficacy of possible interventions.

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration Project

The Parents' Fair Share (PFS) Demonstration was a large-scale, scientifically designed (with experimental and control groups) national demonstration project conducted from 1994 to 1996 that combined job training and placement, peer support groups, and other services with the goal of increasing the earnings and child support payments of unemployed noncustodial parents (generally fathers) of children on welfare, improving their parenting and communication skills, and providing an opportunity for them to participate more fully and effectively in the lives of their children.[18]

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[16] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, *Implementing Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs within Different Organizational Structures*, February 1, 2012, p. 1.

[17] *Meeting the Challenge: What the Federal Government Can Do to Support Responsible Fatherhood Efforts—A Report to the President* ... (Washington, DC, January 2001), http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/guidance01. Also see Sara McLanahan, Laura Tach, and Daniel Schneider, "The Causal Effects of Father Absence," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2013), pp. 399-427.

[18] The Parents' Fair Share (PFS) demonstration was funded by a consortium of private foundations (the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Ford Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, and the Northwest Area Foundation) and federal agencies (the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Labor).The PFS demonstration was conducted in seven cities: Dayton, OH; Grand Rapids, MI; Jacksonville, FL; Los Angeles, CA; Memphis, TN; Springfield, MA; and Trenton, NJ.

The final report on the PFS demonstration concluded that the program did not significantly increase employment or earnings among the full sample of PFS participants during the two years after they entered the program. However, the program did increase earnings among a subgroup of men who were characterized as "less employable" (i.e., those without a high school diploma and with little recent work experience).[19]

One of the reports noted the following as lessons learned from the PFS demonstration:

> Low-income noncustodial fathers are a disadvantaged group. Many live on the edge of poverty and face severe barriers to finding jobs, while those who can find work typically hold low-wage or temporary jobs. Despite their low, irregular income, many of these fathers are quite involved in their children's lives and, when they can, provide financial and other kinds of support.... Some services, such as peer support proved to be very important and valuable to the men and became the focal point of the program. Other services, such as skill-building, were hard to implement because the providers had little experience working with such a disadvantaged group; it was difficult to find employers willing to hire the men, and the providers were not equipped to deal with the circumstances of men who often were simply trying to make it from one day to the next. Finally, we learned about the challenges of implementing a program like PFS, which involves the partnership of various agencies with different goals, and about the difficulty of recruiting low-income fathers into such a program.[20]

Some of the recommendations for future programs included structuring the program to encourage longer-term participation and to include job retention services; providing fathers who cannot find private sector employment with community service jobs; earmarking adequate funding for employment services; involving custodial mothers in the program; providing fathers with legal services to help them gain visitation rights; and encouraging partnerships between CSE agencies and fatherhood programs.[21]

Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration

HHS has an ongoing partnership with the private-sector initiative called Partners for Fragile Families (PFF). This project is an initiative of the National Partnership for Community Leadership (NPCL), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC. A "fragile" family consists of low-income children born outside of marriage whose two natural parents are working together to raise them—either by living together or through frequent visitation.

The development of the initial PFF demonstrations began when planning grants were awarded to 16 sites in 1996. In March 2000, HHS approved state waivers of certain federal CSE requirements (under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act) for 13 PFF demonstration projects spread across nine states. The duration of these projects was three years. The purpose of the demonstration projects was to develop new ways for CSE agencies and community-based nonprofit and faith-based organizations to work together to help young noncustodial fathers (ages 16 to 25—who had not yet established paternity and who had little or no involvement with the CSE program) obtain employment, health, and social services; make child support payments to their children; learn parenting skills; and work with the mothers of their children to build stronger

[19] John M. Martinez and Cynthia Miller, *Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment* (New York: MDRC, October 2000).

[20] Cynthia Miller and Virginia Knox, *The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share* (New York: MDRC, November 2001), pp. v-vi.

[21] Ibid., p. v.

parenting partnerships. The demonstration project sites were located in California, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.[22] According to HHS, of the $9.7 million in federal funding budgeted for the projects, $7.1 million was spent. An additional $1.4 million was spent for an evaluation of the projects.

An evaluation of the PFF project implementation included the following statement:

> Although the concept of PFF was unique when it was developed in 1996, by the time the demonstration was fully implemented, other responsible fatherhood programs had started in many communities nationwide. Independent of PFF, the child support enforcement system was already incorporating more "father-friendly" approaches to service delivery at about the same time PFF was in its developmental stages. The child support system had begun to absorb the lessons learned from earlier fatherhood initiatives (such as the Parents' Fair Share project and the Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration). By the time PFF was operational, some may have viewed it as less pioneering than when it was conceived several years earlier. In addition, the number of young fathers who had not established paternity for their children decreased in the mid- to late-1990s as a result of the success of in-hospital paternity establishment initiatives across the country that established paternity at the time of a child's birth. The pool of young fathers without paternity established for their children had diminished in the PFF sites by the time the projects were implemented.[23]

HHS also sponsored two other evaluations of the PFF demonstration projects. Both of the evaluations were conducted by the Urban Institute. One of the Urban Institute reports includes case studies of selected fathers and their families, and the other report provides an analysis of economic and child support outcomes. A process and outcome evaluation was conducted by interviewing all service providers (including child support enforcement, community-based organizations, and partner agencies) and analyzing client data matched with administrative wage data before and after the PFF program. This evaluation did not have a control group and, thus, did not seek to measure program impacts.

According to the Urban Institute report, employment rates for participants before and after the program generally were low and unchanged. (About 58% of PFF participants were employed 6 months before the demonstration and 59% of PFF participants were employed 6-12 months after enrollment in the demonstration.) Although quarterly earnings of PFF participants increased after enrollment in the demonstration, at the end of 12 months, participants generally had poverty-level incomes.

In contrast, the report indicated that there was a substantial increase in child support orders. At enrollment, about 14% of PFF participants had child support orders, whereas two years after enrollment, 35% of PFF participants had child support orders. For those PFF participants who paid child support, the average child support payment was $1,569 for the first year after enrollment and $2,296 for the second year after enrollment. The report also noted that, on average, about five monthly child support payments were made in the first year after enrollment and about seven monthly payments were made in the second year after enrollment.[24]

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[22] The Chicago, IL, project withdrew from the demonstration. For further information, see http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml and http://www.npcl.org/program/pff.htm.

[23] The Urban Institute. *The Implementation of the Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects*, by Karin Martinson, John Trutko, Demetra Smith Nightingale, Pamela A. Holcomb, and Burst S. Barnow, June 2007. See http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/PFF/imp/.

[24] Karin Martinson, Demetra Smith Nightingale, Pamela Holcomb, Burt Barnow, and John Trutko, "Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects: Employment and Child Support Outcomes and Trends," The Urban Institute, September 2007.

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study followed a group of 4,700 children who were born in 20 large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000.[25] The parents in the 4,700 families in this sample were 3,600 unmarried couples and 1,100 married couples. The data were intended to be representative of nonmarital births in each of the 20 cities and also representative of all nonmarital births in U.S. cities with populations over 200,000.

