

# SUPPORTING FATHER INVOLVEMENT AND SUCCESS:

An Evaluation of the Fathers Corps Program of First 5 Alameda County

Prepared for First 5 Alameda County  
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# Executive Summary

Established in 2013, the Alameda County Fathers Corps (Fathers Corps) is a cross-systems collaboration of Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, Social Services Agency, Department of Child Support Services, and Department of Probation, led by First 5 Alameda County. Fathers Corps works to create a father-friendly system of care for families by building the capacity of service providers to effectively see, serve, and support fathers and father-figures. This program focuses specifically on creating father-specific and father-centered services that improve the parenting skills of fathers and father-figures, specifically low-income fathers of color not residing with their young children (0-5). Over its first decade, the Fathers Corps has demonstrated a promising and impactful approach to directly supporting fathers while also facilitating systemic changes that can benefit fathers and their children throughout Alameda County.

## The Fathers Corps concentrates efforts in three strategic areas



### System Building

Fathers Corps aims to establish a father-friendly system of care by implementing the Father-Friendly Principles and coordinating the Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup.



### Capacity Building

Fathers Corps provides tailored training opportunities for programs and providers, enhancing awareness of fathers' needs and challenges through learning communities and individual trainings.



### Father Engagement and Support

Fathers Corps funds father-specific parenting education and support groups for community-based organizations. Additionally, Fathers Corps hosts fatherhood summits and a monthly support group known as "Dad-scussions."

## RESHAPING THE NARRATIVE

Throughout all efforts, the Fathers Corps strives to reshape the narrative surrounding fathers, especially those from Black and Brown communities, ensuring they are seen, served, and supported respectfully.





## Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation, conducted between February 2023 and January 2024 at the 10-year anniversary of the program, was to document its history and assess the impact of program activities on fathers/father-figures, service providers, and broader public systems. Three primary questions guided the evaluation:

- 1 What effect has Fathers Corps had on **fathers and father-figures** participating in its program activities?
- 2 How has Fathers Corps influenced **service providers** who work directly with fathers, including observed changes in organizational practices towards fathers?
- 3 What impact has Fathers Corps made on service delivery to fathers by **public, private, and nonprofit organizations**, according to leaders of those groups?

Methods of data collection included document review, analysis of historical program surveys, key informant interviews, a focus group held with fathers, and an evaluation survey. Workshops with key stakeholders who participated and funded the program were involved in reviewing and discussing the findings.



## Key Findings for Fathers

The principal activity for fathers within Fathers Corps consisted of participating in father support group sessions. These monthly gatherings provided a forum for fathers to engage in discussions on topics either initiated by participants or introduced by facilitators. **Key findings revealed that nearly 90% of fathers reported improved interactions with their children due to participating in support groups. More than 80% learned and applied new parenting practices and 67% expanded their social support networks.** Additional impacts for fathers are available in the full report.



## Key Findings for Service Providers

**Service providers were primarily impacted by Fathers Corps through their participation in training workshops on an array of topics related to fathers.**

They included participants from 36 organizations throughout Alameda County that represent a large segment of the human services infrastructure including five county agencies, three city agencies, three school districts, 17 community-based organizations, and eight healthcare organizations. Several important Fathers Corps impacts were noted by this group.

- **Service providers noted various organizational impacts observed following their staff's participation in training workshops.** They included, among others, making fatherhood issues part of their organization's strategic planning efforts (73%), seeking or obtaining funding to provide services to fathers (69%), seeking greater participation of fathers in their programs (56%), creating accountability requirements for better serving fathers (58%), and adding requirements to serve fathers to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and contracts (48%).
- **Service providers also reported modifications to their organization's existing programs that are attributable to their participation in Fathers Corps.** Some of the most salient changes included modifying existing program content to better serve fathers (46%), using new approaches to recruit and retain fathers (46%), and adding new services specifically for fathers (44%).
- **New programs and services were also introduced as a result of participation by service providers in Fathers Corps workshops.** Some of these included offering workshops (50%) and support groups (42%) for fathers, as well as providing legal assistance to fathers (31%) and offering co-parenting groups (23%).



## Key Findings for Systems Leaders

**Systems leaders were impacted by Fathers Corps through their or their staff's participation in training workshops and other support activities.** Twenty systems leaders reported on the impacts of these activities for their organizations.

- **Several important organizational changes took place following staff participation in Fathers Corps program activities,** including helping make staff more effective in communicating and engaging with fathers (65%), making fatherhood issues part of their organizations' strategic plans (60%), and greater participation of fathers in their organizations' programs (55%).

- **Systems leaders, particularly at large public agencies, noted important changes** that included adding requirements to serve fathers to Requests for Proposals and contracts (43%), allocating new funding to programs serving fathers (43%), and creating accountability requirements and measures related to better serving fathers (43%).



## Recommendations for Better Serving Fathers

Several recommendations for more effectively serving fathers emerged from interviews, the focus group, the evaluation survey, and a synthesis of the research literature:

- **Improve Father Recruitment:** While word-of-mouth remains a crucial recruitment strategy, fathers strongly recommended significantly expanding marketing and recruitment efforts to reach more fathers who could benefit from Fathers Corps programs, especially fathers with children younger than 5, which comprised about a quarter (26%) of evaluation survey respondents. Suggested outreach activities include community events such as barbecues, car shows, and motorcycle meetups, as well as advertising through billboards and bus stop signs.
- **Offer more one-on-one sessions of individualized support:** Roughly two-thirds (65%) of fathers participating in support groups indicated that they would like to have more one-on-one sessions with program staff. In the evaluation literature, programs offering individualized support and services tended to report better outcomes.
- **Expand Referrals to Services:** A large majority of surveyed fathers agreed that receiving additional services beyond support group participation was important to them. However, less than half (45%) felt that sufficient information about supportive services was made available. Furthermore, 40% of service providers endorsed creating a workshop on effectively referring fathers to community resources.
- **Assist in Establishing Legal Parenting Time Agreements:** Evaluation literature suggests that helping fathers secure court-ordered parenting time agreements, although not widely implemented in fatherhood programs, addresses a major issue that often leads fathers to drop out: lack of access to their children. Supporting fathers in securing these agreements would likely require providing pro bono or cost-effective legal services to aid in negotiating the terms of the agreements.



## Recommendations for Supporting Service Providers and Systems Leaders

Based on survey responses and key informant interviews, a handful of recommendations emerged for improving Fathers Corps to better equip service providers and systems leaders to support fathers

- **Develop a comprehensive, integrated series of workshops:** Service providers surveyed highly ranked the creation of a workshop series that builds upon itself over time, providing a comprehensive learning experience. Designing an integrated curriculum that progressively covers key topics would enhance the effectiveness of training workshops.
- **Compile a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services in Alameda County:** Both service providers (62%) and systems leaders (45%) strongly endorsed the suggestion to create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across the county. This centralized resource would facilitate better referrals and coordination of services for fathers seeking support.
- **Reestablish a male-specific learning community:** Recreating a separate male-only learning community, an idea supported by 49% of surveyed service providers and a flagship activity implemented in the early years of the Fathers Corps, would provide a safe and constructive space to discuss certain issues specific to male providers serving fathers.



## Policy and System Building Recommendations

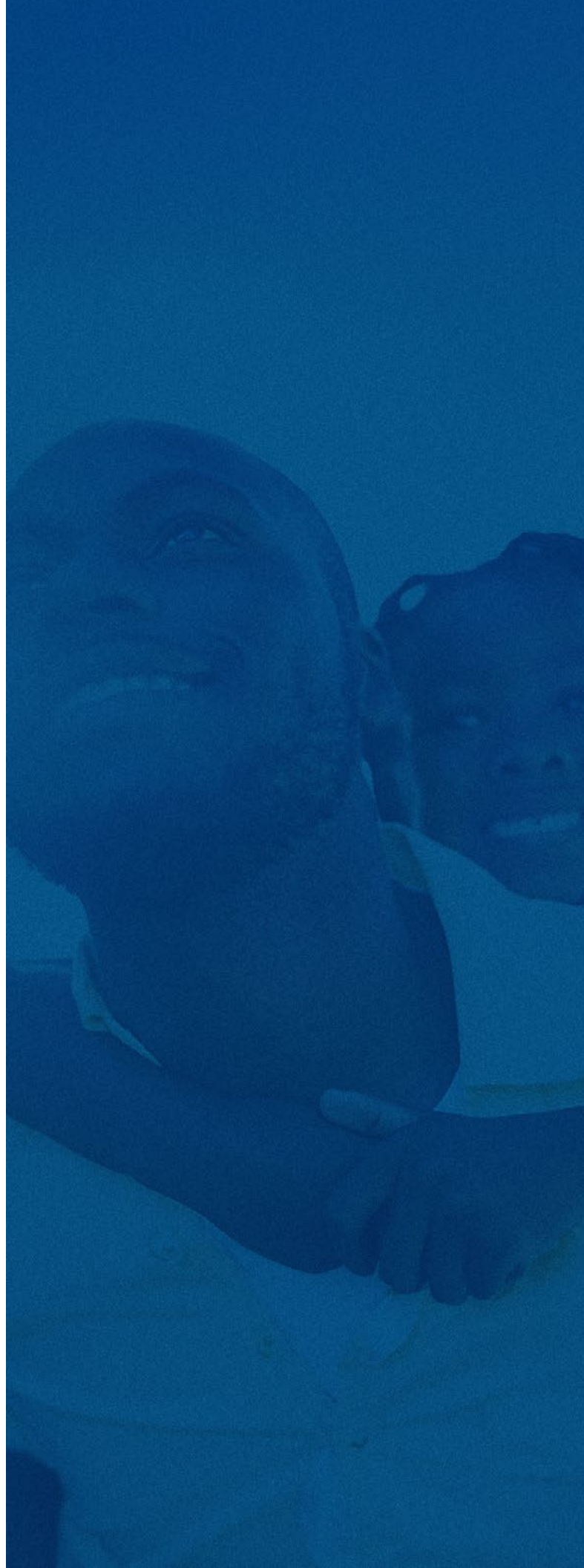
Interviews, the evaluation survey, and the research literature yielded several policy and system-building opportunities. The most prominent include:

- **Facilitate team training, internal team development, and ongoing advising to implement Father-Friendly Principles:** Translating Father-Friendly Principles into actual organizational practice presents a challenge that should be addressed. The Fathers Corps can support the adoption of these principles by providing comprehensive training to help teams internalize and deeply understand the principles and their implications. Additionally, offering strategic advising and coaching to dedicated internal teams can assist in translating these concepts into internal systems practice.
- **Offer training and coaching to service provider champions:** In addition to assisting executive sponsors and internal teams, supporting individual service provider champions who advocate for the adoption of Father-Friendly Principles within their organizations has been identified as a promising opportunity.

- **Establish a partnership with child support services to pilot a program that reduces child support arrears in exchange for completing key milestones in Fathers Corps programs:** Such a program partnership could produce strong incentives for program participation and yield positive benefits for children as a result.
- **Collaborate with community colleges and other educational institutions to integrate content related to serving fathers into certification programs for practitioners:** When surveyed, 45% of service providers and systems leaders endorsed the idea of working with community colleges to incorporate father-serving content into certification programs for family service providers.

This evaluation marks the 10-year anniversary of the Alameda County Fathers Corps, reflecting on the history, progress and programmatic accomplishments, collaborative partnerships with diverse system agencies and community-based organizations, impacts on the target audiences, and insights gained along the way.

The findings and recommendations of this evaluation emphasize the importance of continuing system building efforts, expanding and refining program activities, securing additional funding to strengthen infrastructure and opportunities, and the importance of developing father-focused programming and policies at the local, state, and national levels to effectively see, serve, and support fathers and father-figures.







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The Fathers Corps would also like to acknowledge Fathers Corps co-founders Kevin Bremond, Gary V. Thompson, and Jeff Gillenkirk, all of whom were key partners and supporters of Fathers Corps.



## About KEVIN BREMOND

Kevin Bremond is a father of three, was born, raised, and currently lives in Oakland, California. He is the co-founder and current Program Administrator of the Alameda County Fathers Corps. Kevin is a leading voice advocating for the identification and modification of policies that remove barriers to fathers' engagement with their children, development of father-specific services that honor and respect the role of fathers in their communities and families, and acknowledgement of the true narrative of fatherhood – that fathers are active, engaged, loving, and committed, and those who are not, want to be.

