



ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

Phone: (312) 296-8656

www.responsiblefatherhood.com

THE ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
JEFFERY M. LEVING

December 28, 2006

APPENDIX C

Fathers Who Care; Fathers' Center; Featherfist; First Impression, LLC; Goodwill; Illinois Fatherhood Initiative; Lifelink; Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois; Midwest Center on Workforce and Family Development, Inc.; Neighborhood Technology Resource Center; New Moms, Inc.; One Family, One Child; Order of the Eastern Star; Raymond's Foundation; Roll Call; Sankofa Way Spiritual Services, Inc.; Teamwork By Design; Tennesseans For Fathers; and WOVEN.

- Elected officials: Congressman Danny K. Davis, State Senator Kimberly Lightford, and State Representative Paul Froehlich.
- Top representatives from state agencies: Brenda Russell, IDES; Jesse Ruiz, ISBE; Claude Jacob, IDPH; Erwin McEwen, IDCFS; Karen Newton-Matza, DOHFS; Marva Arnold, IDHS; and Jenny Weiser, ACF.
- Entertainers: Living Proof, Hebron Baptist Church Choir, Dacula, Ga. and B.A. Blessing Productions Featuring Gerald Hall and Chantel Foley, Chicago.

Collaborators:

The Council on Responsible Fatherhood and Cong. Danny K. Davis collaborated with the following organizations for the 2005 Fatherhood Conference & Resource Fair:

- Cong. Danny K. Davis
- Fatherhood Educational Institute
- Fathers Who Care
- Midwest Center on Workforce and Family Development, Inc.

Workshops

Fathers:

- *Fathers' Rights and Responsibilities – Navigating the Legal System* (James Hagler, J.D., Fatherhood Educational Institute and Tim O'Grady, J.D., Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood)
- *Healthy Co-Parenting* (Billie Woodward, WOVEN and Robert Houston)
- *Conflict Resolution* (Shedrick Sanders, Black Star Project)
- *Father Involvement & Empowerment* (Rev. Walter Jones, Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood, Anthony Travis, Daddy's Club)

Practitioners:

- *Head Start & Father Involvement* (Lois Rakov, Cathy Reed, Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood, Gerald Hall, CEDA)
- *Enhancing Quality Practice for Families: Father Involvement Policy & Practice* (Dr. Kirk Harris, Diana Durham-McLoud, Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood)
- *The African-American Fathers Study: Implications and Strategies for "Best Practices"* (Dr. Wrenetha Julion, Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The deterioration of responsible fatherhood over the last half-century has had a devastating effect on American families and 24 million children live absent their biological dads in America. Countless studies and mounting anecdotal evidence continues to demonstrate how children who grow up in father absent homes are much more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior.

We must never forget children need their dads, and when they're absent, something is lost. We have a responsibility to help children who have been born into harsh circumstances and fractured families.

To confront this great social challenge in Illinois, the Council On Responsible Fatherhood (the "Council") has continued working towards one clear and measurable goal: to significantly increase the proportion of children growing up with an involved and responsible father in the state of Illinois.

The following is a summary of what the Council has accomplished in 2006:

Convened Regional Meetings – In 2006, the Council succeeded in meeting the goal of convening two effective regional forums focused on fatherhood issues. The Council hosted events in Belleville and Urbana-Champaign.

Convened Statewide Symposium – On June 3, 2006, the Council convened a statewide symposium in collaboration with Congressman Danny K. Davis and other partner organizations. The event was held at Malcolm X College in Chicago. The symposium sought to educate and empower fathers to be more responsible parents and to provide them with resources to make positive changes in their lives.

Policy Report – Based on feedback from parents, community leaders and practitioners who participated in our previous two regional meetings, the Council has identified four major priority areas that need to be addressed in Illinois to help promote the positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. The major priority areas are discussed on Page 7.

Built the Council Membership – The Council was able to present several qualified candidates to the Governor's Office for consideration for appointment. With the help of State Senator Kimberly Lightford, the Council was able to raise its ranks of voting members from 16 to 20 in 2006.

Completed Assessment of State Agencies – In September 2005, the Council sent out letters to the heads of various key state agencies, including: the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IDHFS), Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), and the Board of Education asking them to complete a self-assessment tool regarding their fatherhood programs. Members of the Council received the responses from the agencies to the self-assessment tools back, analyzed the

data, and received overwhelmingly positive comments on the objectives of the Council from these state agencies.