Both parents were interviewed at the child's birth and again when the child was age one, two, and five. In addition, in-home assessments of the children and their home environments were performed when the children were ages three and five. The parent interviews provided information on attitudes, relationships, parenting behavior, demographic characteristics, health (mental and physical), economic and employment status, neighborhood characteristics, and public welfare program participation. The in-home interview collected information on children's cognitive and emotional development, health, and home environment. The study was expected to provide previously unavailable information on questions such as the following:

- What are the conditions and capabilities of new unwed parents, especially fathers? How many of these men hold steady jobs? How many want to be involved in raising their children?
- What is the nature of the relationship between unwed parents? How many couples are involved in stable, long-term relationships? How many expect to marry? How many experience high levels of conflict or domestic violence?
- What factors push new unwed parents together? What factors pull them apart? How do public policies affect parents' behaviors and living arrangements?
- What are the long-term consequences for parents, children, and society of new welfare regulations, stronger paternity establishment, and stricter child support enforcement? What roles do child care and health care policies play? How do these policies play out in different labor market environments?[26]

A 2007 report that examined data pertaining to the surveyed children at age five found that 16% of participant mothers were married to the father at the time of the five-year interview. Despite not marrying, about 40% of the parents were still romantically involved at the five-year interview. In cases where the couples were no longer romantically involved, 43% of the fathers had seen their children in the month previous to the interview. According to the report:

> Fatherhood programs, such as education, training, support services, and content addressing issues of shared parenting, may also be appropriate for many new unmarried fathers. Engaging parents in responsible fatherhood programs (and weaving these programs into marriage promotion curriculums) early in their child's life may also help new fathers develop important parenting skills crucial to their child's healthy development. These programs may help fathers establish and maintain positive connections with their child and encourage their active participation in raising their child.[27]

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[25] The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is a joint effort by Princeton University's Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (CRCW) and Center for Health and Wellbeing, and Columbia University's Social Indicators Survey Center and National Center for Children and Families (NCCF). The study evaluates a "focal child" within each family at birth and then at various intervals for the next several years.

[26] Irwin Garfinkel and Sara McLanahan, "Fragile Families and Child Well-Being: A Survey of New Parents," *Focus* (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty), vol. 21, no. 1 (spring 2000), pp. 9-11.

[27] *Fragile Families Research Brief,* June 2007, Number 39. Parents' Relationship Status Five Years After a Non-

A nine-year follow-up study—Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing in Middle Childhood—was funded via a $17 million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) of HHS. The purpose of this project was to combine the core telephone surveys, in-home study, and teacher surveys into one larger project. Data collection began in 2007 and continued through the spring of 2010.[28] Short summaries, based on data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, have been prepared since that time to highlight recent research findings and suggest policy implications on issues related to child well-being and the social and economic circumstances faced by unwed parents.[29]

Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Fatherhood Demonstration Programs

To further the national child support program's mission and goals, the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) operates a number of competitive grant programs that provide federal funds for research and demonstration programs and special projects of regional and national significance for operating state child support programs. These programs and projects are funded through OSCE's grant-making or waiver authority under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration Programs

In FY1999, OCSE provided $2.0 million for Responsible Fatherhood demonstration programs. The programs operated in eight states from October 1998 through December 2000. The following eight states received Section 1115 grants or waivers from OCSE/ACF to implement and test responsible fatherhood programs: California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, Washington, and Wisconsin. These projects attempted to improve the employment and earnings of underemployed and unemployed noncustodial parents, and to motivate them to become more financially and emotionally involved in the lives of their children. Although the projects shared common goals, they varied with respect to service components and service delivery. OCSE also provided about $500,000 for an evaluation of the demonstration projects.

An outcome report on the programs found that (1) low-income noncustodial fathers are a difficult population to recruit and serve; (2) many of the participants found jobs with the programs' help, but they were low-paying jobs and relatively few of the participants were able to increase earnings enough to meet their financial needs and those of their children; (3) problems with the noncustodial father's access to his children were hard to define and resolve, and mediation should be used more extensively; (4) child support guidelines result in orders for low-income noncustodial parents that are unrealistically high; (5) CSE agencies should collaborate with fatherhood programs and pursue routine enforcement activities, as well as adopt policies and incentives that are responsive to low-income fathers; and (6) criminal history was the norm rather than the exception among the program participants, many participants faced ongoing alcohol and substance abuse problems, many did not have reliable transportation, and many lacked a court-ordered visitation arrangement.[30]

Marital Birth. Princeton University and Columbia University.

[28] For more information on the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, see https://fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/.

[29] For more information, see http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/briefs2.asp.

[30] Jessica Pearson, Nancy Thoennes, and Lanae Davis, with Jane Venohr, David Price, and Tracy Griffith, *OCSE Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Client Characteristics and Program Outcomes* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department

The outcome report also found that employment rates and earnings increased significantly, especially for noncustodial parents who were previously unemployed. In addition, child support compliance rates increased significantly, especially for those who had not been paying previously. Moreover, the report found that 27% of the fathers reported seeing their children more often after completion of the program.

National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)

In FY2012, OCSE established the National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED). The purpose of the demonstration was to increase the reliable payment of child support by noncustodial parents who were willing but unable to pay, and to test the efficacy of CSE agency-led employment strategies. Consequently, OCSE required CSPED grantees to be child support agencies, serving as fiscal agents for the grants and managing day-to-day operations. Eight state CSE programs were selected through a competitive grant process to participate in the five-year demonstration from October 2012 to September 2017. The eight states were California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

The first year was a planning year. In October 2013, sites began enrollment and random assignment, which ran through September 2016. During the final year, grantees were expected to continue to serve noncustodial parents as the demonstration wound down. Each grantee was to receive $775,000 in Section 1115 demonstration funds over five years. Once Federal Financial Participation (FFP) was added, the total amount of funding available to each grantee over five years was $2.3 million.

Under the demonstration, each grantee attempted to recruit 1,500 eligible noncustodial parents into CSPED. Half of the enrollees were randomly assigned to receive CSPED services; half were assigned to a control group and did not receive the extra services. Each site was required to offer four core services: enhanced child support services, employment assistance, parenting education delivered in a peer support format, and case management. The CSE agency partnered with community service providers for employment and parenting services; case management could be provided by child support or a partner agency. Grantees were also required to work with domestic violence consultants to develop a domestic violence plan. While OCSE provided grantees with guidance on design features and core services, it allowed the grantees to align their efforts with preexisting policies, procedures, and the local social service context.[31]

The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin and Mathematica Policy Research are conducting the evaluation of CSPED.[32] According to the initial implementation report, among the early lessons learned was the need to (1) deploy child support workers who support CSPED's goals to identify and recruit participants; (2) develop services that take into account the challenges faced by the target population; (3) design services to promote sustained participant engagement; and (4) invest in strong partnerships and communication systems.[33]

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of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Center for Policy Research and Policy Studies (HHS Contract No. 100-98-0015), September 2003).

[31] Ibid.

[32] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement, *The National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)*, Fact Sheet #1, March 2015, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/csped_fact_sheet_1_march_2015.pdf.

[33] Diane Paulsell, Jennifer L. Noyes, Rebekah Selekman, Lisa Klein Vogel, Samina Sattar, Benjamin Nerad, Daniel R. Meyer, and Robert Wood, *Helping Noncustodial Parents Support Their Children: Early Implementation Findings from*

According to the evaluators, a final implementation report will examine the full implementation period and provide a more comprehensive assessment of the types of services participants received. It is also expected to examine CSPED's impacts on participants' outcomes and include a benefit-cost analysis.