## About GARY THOMPSON

In his professional life, Gary served as the Fatherhood Initiative Manager at Alameda County for almost 10 years before his retirement in June 2020. Gary had a long and impactful career in Alameda County serving families in a variety of ways. In addition to building out the Fatherhood Initiative case management and group support program within MPCAHA (Maternal, Paternal, Child and Adolescent Health), Gary also co-founded the Alameda County Fathers Corps in 2013. The Fathers Corps was formed to create a father-friendly system of care for families and to support fathers with being the dads they want to be. Gary's knowledge of, and relationships within, Alameda County's public systems helped create a path for the growth and development of the Fathers Corps program.

## About JEFF GILLENKIRK

In 2013, Jeff Gillenkirk, First 5 Alameda Communications Specialist, along with Gary Thompson and Kevin Bremond, co-founded the Fathers Corps. Sadly, Jeff passed away suddenly in 2016. His profound belief in the mission of the Fathers Corps, and its potential to positively impact children and families in Alameda County, was unwavering. Jeff played a pivotal role in naming the Alameda County Fathers Corps, drawing inspiration from the Peace Corps.



# Introduction

Fathers Corps is the product of a multi-agency partnership within Alameda County to enhance father involvement and child well-being. The multi-program initiative seeks to enhance the parenting skills of low-income fathers of color who are not living with their young children (ages 0 to 5) and to equip service providers and public systems to become more inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of these fathers.

The purpose of this evaluation, conducted between February 2023 and January 2024 at the 10-year anniversary of the program, was to document its history and assess the impact of program activities on fathers/father-figures, service providers, and broader public systems. The evaluation approach taken is formative, a process of gathering and analyzing feedback during the development or implementation of a program, and draws heavily on the retrospectively reported experiences of participants gathered through interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

## How This Report is Organized

The contents of the report are organized into seven sections:

- 1 Program History:** The first section provides an overview of the history of the Fathers Corps program as well as a timeline of its core program activities.
- 2 Fathers Corps Program Model:** The second section explains the Fathers Corps program model in detail, including a presentation of a logic model and a concept map illustrating the flow of program activity.
- 3 Program Impacts:** The third section presents the evidence regarding the impacts of Fathers Corps programs and activities on the intermediate and target outcomes for fathers and father-figures, service providers, and systems leaders.
- 4 Opportunities for Improvement:** The fourth section draws on insights shared by program participants regarding areas of possible improvement for Fathers Corps programs.
- 5 Recommendations:** The last section offers recommendations based on a synthesis of the research literature and insights from program participants.
- 6-7 Appendices 1 and 2** provide a description of the evaluation methodology for this report along with a summary of the literature on effective fatherhood programs.



# Fathers Corps Program History

Established in 2013, the Alameda County Fathers Corps (Fathers Corps) is a program of First 5 Alameda County and began as a jointly funded effort between First 5, the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, and the Alameda County Social Services Agency. The partnership would later expand to include the Alameda County Social Services Agency, Alameda County Department of Probation, and the Alameda County Department of Child Support Services. The Fathers Corps emerged to address a significant gap in services for families within early childhood, community service, and social support sectors. Traditionally, these services predominantly focused on supporting and engaging mothers and children, leaving fathers underserved and underrepresented. The Fathers Corps, co-founded by Kevin Bremond and Jeff Gillenkirk of First 5 Alameda County, along with Gary Thompson of the Alameda County Public Health Department, seeks to transform this dynamic by advocating for a father-centered approach to family services.

Programs focused on fathers can help to raise awareness of the benefits of the critical role that fathers and father-figures have in early childhood development. Both local and national research indicates high-quality, involved fathering by dads who live in the child’s home and apart, has strong, positive impacts on children’s development, including academic achievement, emotional well-being, and behavior. According to First 5’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessments (KRA) data there is strong link between fathers’ use of kindergarten transition supports and higher kindergarten readiness.

Dedicated to fostering a father-friendly system of care, the Fathers Corps distinguishes itself from other fatherhood programs by concentrating on systems and capacity building, as well as father engagement and support. This initiative works diligently to reshape the narrative surrounding fatherhood, ensuring that fathers receive the recognition and resources they need to actively participate in their families’ lives. Through its innovative and inclusive approach, the Fathers Corps aims to create a balanced and supportive environment for all family members in Alameda County.

Over the course of its first decade, the Fathers Corps has introduced seven core program activities that together help to fulfill its mission to both provide direct service to fathers and spur changes to systems that serve fathers across Alameda County. Each component is described in more depth below along with the mission and goals of the initiative.

## Fathers Corps Timeline

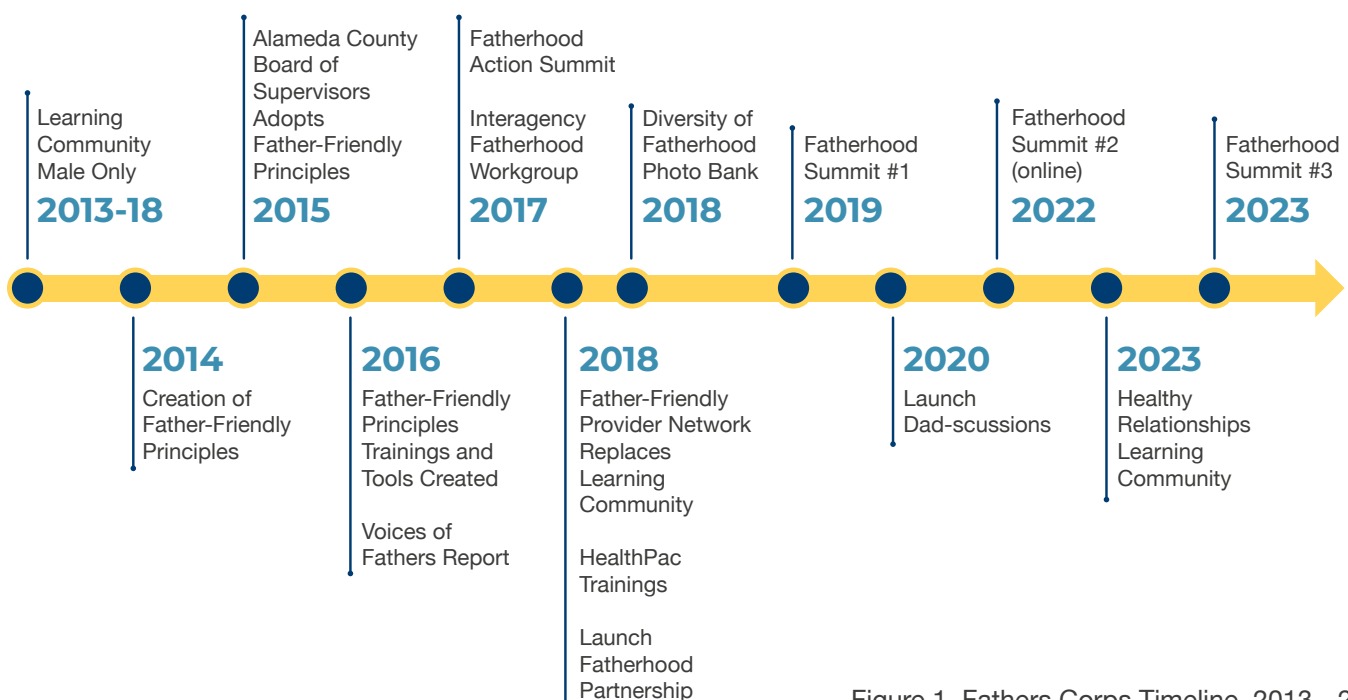


Figure 1. Fathers Corps Timeline, 2013 - 2023

# Fathers Corps Program Model

## Mission

The mission of Fathers Corps is to create a father-friendly system of care for families by building the capacity of service providers to effectively see, serve, and support fathers and father-figures. The multi-program initiative specifically seeks to create father-specific and father-centered services that enhance the parenting skills of low-income fathers of color not residing with their young children.

## Goals

Fathers Corps is committed to the principle that helping to increase father involvement in children's lives will significantly strengthen families in Alameda County. Its primary goals are to:

- Increase opportunities for fathers to strengthen their parenting skills
- Promote and assist with the implementation of the Alameda County Fathers Corps Father-Friendly Principles throughout Alameda County
- Increase awareness of the importance of strengthening the bond between fathers, their children, and families
- Expand the pool of Father Engagement Specialists and Mentors who are available to support Alameda County family service programs
- Highlight the narrative that Black and Brown fathers are engaged, active, and present, and those who aren't, want to be

## Target Population

Fathers Corps has three primary target populations:

- 1. Fathers and Father-Figures:** Fathers Corps seeks to improve the quality of father-child interactions and relationships between fathers and their children, particularly for low-income fathers of color who do not reside with their young children (ages 0-5).
- 2. Service Providers:** Fathers Corps also seeks to improve the capacity of those who offer direct services to fathers and father-figures.
- 3. Systems Leaders:** Lastly, Fathers Corps aims to influence how leaders of public and private organizations make decisions that impact fathers and father-figures.

## Core Program Areas

This section describes the Fathers Corps core program areas:

- Systems Building
- Capacity Building
- Father Engagement and Support

Woven across all three of these core program areas is an effort to re-shape the narrative about fathers, particularly for fathers of color.





### System Building

Fathers Corps aims to establish a father-friendly system of care by implementing the Father-Friendly Principles and coordinating the Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup.



### Capacity Building

Fathers Corps provides tailored training opportunities for programs and providers, enhancing awareness of fathers' needs and challenges through learning communities and individual trainings.



### Father Engagement and Support

Fathers Corps funds father-specific parenting education and support groups for community-based organizations. Additionally, Fathers Corps hosts fatherhood summits, and "Dad-scussion" sessions, a monthly support group.

## RESHAPING THE NARRATIVE

Figure 2. Fathers Corps Program Areas

### System Building

The aim of system-building activities is to improve how public, private, and nonprofit organizations identify and address the needs of fathers. There are three core activities in this program area: the Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup, the Father-Friendly Principles and associated workshops, and the Diversity of Fatherhood Photo Bank.

#### The Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup (IFW)

Launched in 2017, The Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup (IFW) aims to advance the implementation of Father-Friendly Principles in public agencies and nonprofits across Alameda County. The workgroup originated from the Fatherhood Action Summit, a gathering of 84 leaders from 38 agencies and programs to discuss strategies for improving services to fathers and identifying necessary policy shifts.

The IFW serves as a forum for public agency leaders to discuss and address policy and practice issues related to implementing Father-Friendly Principles. The group meets on a monthly-to-quarterly basis, with meetings facilitated by Fathers Corps staff. Membership primarily comprises middle managers and has remained consistent over the

past few years. The primary focus of the IFW is to develop accountability measures for implementing the Father-Friendly Principles and to share best practices, including language for creating father-friendly policies.

#### Father-Friendly Principles Training Workshops

In 2014, Fathers Corps staff and members of the Learning Community created the Father-Friendly Principles (FFP) to guide agencies and programs in better serving and supporting the needs of Alameda County's fathers and father-figures. The following year, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors formally endorsed the principles by issuing a resolution encouraging all social and family support programs to implement them and participate in related training offered by Fathers Corps.

To facilitate the effective implementation of these principles, Fathers Corps introduced tools and a training program in 2016. These tools include the Father-Friendly Self-Assessment and the Father-Friendly Principles Implementation Tool. The Self-Assessment Tool helps agencies evaluate their father-friendliness and serves as a guide to integrating the Father-Friendly Principles into service delivery. The Implementation Tool provides a step-by-step guide for any program or agency to implement each of the seven Father-Friendly Principles.

Fathers Corps also offers workshops to public and private organizations for applying the Father-Friendly Principles tools. Since 2014, Fathers Corps has conducted approximately 50 training sessions, engaging a diverse range of organizations, including healthcare facilities, public health departments, nonprofit entities, government agencies, churches, the Oakland Unified School District, and family justice centers. In 2018, Fathers Corps expanded its training efforts to include the Health Program of Alameda County (HealthPAC), a county initiative aimed at providing affordable healthcare services to uninsured, low-income individuals through its network of nine community-based health clinics.