Completed Fatherhood Resource Guide

The Council produced the “Illinois Fatherhood Resource Guide” and distributed copies of it throughout the state. Printing was done by IDHS. The Illinois Fatherhood Resource Guide is also available as a downloadable .pdf file at the Council’s Website (www.responsiblefatherhood.com), as well as on other state agencies and partner organization Websites.

Generated Public Awareness – Leveraging regional and statewide events, the Council was able to secure significant placements in media throughout the state regarding the importance of the commitment of the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Council’s mission. Throughout the state, increasing numbers of organizations and individuals now recognize the role the Council is playing in increasing awareness of the need for responsible father involvement for the well-being of Illinois children and families.

While much was accomplished in 2006, it is still a prelude to the work that needs to be done in 2007.

The responsible fatherhood movement has become a nationwide call-to-action for all parents and concerned citizens seeking to improve the welfare of the next generation of American children. The Governor and General Assembly’s leadership on this issue and their continued support of the Council and its mission is essential to the success of the movement at both a statewide and national level. The Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood is one of the first government programs of its kind and will serve as a model for other states across the country seeking to restore responsible fatherhood as a societal norm in all communities.

COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

The mission of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood is to significantly increase the number of children in Illinois that grow up with a responsible father in their lives. The Council seeks to accomplish this through:

- Raising public awareness of the impact of father absence on children;
- Assisting state agencies and other service providers in securing the resources they need to promote responsible fatherhood;
- Reforming perceptions within state agencies and other service providers regarding the role of fathers as parents; and
- Advocating for programs, policies, and legislation that will encourage the positive involvement of fathers.

Strategic Overview

The Illinois Council of Responsible Fatherhood will raise public awareness of the impact of father absence on children by:

- Holding regional meetings and sharing significant research and statistics.
- Convening a symposium and conducting free public sessions on the impact of absent fathers; and
- Preparing a resource guide that will include statistical impact.

The Council will assist state agencies and other service providers in securing the resources they need to promote responsible fatherhood by:

- Conducting assessments of state agency needs related to promoting responsible fatherhood;
- Encouraging state agencies to complete father-friendly assessments; and
- Developing and dissemination a resource guide listing available service-providers throughout the state.

We will reform perceptions among state agencies and other service providers regarding the role of fathers as parents by:

- Conducting regional forum meetings to gain input from citizens throughout the state and share information and available resources with stakeholders; and
- Convening a symposium to share lessons learned.

See Appendix A for more information on the Council's structure and mission.

2006 ACTIONS

Convened Regional Meetings

In 2006, the Council succeeded in meeting the goal of convening effective regional forums focused on fatherhood issues in different geographic areas of the state. The Council hosted events in Belleville (March 9th) and Urbana-Champaign (November 4th).

The regional meetings have helped us build a statewide network of supportive groups and individuals; pinpoint challenges that hinder father involvement in their children's lives; develop ideas for programs that would support fathers; and identify the means of bringing about legislative reforms. To accomplish this, the Council reached out to lawmakers, churches, community and faith-based organizations, social service agencies, educational institutions, and individuals in these geographic areas to participate in the forums.

The objectives of the regional meetings were to:

- Identify the top policy issues and concerns that hinder the positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children in different geographic areas of Illinois;
- Discuss ways to engage fathers through programming and public outreach; and
- Raise public awareness concerning the impact of father absence through public relations outreach.

From the positive comments of attendees, both forums were considered a success and generated important feedback. More information on the initial regional meetings and feedback from the attendees is available in Appendix B.

The Council is planning a regional meeting in Peoria at Bradley University in February 2007. Also, the Council is exploring holding another regional meeting in the Quad Cities area.

Convened Statewide Symposium

On June 3, 2006, the Council convened a statewide symposium in collaboration with Danny K. Davis and other partner organizations. The event was held at Malcolm X College in Chicago under the theme "Paving a Pathway to Parenthood: Investing in Fathers."