Responsible Fatherhood, Marriage, and Family Strengthening Grants for Incarcerated and Reentering Fathers and Their Partners

An HHS-sponsored evaluation of responsible fatherhood programs, called the National Evaluation of the Responsible Fatherhood, Marriage, and Family Strengthening Grants for Incarcerated and Reentering Fathers and Their Partners (MFS-IP), began in 2006. MFS-IP grantees included government (state, local, and tribal) and private (community- and faith-based) organizations. With a funding level of up to $500,000 per year for five years, the programs implemented under the MFS-IP priority area were designed to promote and sustain healthy marriages and strengthen families affected by incarceration.[34]

Thirteen grantees in 12 different states received five-year grants from the OFA to implement multiple activities to support and sustain marriages and families of fathers during and after incarceration. Grantees may also provide support for reentering the family and community from prison, parenting support including visitation during incarceration, and education and employment services during and after incarceration. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the 13 MFS-IP grantees, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) awarded a contract to RTI International to conduct an implementation evaluation as well as a multisite, longitudinal, impact evaluation of selected grantees.[35] The evaluation was a multiyear (quasiexperimental) study that was conducted from 2006 through 2014.

According to an HHS Research Brief:

> The implementation experiences of the MFS-IP grantees can inform future efforts to build healthy relationship skills among families affected by incarceration. While incarcerated, many individuals are interested in improving themselves and their relationships with their partners, children, and other family members. Although not all incarcerated persons are married or in intimate relationships, healthy relationship skills broadly apply to many types of interpersonal relationships. As observed by several grantees, relationships such as parent-child, correctional officer-inmate, inmate-inmate, and employer-employee could be improved by healthy relationship skills training.
>
> The impact study component of the MFS-IP evaluation, concluding in 2015, will determine the effectiveness of relationship education and other MFS-IP program components in strengthening relationship quality and stability and facilitating successful community reentry. Research suggests that healthy relationships contribute to reentry success, yet little is known about how to improve relationship quality for couples affected by incarceration. Relationship education that builds healthy relationship skills could play an important role in relationship quality throughout incarceration and during the critical reentry period. Even

the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) Evaluation Interim Report September 2015, pp.xi-xii, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/cspedinterimpl2015.pdf.

[34] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative—Further Progress Is Needed in Developing a Risk-Based Monitoring Approach to Help HHS Improve Program Oversight," GAO-08-1002, September 2008. Also see National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, "What Works in Fatherhood Programs? Ten Lessons From Evidence-Based Practice," by Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Allison Horowitz, and Allison Metz, at http://www.fatherhood.gov.

[35] See the following webpage for additional information: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/MFS-IP/index.shtml.

> for lengthy periods of incarceration, communication and conflict resolution skills could result in more supportive relationships, improved co-parenting, and increased familial contact—all of which could be beneficial upon the individual's eventual release.[36]

Other Evaluations

HHS has invested resources in multiple federal evaluations to document successes, challenges, and lessons from fatherhood programs in order to provide useful information to program operators and policymakers. The 2011 application announcement for RF program grants required that grantees operate comprehensive fatherhood programs that integrate robust economic stability services, healthy marriage activities, and activities designed to foster responsible parenting.[37] It also indicated that, as a condition of acceptance of an RF grant, grantees would be required to participate fully in HHS-sponsored evaluations. According to HHS, in September 2011 60 RF grants were awarded for three years.[38] These grants were initially scheduled to run through September 2014, but were extended for an additional year in the form of noncompetitive continuations awards.[39]

According to a 2012 report that provides a review of the fatherhood program and policy arena:

> At the state and local level, although awareness of the importance of evaluation appears to be high, it does not appear that programs have reached the point of being able to conduct scientifically rigorous evaluations. Moving forward, the field will need to ensure that agencies are equipped with the proper knowledge and tools for conducting meaningful evaluations, including appropriate measures to provide an accurate representation of program outcomes and impacts.[40]

In the last several years there has been a spate of fatherhood research and evaluations, some of which are using an experimental design model. The outcomes and findings are expected to provide necessary information on the types of programs and strategies that are most effective in helping noncustodial parents, particularly fathers, better connect with their children.[41] The 2015 round of RF grants (mentioned earlier) are subject to the continued requirement that grantees

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[36] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, ASPE Research Brief, *Strategies for Building Healthy Relationship Skills Among Couples Affected by Incarceration*, by Christine Lindquist, Tasseli McKay, and Anupa Bir of RTI International, March 2012, p. 12.

[37] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Grants, June 28, 2011, https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2011-ACF-OFA-FK-0194_0.pdf. Also see Virginia Knox, Philip A. Cowan, Carolyn Pape Cowan, and Elana Bildner, "Policies That Strengthen Fatherhood and Family Relationships: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know?" MDRC, 2009.

[38] Note that in September 2011, an additional 61 grantees were awarded healthy marriage promotion grants pursuant to P.L. 111-291.

[39] For additional information on the continuation of the grants, see the following webpage—http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/hmrf_ttcw_continuationfaqs.pdf. For information on process results from four of these RF grant evaluations, see Heather Zaveri, Scott Baumgartner, Robin Dion, and Liz Clary, *Parents and Children Together: Design and Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs*, Mathematica Policy Research, September 2015. Also see Jocelyn Fontaine, Shelli Rossman, and Lindsey Cramer, with Hannah Dodd, Helen Ho, Jeremy Levy, and David McClure, *Early Implementation Findings from Responsible Fatherhood Reentry Projects*, Urban Institute, January 2015.

[40] Serena Klempin and Dr. Ronald Mincy, *Tossed on a Sea of Change: A Status Update on the Responsible Fatherhood Field*, Columbia University, Center for Research on Fathers, Children and Family Well-Being, September 25, 2012, p. 10.

[41] For additional information, see the following webpage—http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/es_fatherhood_ongoing_research_program_evaluation_efforts.pdf.

participate fully in HHS-sponsored evaluations.[42] These grants, which are scheduled to run through FY2020, have also included a new emphasis on key short- and long-term outcomes intended to enhance evaluation and strengthen program design.[43] According to the OFA, it is expected that the fatherhood programs funded by these grants (and their evaluations) will increase the understanding of policymakers and others of what works and why.[44]

Potential Issues

In the late 1990s, when interest in federally funding responsible fatherhood programs first gained national attention, some were concerned that an emphasis on the importance of fathers could lead to unintended consequences for single mothers if too much emphasis was placed on the value of two-parent homes, or on the ability of noncustodial spouses to challenge child custody, child support, and visitation arrangements.[45] Although that underlying tension has not disappeared completely, then and now, it was thought that (in order to be productive and nondivisive) the policy debate on responsible fatherhood initiatives had to be based on the view that the welfare of fathers, mothers, and children are intertwined and interdependent.[46] In addition, over the past 20 years, the results of the research and evaluations discussed earlier in this report have shed additional light on how certain factors, such as economic opportunity, affect the ability of fathers to be involved in the lives of their children. As a result of these and other factors, the policy debate on responsible fatherhood now recognizes that addressing the issues that directly affect the noncustodial parent could potentially strengthen the custodial parent's household as well.