## The Diversity of Fatherhood Photo Bank

The Fathers Corps launched the [Diversity of Fatherhood Photo Bank](#) in 2018 to support and promote positive representations of Black and Brown fathers. This Photo Bank aligns with Father-Friendly Principle number three, which emphasizes the importance of including diverse and positive images of fathers in outreach materials and creating father-friendly environments. The photo bank offers more than 800 professionally photographed images of local fathers with their children, available for free, to help partners implement this principle. The goal is to shift the narrative around fatherhood and ensure that materials and facilities reflect the needs and interests of men and fathers.

## Capacity Building

Activities in the capacity-building program area are aimed at enhancing service providers' understanding of fathers' needs and improving service delivery. This program area encompasses three core activities: Father-Friendly Provider Network trainings, the Fatherhood Summit, and the Healthy Relationships Learning Community.

### Father-Friendly Provider Network (formerly The Learning Community)

The Learning Community was inaugurated in 2013 with the objective of raising awareness about the needs and challenges faced by fathers and father-figures in Alameda County and highlighting the necessity for more supportive services. The network was built on the belief that strengthening families involves equipping service providers with the skills and knowledge to effectively engage with fathers and father-figures, thereby fostering their active involvement in their children's lives. At its launch the Learning Community was comprised exclusively of male service providers.

## Capacity-Building Statistics At-a-Glance: 2013-2024

- Participants attending 1-6 workshops sessions: 670
- Father Engagement Specialists (attending at least 7 workshops): 68
- Father Engagement Mentors (attending at least 14 workshops): 37
- Father Engagement Ambassadors (attending at least 21 workshops): 23

In 2018, the program evolved significantly, transitioning from the Learning Community to the Father-Friendly Provider Network (FFPN). This change marked a shift towards including service providers of all genders to ensure that all providers have access to training on father engagement and support.

The Father-Friendly Provider Network convenes monthly from September through May, offering workshops that last two to three hours. These workshops address a wide range of topics designed to enhance the capacity of service providers to engage effectively with fathers and support the improvement of father-child relationships. Key areas of focus include bonding and attachment, co-parenting, child development, navigating the child support system, understanding barriers to father engagement, and addressing maternal and paternal depression.

According to key informants, workshop attendees usually include frontline staff, supervisors, and program managers. Efforts are made to align each training session with the Father-Friendly Principles, including the reintroduction of the Father-Friendly Principles Self-Assessment and Implementation Tools.

### Fatherhood Summits

Since 2019, Fathers Corps has convened three Fatherhood Summits, attracting hundreds of participants. These summits took place in 2019, 2022 (conducted online), and 2023. They offer service providers workshops on various topics relevant to fathers and feature nationally recognized speakers. Example workshop topics include "Brother, You've Been On My Mind: Mental Health and Well-Being," "Building Healthy Relationships," "Honoring the Diversity of Fatherhood: Embracing LGBTQ Fathers," "Civically Minded and Politically Active," and "A Father's Role in Supporting Child Development."

## Healthy Relationship Learning Community

The Healthy Relationship Learning Community, launched in late 2023, offers a series of workshops designed to equip service providers with the necessary skills to effectively navigate challenging conversations regarding healthy relationships and co-parenting. The Healthy Relationships Learning Community convened and led by the Fathers Corps, meets once per month for two to three hours, from September through May. The primary goal is to build the capacity of service providers to assist parents in prioritizing the well-being and needs of their children within co-parenting dynamics.

### Father Engagement and Support

There are four activities in the Father Engagement and Support program area intended to directly serve fathers.

#### Peer Support Groups (Fatherhood Partnership)

Since 2018, with the launch of the Fatherhood Partnership, Fathers Corps has supported the provision of peer support groups for fathers and father-figures. Offered through 8 community partners across Alameda County, peer support group sessions offer a platform for fathers to engage in discussions on participant-driven or facilitator-



introduced topics. Sessions are typically an hour or more and comprised of eight to 12 fathers. Occasionally a speaker will be invited to join the group to share comments prior to group discussion. According to key informants, issues related to child caretaking (e.g., diaper changes, child's sleep patterns), child discipline, co-parenting, custody and access to children are frequent topics. Having a space to connect with other dads is one of the most important features of support groups according to multiple key informants. Despite placing advertisements, flyers, and various forms of community outreach, most key informants indicated that fathers primarily find their way to support groups through word of mouth.

#### Dad-scussions

Dad-scussions was launched in response to the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home order issued by the public health department in Alameda County in 2020. About 15 to 20 dads join 90-minute monthly sessions on Zoom where topical experts are often given 10 to 20 minutes to share information about a topic before participants enter breakout rooms for discussion. Afterward they debrief with the larger group. Sessions typically close with a fatherhood affirmation and announcements about resources and other happenings in the community.

#### Training Workshops

Fathers can participate in the same training workshops offered to service providers as part of the Father-Friendly Provider Network. Workshop sessions on an array of father-related topics are conducted both in-person and online, last about an hour and incorporate peer discussion and interactive activities.

#### Fatherhood Summit

Like service providers, fathers and father-figures participate in Fatherhood Summits. To date, summits have been held by the Fathers Corps in 2019, 2022 (online), and 2023 featuring workshops and speakers on several fatherhood-related themes. While everyone is welcome, the target audience for the Fatherhood Summit are fathers and father-figures.



## Program Logic Model

Figure 3 illustrates the logic of the Fathers Corps program. It summarizes the type of staff, activities, dosage, duration, intermediate outcomes, and target outcomes for each of the three target populations. Figure 4 provides a Concept Map illustrating the flow of program activities between different stakeholders that is aimed at ultimately benefiting fathers.

**Program Delivery Personnel:** Fathers Corps program delivery personnel include support group facilitators, trainers, external speakers, and convening facilitators.

- **Support group facilitators:** Facilitators are trained by Fathers Corps to lead open-topic and guided

discussion sessions with support group participants. These staff are either employed by Fathers Corps or the eight organizations funded by Fathers Corps as part of the Fatherhood Partnership.

- **Trainers:** Trainers are either Fathers Corps staff or external parties with expertise in specific topics that are recruited to conduct training sessions.
- **Speakers:** In addition to trainers, Fathers Corps recruits speakers to deliver topical lectures.
- **Convening facilitators:** Staff of Fathers Corps convene and facilitate periodic meetings of the Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup.

Each component of the program's logic model is illustrated in Figures 3 and a concept map illustrates the flow of program activity for Father Corps programs in Figure 4.

|                   | Program Delivery Personnel   | Activities, Context, Dosage, Duration  | Target Populations   | Intermediate Outcomes   | Target Outcomes   |
|-------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Fathers           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Group Facilitators</li> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• Speakers</li> </ul> | <p><b>Activities:</b> Support Groups, Trainings, Fatherhood Summit</p> <p><b>Context:</b> In-person and online</p> <p><b>Dosage:</b> 12 to 24, 1-hour sessions</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 12 months</p> | <p><b>Fathers</b></p> <p>An emphasis on low-income fathers of color who are not residing with their young children, ages 0-5</p>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn and apply new parenting skills.</li> <li>• Increase reported social support.</li> <li>• Boost fathers' confidence in their parenting abilities.</li> </ul>   | <p>Improve the quality of interactions and relationship between fathers and their children.</p>                               |
| Service Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• Speakers</li> </ul>                                       | <p><b>Activities:</b> Trainings</p> <p><b>Context:</b> In-person and online</p> <p><b>Dosage and Duration:</b> At least 7 of 10 workshops offered annually over a 9-month period.</p>                | <p><b>Service Providers</b></p> <p>Providers who interact with or provide direct services and supports to fathers and father-figures</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn and apply new understanding and skills to include and support fathers and father-figures.</li> <li>• Modify service content and practices to better address fathers and father-figures.</li> </ul> | <p>Improve the understanding and effectiveness with which providers serve the needs of fathers and father-figures.</p>        |
| Systems Leaders   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• Convening Facilitators</li> </ul>                         | <p><b>Activities:</b> Funding, Trainings, Facilitated period convenings</p> <p><b>Context:</b> In-person</p> <p><b>Dosage and Duration:</b> Not specified</p>  | <p><b>Systems Leaders</b></p> <p>Those who oversee how public, private and nonprofit organizations interact with and support fathers; not direct service providers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change organizational policies to better serve fathers and father-figures.</li> <li>• Change organizational practices to better serve fathers and father-figures.</li> </ul>                             | <p>Improve how public, private, and nonprofit organizations identify and address the needs of fathers and father-figures.</p> |

Figure 3. Fathers Corps Program Logic Model

# Fathers Corps

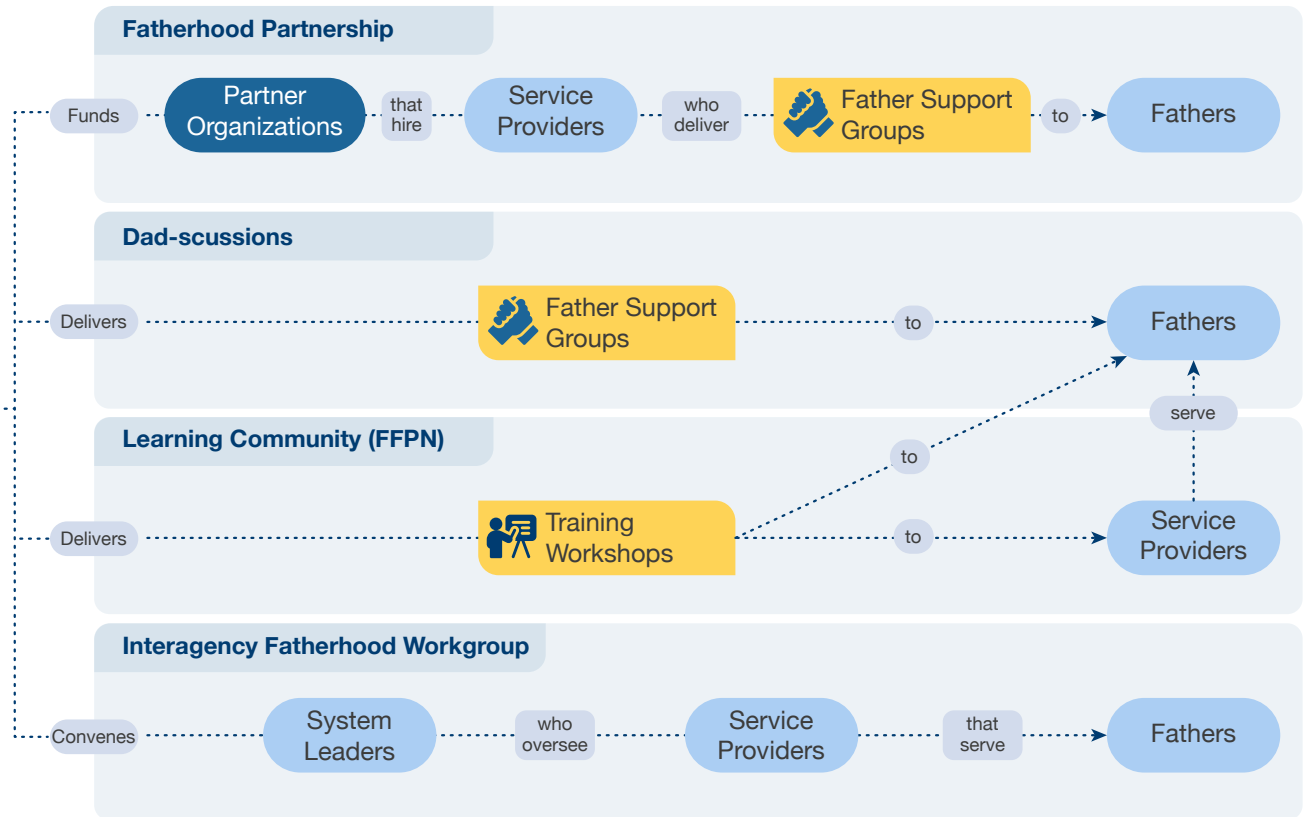


Figure 4. Program Concept Map



# Program Impacts & Recommendations

Evidence for program impacts is drawn from the evaluation survey fielded in November of 2023. For each of the three target populations—fathers, service providers, and systems leaders—program impacts are summarized at two levels:

- 1. Program Reactions:** This level of impact relates to how participants rated the quality and other characteristics of support groups and training workshops. They are similar to customer feedback ratings.
- 2. Program Impacts:** This level of impact relates to whether participating in support groups and training workshops, or any Fathers Corps activity overall, affected intermediate or target outcomes.