Elected officials, such as: Congressman Danny Davis, State Senator Kimberly Lightford, and State Representative Paul Froehlich were in attendance as well as top representatives from state agencies. These included: Brenda Russell, IDHS; Jesse Ruiz, ISBE; Claude Jacob, IDPH; Erwin McEwen, IDCFS; Karen Newton-Matza, IDHFS; Marva Arnold, IDHS; and Jenny Weiser, Region V, Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

The goal of the symposium was to educate and empower fathers to be more responsible parents and to provide them with resources to make positive changes in their lives through:

- Public dialogue with top state officials and decision-makers regarding policies and programs relevant to fathers;
- Informative skill-building workshops; and
- a Resource Fair

The 2006 event examined state policies and programs to encourage responsible fatherhood. More than 300 people attended. Many in attendance were indigent or lower-income fathers, and more than 25 social service agencies provided free information for attendees (for a list of organizations who participated in the Resource Fair see Appendix C).

The event was successful in helping create a framework for a collaborative, inter-agency effort to address father absence in Illinois. From this framework, the Illinois Council is in an excellent position to continue its work in the coming year.

More information on the symposium is available in Appendix C.

Policy Report

Based on feedback from parents, community leaders, and practitioners who participated in our regional meetings, the Council has identified four major priority areas that need to be addressed in Illinois to help promote the positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. The Council plans to work with state agencies and legislators to enact reforms and legislation that will address the following needs:

- **Create a more father-friendly court system:** Eliminate the perceived gender bias against fathers in the court system and encourage a process that promotes the positive involvement of both parents. This includes access to legal assistance for low-income fathers;
- **Encourage fathers to stay involved in their children's lives:** Reform of state programs to create incentives that encourage fathers to remain involved;
- **Assist incarcerated fathers:** Create programs that help incarcerated fathers maintain contact with their children, abate and/or modify child support and assist in re-entry; and
- **Provide career opportunities for fathers:** Provide education and career training for fathers to better provide for their children.

Completed Assessment of State Agencies

In September 2005, the Council sent out letters to the heads of several key state agencies and organizations asking them to complete a self-assessment tool regarding their fatherhood programs. These agencies included: DCFS, IDHS, IDPH, IDHFS, IDOC, and the Board of Education. In 2006, the Council reviewed and analyzed the results of the self-assessment tools and found the following:

- In general, the state agencies were receptive to the goals and objectives of the Council.
- With the exception of the IDHFS (DCFS advises that their outreach materials are in development stage), none of the agencies had outreach material directed specifically to fathers or men even though some of the agencies, as noted above, have services directed toward fathers or men.
- Most state agencies procedures make no mention of specific policies to address fathers and their role in families.

- A number of the agencies indicated that funding to support fatherhood initiatives would be helpful in focusing on fatherhood within their normal programming.

Based on these findings, the Council sets forth the following recommendations:

- The Council should assist state agencies in the development of a comprehensive plan to integrate fathers into their overall programmatic approach.
- Self-Assessment forms should be submitted for completion to all remaining state agencies.
- The Council should make any required administrative changes to become a body that can solicit and administer funding for collaborative program initiatives that enhance the role of fathers in the lives of their children and their families in Illinois. An appropriate funding source would allow the Council to assist with technical assistance and training at the state agencies.
- The Council should systematically review state legislation to identify statutes that have unintended negative impact on fathers and their relationship to their children.
- The Council should acknowledge “father friendly” changes in policy, programming, and legislation as they occur in Illinois and assist with public awareness of these changes.

Completed Fatherhood Resource Guide

The Council completed production of its resource guide and began distributing copies of it throughout the state. The Illinois Department of Human Services undertook the task of printing the guide on behalf of the Council. The resource guide is also available as a downloadable .pdf file on the Council’s Website (www.responsiblefatherhood.com), as well as other state agency and partner organization Websites.

Generated Public Awareness

One of the primary functions of the Council, as mandated in the Responsible Fatherhood Act, is to generate public awareness of the impact of father absence on children. Leveraging regional and statewide events, the Council was able to secure significant placements in media throughout the state regarding the Council and the importance of its mission. (Detailed reports on media placements for the regional meetings is available in Appendix B).

The symposium, a success from a public policy standpoint, also generated significant public relations. The Council was able to secure a media partnership with three Clear Channel stations (WGCI-FM, V103-FM and WGRB-AM) to promote the event as well as responsible fatherhood. Public relations outreach netted coverage in nearly 20 community newspapers across the city including the Chicago Defender, Streetwise, and the Chicago Crusader.