Many issues are associated with the federal government's support of fatherhood initiatives. A few examples are: Is the goal of federal policy to promote and support the involvement of fathers in their children's lives regardless of the father's relationship with the children's mother? What if the parent has children with more than one person? What is the federal policy with regard to incarcerated parents and parents recently released from prison? Does the federal government support counseling, education, and supervised visitation for abusive parents so that they can reconnect with their children?[47]

The discussion below examines three issues that will likely impact the success of congressional fatherhood initiatives. The first deals with the role of the CSE agency in responsible fatherhood programs. Some analysts contend that since many noncustodial parents have a negative view of

[42] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Grants, July 7, 2015, https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2015-ACF-OFA-FK-0993_0.pdf.

[43] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, New Pathways for Fathers and Families, Funding Opportunity Announcement, HHS-2015-ACF-OFA-FK-0993, July 7, 2015, p.4 of 70 (https://ami.grantsolutions.gov/files/HHS-2015-ACF-OFA-FK-0993_0.pdf).

[44] See the following webpage—http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2015/10/marriage-and-fatherhood-grants-released.

[45] See, for example, the debate documented in Susan Kellam, "Child Custody and Support," *CQ Researcher*, January 13, 1995, vol. 5, pp. 25-48.

[46] William J. Doherty, Edward F. Kouneski, and Martha Farrell Erickson, *Responsible Fathering: An Overview and Conceptual Framework—Final Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Center for Policy Research and Policy Studies (HHS-100-93-0012), September 1996). See also, comments of the NWLC on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, "Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs," published November 17, 2014 (Vol. 79 FR No. 221 68548), January 16, 2015—http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/nwlc_child_support_comments_1_16_15_acf.pdf.

[47] For additional information, see Maria Cancian, Daniel R. Meyer, and Eunhee Han, "Child Support: Responsible Fatherhood and the Quid Pro Quo," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 635, no. 140, 2011.

and/or contentious relationship with the CSE program, the use of the CSE program to recruit fathers does not bode well for the success of such programs. Currently, most federally funded responsible fatherhood programs are provided through competitive grants to community organizations and other groups that have experience in working with low-income men.

The second issue examines father involvement in the context of the father's relationship with the child's mother. This issue is based on the premise that formal marital relationships last longer and are more conducive to long-term interaction between fathers and children than other types of relationships.

The third issue examines the importance of employment programs and job supports for noncustodial parents. This issue acknowledges that economic pressures and instability, often because of unemployment or low wages, frequently contribute to nonpayment of child support and dysfunctional relationships.

CSE System and Noncustodial Parents May Often Be at Odds

During the period from FY1978 to FY2016, child support payments collected by the CSE agencies increased from $1 billion to $28.8 billion. Moreover, the program has made significant improvements in other program measures as well, such as the number of parents located, paternities established, and child support orders established. Advocates of the CSE program say that this dramatic program performance is aside from the indirect and intangible benefits of the program, such as increased personal responsibility and welfare cost-avoidance. Critics of the CSE program contend that even with an unprecedented array of "big brother" enforcement tools such as license (professional, driver's, recreational) and passport revocation; seizure of banking accounts, retirement funds, and lottery winnings; and automatic income withholding from pay checks, the program still collects only 20% of child support obligations for which it has responsibility[48] and collects payments for only 60% of its caseload.

Information obtained from both custodial and noncustodial parents through various surveys and studies consistently tells the same story.[49] Noncustodial parents generally indicate that they (1) want more access to their children, (2) need to learn more relationship skills so they can coparent their children, and (3) need help finding and maintaining employment.[50] In addition, many noncustodial parents maintain that the CSE system is dismissive of their financial condition and continues to pursue child support payments (current support as well as arrearages) even when it knows that many of them can barely support themselves.[51]

Although the CSE program has historically been the policy answer to the challenge of father absence, because its focus until recently was exclusively on financial support, it has had the practical effect of alienating many low-income noncustodial parents who are unable to meet their

[48] This percentage accounts for arrearages (past-due child support). If child support arrearages are not taken into account the percentage is 64%. In FY2014, $148.6 billion in child support obligations ($33.8 billion in current support and $114.8 billion in past-due support) was owed to families receiving CSE services, but only $29.3 billion was paid ($21.7 billion in current support and $7.6 billion in past-due support).

[49] Mathematica Policy Research,*In Their Own Voices: The Hopes and Struggles of Responsible Fatherhood Program Participants in the Parents and Children Together Evaluation*, by Pamela Holcomb, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey Max, Alford Young, Jr., Angela Valdovinos D'Angelo, Daniel Friend, Elizabeth Clary, and Waldo E. Johnson, June 2015.

[50] Ibid, pp. 99-100.

[51] Ronald B. Mincy, M. Jethwani, and S. Klempin, *Failing our Fathers: Confronting the Crisis of Economically Vulnerable Nonresident Fathers*. New York: Oxford University Press, January 2015.

child support obligations. Some policy analysts maintain that noncustodial parents are, in effect, devalued when their role in their children's lives is based solely on their cash contributions.[52]

Many observers maintain that noncustodial parents and the CSE program have differences that may be irreconcilable.[53] In light of this challenge, they argue that the most that should be expected is for the noncustodial parent to clearly understand the purposes of the CSE program, the requirements imposed on the custodial parent, and the noncustodial parents' rights to have their child support payments modified if they incur a financial change in circumstances. If the CSE program continues to be one of the ways that noncustodial parents are connected with fatherhood programs, many observers contend that the CSE program must become more effective in gaining the cooperation and trust of noncustodial parents.

In contrast, others assert that, more than any other agency of state government, the CSE program has the responsibility and is in the position to reach out to noncustodial parents who need supportive services. They point out that CSE agencies are already involved in forging relationships with these parents through partnerships with community-based organizations. They also note that CSE agencies provide a natural link to coordinate with TANF agencies to help families achieve self-sufficiency.[54]

Noncustodial Father Involvement vs. Promotion of Marriage vs. Maintenance of Fragile Families

The first finding included in the 1996 welfare reform law is that marriage is the foundation of a successful society. The second finding is that marriage is an essential institution of a successful society that promotes the interests of children.[55] However, some child welfare advocates argue that marriage is not necessarily the best alternative for all women and their children. It is generally agreed that one-parent homes are a better alternative for children than living with an abusive parent. Many observers caution that government must be careful about supporting programs that provide cash incentives to induce people to marry or that coerce people into marrying. They note the problems associated with marriages between youths and unions that are formed in response to pregnancy. Others respond that many long-lasting marriages were based on financial alliances (e.g., to increase economic status, family wealth, status in the community, etc.). They also point out that most government programs are sensitive to the issues of domestic violence and include supports to prevent or end such actions.

Many young children live with parents who are not married but who are cohabiting. Noting this, some analysts argue that policies designed to promote certain types of family structures (e.g., nuclear families) at the expense of others may undermine nontraditional family relationships. They contend that more emphasis should be placed on trying to meet the needs of these fragile

[52] Wade F. Horn and Isabel V. Sawhill, *Making Room for Daddy: Fathers, Marriage, and Welfare Reform,* Brookings Institution Working Paper (Washington, DC, April 26, 2001), p. 4.

[53] Waller and Plotnick, "A Failed Relationship? Low-Income Families and the Child Support Enforcement System," *Focus* (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty), vol. 21, no. 1 (spring 2000), pp. 12-17.

[54] National Child Support Enforcement Association, *Resolution on Fatherhood Initiatives*, adopted by the NCSEA Board of Directors on July 29, 2000, http://www.ncsea.org/files/2000_fatherhood_resol-final.pdf.