## Fathers and Father-Figures Impacts

The impacts of Fathers Corps activities for fathers are of central importance in this evaluation. Findings summarized in this section pertain to those who identified as “Father or Father-Figures” in the evaluation survey.

### Father Characteristics

Demographic data is not gathered at support groups meetings attended by fathers, so estimates of demographic characteristics reported here are drawn from those who completed the evaluation survey.

- **Participating fathers are mostly in their 30s and 40s or older.** According to fathers who attended the focus group and those who responded to the survey, most support group participants were in their 30s and 40s. See Figure 5. Among survey respondents (n=62), nearly 40% were between the ages of 36 and 45. Just 13% were aged 25-35 and the remaining (49%) were older than 45. This pattern of older father participants in Fathers Corps activities is consistent with national studies of participants in the federally funded Responsible Fatherhood programs where the average participant is 35 years old.<sup>1</sup> Fathers Corps Staff and key informants also confirmed that in their experience most group attendees are in their 30s and 40s.

<sup>1</sup> Zaveri, H., Baumgartner, S., Dion, R., & Clary, L. (2015). *Parents and children together: Design and implementation of responsible fatherhood programs* (No. 15116599eceb4b3f9d0de9b8d8797453). Mathematica Policy Research; Avellar, Sarah, Reginald Covington, Quinn Moore, Ankita Patnaik, and April Wu (2018). *Parents and Children Together: Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers*. OPRE Report Number 2018-50. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



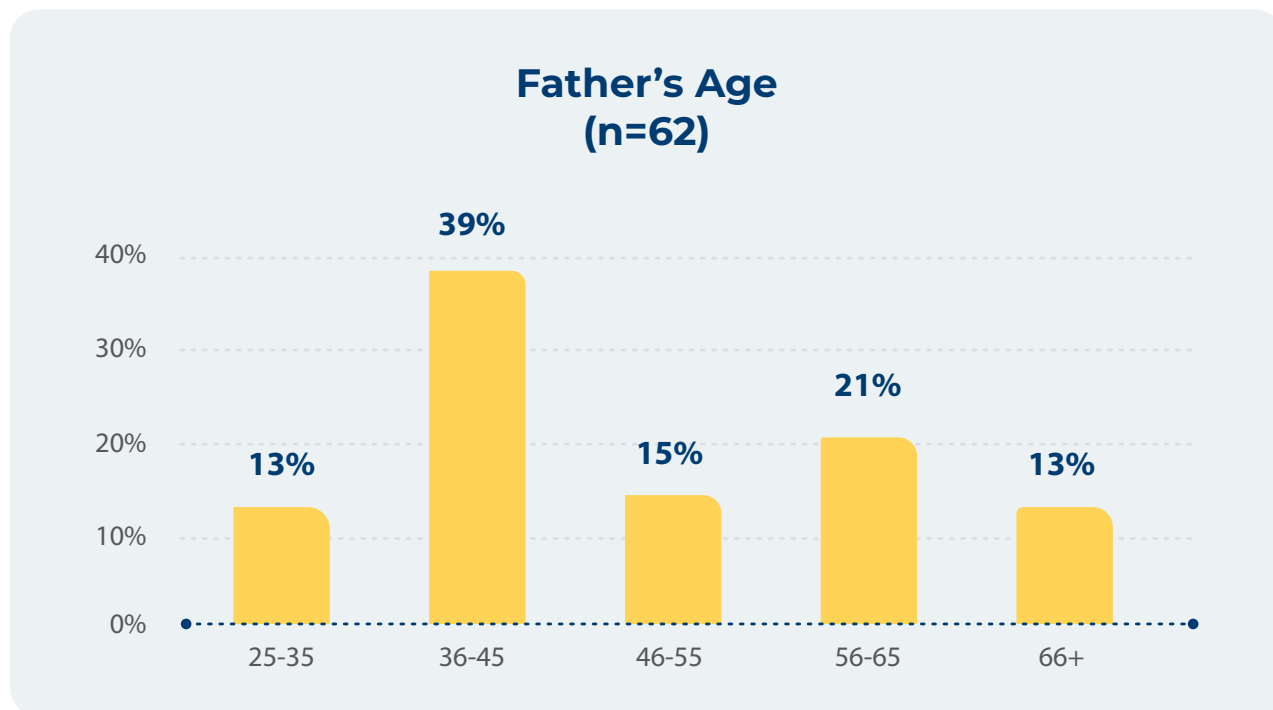


Figure 5. Fathers Age as Reported in Evaluation Survey Responses.

Note: The above percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

- **Most fathers who participated in support groups were identified as Latino and Black (84%).** According to survey responses, 45% of father participants were Latino and 39% were Black.
- **Most fathers were born in the U.S. Among those who were not, most were born in Mexico.** Roughly 70% of support group participants were born in the U.S. Of the quarter of participants born outside the U.S., most (75%) were born in Mexico.
- **Fathers were mostly from Hayward, Oakland and to a much lesser extent, San Leandro and Castro Valley:** About one-third of participants were from either Hayward (32%) or Oakland (31%) and the remainder was from San Leandro (6%), Castro Valley (5%), or dispersed among various locations in Alameda County (26%).
- **About half of the fathers in support groups had a child younger than 12, while about a quarter had a child under the age of 5:** Among support group participants, 26% reported a youngest child under the age of 5, while 31% had a youngest child between 6 and 12 years old. See Table 1. Additionally, 19% of participants indicated that their youngest child was between the ages of 13 and 17. The remaining participants either had a youngest child older than 18 or did not specify their children's ages.

Table 1. Father Respondents by Age of Youngest Child

| Age of Youngest Child | Total Respondents | % of Overall Father Sample |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Ages 0-5              | 15                | 26%                        |
| Ages 6-12             | 18                | 31%                        |
| Ages 13-17            | 11                | 19%                        |
| Ages 18+              | 14                | 24%                        |
| Not reported          | 4                 | 9%                         |
| All                   | 62                | 100%                       |

The principal activity for fathers within Fathers Corps consisted of participating in support group sessions and related activities. This section will thus review the impacts these support groups had for fathers. Below is a summary of the characteristics of participants in father support groups, their reactions to support group sessions, and how their participation influenced their outcomes.

#### Program Participation and Reactions

In the survey, fathers reported the number of sessions they attended, the duration during which they attended them, and services they desired more of.

- **Fathers attended an average of 7.8 sessions overall, which is below the recommended number of 12 to 24 sessions per Fathers Corps staff. About a third of fathers (32%) attended the recommended 12 or more sessions.** Among 59 fathers who reported both the age of their youngest child and whether they attended support group sessions, the average number of sessions attended was 7.8. See Table 2. Specifically, fathers with a youngest child under the age of 5 also attended an average of 7.8 sessions, while those with their youngest child aged between 6 to 12 attended an average of 8.1 sessions. Given that Fathers Corps staff recommend a participation dosage of 12 to 24 sessions, it appears that the typical support group attendee participated in fewer sessions than advised. Overall, approximately one-third (32%) of respondents reported attending 12 or more support group sessions. This included 27% of fathers with a youngest child under 5 years old, 33% of fathers with a youngest child aged 6 to 12, 18% of fathers with a youngest child aged 13 to 17, and 50% of fathers with a youngest child aged 18 years or older.

### Navigating Institutional Bias

Two fathers in the focus group noted biases they encounter when navigating institutions:

“Teachers won’t walk up to you and talk to you about your child. Dads of color experience unique stigma about who they are and how they should be treated. We need to change the perception of what a parent that cares for their child looks like.” Another father affirmed, remarking, “I’m looked at suspiciously when I pick up my children from school.”

- **Overall, fathers attended the support groups sessions for an average of 20 months. Close to half of all fathers attended support groups sessions for 12 months or more (the recommended duration).** See Table 2. The duration of participation in father support groups is defined by the time span between a father’s first and last session, as reported at the time of survey completion in November 2023. With a recommended participation period of 12 months or longer, 47% of fathers met or exceeded this duration in their involvement with support groups. When analyzed by the age of the youngest child, 53% of fathers with children aged 5 or under persisted for the recommended duration, compared to 39% of fathers with children aged 6 to 12, 45% of fathers with children aged 13 to 17, and 50% of fathers with children aged 18 or older.



Table 2. Father Program Dosage and Duration by Age of Youngest Child

| Age of Youngest Child | Dosage                    |                         | Duration                                |                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|                       | Average Sessions Attended | % Attended 12+ sessions | Average Duration of Attendance (months) | % Attended 12+ months |
| Ages 0-5              | 7.8                       | 27%                     | 19.5                                    | 53%                   |
| Ages 6-12             | 8.1                       | 33%                     | 27.2                                    | 39%                   |
| Ages 13-17            | 5.7                       | 18%                     | 14.7                                    | 45%                   |
| Ages 18+              | 10.2                      | 50%                     | 16.6                                    | 50%                   |
| All                   | 7.8                       | 32%                     | 20.2                                    | 47%                   |

- **A large majority of fathers (89%) agreed that topics that are important to them are addressed in support groups.** For fathers with young children (ages 5 and under), 93% agreed with this statement.
- **About three-quarters (72%) of fathers felt co-parenting information was important to them and around 68% agreed that they received enough information about co-parenting.** Rates of agreement were the same generally for fathers of young children (73% for both).

- **Almost eight in 10 (79%) fathers reported that interactions with their children** had improved as a result of participating in support groups. This figure was even higher (87%) for fathers of young children.

### Potential Areas of Improvement

Through interviews, surveys, and a focus group, fathers offered or endorsed several improvements to Fathers Corps programs and activities, especially changes to support groups and training workshops. This section summarizes those recommended areas of improvement.

#### Program Impacts on Intermediate and Target Outcomes

The impacts that support groups had on fathers' intermediate and target outcomes were also captured from survey responses.

- **A large majority of fathers (73%) learned about and were able to apply new parenting practices** as a result of participating in support groups. Rates of agreement among fathers with young children were slightly higher at 80%.
- **Most fathers (67%) reported expanding their networks of social support** as a result of participating in support groups. An even larger share of fathers with young children (87%) saw their networks of social support expand through support group participation.
- **More than three-quarters (78%) of fathers experienced a boost in confidence in their fathering** as a result of participating in support groups. A similar rate (80%) prevailed for fathers of young children.

#### Improvements to Support Groups

Of the 62 fathers that completed the evaluation survey, 90% (n=56) weighed in on possible improvements to father support groups.

- A large majority (82%) agreed that services beyond support groups are important to them; however, less than half (45%) felt that enough information about supportive services is made available to them. Some examples of the type of additional supports mentioned by fathers included housing support (15% of father respondents) and employment services (10% of father respondents).
- Roughly two-thirds (65%) of support group participants indicated interest in more one-on-one sessions outside of groups sessions.

## Additional Training Workshops for Fathers

While training workshops offered by Fathers Corps are officially open to all comers, few fathers (18%) completing the survey attended training workshops (n=11 of 62). However, of those that attended workshops, they were asked to select up to five additional workshops out of a total of 10 that they believed should be offered to fathers. The following seven workshops were the most highly selected among father respondents:

1. Strengthening father-child bonds (73%)
2. Empowering fathers as nurturers (64%)
3. Guidance for fathers navigating institutions like schools and healthcare (55%)
4. De-escalation techniques for fathers (55%)
5. Employment programs and referral for fathers (45%)
6. Self-care for fathers (45%)
7. Child discipline strategies (45%)

## Improvements to Recruitment

Discussions with fathers in the focus group highlighted key suggestions for enhancing the recruitment of fathers into support groups and related activities. One father pointed out the lack of visibility of Fathers Corps, stating, “You have to know somebody to be part of it,” and advocated for the use of billboards and bus stop advertisements, particularly to reach younger fathers in communities unaware of these services. Additionally, other fathers recommended promoting Fathers Corps at

community events such as barbecues, car shows, and motorcycle meetups, as well as establishing connections with fathers at hospitals during the birth of their children. They observed a notable issue during hospital visits with pregnant partners, where healthcare professionals often fail to engage with or acknowledge them, a problem that is reportedly exacerbated for younger fathers.