Moreover, the chairman of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood has championed the Council and its mission through public outreach. Some forums in which he has promoted the Council include:

- Radio: Interviews on radio shows, including Chicago talk radio and WGCI-FM;

- TV: As a host of “Chicago Counterpoint,” a popular public affairs show on CAN-TV in Chicago; and
- Print: Submitted several Op-Ed pieces to top dailies throughout the state; and a large display advertisement in the Chicago Tribune.

2007 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Policy Report

The Council plans to work with state agencies and legislators to enact reforms and legislation that will: create a more father-friendly court system, encourage fathers to stay involved, assist incarcerated fathers, and provide career opportunities for fathers.

Carry Out Recommendations Based on the Agency Self-Assessments

The Council will assist state agencies in the development of a comprehensive plan to integrate fathers into their overall programmatic approach. The Council will make administrative changes to become a body that can seek and administer funding for collaborative program initiatives that enhance the role of fathers in the lives of their children and their families in Illinois. Further, the Council plans to systematically review of state legislation to identify statutes that have unintended negative impact on fathers and their relationship to their children. Finally, the Council should acknowledge “father friendly” changes in policy, programming, and legislation as they occur in Illinois and assist with public awareness of these changes.

Convene a Second Statewide Symposium on Responsible Fatherhood

Building on the success of last year’s event, the Council will convene another statewide symposium focused on educating fathers, families, practitioners, and community leaders about fatherhood issues and provide them the practical resources need to promote responsible fatherhood in their homes and in their communities.

Continue to Convene Additional Regional Meetings

A regional meeting is planned for Peoria at Bradley University in February 2007. Also, the Council is currently exploring holding a regional meeting in the Quad Cities area.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING

The Council has accomplished its progress to date with the time and commitment of the Council members and through the support of partner organizations, including Congressman Danny K. Davis (7th Congressional District), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Malcolm X College (Chicago), and the Fatherhood Educational Institute.

However, for the Council to continue holding regional meetings and to convene a symposium representative of the authority granted to the Council by the General Assembly and the importance of its mission, the Council needs funding. The Council does not receive state funding which is needed and important to its continued effectiveness. The Responsible Fatherhood Act does not provide for any specific funding amounts.

Therefore, the Council would like to recommend that the General Assembly grant a special appropriation to the Council to fund these important initiatives.

REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The Council would like to request at least 1 (one) full time skilled staff person to support the Council in performing all of its duties. Pursuant to Public Act 093-0437 and later Public Executive Order 2006-07, "The Department of Human Services shall provide staff and other support services to the Council." Based upon the Council members' knowledge, this has not occurred in the three years the Council has been in existence.

The Council has made more than one request to the Department of Human Services asking for administrative support including writing a letter dated July 7, 2006. See attached request letter.

Presented by:



Jeffery M. Leving, Chair
Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood

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Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood

Approved 2006-2007 Strategic Overview

July 14, 2006

Council Mission Statement

The mission of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood is to significantly increase the number of children in Illinois that grow up with a responsible father in their lives. We seek to accomplish this through:

- Raising public awareness of the impact of father absence on children
- Assisting state agencies and other service providers in securing the resources they need to promote responsible fatherhood
- Reforming perceptions within state agencies and other service providers regarding the role of fathers as parents
- Advocating for programs, policies and legislation that will encourage the positive involvement of fathers

Council Strategic Overview

We will raise public awareness of the impact of father absence on children by:

- Holding regional meetings and sharing statistics
- Convening a symposium and conducting sessions on the impact of absent fathers
- Preparing resource guide that will include statistical impact

• We will assist state agencies and other service providers in securing the resources they need to promote responsible fatherhood by:

- Conducting assessment of state agency needs related to promoting responsible fatherhood
- Encouraging state agencies to complete father-friendly assessments
- Developing a resource guide listing available service-providers throughout the state

We will reform perceptions among state agencies and other service providers regarding the role of fathers as parents by:

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- Conducting regional forum meetings to gain input from citizens throughout the state and share with stakeholders
- Convening a symposium to share lessons learned

We will advocate for programs, policies and legislation that will encourage the positive involvement of fathers by:

