



Ohio Practitioners' Network
for Fathers and Families

SPECIAL EDITION: The Ohio Fatherhood Initiative

Ten Grants for Fatherhood Programming Awarded to Ohio Faith-Based and Community Agencies

The Ohio Commission on Fatherhood recently awarded ten grants to non-profit faith-based and community organizations to implement partnership-based, and effective regional fatherhood-specific programs. These programs will provide fatherhood-specific programs to low-income, incarcerated and other at risk men. The programs will be assisting men to develop strong and healthy relationships with their children and to become responsible caregivers. Some programs are working with teenagers to prevent premature fatherhood.

Grants were awarded within the 12 Regions of the Ohio Fatherhood Initiative (see regional map on page 2). Information on each grantee program follows, including: lead agency, program name and description, target population and target counties. Contact information for all programs is on page 4.

Alvis House, a human services agency based in Franklin County, will

be the lead agency for Region 1, which includes seven Ohio counties: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Fayette, Licking, Logan, and Madison.

Alvis House will provide services to fathers and young men at risk of becoming premature fathers. **Alvis House** primarily expects to serve individuals who have become involved in the criminal justice system and who are seeking to strengthen their family ties and become more productive members of the community.

"Many men who have recently been incarcerated desire more of a relationship with their children, but do not know how to do so." Lois Hochstetler, vice president of agency programs at Alvis House.

The number of children with a parent in prison has grown by more than 60% in the last ten years to the point where more than seven million children have a parent under some form of correctional supervision. The separation

caused by an individual's involvement in the criminal justice system has significant psychological and emotional consequences for both the incarcerated parents and the children left behind.

With this in mind, **Alvis House** will provide the following primary services and activities for fathers and their child/ren:

1. Individual assessment and development of a Family Participation Plan which identifies an individual's plan (with specific steps identified) to increase and improve the amount of involvement he has with his child/ren; case management services will follow to provide coaching and assistance;
2. Parenting group education to teach new skills and to develop peer-to-peer mentoring relationships among the group's participants based on parenting experience.
3. Individual and group family programming with fathers and their child/ren.

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J. Tracy Robinson - In July 2008, Governor Ted Strickland appointed J. Tracy Robinson as Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood. J. Tracy Robinson brings more than 20 years of government service to the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood. Tracy worked for the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office in gang enforcement for 10 years. Then, Tracy served as the Special Projects Manager for the Ohio Judicial Conference for 10 years.

Tracy is an experienced grant reviewer and has served as a project manager on several Federal grants. Tracy has served as a grant reviewer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice. Tracy founded a grants management firm which helped government, nonprofits and faith based organizations serve its customers better and more efficient through policy development, training, and project management. Tracy has trained many nonprofit, and faith based community based organizations in capacity building, grant seeking and management.

Tracy Robinson is an encourager, motivator and a source of inspiration for many.

Tracy has a longstanding commitment to his faith. Tracy served as the Director of Membership for the New Salem Missionary Baptist Church for five years. Tracy continues to serve as a deacon and Sunday School teacher. Tracy grew his Sunday School class from 35 students to currently over 150 students attending his class every Sunday morning.

Tracy Robinson possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Oberlin College and a Masters Degree in Education from The Ohio State University. He has been married to Dwan, his college sweetheart for 20 years. They are the parents of two sons Jacob (16) and Jonathan (13).



J. Tracy Robinson,
Executive Director, Ohio
Commission on Fatherhood

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The **East Toledo Family Center** is the lead agency for Region 2, which includes nine Ohio counties: Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams and Wood. The program, called the **Northcoast Fatherhood Initiative (NCFI)** will be a coordinated effort of community- and faith-based organizations that care about and are willing to take action to support responsible fatherhood in Northwest Ohio. The **NCFI** will strengthen rural and urban, low-income fathers by:

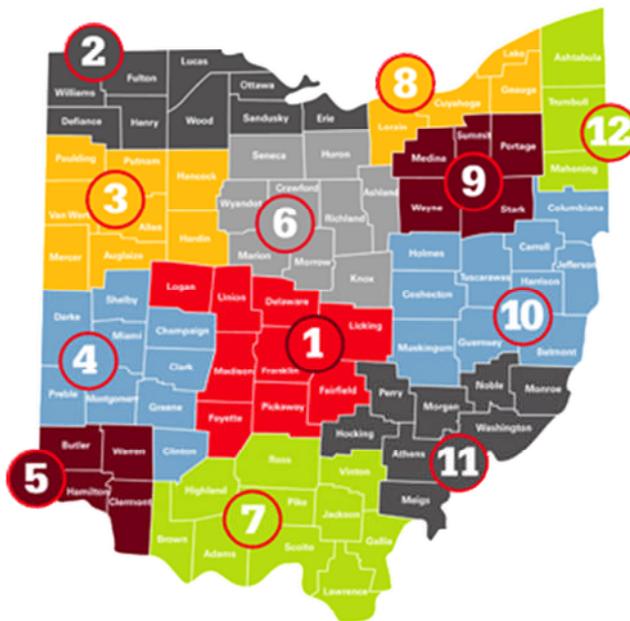
1. Building relationships with their children through various constructive activities;
2. Developing skills that will lead to steady employment opportunities;
3. Motivating child support compliance.