## Service Provider Impacts

Training workshops are the primary program activity with which service providers interact. This section summarizes the characteristics of service providers, their reactions to training workshops, and how their participation in workshops influenced intermediate and target outcomes.

### Service Provider Characteristics

Based on the evaluation survey, the following characteristics describe service providers:

- **Most service providers (n=49) were Black (45%) and Latino (45%),** with a small portion (6%) who were white (non-Hispanic) and East Asian (2%).
- **Service providers** were roughly **evenly divided between women (50%) and men (46%).**
- **Service providers** who responded to the evaluation survey **were employed at 36 organizations located throughout the Bay Area.** They included five county agencies, three city agencies, 3 school districts, 17 community-based organizations, and eight healthcare organizations. All organizations to which service providers belonged are listed in Table 3.



Table 3. Organizations Employing Service Provider Respondents to Evaluation Survey

| Public Agencies  | School Districts                       | Healthcare                                | CBOs  |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Alameda County Public Health                            | 1. Hayward Unified School District     | 1. Gentlemen Health & Wellness            | 1. A Better Way, Inc.   |
| 2. Alameda County Department of Child Support Services     | 2. Newark Unified School District      | 2. LifeLong Medical Care                  | 2. Alameda Family Services- ECFS                              |
| 3. Alameda County Health Care Services Agency              | 3. San Lorenzo Unified School District | 3. Men Creating Peace                     | 3. Asthma Start   |
| 4. City of Berkeley, Health Housing and Community Services |  | 4. Native American Health Center          | 4. Bananas  |
| 5. City of Oakland   |  | 5. Stanford Children's Health             | 5. Bay Area Community Healthh                                 |
| 6. First 5 Alameda County                                  |  | 6. Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center         | 6. Child Abuse Prevention Council                             |
| 7. Oakland Public Library                                  |  | 7. UCSF Benioff Children Hospital Oakland | 7. Church of Christ   |
| 8. SF Human Services Agency                                |  | 8. West Oakland Health Center             | 8. Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Alameda County       |
|  |  |   | 9. Community Association for Preschool Education, Inc. (CAPE) |
|  |  |   | 10. Dads Evoking Change                                       |
|  |  |   | 11. East Bay Agency for Children                              |
|  |  |   | 12. Fatherhood Advocate Implementing Rights (FAIR)            |
|  |  |   | 13. Family Paths  |
|  |  |   | 14. Positive Communications Practices                         |
|  |  |   | 15. Realized Potential Inc                                    |
|  |  |   | 16. Union City Family Center                                  |
|  |  |   | 17. YMCA  |

### Program Participation and Reactions

In the evaluation survey, service providers reported whether they attended training workshops, the number of workshops they attended, and the duration during which they attended workshops.

- **Nearly nine out of 10 (88%) service providers (n=48) attended training workshops.**
- **Of service providers that attended workshops, nearly half (46%) attended eight or more workshops and roughly a quarter (27%) attended more than 15.** The recommended number of workshops for service provider certification by Fathers Corps is seven or more workshops within 12 months. It's not possible from the survey data to discern how many service providers met this requirement.
- **Among the service providers the average duration of workshop attendance was nearly 52 months.** Out of the 48 service providers who responded to the evaluation survey, about two-thirds (63%) provided the dates of their first and last workshops attended up to the time of completing the survey. The period between these two dates served as the measure for the duration of workshop attendance. The average (mean) duration from the first to the last workshop attended was nearly 52 months.
- **Most service providers who participated in workshops thought that they covered topics that were highly valuable (75%), well-organized (73%), and had presenters that were highly knowledgeable (73%).** Most also found workshops to be of **sufficient depth (73%),** appropriate **duration (73%),** striking the **right balance between presentation and discussion (71%)** and were **offered at convenient times (69%)** and **locations (58%).**

## Program Impacts on Intermediate and Target Outcomes

The impacts that training workshops had for the intermediate and target outcomes of service providers were both varied and substantial. They included individual impacts on service providers themselves, impacts they helped to implement in their organizations, or impacts they observed in their organizations as a result of their or their colleagues' participation in training workshops.

- **Of those service providers who responded to the survey (n=48), most (85%) described individual and organizational impacts of participating in training workshops.**
- **Service providers identified several significant individual impacts** resulting from training workshops. They included:
  - Increased understanding of the importance of fathers in child development (77%)
  - Improved sense of community after training workshops (77%)
  - Increased knowledge about the challenges and stigma faced by fathers (75%)
  - Improved communication and engagement with fathers (75%)
  - Greater awareness of resources available to support fathers (75%)
  - Expanded professional network for service providers (73%)
  - A changed orientation, mindset or narrative regarding fathers (54%)
- **Service providers noted various organizational impacts observed following their staff's participation in training workshops. The most significant impacts encompassed:**
  - My organization or I have partnered or collaborated with other organizations to support fathers (79%).
  - Fatherhood issues are part of my organization's strategic planning efforts (73%).
  - We are seeing increased advocacy within our organization for policies and programs to better support fathers (71%).
- Our agency has changed the appearance of our facilities to become more welcoming to fathers (69%).
- My organization has sought or obtained funding to support providing programs or services to fathers (69%).
- My organization has created accountability requirements and measures related to better serving fathers (58%).
- We are seeing greater participation of fathers in our programs (56%).
- My organization has added requirements to serve fathers to RFPs and contracts (48%).
- **Service providers also reported modifications to their organization's existing programs that are attributable to their participation in Fathers Corps.** They included:
  - Added new program materials specifically for fathers (48%)
  - Modified existing program content, messages or practices to better serve fathers (46%)
  - Used new approaches to recruit and retain fathers (46%)
  - Added new service activities specifically for fathers (44%)
  - Hired former program participants to become staff providers to fathers (23%)
  - Hired new staff to better support fathers (23%)
- **New programs and services were also introduced as a result of participation by service providers in Fathers Corps workshops.** These included:
  - Workshops for fathers (50%)
  - Outreach events for fathers (44%)
  - Offering father support groups (42%)
  - Offering parenting classes targeting fathers (40%)
  - Providing legal assistance to fathers (31%)
  - Creating group outing activities for fathers (25%)
  - Offering co-parenting groups (23%)
  - Offering school activities to support fathers (21%)
  - Offering drop-in programs for fathers (17%)
  - Organizing dinners for fathers and their children (17%)
  - Organizing playgroups for fathers and their children (17%)
  - Organizing family game nights for fathers and their children (10%)

## Systems Leader Impacts

Few systems leaders participated in training workshops but managed staff that did. In this section, therefore, we summarize what systems leaders reported observing or directly implementing that they attributed to Fathers Corps program activities. These activities included training workshops, the dissemination of the Father-Friendly Principles, and any training received on the Father-Friendly Principles. Responses to the evaluation survey provided the most systematic perspective on how the Father-Friendly Principles and staff training impacted organizational policy and practice.

Evidence for impact on intermediate and target outcomes for systems leaders is drawn from two sources: 1) key informant interviews with directors of seven large Alameda County agencies that either partner or fund Fathers Corps and 2) responses submitted to the evaluation survey by respondents at seven large Alameda County public agencies.

## Systems Leaders Characteristics

Below is a summary of the characteristics of systems leaders who responded to the evaluation survey. There was a total of 20 respondents belonging to 16 different organizations.

- **Systems Leaders who responded to the evaluation survey were employed at 16 organizations located throughout the Bay Area.** Organizations included eight county agencies, one city agency, one school and one school district, four community-based organizations and one healthcare organizations. All organizations to which systems leaders belonged are listed in Table 4.
- **Systems leaders were also demographically diverse comprised of Black (45%), Latino (20%), white (15%) and Asian (5%) leaders.**

Table 4. Organizations Employing Systems Leader Respondents to Evaluation Survey

| Public Agencies  | Schools                            | Healthcare                        | CBOs                                 |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Alameda County Public Health                        | 1. Burckhalter Elementary (OUSD)   | 1. Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center | 1. Brothas Raising Up His            |
| 2. Alameda County Child Family Services                | 2. Hayward Unified School District |                                   | 2. Lao Family Community Development  |
| 3. Alameda County Department of Child Support Services |                                    |                                   | 3. Lotus bloom                       |
| 4. Alameda County Health Care Services Agency          |                                    |                                   | 4. Oakland Starting Smart and Strong |
| 5. Alameda County Probation Department                 |                                    |                                   |                                      |
| 6. Alameda County Public Library                       |                                    |                                   |                                      |
| 7. Alameda County Social Services Agency               |                                    |                                   |                                      |
| 8. First 5 Alameda County                              |                                    |                                   |                                      |
| 9. City of Oakland Head Start Program                  |                                    |                                   |                                      |

## Program Participation and Reactions

Relatively few systems leaders (35%) reported participating in training workshops, so participation and reaction responses for workshops are not reported.

## Organizational Impacts

- There was a total of 20 systems leader survey respondents, 90% of which indicated their level of agreement with whether they observed any of nine changes to their organization **following their own or their staff's participation in Fathers Corps** programs. See Table 5. The **organizational impacts most commonly affirmed by systems leaders** included:
  - o Our agency has changed the appearance of our facilities to become more welcoming to fathers (65%).
  - o Workshops helped make staff more effective in communicating with and engaging with fathers (65%).

- o My organization or I have partnered or collaborated with other organizations to support fathers (65%).
- o Fatherhood issues are part of my organization's strategic plan (60%).
- o We are seeing greater participation of fathers in our programs (55%).

- When the analysis was restricted to systems leaders who are senior leaders (i.e., program managers or higher) at large public agencies (n=7), notable differences emerged with respect to some organizational impacts. **Systems leaders at large public systems were much more likely than all systems leaders to report that:**

- o My organization has added requirements to serve fathers to RFPs and contracts (43%).
- o My organization has allocated new funding to programs and services for fathers (43%).
- o My organization has created accountability requirements and measures related to better serving fathers (43%).

Table 5. Organizational Impacts Reported by Systems Leaders

| Organizational Impact   | All Systems Leaders (% Agreed) | Large Public Systems Leaders (% Agreed) |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Fatherhood issues are part of my organization's strategic planning efforts.   | 60%                            | 71%                                     |
| Our agency has changed the appearance of our facilities to become more welcoming to fathers.  | 65%                            | 71%                                     |
| Participation in Fathers Corps helped make staff more effective in communicating with and engaging with fathers.                                | 65%                            | 57%                                     |
| My organization or I have partnered or collaborated with other organizations to support fathers.  | 65%                            | 57%                                     |
| My organization has added requirements to serve fathers to RFPs and contracts.  | 25%                            | 43%                                     |
| My organization has allocated new funding to programs and services for fathers.   | 15%                            | 43%                                     |
| My organization has created accountability requirements and measures related to better serving fathers.   | 30%                            | 43%                                     |
| My organization has sought or obtained funding to support providing programs or services to fathers.  | 40%                            | 43%                                     |
| My organization is planning new father activities, services, or programs as a result of my or my organization's participation in Fathers Corps. | 40%                            | 43%                                     |
| We are seeing greater participation of fathers in our programs.   | 55%                            | 43%                                     |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>20</b>                      | <b>7</b>                                |



## Changes to Existing Programs

- **Systems leaders were asked whether their organization made changes to existing programs as a result of their participation in Fathers Corps.** See Table 6. The most reported changes were:
  - o Modified existing program content, messages, or practices to better serve fathers (57% for all systems leaders, 71% for those at large public agencies)
  - o Used new approaches to recruit and retain fathers (50%)
  - o Added new program materials specifically for fathers (48%)

Table 6. Changes to Existing Programs as Reported by Systems Leaders

| Change to existing programs   | All Systems Leaders (% Yes) | Large Public Agency Systems Leaders (% Yes) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Modified existing program content, messages or practices to better serve fathers. | 57%                         | 71%   |
| Added new program materials specifically for fathers.                             | 48%                         | 43%   |
| Added new service activities specifically for fathers.                            | 33%                         | 29%   |
| Used new approaches to recruit and retain fathers.                                | 50%                         | 29%   |
| Hired new staff to better support fathers.  | 5%                          | 14%   |
| Hired former program participants to become staff providers to fathers            | 5%                          | 0%  |
| <b>Total Responses</b>  | <b>20</b>                   | <b>7</b>                                    |

## Launching New Programs and Services

- **Systems leaders were asked whether their organization launched any new programs or services** as a result of participating in Fathers Corps programs and activities. See Table 7. **The most frequently cited new programs or services were:**
  - o Providing legal assistance to fathers (50%)
  - o Creating father support groups (44%)
  - o Conducting outreach events for fathers (42%)
  - o Creating co-parenting groups (40%)

Table 7. New Programs Launched as a Result of Fathers Corps

| New Programs                                      | Yes       |
|---|-----------|
| Legal assistance to fathers                       | 50%       |
| Father support groups                             | 44%       |
| Outreach events for fathers                       | 42%       |
| Co-parenting groups                               | 40%       |
| Workshops for fathers                             | 31%       |
| Created group outing activities for fathers       | 25%       |
| Parenting classes targeting fathers               | 23%       |
| Dinners for fathers and their children            | 21%       |
| Family game nights for fathers and their children | 17%       |
| Drop-in programs for fathers                      | 17%       |
| Playgroups for fathers and their children         | 17%       |
| School activities to support fathers              | 10%       |
| <b>Total Responses</b>                            | <b>48</b> |

# Potential Areas of Improvement

In this section, areas of potential improvement to Fathers Corps activities will be reported for both service providers and systems leaders to avoid redundancy. In the evaluation survey, service providers and systems leaders were invited to prioritize and endorse a range of proposed enhancements for Fathers Corps, derived from key informant interviews, a focus group with fathers, and an analysis of 66 past feedback surveys administered by Fathers Corps staff. The respondents were asked to provide their perspectives on four distinct areas of potential improvement: 1) modifications to training workshops; 2) additional workshop topics that should be introduced for service providers and systems leaders; 3) supports required by Fathers Corps to advance the adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles across Alameda County; and 4) general enhancements to the programs and services of Fathers Corps. The feedback received for each of these areas is summarized below.