- Conducting assessment or researching of current programs, policies, legislations that hinder father engagement
- Holding a symposium to gather information and evaluate current programs and policies
- Preparing a report to identify current status of responsible fatherhood in Illinois and recommendations for enhancement

Sub-Committees

Symposium Sub-Committee

Responsibilities:

- Collaborating with state agencies to plan symposium
- Help plan regional meetings

Resource Guide Sub-Committee

Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with state agencies to revise "Non-Custodial Parent Service Directory" into resource guide
- Compile existing research/statistics on the state of fatherhood in Illinois for Resource Guide

Assessment Sub-Committee

Responsibilities:

- Revise/Design assessment program/tool for state agencies
- Make recommendations for internal policies and programs

Intergovernmental Affairs Sub-Committee

Responsibilities:

- Interact with state agencies to keep abreast on new policies and programs
- Make recommendations for changes in agency policies and programs

Legislative Sub-Committee

Responsibilities:

- Research legislative initiatives that could serve fathers
- Make recommendations for the General Assembly

Chairman

Responsibilities:

- Organize and implement regional meetings
- Organize full Council meetings, set agendas
- Manage and maintain Web site
- Manage sub-committees and provide administrative support



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Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood *Regional Meetings Report*

Background

In 2006, the Council on Responsible Fatherhood for the state of Illinois convened two regional meetings – Belleville on March 9th and Urbana-Champaign on November 4th.

The regional meetings sought to build a statewide network of supportive groups and individuals, pinpoint challenges that hinder father involvement in their children's lives, develop ideas for programs that would support fathers and look for means of bringing about legislative reforms. To accomplish this, the Council reached out to lawmakers, churches, social service organizations and individuals in these geographic areas to participate in the forum.

The stated objectives of the meeting were to:

- Identify what are the top policy issues or concerns that prevent the positive involvement of fathers in Southern and Central Illinois
- Discuss ways to engage fathers through programming and public outreach
- Form regional taskforces in Southern and Central Illinois

The regional meetings also offered an opportunity to raise public awareness of the impact of father absence through public relations outreach in these areas.

Results Summary

Information was gathered through dialogue in the forum discussion as well as responses to a questionnaire completed by each participant.

Following is a detailed assessment from each meeting. A few general issues and policy recommendations emerged from both meetings:

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- **Create a more father-friendly court system:** Eliminate the perceived gender bias against fathers in the court system and encourage a process that promotes the positive involvement of both parents
- **Encourage fathers to stay involved:** Reform of state programs to create incentives that encourage fathers to remain involved
- **Assist incarcerated fathers:** Create programs that help incarcerated fathers maintain contact with their children, abate child support and assist in re-entry
- **Providing career opportunities for fathers:** Provide education and career training for fathers to better provide for their children

Belleville – Forum

The following is a compiled list of suggestions from the participants on both programs and policies

Programs –

Training/Education

- Training for practitioners and social workers focused on promoting responsible fatherhood
- Training for educators and medial personnel that interact closely with fathers and families
- Reworking public outreach materials/communications on parenting (i.e. posters, pamphlets, etc) to focus on connecting with fathers

Counseling/Support

- Counseling for abusive fathers and adolescent fathers from abusive households (a program seeking to stop “the cycle of violence” that is often passed on to children to children in abusive households)
- Support groups and training programs for single fathers (custodial and non-custodial)

Other

- Encourage more male leadership in community organizations and social service agencies
- Provide educational and career assistance to fathers – especially young fathers

Policy/Legislation

- Reform child support enforcement policy and practices to focus on keeping fathers involved emotionally, not just financially

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- Create provision to provide transportation assistance for fathers to get to better paying jobs and to visitation (public transportation is scarce and expensive for indigent fathers in Western Illinois)
- Reform rules on re-entry/expungement to allow fathers with records to remain connected to their children
- Strict enforcement of Child Abduction Act and visitation interference
- Judicial reform to eliminate gender bias in the court system
- Reforming administrative policies and practices of social service agencies to encourage marriage and paternity establishment
- Legislation to provide mandatory counseling for fathers convicted of domestic violence – through DCFS and local law enforcement

Belleville – Questionnaire

The following are responses received from Belleville attendees on questionnaires distributed during the meeting.