[55] The majority of pre-TANF evaluations of welfare initiatives that examined family formation decisions found little, if any, impact of state policies on decisions to marry. One exception was an evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). In this program, compared to those who were subject to the AFDC requirements, more unmarried-parent participants subject to new policies under MFIP got married and fewer of the married-parent participants had divorced within three years after the program began.

families to enable them to stay together for longer periods of time.[56] From their perspective, a single-focus policy, no matter whether it aims to support traditional family relationships or fragile families, can place children in less desirable situations. For instance, promoting the marriage of biological parents could result in supporting situations where a biological parent is absent if all children in the household are not all from the same union.

In response, some promarriage analysts point out that about 65% of children born to cohabiting parents will see their parents separate before they reach age 12, compared to about 24% of those born to married parents.[57] In light of these trends, they note that even with supports it is unlikely that fragile families (unmarried couples) will remain together as long as married families. Some observers contend that skills such as how to choose a good partner and how to keep a relationship going should be part of responsible fatherhood programs. They argue that the promotion of marriage should be incorporated into fatherhood programs if the goal is lifetime involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Another related concern raised by some analysis is that fatherhood initiatives might sometimes be incompatible with initiatives that encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, and with initiatives that promote marriage. As a result, such observers argue that the focus of the program should be the participation of fathers in their children's lives, regardless of the marital status of the parents. As part of the 1996 welfare reform effort, a fourth purpose of the TANF block grant was included, to "encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families." At that time, there was some discussion about whether the fourth purpose means married-couple families or just two parents who are involved in their children's lives, regardless of whether they are married or even living together. In late 1999, the Clinton Administration issued *A Guide on Funding for Children and Families* through the TANF program, which broadly interpreted two-parent families to mean not only married-couple families, but also never-married, separated, and divorced parents, whether living together or not. Thus, many states classify their fatherhood programs and programs that encourage visitation by noncustodial parents under the rubric of fulfilling the purposes of the TANF program.[58]

Work-Oriented Strategies for Noncustodial Parents

It is generally agreed that many low-income fathers, like low-income mothers, lack the education and training they need to get jobs that pay enough to sustain them and their families. The 1996 welfare reform law placed work requirements on TANF recipients, mainly custodial mothers. It also required states, as part of their collection tools, to require state child support officials to have the authority to seek a judicial or administrative order that directs any noncustodial parent owing past-due support to a child receiving TANF benefits to pay that child support in accordance with a plan approved by the court or to participate in appropriate work activities.[59]

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[56] See "Is Marriage a Viable Objective for Fragile Families?" *Fragile Families Research Brief 9* (Princeton University: Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, July 2002).

[57] David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Should We Live Together? What Young Adults Need to Know about Cohabitation before Marriage, A Comprehensive Review of Recent Research," Second Edition, 2002. See also the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage Project, the State of Our Union—Marriage in America 2011, *When Baby Makes Three: How Parenthood Makes Life Meaningful and How Marriage Makes Parenthood Bearable*, by Brad Wilcox & Elizabeth Marquardt, December 8, 2011, p. 11.

[58] Wade Horn, "Wedding Bell Blues: Marriage and Welfare Reform," *Brookings Review*, summer 2001, pp. 40-41.

[59] This enforcement tool, which was mandated by the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193), reflected Congress's acknowledgement that many noncustodial parents lack the education and skills necessary to obtain a job. The purpose of the CSE work-activities provision is to provide some noncustodial fathers of children receiving TANF cash

After welfare reform, Representative Nancy Johnson, the chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources during the 106th Congress, stated, "To take the next step in welfare reform we must find a way to help children by providing them with more than a working mother and sporadic child support." She noted that many low-income fathers have problems similar to those of mothers on welfare—namely, they are likely to have dropped out of high school, to have little work experience, and to have significant barriers that lessen their ability to find and/or keep a job. She also asserted that in many cases these men are "dead broke" rather than "dead beats," and that the federal government should help these noncustodial fathers meet both their financial and emotional obligations to their children.[60]

As mentioned earlier, "Activities to foster economic stability" are a part of the purpose of responsible fatherhood programs. Federal law lists some examples of activities that foster economic stability, namely job search, job training, subsidized employment, job retention, job enhancement, and education including career-advancing education; coordination with existing employment services; and referrals to local employment training initiatives.[61]

In addition, as was noted in the earlier section of this report on evaluations, many of the responsible fatherhood evaluations that included an impact analysis indicated that programs that included work-oriented strategies showed a significant increase in child support payments made by the participants. According to a 2015 report that summarizes information gained from in-depth interviews with participants of responsible fatherhood programs:

> While fathers generally provided positive feedback about the job readiness and job search skills they obtained through the RF programs, the employment challenges these men typically face are significant. Most were still struggling to find steady employment, earn enough to make ends meet, and meet their child support obligations. Although these fathers faced a myriad of barriers to gaining and maintaining employment, the most commonly cited obstacle was fathers' past incarceration and criminal records. These findings suggest that the economic stability component of RF programs may need to be strengthened to improve the chances that fathers will be successful at securing good jobs with steady and adequate wages. Any employment approach should include assistance in expunging or sealing criminal records when possible.[62]

As of February 2014, 30 states and the District of Columbia were operating 77 work-oriented programs for noncustodial parents with active CSE agency involvement.[63] Although most of the programs were not statewide, Georgia, Maryland, and North Dakota were identified as operating statewide programs, and many other states were operating programs in multiple counties. OCSE estimated that roughly 30,000 noncustodial parents were served by these programs in 2013. In

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assistance with employment opportunities so that they can meet their child support obligations by passing on some of their earnings to their children. See Elaine Sorensen, *Reaffirming the Work Requirement for Noncustodial Parents as Part of TANF Reauthorization*, Urban Institute, December 2011.

[60] U.S. Congress, House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, "Hearing on Fatherhood Legislation," Statement of Chairman Nancy Johnson, 106th Congress, 1st Session (October 5, 1999), p. 4.

[61] Section 403(a)(2)(C)(ii)(III) of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 603(a)(2)(C)(ii)(III)].

[62] Pamela Holcomb, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey Max, Alford Young, Jr., Angela Valdovinos D'Angelo, Daniel Friend, Elizabeth Clary, and Waldo E. Johnson, *In Their Own Voices: The Hopes and Struggles of Responsible Fatherhood Program Participants in the Parents and Children Together Evaluation*, Mathematica Policy Research, June 2015, p. 100.

[63] See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement (Administration for Children and Families), *Work-Oriented Programs with Active Child Support Agency Involvement that Serve Noncustodial Parents*, February 2014, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/work_oriented_programs_for_non_custodial_parents_2014.pdf.

many of these states, the work-oriented programs discussed in the report were available to all noncustodial parents who are unable to make their child support payments in a timely manner, not just those noncustodial parents who have a child enrolled in the TANF program.

Current job training and workforce programs generally are not targeted to noncustodial parents, and only some focus on low-income individuals. Some observers note that while the CSE agency and responsible fatherhood programs are making some inroads, a lot more needs to be done on a much broader scale. They contend that in these times of federal and state budget constraints, the TANF program is an untapped resource.[64] They maintain that states should use TANF and MOE funds to provide work opportunities and work supports for noncustodial parents.