## Improvements to Training Workshops

Service providers recommended several enhancements to training workshops. In the evaluation survey, they were prompted to prioritize eight possible improvements to these workshops. Among the respondents, 77% (n=37) submitted complete rankings for these proposed enhancements. **The rankings, on a scale of 1 to 8 with 1 being the highest, are listed in descending order of preference. The first two improvements received the highest and most consistent rankings among the eight options presented.**

- Create a series of workshops that build on each other over time to produce a comprehensive learning experience (average rank = 2.7).
- Create more networking opportunities during workshops (avg rank = 3.1).
- Create more opportunities for active engagement or practice with workshop content, including role-playing and hands-on exercises (avg rank = 4.2).
- Provide practical tools for applying workshop learning after the workshop (avg rank = 4.5).

- Offer training in a comprehensive fatherhood curriculum (avg rank = 4.7).
- Offer the same workshops more than once during the year (avg rank = 5.3).
- Create a library of recorded workshops (avg rank = 5.8).
- Include more fathers or father figure participants in workshops (avg rank = 5.8).

## Additional Workshop Topics to Offer

Several additional workshop topics were endorsed by both service providers and systems leaders. Out of a list of 26 possible topics, respondents were asked to select up to 10 that they believed should be offered by Fathers Corps. Table 8 displays the percentage of service providers and systems leaders who endorsed each workshop topic. **The following are the top 10 workshops endorsed.**

1. Recognizing and addressing trauma in adults and children and across generations (40%)
2. Self-care for fathers (40%)
3. De-escalation techniques for fathers (38%)
4. Empowering fathers as nurturers and caregivers (37%)
5. How to effectively refer fathers to community resources (35%)
6. Helping fathers with substance abuse issues (32%)
7. Child discipline strategies (31%)
8. Employment programs and referral for fathers (31%)
9. Guidance for fathers navigating institutions like schools and healthcare (31%)
10. Supporting undocumented fathers (31%)

**Table 8. Additional Proposed Workshops Endorsed by Service Providers and Systems Leaders  
(Sorted on the “% Both” Column)**

| <b>Additional Workshop Topics</b>   | <b>% Service Providers</b> | <b>% Systems Leaders</b> | <b>% Both</b> |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Recognizing and addressing trauma in adults and children and across generations | 42%                        | 35%                      | 40%           |
| Self-care for fathers   | 48%                        | 20%                      | 40%           |
| De-escalation techniques for fathers  | 40%                        | 35%                      | 38%           |
| Empowering fathers as nurturers and caregivers                                  | 35%                        | 40%                      | 37%           |
| How to effectively refer fathers to community resources                         | 42%                        | 20%                      | 35%           |
| Helping fathers with substance abuse issues                                     | 40%                        | 15%                      | 32%           |
| Child discipline strategies   | 33%                        | 25%                      | 31%           |
| Employment programs and referral for fathers                                    | 35%                        | 20%                      | 31%           |
| Guidance for fathers navigating institutions like schools and healthcare        | 38%                        | 15%                      | 31%           |
| Supporting undocumented fathers   | 31%                        | 30%                      | 31%           |
| Creating a father-friendly culture in clinics and services                      | 31%                        | 25%                      | 29%           |
| Issues facing young first-time fathers  | 35%                        | 15%                      | 29%           |
| Case management for fathers   | 33%                        | 15%                      | 28%           |
| Outreach strategies for father recruitment                                      | 27%                        | 25%                      | 26%           |
| Fathers involved in the child welfare system                                    | 29%                        | 15%                      | 25%           |
| Mediation practices and services for families                                   | 29%                        | 15%                      | 25%           |
| Effectively engaging with different ethnic communities                          | 25%                        | 20%                      | 24%           |
| Healing strategies with fathers   | 31%                        | 5%                       | 24%           |
| Psychological impacts of poverty on families                                    | 29%                        | 10%                      | 24%           |
| Coaching techniques for fathers   | 25%                        | 15%                      | 22%           |
| Challenges and supports needed for incarcerated fathers                         | 19%                        | 25%                      | 21%           |
| Support group facilitation techniques   | 25%                        | 10%                      | 21%           |
| Early childhood literacy  | 21%                        | 15%                      | 19%           |
| Practical suggestions for conversations with fathers                            | 15%                        | 5%                       | 12%           |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  | <b>48</b>                  | <b>20</b>                | <b>68</b>     |

## Implementing Father-Friendly Principles

Both key informant interviews and survey responses helped inform potential improvements to Fathers Corps that can effectively support the systems change necessary to implement the Father-Friendly Principles.

### Key Informant Interviews

Executive leaders from large organizations, serving as key informants for this evaluation, have offered numerous insights into facilitating the organizational change necessary for the effective adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles.

They emphasized that while understanding the principles and the significance of fathers' roles is crucial, translating this understanding into actual organizational practice presents a distinct challenge. This transformation necessitates a comprehensive set of tools and strategies for organizational change, highlighting that the responsibility for initiating such change should not fall solely on Fathers Corps.

Engaging organizational members in this change process is essential, as individuals are unlikely to pursue these changes independently. Experience has shown that staff often prefer clear directives on the actions they need to take. Therefore, leadership must proactively identify and train representatives to champion these principles within the organization, recognizing that waiting for managers to take initiative independently is ineffective.

The implementation process requires a dedicated team to guide the organization, acknowledging that there may be resistance or slow adoption from some team members. To overcome these challenges, organizations need a well-developed support system, including advisory and consultation support from Fathers Corps and the formation of an internal team committed to this cause. This team should undergo extensive training to fully grasp the Father-Friendly Principles. A critical step involves translating the principles into language and concepts that feel native to organizations that are being primed for change, necessitating both external assistance and internal effort. Organizations must ideate and create tailored approaches to integrate these principles, developing strategic plans to address resistance and foster coalitions.

Furthermore, given the high turnover rates in many large institutions, there is often a need for a “reset” to re-engage staff and apply insights gained over the past five to seven years. This approach aims to introduce a new wave of personnel to the principles and drive the organizational change forward.

### Evaluation Survey

In the evaluation survey, service providers and systems leaders were asked to rank five potential supports for improving how public and private organizations can implement the Father-Friendly Principles. Complete rankings for all five options were received from 67% (n=32) of service provider respondents and 70% (n=14) of systems leader respondents. See Table 9.

**Table 9. Potential Support for Implementing Father-Friendly Principles**

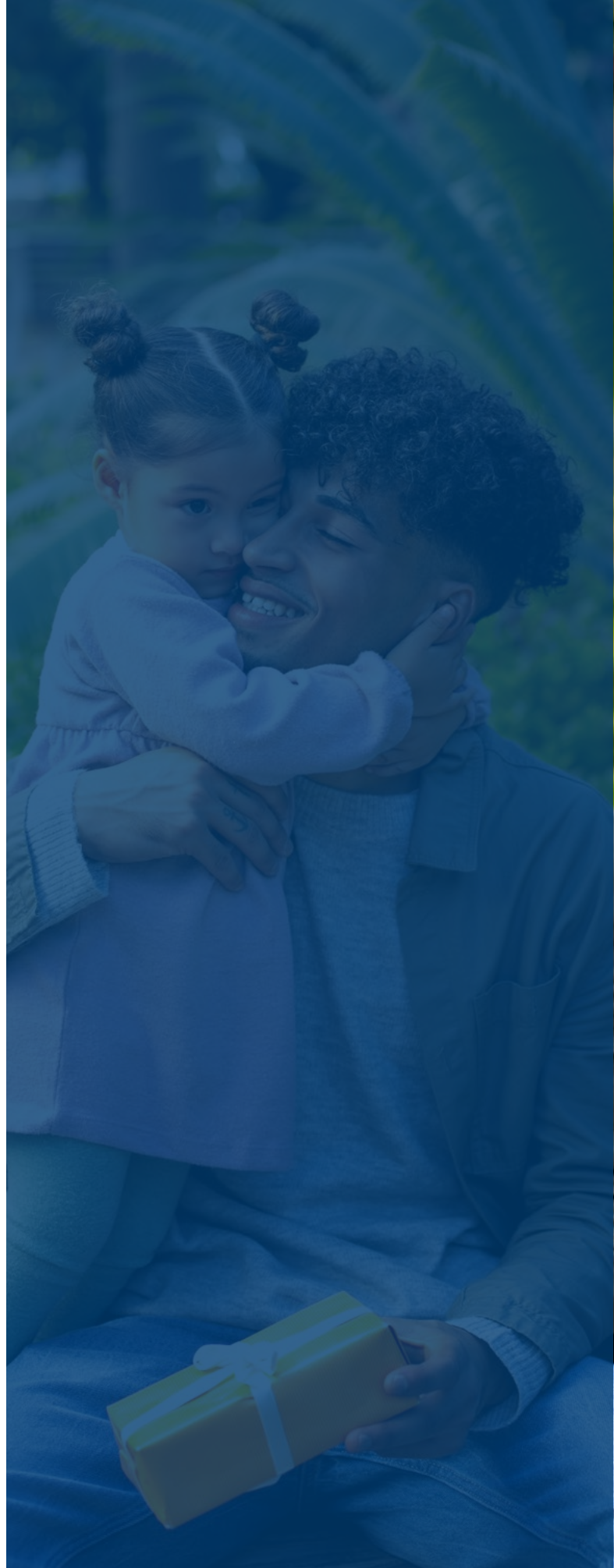
| Potential Support for Implementing Father-Friendly Principles   | Service Providers<br>(avg rank out of 5) | Systems Leaders<br>(avg rank out of 5) |
|---|--|--|
| Provide guidance in leading conversations with upper management to support implementation of Father-Friendly Principles.                                | 2.4                                      | 3.4                                    |
| Provide coaching support to providers seeking to implement the Father-Friendly Principles in their organizations.                                       | 2.7                                      | 2.6                                    |
| Seek to embed Father-Friendly Principles into training programs for field professionals (e.g. social work, education and public health).                | 2.8                                      | 2.2                                    |
| Provide consulting support to implement Father-Friendly Principles in agencies that entails helping organizations plan and implement change strategies. | 3.2                                      | 3.8                                    |
| Provide a training series on ways to implement the Father-Friendly Principles within agencies.  | 3.8                                      | 3.1                                    |



## Overall Improvements to Fathers Corps Program Activities

Respondents from both service provider and systems leader groups were invited to choose up to 10 potential improvements for Fathers Corps from a list of 20 options. Aggregating the results from both groups, the 10 proposed enhancements with the highest level of endorsement are as follows (in descending order):

1. Create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County (57%)
2. Promote fatherhood programs and services at more community events (49%).
3. Create a more streamlined referral process for accessing resources for fathers (48%).
4. Incorporate social outings into the programs to build a sense of community and give fathers and father-figures opportunities to spend quality time with their children (46%).
5. Provide materials and resources in Spanish (46%).
6. Reintroduce a male-specific learning community (45%).
7. Work with community colleges to integrate father-serving content into certifications for family service providers (45%).
8. Target outreach and recruitment efforts to reach specific demographics and populations in specific neighborhoods (45%).
9. Provide childcare support and referrals for fathers (45%).
10. Offer programs and services in schools to fathers of students or students who are fathers (45%)



## How Fathers Corps Compares to Evidence-Based Practice

In its design and operation, Fathers Corps exhibits both key similarities and differences with the characteristics of what are considered effective fatherhood programs. It is important to note, however, that these characteristics have not themselves been evaluated for their independent effectiveness on fatherhood outcomes.