1. Which of the following topics represents your primary interest in the Council's work?

Identifying the service needs of fathers – **65%**

Participating in training on fatherhood concerns for fathers or practitioners/providers – **64%**

Promoting father-friendly practices in state agencies and/or community Organizations – **60%**

Enhancing public awareness of fatherhood issues and concerns – **57%**

Evaluating /developing state policies related to fathers – **31%**

Statewide and/or local symposiums and meetings – **25 %**

Researching the "fatherhood state of the state" – **10%**

2. Which public policy issues are you most interested in?

Educational support and training for dads – **90%**

Mental health services for dads and children – **61%**

Judicial concerns on child support and paternity establishment – **55%**

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Expungement and other fatherhood re-entry laws and policies – **51%**

Job services for dads – **35%**

Health services for fathers and families – **31%**

Family leave policies at organizations and state agencies – **17%**

Earned Income Tax Incentives – **1%**

Open – Reform of policies at social service agencies to encourage marriage, parenting education for dads (particularly teen dads), responsible sexuality with birth control promotion for men and boys

3. What do you see are the primary concerns of fathers in your area?

Attendees were asked to rate the following areas of concern in priority from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest area of concern and 10 being the highest.

Jobs & Education – **8** (similar responses)

Gender bias in the court system – **5**

Attitude of service providers – **3**

Transportation barriers – **3**

Visitation interference – **2**

Lack of parenting skills – **1**

Lack of participation with children

Substance Abuse

Re-entry/Expungement

Access to services

Navigating the legal system

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The following is a compiled list of suggestions from the participants on both programs and policies

Programs –

Training/Education

- Training for practitioners and social workers focused on promoting responsible fatherhood
- Training for educators and medical personnel that interact closely with fathers and families

Counseling/Support

- Counseling for abusive fathers and adolescent fathers from abusive households (a program seeking to stop “the cycle of violence”)
- Support groups for single fathers

Other

- Encourage more male leadership in community organizations and social service agencies
- Provide educational and career assistance to fathers

Policy/Legislation

- Reform child support enforcement policy and practices to focus on keeping fathers involved emotionally, not just financially
- Reform rules on expungement to allow fathers with records to remain connected to their children
- Judicial reform to eliminate gender bias
- Reforming administrative policies and practices of social service agencies to encourage marriage and paternity establishment

Urbana Champaign – Questionnaire

The following are responses received from Urbana-Champaign attendees on questionnaires distributed during the meeting.

1. Which of the following topics represents your primary interest in the Council’s work?

Identifying the service needs of fathers – **66%**

Participating in training on fatherhood concerns for fathers or practitioners/providers – **65%**

Promoting father-friendly practices in state agencies and/or community organizations – **63%**

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Enhancing public awareness of fatherhood issues and concerns – **53%**

Evaluating /developing state policies related to fathers – **30%**

Statewide and/or local symposiums and meetings – **21 %**

Researching the “fatherhood state of the state” – **6%**

2. Which public policy issues are you most interested in?

Educational support and training for dads – **92%**

Mental health services for dads and children – **62%**

Judicial concerns on child support and paternity establishment – **54%**

Expungement and other fatherhood re-entry laws and policies – **53%**

Job services for dads – **42%**

Health services for fathers and families – **29%**

Family leave policies at organizations and state agencies – **17%**

Earned Income Tax Incentives – **2%**

3. What do you see are the primary concerns of fathers in your area?

Attendees were asked to rate the following areas of concern in priority from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest area of concern and 10 being the highest.

Jobs & Education – **7** (similar responses)

Gender bias in the court system – **6**

Attitude of service providers – **3**

Transportation barriers – **3**

Visitation interference – **2**

Lack of parenting skills – **1**

Lack of participation with children

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Substance Abuse

Re-entry/Expungement

Access to services

Navigating the legal system

Public Awareness

The Council undertook significant targeted outreach efforts to community organizations in both Southern and Central Illinois to generate attendance at the forums, including mass mailings, email distribution and direct telephone contact.

In addition, the Council generated awareness of the forums and issues of father absence among the general public through aggressive public relations outreach.

Belleville

Radio

- WGNU-AM (920) in St. Louis – Thirty minute interview. Host: Brett Rosen
- KMOX-AM (1120) in St. Louis – Thirty minute interview

Urbana Champaign –

Print

- Daily Illini – post-event write-up in the University's daily student newspaper, which is distributed to over 60,000 students, faculty, and residents in Urbana-Champaign

Radio

- WNLD-FM (88.1) – Interview promoting the event and discussing father issues in Illinois.
- WBGL-FM (91.7) – A community announcement was read the day before and the day of the regional meeting.