In November 2014, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) was released that proposed revisions to CSE program operations and enforcement procedures.[65] These revisions included a proposal to provide the CSE program with the ability to directly fund job services for noncustodial parents at the regular CSE matching rate (66%). Advocates commented that, given that employment services have been seriously underfunded for many years, allowing states to be reimbursed at an open-ended 66% federal matching rate could make a significant difference for noncustodial parents who are unable to comply with their child support obligations because of unemployment or low wages. Although there are many supporters of the idea of providing CSE federal matching funds for work-oriented programs for noncustodial parents, there was concern among both supporters and opponents of the provision that the Obama Administration may have overstepped its authority (i.e., they say the Administration was legislating through its regulations).[66] When the final rule was issued on December 19, 2016, the job service-related provisions were omitted. In its commentary on the final rule, OCSE explained,

> This proposed provision received overwhelming support from states, Members of Congress, and the public, but it also was opposed by some Members of Congress who did not think the provision should be included in the final rule. While we appreciate the support the commenters expressed, we think allowing for federal IV-D reimbursement for job services needs further study and would be ripe for implementation at a later time. Therefore, we are not proceeding with finalizing the proposed provisions.... [67]

[64] States can use federal TANF and state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) dollars to meet any of the four goals set out in the 1996 law: "(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families."

[65] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement (Administration for Children and Families) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs, *Federal Register, vol. 79, no. 221*, November 17, 2014.

[66] During the 114th Congress, two pieces of legislation were introduced that specify that HHS may not take any action to finalize, implement, enforce, or otherwise give effect to the proposed rule entitled "Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs" or any proposal set forth in the proposed rule (S. 1525, introduced by Senators Hatch and Cornyn; H.R. 2688, introduced by Representatives Paul Ryan and Boustany). Neither of those pieces of legislation received congressional action.

[67] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement (Administration for Children and Families) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Final Rule, Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs, *Federal Register*, vol. 81, no. 93492, December 19, 2016.

Appendix A. Temporary Extensions of the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Grant Program

Table A-1. Temporary Extensions of the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Grants Program

Public Law	Time Period
P.L. 111-242	Oct. 1, 2010-Dec. 3, 2010
P.L. 111-290	Dec. 4, 2010-Dec. 7, 2010
P.L. 111-291	Dec. 8, 2010-Sept. 30, 2011
P.L. 112-35	Oct. 1, 2011-Dec. 31, 2011
P.L. 112-78	Jan. 1, 2012-Feb. 21, 2012
P.L. 112-96	Feb. 22, 2012-Sept. 30, 2012
P.L. 112-175	Oct. 1, 2012-Mar. 27, 2013
P.L. 113-6	Mar. 28, 2013-Sept. 30, 2013
P.L. 113-46[a]	Oct. 17, 2013-Jan. 15, 2014
P.L. 113-73	Jan. 16, 2014-Jan. 18, 2014
P.L. 113-76	Jan. 19, 2014-Sept. 30, 2014
P.L. 113-164	Oct. 1, 2014-Dec. 11, 2014
P.L. 113-202	Dec. 12, 2014-Dec. 13, 2014
P.L. 113-203	Dec. 14, 2014-Dec. 17, 2014
P.L. 113-235	Dec. 18, 2014-Sept. 30, 2015
P.L. 114-53	Oct. 1, 2015-Dec. 11, 2015
P.L. 114-96	Dec. 12, 2015-Dec. 16, 2015
P.L. 114-100	Dec. 17, 2015-Dec. 22, 2015
P.L. 114-113	Dec. 18, 2015-Sept. 30, 2016
P.L. 114-223	Oct. 1, 2016-Dec. 9, 2016
P.L. 114-254	Dec. 10, 2016-Apr. 28, 2017
P.L. 115-30	April 29,2017-May 5, 2017
P.L. 115-31	May 6, 2017-September 30, 2018

Source: Congressional Research Service.

a. P.L. 113-46 ended a funding gap for the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood grant program that lasted between Oct. 1, 2013, and Oct. 16, 2013.

Appendix B. Legislative History of Federally Funded Responsible Federal Fatherhood Programs

Beginning with the 106th Congress and with each subsequent Congress, responsible fatherhood programs have received both presidential and congressional attention.

106th Congress (1999-2000)

Through the FY2001 appropriations process, $3 million was set aside for a nongovernmental national fatherhood organization named the National Fatherhood Initiative (P.L. 106-553), $500,000 for the National Fatherhood Initiative, and $500,000 for the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization (P.L. 106-554).

President Clinton's FY2001 budget included $255 million for the first year of a proposed "Fathers Work/Families Win" initiative to help low-income noncustodial parents and low-income working families work and support their children. The "Fathers Work/Families Win" initiative would have been administered by the Department of Labor (DOL). The "Fathers Work" component ($125 million) would have been limited to noncustodial parents (primarily fathers) and the "Families Win" component ($130 million) would have been targeted more generally to low-income families. Neither the House nor the Senate versions of the FY2001 appropriations bill (H.R. 4577, 106th Congress) for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) included funding for the Fathers Work/Families Win proposal.

In addition, legislation that included funding for a nationwide responsible fatherhood grants program was twice passed by the House (but not acted on by the Senate). H.R. 3073, the proposed Fathers Count Act of 1999, and H.R. 4678, the proposed Child Support Distribution Act of 2000, would have authorized funding ($140 million over two years in H.R. 3073 and $140 million over four years in H.R. 4678) to establish a program (usually referred to as fatherhood initiatives) to make grants to public or private entities for projects designed to promote marriage, promote successful parenting and the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children, and help fathers improve their economic status by providing job-related services to them.

107th Congress (2001-2002)

From the beginning of his presidency, President George W. Bush indicated his support for responsible fatherhood initiatives. President Bush's FY2002 budget proposed $64 million in 2002 (and $315 million over five years) to strengthen the role of fathers in the lives of families. This initiative would have provided competitive grants to faith-based and community organizations that help unemployed or low-income fathers and their families avoid or leave cash welfare, as well as to programs that promote successful parenting and strengthen marriage.

His FY2003 budget proposed $20 million (for FY2003) for competitive grants to community and faith-based organizations for programs that help noncustodial fathers support their families to avoid or leave cash welfare, become more involved in their children's lives, and promote successful parenting and encourage and support healthy marriages and married fatherhood.

Several bills (H.R. 1300/S. 653, H.R. 1471, S. 685, S. 940/H.R. 1990, H.R. 2893, H.R. 3625, H.R. 4090,[68] S. 2524, and H.R. 4737) that included fatherhood initiatives were introduced, but none were enacted. The purposes of the fatherhood programs in the bills introduced generally were the same: fatherhood programs must be designed to promote marriage through counseling, mentoring, and other activities; promote successful parenting through counseling, providing information about good parenting practices including payment of child support, and other activities; and help noncustodial parents and their families avoid or leave cash welfare by providing work-first services, job training, subsidized employment, career-advancing education, and other activities. However, the structure of the fatherhood programs differed.

Although H.R. 4737, as amended, was passed by the House on May 16, 2002 (H.Rept. 107-460, Part 1), and reported favorably in the nature of a substitute by the Senate Finance Committee (S.Rept. 107-221) on July 25, 2002, it was not passed by the full Senate.

108th Congress (2003-2004)

President Bush's FY2004 budget proposed $20 million annually (for FY2004-FY2008) for promotion and support of responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage. The FY2004 budget proposal also would have gradually increased the annual funding of the CSE access and visitation grant program from $10 million annually, to $20 million annually by FY2007.