### Key Similarities With Field Practices

The two main similarities between Fathers Corps and evaluated programs are the age of the father participants and the hiring of program graduates as staff.

- **Age of father participants:** The average age of Fathers Corps fathers, primarily ages 36-45, is similar to the average age of participants in large rigorously evaluated fatherhood programs like Parents and Children Together (age 35) and TYRO Dads (age 36).<sup>2</sup> Older fathers tend to show greater likelihood and level of participation in fatherhood programs which other evaluators attribute to greater maturity and readiness to change. Whatever the motivation, there is a clear demand for fatherhood support programs among men in their 30s and 40s raising their second or third child. What is unclear from the literature and the experience of Fathers Corps is the level of demand that exists for fatherhood programming among fathers in their late teens and 20s and how best to recruit them into such programs.
- **Hiring program graduates as program staff:** Similar to a best practices emphasized in the research literature (see Fatherhood Literature Review), Fathers Corps program participants often go on to become support group facilitators and trainers.

### Key Fathers Corps Innovations

Important innovations set Fathers Corps apart from other evaluated fatherhood programs, including:

- **Developing service provider capacity:** Unlike any evaluated programs in the field, Fathers Corps provides substantial training and support to service providers across public and private institutions to help improve the quality of services provided to fathers. This is a unique aspect of the model relative to the field.

2 Avellar, Sarah, Reginald Covington, Quinn Moore, Ankita Patnaik, and April Wu (2018). *Parents and Children Together: Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers*. OPRE Report Number 2018-50. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Kim, Y. I., & Jang, S. J. (2018). *Final evaluation report: A randomized controlled trial of the effectiveness of a responsible fatherhood program: The case of TYRO Dads*.

- **Emphasis on systems change:** Another unique characteristic of Fathers Corps is its focus on producing systems change with public agencies and other father-serving institutions. In fact, the Father-Friendly Principles and their adoption by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors is held up as a model in the national research literature.<sup>3</sup>
- **Providing direct services through community partners:** Apart from the Dad-scussions component, which is offered online to a subset of fathers participating in support groups, the majority of Fathers Corps' support for fathers is indirectly provided through its eight funded community partners. These partners organize and lead regular support group sessions for fathers. A vital function of Fathers Corps in collaboration with its community partners involves offering training and facilitating referrals.

### Key Areas of Difference With Practice in the Field

- **Dedicated training workshops for fathers:** Fathers Corps does not provide workshops specifically targeted to fathers, but rather allows fathers to attend workshops that are also attended by service providers. In evaluated programs, several hours of workshops (in some cases as many as 240) are offered specifically to fathers.<sup>4</sup>
- **Formal curricula:** Fathers Corps does not use formal curricula for its parenting or co-parenting workshops and support groups. Most evaluated programs used some type of formal curricula, often adapted versions of published curricula.<sup>5</sup>
- **Employment services:** Unlike what is commonly provided in evaluated fatherhood programs, Fathers Corps does not provide employment services to program participants. It does offer training content on employment services and their providers but does not directly provide these services themselves.<sup>6</sup>
- **Child support order modification:** Fathers Corps doesn't presently work with Child Support agencies to modify child support orders, although it does provide training workshops on navigating the child support system.<sup>7</sup>

3 Higgs, E., Gomez-Vidal, C., & Austin, M. J. (2018). Low-income nonresident fatherhood: A literature review with implications for practice and research. *Families in Society*, 99(2), 110-120.

4 Avellar, Sarah, Reginald Covington, Quinn Moore, Ankita Patnaik, and April Wu (2018). *Parents and Children Together: Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers*. OPRE Report Number 2018-50. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.



# Recommendations

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This section of the report closes with recommendations for Fathers Corps program decision-makers and staff. These recommendations are based on a synthesis of findings from the research literature, key informant interviews, the focus groups with fathers, and the evaluation survey. Before laying out recommendations, Fathers Corps is first compared to evaluated fatherhood programs to identify areas of similarity and difference to programs deemed effective for certain fatherhood outcomes. Following that, recommendations related to enhancing the program model, policy and systems change, and future evaluation are set forth.

## Program Enhancement Recommendations

Several potential program improvements for serving fathers and supporting service providers are listed below.

### Better Serving Fathers

Several recommendations for more effectively serving fathers were identified from interviews, the focus group, the evaluation survey and the research literature.

- **Improve father recruitment.** The primary method for recruiting fathers into Fathers Corps is through word of mouth, a crucial recruitment strategy for any program. Nonetheless, fathers have strongly recommended a significant expansion of marketing and recruitment efforts. These include community outreach activities such as barbecues, car shows, motorcycle meetups, and other community events, as well as advertising through billboards and bus stop signs. Such efforts are particularly aimed at engaging younger fathers in specific neighborhoods and schools. Indeed, the evaluation survey revealed that nearly half of the service providers and systems leaders support targeted outreach and recruitment to reach specific demographics (45%) and advocate for the promotion of fatherhood programs and services at community events (49%). To enhance recruitment, programs evaluated in the PACT study have established robust referral partnerships with courts and various public entities, including parole offices, child support agencies, and employment service providers. Additionally, fathers in the focus group suggested that Fathers Corps form connections with healthcare providers. This would enable the recruitment of fathers during hospital visits with their pregnant partners, further broadening the program's reach.
- **Create a workshop series specifically for fathers.** Fathers Corps should consider creating a workshop series targeted specifically to fathers as is common practice across several evaluated fatherhood programs. Several workshop topics of interest have been highlighted by fathers in either the focus group



or survey. They include strengthening father-child bonds, empowering fathers as nurturers, guidance for fathers on navigating institutions like schools and healthcare, de-escalation techniques for fathers, employment programs for fathers, self-care for fathers, and child discipline strategies.

- **Offer more one-on-one sessions of individualized support.** Roughly two-thirds (65%) of fathers participating in support groups indicated that they would like to have more one-on-one sessions with program staff. In the evaluation literature, programs offering individualized support and services tended to report better outcomes.<sup>8</sup>
- **Provide fathers more referrals to services.** A large majority of fathers who were surveyed agreed that receiving services in addition to participating in support groups was important to them; however, less than half (45%) felt that enough information about supportive services is made available to them. Moreover, 40% of service providers endorsed creating a workshop on “how to effectively refer fathers to community resources.” Lastly, half (48%) of service providers and systems leaders agreed that Fathers Corps should “create a more streamlined referral process for accessing resources for fathers.” All these findings point to both a demand for greater service referral and a desire for service providers and systems leaders to more effectively meet that demand.
- **Provide access to non-legal mediation services.** The challenges some fathers encounter in maintaining contact with their children highlight the need for greater focus on co-parenting dynamics. Co-parenting support could benefit from the availability of non-legal mediation services to assist parents in resolving disputes, fostering better communication, and diminishing conflict levels.
- **Consider developing or adapting a parenting and/or co-parenting curriculum.** Fatherhood programs that were found effective for improving parenting or co-parenting outcomes typically used formal curricula.<sup>9</sup> Curricula allow for providing consistent programmatic content with fidelity. Examples of parenting curricula that were adapted for use by fatherhood programs in the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation include *Father Development: A Curriculum for Young*

*Fathers and Young Dads/Young Moms.* Other published curricula include *The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum*. A publicly available co-parenting curriculum that was used by two organizations in the PACT evaluation is *Within My Reach*. All mentioned curricula could potentially be adopted or adapted to formalize content for participants in the Fathers Corps program. A significant observation from the PACT evaluation highlights that attendance at standalone co-parenting workshops is notably lower compared to parenting workshops. One recommended strategy for enhancing fathers’ exposure to co-parenting content was found in one program, which integrated co-parenting topics into parenting workshops, rather than treating them as separate subjects.

- **Help fathers establish legal parenting time agreements.** Helping fathers secure court-ordered parenting time agreements is a program component not widely implemented in fatherhood programs, but one that addresses a major problem that often drives fathers to drop out of fatherhood programs: lack of access to their children. To support fathers in securing these agreements, the provision of pro bono or cost-effective legal services would be necessary to aid fathers in negotiating the terms of these agreements.
- **Create, or partner with other agencies to offer employment services for fathers.** Opportunities to enhance their employment prospects are a significant draw for fathers participating in fatherhood programs. Despite the limited impact on employment outcomes observed in most evaluated programs, there remains a strong demand for employment services. Approximately one-third (31%) of service providers and systems leaders who responded to the evaluation survey indicated a need for workshops focused on “Employment programs and referral for fathers.” Considering Fathers Corps’ lack of specialization in employment services, it would be prudent to establish partnerships with organizations proficient in this area, particularly those experienced with hard-to-employ demographics, such as the Center for Employment Opportunities or sector-specific employment providers. The employment services integrated into fatherhood programs, as identified in the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation, encompass a broad range of supports. These include employment workshops, skills and interest assessments, the creation of personalized employment plans, program-supervised job practicums, job development initiatives, peer discussion and support groups addressing employment challenges, access to vocational training, unpaid internships, job shadowing opportunities, and job fairs. Furthermore, it is recommended that these

8 Carrano, J., Allen, T., Bowie, L., Mbawa, K., & Matthews, G. (2007). Elements of promising practice for fatherhood programs: Evidence-based research findings on programs for fathers. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

9 Zaveri, Heather, Scott Baumgartner, Robin Dion, and Liz Clary. (2015). Parents and Children Together: Design and Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs. OPRE Report Number 2015-76. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.





employment services be supplemented by efforts to expunge criminal records, which can obstruct fathers' employment opportunities.

- **Provide Individualized child support assistance.** Fathers participating in fatherhood programs frequently face child support orders demanding payments beyond their financial means, or they have accrued arrears that are nearly impossible to clear. A significant portion of participants in the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation expressed a need for services to modify these child support orders. Beyond workshops, fathers would benefit from targeted, personalized support to manage the intricacies of the child support and court systems effectively. Offering additional on-site child support and legal assistance could be instrumental in ensuring that a greater number of fathers with child support orders undergo comprehensive case reviews.
- **Increase total program hours (program dosage) that participants receive.** Survey data indicates that only a third (32%) of fathers engaged in the advised 12 to 24 support group sessions, underscoring the need to enhance program dosage for improved effectiveness. The PACT evaluation revealed that programs with a higher dosage demonstrated greater efficacy. Furthermore, programs characterized by higher intensity—entailing more program hours condensed into fewer days—yielded the most favorable outcomes. However, the requirement for daily participation over several hours poses significant challenges for fathers who are employed or have other conflicting responsibilities.
- **Systematically collect baseline data on program participants at a time that is proximate to their first engagement in Fathers Corps program activities.** The lack of baseline data for father program

participants is an impediment to making strong causal claims about Fathers Corps impacts. The following demographic items may be useful to collect, including: fathers' age, race, education level, household income, location of residence, age of their youngest child, histories of incarceration, child support issues, housing issues, data regarding their relationship with their child's mother(s) through a validated scale like the Coparenting Relationship Scale (CRS) or the Coparenting Competence Scale (CCS), and completion of a validated child-parent relationship quality scale like the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRSSF) or the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS).<sup>10</sup>

## Better Supporting Service Providers

Based on survey responses and key informant interviews, a handful of recommendations have emerged for improving Fathers Corps to better equip service providers to support fathers.