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Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood *2006 Fatherhood Symposium Report* *June 3, 2006*

Overview

Mission:

To educate and empower fathers to be more responsible parents and to provide them with resources to make positive changes in their lives.

The 2006 Fatherhood Symposium accomplished this through:

- Public dialogue with top state officials and decision-makers regarding policies and programs relevant to fathers;
- Informative skill-building workshops; and
- Resource Fair

The focus of the 2006 event will be reforming state policies and programs to encourage fathers to be more involved in the lives of their children.

Theme:

"Paving a Pathway to Parenthood: Investing in Fathers"

Location:

Malcolm X College in Chicago

Who Was There:

- More than 300 people attended. Many in attendance were indigent or lower-income fathers.
- More than 25 father-friendly social services agencies that provided free information and services for those in attendance, including: Black Star Project; Chicago Area Project; Chicago Freemasons; Community Action of Nebraska; Community Action of Northeast Indiana; Daddy's Club; Dads Are People Too; Family Focus Lawndale; Fatherhood Educational Institute;

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Policy:

Fatherhood Policy Workshop (Midwest Center on Workforce and Family Development, Inc.)

Forum Discussion

Summary:

Panel discussion in which each representative was able to briefly address the audience and detail their organization's efforts to promote positive father involvement. Then the panel took questions from the audience. The purpose of the forum was to open dialogue between policy-makers and concerned citizens and provide an opportunity for each organization to commit publicly to helping provide support for fathers in Illinois.

Moderator: State Senator Kimberly Lightford

Panelists:

- State Representative Paul Froehlich
- Jeffery M. Leving, Chair, Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood
- Brenda Russell, Director, Illinois Dept. of Employment Security
- Jesse Ruiz, Board Chair, Illinois State Board of Education
- Claude Jacob, Deputy Director, Illinois Dept. of Public Health
- Erwin McEwen, Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services
- Karen Newton-Matza, Manager of Community Outreach, Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services - Division of Child Support Enforcement
- Marva Arnold, Director, Dept. of Human Services – Human Capital Development
- Jenny Weiser, Administration for Children and Families



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7/7/2006

COPY

Chairman:

Jeffery M. Leving

Council Members:

Sen. Kimberly Lightford
Sen. Edward Palka
Rep. Paul E. Ercehlich
Sam Cahnman, County Bd. Rep.
Rodney Byrd
Dianna Dutham-McCloud
George Haley
Dr. Kirk Hams
David Hirsch
Dr. Leon Intrater
Rev. Walter Jones
Dr. Wrenethia A. Julian
Howard Lathan
Terence Mitchell
Jim O'Grady
Yolanda Peppers
Lors Rakov
Cathy Reed
Alexander Roseborough
Normis Stevenson

Mary Hudgins
Department of Human Services
100 S Grand Ave, East
Springfield, IL 62762

Dear Mary:

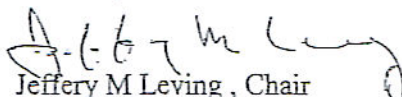
Pursuant to Public Act 093-0437, "The Department of Human Services must provide staff support to the Council". To my knowledge, this has not occurred and the Council on Responsible Fatherhood has been in existence for a period of years. Such staff support has been previously requested.

I would greatly appreciate DHS's help in this matter. I do need at least 1 (one) full time skilled staff person to support the council in performing its duties as listed in the above referenced law. Please see the law for the specific statutory duties in your selection of a qualified candidate or candidates. Organizational, administrative, public relations, writing, web-design and event planning skills could be valuable skills to consider in the selection process.

The address provided to the council is problematic. I believe that letters mailed to that address have been returned to the sender instead of being directed to me. The address I am referring to is on this letterhead. Please try and correct this.

Pursuant to the above act creating the council, the council consists of 21 members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor. It appears that 17 of such members have been appointed by the Governor, leaving 4 vacancies. In addition, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, The Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate shall each appoint one ex officio, non voting member. I believe there are no vacancies among the ex officio members.

Sincerely,


Jeffery M Leving, Chair