His FY2005 budget proposed $50 million (for FY2005) for 75 competitive grants to faith-based and community organizations, together with Indian tribes and tribal organizations, to encourage and help fathers to support their families, avoid welfare, and improve their ability to manage family business affairs, and to support healthy marriages and married fatherhood.

Several bills that included responsible fatherhood provisions (S. 5, S. 448, S. 604, S. 657, S. 1443, and S. 2830; H.R. 4 and H.R. 936) were introduced, none of which became law.

On February 13, 2003, the House passed H.R. 4, a welfare reauthorization bill that would have provided $20 million per year for each of FY2004-FY2008 for a responsible fatherhood grant program. This bill was essentially identical to H.R. 4737 as passed by the House in 2002.

On September 10, 2003, the Senate Finance Committee approved its version of H.R. 4 (S.Rept. 108-162), which would have established a $75 million responsible fatherhood program composed of four components for each of FY2004-FY2008: (1) a $20 million grant program for up to 10 eligible states to conduct demonstration programs; (2) a $30 million grant for eligible entities to conduct demonstration programs; (3) $5 million for a nationally recognized nonprofit fatherhood promotion organization to develop and promote a responsible fatherhood media campaign; and (4) a $20 million block grant for states to conduct responsible fatherhood media campaigns. Although H.R. 4 was debated on the Senate floor during the period March 29-April 1, 2004, consideration of the bill was not completed when a motion to limit debate on the bill failed to

[68] H.R. 4090, as amended, was ordered reported by the House Ways and Means Committee on May 2, 2002 (H.Rept. 107-460, Part 1). The bill would have provided $20 million in grants per year for a five-year period (FY2003-FY2007) to public entities and nonprofit community entities, including religious organizations, and to Indian tribes and tribal organizations to promote responsible, caring, and effective parenting and to encourage positive father involvement, including the positive involvement of nonresident fathers; enhance the abilities and commitment of unemployed or low-income fathers to provide support for their families and to avoid or leave welfare; improve fathers' ability to effectively manage family business affairs; and encourage and support healthy marriages and married fatherhood. Readers should note that H.R. 4737, a bill that included identical "fatherhood" provisions, passed the House on May 16, 2002.

garner the necessary 60 votes. The Senate did not bring the bill back to the floor before the end of the session.[69]

109th Congress (2005-2006)

President Bush's FY2006 budget proposed $40 million (for FY2006) for a responsible fatherhood competitive grant program.

The FY2007 budget proposed $100 million for competitive matching grants to states for marriage promotion. It also included the $150 million for HMP and RF grants that was enacted in the DRA during the prior Congress.

Several bills that included responsible fatherhood provisions were introduced. Two of the bills were standalone bills that had been introduced in a previous Congress (S. 3607 and S. 3803) and four were welfare reauthorization bills that included some responsible fatherhood provisions (H.R. 240/S. 105, S. 6, and S. 667).

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (S. 1932; DRA), which also included a provision that provided competitive grants for responsible fatherhood activities, was enacted into law.[70] Among other things, the DRA reauthorized the TANF block grant at $16.5 billion annually through FY2010 and included a provision that provided $150 million in funding for the new HMP and RF competitive grants programs for each of the fiscal years, FY2006 through FY2010. Of the $150 million, up to $50 million per year in grants was to be provided to states, territories, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and public and nonprofit community organizations, including religious organizations, for responsible fatherhood initiatives.

Under the DRA, RF grant funds could be spent on activities to promote responsible fatherhood through (1) marriage promotion (through counseling, mentoring, disseminating information about the advantages of marriage and two-parent involvement for children, etc.), (2) parenting activities (through counseling, mentoring, mediation, disseminating information about good parenting practices, etc.), (3) fostering economic stability of fathers (through work first services, job search, job training, subsidized employment, education, etc.), or (4) contracting with a nationally recognized nonprofit fatherhood promotion organization to develop, promote, or distribute a media campaign to encourage the appropriate involvement of parents in the lives of their children, focusing particularly on responsible fatherhood; and/or to develop a national clearinghouse to help states and communities in their efforts to promote and support marriage and responsible fatherhood.

110th Congress (2007-2008)

President Bush's FY2008 and FY2009 budget included the $150 million for HMP and RF programs that was included in the DRA as part of welfare reauthorization. As noted, pursuant to

[69] During the period from 2002 to 2004, the responsible fatherhood bills that were passed by the House were part of welfare reauthorization legislation. (The funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, mandatory child care, and the abstinence education block grant—which were part of the 1996 welfare reform legislation (P.L. 104-193) whose funding authority expired on September 30, 2002—continued under a number of temporary extension measures.) Welfare reauthorization legislation was not enacted during this period.

[70] On December 19, 2005, the House adopted the conference report on S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (H.Rept. 109-362). On December 21, the Senate adopted the conference report on S. 1932 with amendments. The House subsequently agreed to the Senate amendments on February 1, 2006. On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed S. 1932 into P.L. 109-171.

the DRA, $50 million was specifically allocated for responsible fatherhood programs for each of FY2006-FY2010.

Two bills that included responsible fatherhood provisions were introduced, S. 1626, and a House companion bill, H.R. 3395. Among other things, S. 1626/H.R. 3395, would have increased funding for the RF grants (authorized by the DRA) to $100 million per year for each of FY2008-FY2010. (The total for the HMP and RF grants would have increased from $150 million to $200 million per year for each of FY2008-FY2010.) The bills were not reported out of committee.

111th Congress (2009-2010)

The Obama Administration's FY2011 budget included a new proposal to redirect funds from the HMP and RF Grant Programs to the proposed $500 million Fatherhood, Marriage, and Families Innovation Fund. The proposed Fatherhood, Marriage, and Families Innovation Fund would have been available for one year (FY2011) to provide three-year competitive grants to states.[71] According to one budget document, "The Fatherhood, Marriage, and Families Innovation Fund will serve as a catalyst for innovative service models that integrate a variety of service streams. The results from these demonstrations could form the basis for possible future TANF and CSE program changes at the federal or state level based on a multidimensional picture of the dynamics of family functioning and material self-sufficiency and child well-being."[72] The Fatherhood, Marriage, and Families Innovation Fund proposal was not acted on by either the House or the Senate.

Three bills that included responsible fatherhood provisions were introduced, all three of which had been introduced in a previous Congress. None of the bills received congressional action.

The first two bills were companion proposals that were almost identical to bills that were introduced in the 110th Congress. The Senate proposal, S. 1309, was referred to as the Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009. The House proposal, H.R. 2979, was referred to as the Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009. The bills would have (1) increased funding for RF grant programs from $50 million per year to $100 million per year (for each of FY2008-FY2010); (2) expanded procedures to address domestic violence; (3) expanded activities promoting responsible fatherhood; (4) provided grants to healthy family partnerships for domestic violence prevention, for services for families and individuals affected by domestic violence, and for developing and implementing best practices to prevent domestic violence; and (5) eliminated the separate TANF work participation rate for two-parent families. The bills would have also made several changes to the CSE program and addressed the issue of employment for noncustodial and disadvantaged parents. The HHS Secretary would have been directed to award grants to states for an employment demonstration project involving a court- or state child support agency-supervised program for noncustodial parents so they can pay child support obligations. In addition, the Secretary of Labor would have been required to award grants for transitional jobs programs and for public-private career pathways partnerships to help disadvantaged parents obtain employment.