- **Create a series of workshops that build on each other over time to produce a comprehensive learning experience.** Among service providers surveyed, creating a comprehensive and integrated workshop series was the top-rated recommended improvement for training workshops.
- **Create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County.** The suggestion to create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County was the most endorsed suggestion to improve Fathers Corps among both service providers (62%) and systems leaders (45%).
- **Reintroduce a male-specific learning community.** When Fathers Corps began, the learning community that was its flagship program component was an all-male community for service providers serving fathers and father-figures. In 2018, the learning community transitioned to the Father-Friendly Provider Network (FFPN), which invited all service providers regardless of gender. Re-creating a separate male-only learning community is an idea with strong proponents among key informants and in surveys of service providers and systems leaders who endorsed the idea by 49% and 35%, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> For the CCS, or Coparenting Competence Scale, see May, C., Atherton, C., Colyvas, K., Mancini, V., & Campbell, L. E. (2023). Development of a Brief Coparenting Measure: The Coparenting Competence Scale. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(13), 6322. For child-parent relationship scales, see Kauffman et al, (2016) *Measures of Father-Child Relationship Quality for Fatherhood Programs*. Fatherhood Research and Practice Network. Retrieved on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from <https://www.fatherhood.gov/research-and-resources/measures-father-child-relationship-quality-fatherhood-programs>

- **Aggregating of survey responses for both service providers and systems leaders, seven potential workshop topics were deemed to be of the most significant value for more effectively supporting fathers.** They included:

1. Recognizing and addressing trauma in adults and children and across generations (40%)
2. Self-care for fathers (40%)
3. De-escalation techniques for fathers (38%)
4. Empowering fathers as nurturers and caregivers (37%)
5. Helping fathers with substance abuse issues (32%)
6. Child discipline strategies (31%)
7. Guidance for fathers navigating institutions like schools and healthcare (31%)



## Policy and Systems Building Recommendations

**Support team training, internal team development, and ongoing advising to implement Father-Friendly Principles.** Translating Father-Friendly Principles into actual organizational practice is a challenge that can and should be overcome. Executive leaders interviewed for this evaluation study noted that even with executive sponsorship, implementing the principles will require several steps. They offered the advice that Fathers Corps can help further the adoption of the principles by providing comprehensive training to teams to internalize and become deeply conversant in the principles and their implications. Following this, Fathers Corps can provide strategic advising and coaching to help dedicated internal teams translate the concepts into the native linguistic environments of organizations. If possible, they can also help facilitate a process of ideation and planning that can give way to the organizing that’s necessary to produce change in large public organizations. The five steps can be summed up as training, translation, ideation, planning and organizing. It was also noted that with the high turnover rates in many large institutions, there is need for a “reset” to re-engage staff and apply insights gained over the past five to seven years. This approach aims to introduce a new wave of personnel to the principles and drive organizational change forward.

**Provide training and coaching to service provider champions.** Beyond offering assistance to executive sponsors and internal teams, supporting potential service provider champions who aim to advocate for

the adoption of Father-Friendly Principles within their organizations has been identified as a promising area of opportunity. Service providers expressed a keen interest in acquiring more strategies for “leading conversations with upper management to support the implementation of Father-Friendly Principles” in their survey responses. This emerged as their top suggestion for facilitating the adoption of these principles.

**Form a partnership with Child Support Services to pilot an effort to reduce child support arrears in return for completing key milestones in the Fathers Corps program.** Such a program partnership could produce strong incentives for program participation and yield positive benefits for children.

**Work with community colleges and other educational institutions to integrate content related to serving fathers into programs that certificate practitioners.** When surveyed, 45% of service providers and systems leaders endorsed the idea of collaborating with community colleges to incorporate content aimed at serving fathers into certification programs for family service providers. Specifically, among systems leaders, the top recommendation for facilitating the successful adoption of Father-Friendly Principles was to incorporate these principles into the professional training of social work, education, and public health professionals.





## Recommendations for Future Fathers Corps Evaluations

The absence of baseline data introduces measurement error in assessing the impacts of Fathers Corps programs for some participants, and the lack of random assignment limits the ability to make strong assertions about causal impacts. Nonetheless, there is considerable qualitative and circumstantial evidence suggesting that Fathers Corps has significantly influenced systems change outcomes. This is demonstrated through organizational impacts, modifications to existing programs, and the development of new programs and services, all attributed to Fathers Corps' influence by survey respondents. Enhancing measurement and establishing clearer causal relationships regarding the program's impacts on fathers and service providers would be improved by implementing pre-testing at the time of program enrollment for support groups or training workshops, followed by assessments at six to 12 months. With future adjustments to program components for fathers and increased recruitment efforts, rigorous evaluation approaches could further solidify claims of causal impact. Currently, Fathers Corps represents a promising and impactful approach to directly supporting fathers, enhancing service provider capacities, and instigating significant systems changes that benefit fathers and their children across Alameda County.

## First 5 Alameda Closing Remarks and Next Steps

The Fatherhood program began 10 years ago as a pilot to better *see, serve and support* fathers and father-figures who are often overlooked, discounted, or maligned as vital to contributing to their families and the early childhood system of care. Through the hard work of a core group of visionaries in different public systems, what started as one group of male service providers coming together monthly to both share their own lived and professional experience and address the gaps in serving their male clients is now a multi-faceted, countywide network of resources. This report documents both the need for and impact of this comprehensive, carefully curated, father informed, culturally concordant program. It punctuates the need to listen to fathers and father-figures and develop programs that address their specific needs by providing emotional support, navigation, and safety net services.

The data and information in this evaluation will help guide the next phase of system building relationships and investments, will determine how to prioritize where and with whom program expansion should take place, and highlights policies that pose barriers to fathers' engagement with their children. The hope is this report is used for concrete and ongoing conversations that help both community and public agencies better collaborate on a framework and language that guide work over the next 10 years dedicated to ensuring all fathers/father-figures have access to services and resources from prenatal through the K-12 system. Ultimately, the goal of this report is to move us all closer to our "North Star," that all of Alameda County's children thrive and can reach their potential.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Methodology

This evaluation aimed to understand the structure and efficacy of the Fathers Corps program, comparing it to evidence-based practices and assessing its impact on participants, service providers, and public and private systems that impact the lives of fathers. The methodology encompassed defining evaluation questions, conducting a comprehensive literature review, and collecting data through various methods elaborated further below. This section closes with a summary of the limitations of this study.

### Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was steered by three critical questions:

1. What effect has Fathers Corps had on fathers and father-figures participating in its program activities?
2. How has Fathers Corps influenced service providers who directly assist fathers, including observed changes in organizational practices towards fathers?
3. What impact has Fathers Corps made on service delivery to fathers by public, private, and nonprofit organizations, according to leaders of those groups?

### Research Scan and Analysis

A thorough review and synthesis of existing research were undertaken, focusing on the following lines of inquiry:

- The significance of non-residential fathers in children's well-being
- The effectiveness of fatherhood programs and their outcomes
- Characteristics of fatherhood program participants
- Key features of successful fatherhood programs
- Recommended policy and systems changes to enhance fatherhood outcomes

Search terms used for conducting the research scan included: "father involvement" "fathers" "child outcomes" "fatherhood programs" "fatherhood program evaluations" "responsible fatherhood" "randomized controlled trials" and "experiment."

## Data Collection Methods and Timeline

Five methods of data-collection were employed to understand experiences with and impacts of Fathers Corps program activities:

1. **Document Review:** Analysis of Fathers Corps materials to inform interview and focus group protocols. Relevant documents included brochures, annual reports, program descriptions, presentation slide decks, and reports published by Fathers Corps.
2. **Program Feedback Survey Data Analysis:** Synthesis of 66 surveys with 986 responses from 2018 to 2023 to guide further data collection methods. Surveys were distributed to participants attending Fathers Corps trainings.
3. **Key Informant Interviews:** Eighteen semi-structured interviews with Fathers Corps staff and service providers in August and September 2023.
4. **Focus Group Discussion:** A 90-minute session with six fathers participating the Fathers Corps program was held in September 2023, providing insights for the evaluation survey.
5. **Evaluation Survey:** Administered from November 9-27, 2023 to a list of 1,058 email addresses with a response rate of 17.4% from fathers (n=62) and 11.3% from other stakeholders (n=80).<sup>11</sup> Evidence for program impacts is drawn from the evaluation survey. In completing the survey, respondents were asked to self-select into four respondent groups: fathers/father-figures, service providers who directly interact with fathers or father-figures, systems leaders (not service providers) who manage programs or organizations that interact with fathers and "Others" who do not fall into any of the prior three categories. Impact findings for Fathers Corps' three target populations relied heavily on these survey results.
6. **Program Theory and Innovation Workshops:** Four workshops were held with a variety of internal stakeholders and a cross-sector group of external Fathers Corps stakeholders from November 2023 through January 2024 to review and discuss the program model as well as begin processing lessons learned for guiding future innovation of the Fathers Corps model.

<sup>11</sup> Data associated with email addresses did not explicitly define who were fathers or service providers. Based on an analysis of whether an email address was on a list that primarily contained fathers and whether it used a personal email address (e.g. @gmail, @yahoo, etc.) it was determined that the probable list total number of fathers on the list was 356, or 34% of the combined list. All other email addresses on the list are considered "probable non-fathers" and are used to estimate the response rates for "other stakeholders".





## **Data Capture and Analysis Tools and Techniques**

Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed. The electronic evaluation survey was administered via Survey Monkey, with quantitative data analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Stata 18.

## **Limitations of the Evaluation**

Despite its strengths, the evaluation faced important limitations:

The evaluation methodology chose is a retrospective evaluation that is more formative than summative in nature for three reasons: 1) The lack of baseline data and the use of retrospective pre-test survey responses limits our ability to directly attribute outcomes to program participation; 2) The lack of random assignment to treatment or control groups also precludes causal inferences about the program's effects; 3) The absence of data on participants' children restricts our ability to assess changes in child outcomes beyond father self-reports.

## Appendix 2. Recommended Improvements to Fathers Corps

| Recommended Improvements to Fathers Corps   | Service Provider Recommended (n=48) | Systems Leader Recommended (n=20) | Both (n=68) |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County.  | 62%                                 | 45%                               | 57%         |
| Promote fatherhood programs and services at more community events.  | 51%                                 | 45%                               | 49%         |
| Create a more streamlined referral process for accessing resources for fathers.   | 54%                                 | 35%                               | 48%         |
| Incorporate social outings into the programs to build a sense of community and give fathers and father-figures opportunities to spend quality time with their children. | 51%                                 | 35%                               | 46%         |
| Provide materials and resources in Spanish.   | 46%                                 | 45%                               | 46%         |
| Reintroduce a male-specific learning community.   | 49%                                 | 35%                               | 45%         |
| Work with community colleges to integrate father-serving content into certifications for family service providers.  | 49%                                 | 35%                               | 45%         |
| Target outreach and recruitment efforts to reach specific demographics and populations in specific neighborhoods.   | 51%                                 | 30%                               | 45%         |
| Provide childcare support and referrals for fathers.  | 51%                                 | 30%                               | 45%         |
| Offer programs and services in schools to fathers of students or students who are fathers.  | 51%                                 | 30%                               | 45%         |
| Connect directly with fathers in hospitals when their children are born.  | 51%                                 | 25%                               | 43%         |
| Offer transportation resources to help low-income fathers participate in programs.  | 43%                                 | 40%                               | 42%         |
| Use more videos and social media to raise the visibility of Fathers Corps.  | 41%                                 | 25%                               | 36%         |
| Workshops, support groups and other events for fathers should accommodate the presence of children.   | 41%                                 | 25%                               | 36%         |
| Broaden marketing efforts to reach more fathers (e.g. billboards, bust stop signs, etc.)  | 38%                                 | 15%                               | 31%         |
| Provide more professional coaching for providers.   | 27%                                 | 40%                               | 31%         |
| Make more effective use of Father Corps list-serv to centralize Fathers Corps communications.   | 38%                                 | 10%                               | 30%         |
| Reach more family services practitioners with Fathers Corps programs.   | 27%                                 | 15%                               | 23%         |
| Create standardized surveys for provider organizations to assess the impact of father programs and services.  | 24%                                 | 15%                               | 21%         |
| Create posters with images of fathers and key messages.   | 22%                                 | 15%                               | 20%         |



# SUPPORTING FATHER INVOLVEMENT AND SUCCESS:

An Evaluation of the Fathers Corps  
Program of First 5 Alameda County