The third proposal, S. 939, was the Protecting Adoption and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Act of 2009. The bill would have required the HHS Secretary to establish an automated National Putative Father Registry. Among other things, S. 939 would have directed the Secretary to establish a nationwide responsible fatherhood and putative father registry educational campaign

[71] U.S. Department of Health And Human Services (ACF), "FY2011 Congressional Justification: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)," pp. 304-305 http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/olab/budget/2011/TANF.pdf.

[72] Ibid.

designed to (1) inform men about the National Putative Father Registry, the advantages of registering with a State Putative Father Registry, and the rights and responsibilities of putative fathers; and (2) inform women about the National Registry and its potential role in a pending or planned adoption or a termination of a putative father's rights. In addition, it would have required each state that desired to receive such a grant to develop and implement a state plan for promoting responsible fatherhood and permanency for children.

The Claims Resolution Act of 2010, enacted December 8, 2010 (P.L. 111-291), extended the RF grant program through FY2011 and its funding was increased from $50 million to $75 million. Funding for the HMP grants was reduced to $75 million.[73]

112th Congress (2011-2012)

The Obama Administration's FY2012 and FY2013 budget proposed continued funding of $150 million to support HMP and RF grant programs for FY2012. This budget proposal also would have made changes to the purpose clause of the CSE program to include access and visitation and other fatherhood involvement activities. These activities would have become core parts of the CSE program and thereby states would have been reimbursed by the federal government for expenditures on such activities at an open-ended 66% matching rate. The budget proposal would have required states to establish access and visitation responsibilities in all initial child support orders. It would have encouraged states to undertake activities that support access and visitation, implementing domestic violence safeguards as a critical component of this new state responsibility. (The estimated cost of the proposal was $570 million over 10 years.)

The Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2011, was reintroduced as H.R. 2193. Similar to the bill introduced in the 111th Congress, H.R. 2193, among other things, would have reauthorized and provided $75 million per year for the RF grant program for each of the years FY2011 through FY2015. This measure did not receive congressional action. Instead, the programs were extended temporarily at their FY2012 levels ($150 million per year on a pro rata basis, divided equally between the two programs), through three laws:

- P.L. 112-78, the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011 (enacted December 23, 2011), provided funding for the HMP and RF grant programs through February 29, 2012.
- P.L. 112-96, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (enacted February 22, 2012), provided funding for the HMP and RF grant programs through September 30, 2012.
- P.L. 112-175 (the government-wide continuing resolution enacted on September 28, 2012) extended funding for the HMP and RF grant programs through March 2013 (i.e., the first six months of FY2013).

113th Congress (2013-2014)

The Obama Administration's FY2014 and FY2015 budgets proposed continued funding of $150 million to support HMP and RF grant programs each of those fiscal years. These funds would have been split equally among HMP and RF activities. These budget proposals were very similar to the FY2012 and FY2013 proposals with regard to fatherhood programs. (However, the FY2013

[73] Pursuant to P.L. 111-291, the $75 million in Responsible Fatherhood funds provided for FY2011 could be used for fatherhood activities intended to promote or sustain marriage, responsible parenting, economic stability, and media campaigns that reach families with important messages about responsible fatherhood.

budget would have provided $580 million over 10 years to support the increased access and visitation services while the FY2014 and FY2015 budgets would have provided $448 million over 10 years for such services.)

During the 113th Congress, the HMP and RF grant programs were extended and funded thorough a number of appropriations acts. All of these appropriations acts provided $150 million per year (either through a full year of funding or on an annualized basis), divided equally between the programs.

- For FY2013, a full-year continuing resolution (P.L. 113-6, enacted on March 26, 2013) extended funding for the HMP and RF grant programs through September 30, 2013.
- For FY2014, the programs were initially extended and funded through an interim continuing resolution (P.L. 113-46, enacted on October 17, 2013), and subsequently provided full-year appropriations through September 30, 2014 (P.L. 113-76, enacted on January 17, 2014).
- For FY2015, the programs were initially extended and funded through three continuing appropriations acts: (1) P.L. 113-164, enacted on September 19, 2014; (2) P.L. 113-202, enacted on December 12, 2014; and (3) P.L. 113-203, enacted on December 13, 2014). Later in the fiscal year, full-year appropriations were provided through September 30, 2015 (P.L. 113-235, enacted on December 16, 2014).

Other pieces of legislation affecting the HMP and RF programs were introduced during the 113th Congress, though none received congressional action. H.R. 2359, the Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2013, was reintroduced. Similar to the bill (H.R. 2193) introduced in the 112th Congress, H.R. 2359, among other things, would have reauthorized and provided $75 million per year for RF programs for each of the years FY2014 through FY2018.

114th Congress (2015-2016)

The Obama Administration's FY2016 and FY2017 budgets proposed continuing funding of $150 million to support HMP and RF grant programs for each of those fiscal years. These funds would have been split equally among Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood activities. These budget requests also continued to propose $448 million over 10 years to support increased access and visitation services and integrating those services into the core CSE program.

The HMP and RF programs were extended and funded through a number of appropriations acts. All of these appropriations acts provided $150 million per year (either through a full year of funding or on an annualized basis), divided equally between the programs.

- For FY2016, the programs were initially funded through three interim continuing resolutions: (1) P.L. 114-53, enacted September 30, 2015; (2) P.L. 114-96, enacted December 11, 2015; and (3) P.L. 114-100, enacted December 16, 2015. Full-year funding for FY2016 was provided via P.L. 114-113 (enacted December 18, 2015).
- For FY2017, the programs did not receive full-year appropriations during the 114th Congress, and instead were funded through two continuing resolutions: (1) P.L. 114-223, enacted on September 29, 2016; and (2) P.L. 114-254, enacted on December 10, 2017. The continuing appropriations in P.L. 114-254 were scheduled to expire on April 28, 2017.

Other pieces of legislation affecting the Healthy Marriages and Responsible Fatherhood programs were introduced during the 114th Congress, though none received congressional action. H.R. 3005, the Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2015, was reintroduced. Similar to the bill (H.R. 2359) introduced in the 113th Congress, H.R. 3005, among other things, would have reauthorized and provided $75 million per year for responsible fatherhood programs for each of five fiscal years (FY2016 through FY2020). Also during the 114th Congress, two pieces of legislation were introduced that specify that HHS may not take any action to finalize, implement, enforce, or otherwise give effect to the proposed rule entitled "Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs" or any proposal set forth in the proposed rule (S. 1525 and H.R. 2688). Neither of those pieces of legislation received congressional action. (The final rule was issued on December 19, 2016.)

115th Congress (2017-2018)

The Trump Administration's FY2018 budget proposed that funding for the HMP and RF grants be continued through FY2018 at current law levels ($75 million for each program).

The HMP and RF grant programs were temporarily extended by two appropriations laws. The first, enacted on April 29, 2017, extended the program through May 5, 2017 (P.L. 115-30). The second, enacted on May 5, 2017, extended the program for a comparatively longer time period, through September 30, 2018 (P.L. 115-31).

The Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2017 (H.R. 3465) was reintroduced, which would, among other things, reauthorize the program through FY2023. No legislative action on that proposal has occurred.

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