The NCFI has one universal goal: "Help fathers make a difference in the lives of their children."

David Justus, Program Director

NCFI will outreach to fathers in the neighborhoods in which they reside by providing opportunities to strengthen their relationship with their children and improve parenting skills during pregnancy and birth, through the formative years (0-5 years), and during the developmental years (6-14 years). These opportunities will include *Parent Education And Referral Services (PEARS)*, structured father/child activities at local family resource centers and faith-based locations, and to address the immediate, complex needs of some low-income fathers, *Case Management Services (CMS)*.

Likewise, **NCFI** will assist the **CMS** participants to identify and utilize a strong support system including family members, religious leaders, mentors, community partners, and other interested parties, to decrease the program drop-out rate, while increasing the follow-up and follow-through of the service plan. Using this team approach, fathers will be encouraged by team members to follow through on activities that will increase responsible fatherhood. In addition, this team of supporters will continue to be a positive influ-



Region 2, called the **VIP Program - "Very Important Padre"**. The program will target married, unmarried, non-custodial fathers and cohabitating fathers. The goal will be to assist fathers and their children in building positive and strong relationships. **WSOS** will serve Region 2 in partnership with other community action agencies throughout the region's counties.

The **VIP** Program's primary services and program activities are:

1. Parenting Education Activities;
2. Responsible Fathering classes utilizing 24/7 Dad curriculum.

In addition, the **VIP** Program will offer fathers one on one case management, referral linkages, family literacy projects, volunteer activities, and family fun events. **WSOS** plans to offer incentives and supportive services which will increase father and child time together and nurture healthy relationships.

Urban Light Ministries, based in Clark County, is the lead agency for a program serving Region 4, called the **Miami Valley Partnership for Fathers (MVPF)**. Region 4 encompasses nine counties: Montgomery, Clark, Green, Miami, Clinton, Darke, Shelby, Preble and Champaign.

"Our vision is to impact our region's future vitality by promoting the welfare of our youth, children, and the generations to come through positive parenting practices."

Eric Smith, Program Director, MVPF

The **MVPF** initiative will target incarcerated men in pre-release and jail locations in two counties, fathers from the general community wishing to engage their children in more positive

ence on participants long after they complete the program.

East Toledo Family Center joins many partners from throughout the region for **NCFI**. Each partner has extensive experience and expertise in the areas of service to fathers and their families and have demonstrated a willingness to reduce the obstacles that keep children from their fathers. **NCFI** will work towards the enhancement of services that will empower low-income fathers to be an active parent, to be self-sufficient, and to be financially responsible.

WSOS Community Action Commission (WSOS), based in Wood County, is the lead agency for a second Ohio Fatherhood Initiative program in Re-

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ways in nine counties, and young men of middle school ages that are in danger of becoming premature fathers in one county.

Primary **MVPF** program services include:

1. The Nurturing Fathers for Life (NFL) program curriculum and Wise Guys premature fatherhood prevention program curriculum;
2. Program participants will be provided added support through monthly support group meetings and ongoing case management;
3. Activities that encourage fathers to get engaged with their children and their community through monthly father-child activities and community volunteer opportunities.

WSOS Community Action Commission (WSOS), based in Huron County, will be the lead agency for the **Father Connection** program in Region 6. The region encompasses nine Ohio counties: Seneca, Huron, Wyandot, Crawford, Richland, Ashland, Marion, Morrow, and Knox. WSOS will serve fathers in the region in partnership with other community action agencies. The program will target married, unmarried, non-custodial fathers and cohabitating fathers. The goals will be to assist fathers and their children in building positive and strong relationships.

"This is a great program that will help fathers improve their relationships with their children."

Jacquie Wells, Family Development Director, WSOS

The **Father Connection** program's primary services and program activities are:

1. Parenting Education Activities;
2. Responsible Fathering classes utilizing 24/7 Dad curriculum.

In addition, the **Father Connection Program** will offer fathers one on one case management, referral linkages, family literacy projects, volunteer activities, and family fun events. WSOS plans to offer incentives and supportive

services which will increase father and child time together and nurture healthy relationships.

Ironton-Lawrence County CAO Head Start, based in Lawrence County, Ohio will serve as the lead agency for the 10 Ohio counties in Region 7: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. The program, called the **Southern Ohio Fatherhood Initiative**, will provide fatherhood programs to low-income, incarcerated and/or single fathers.

Primary program services provided by the **Southern Ohio Fatherhood Coalition** include:

1. The 24/7 Dad am/pm and Building Blocks curricula;
2. Improving self-awareness of fathers by building on their strengths and weaknesses as parents;
3. Teaching fathers how to plan and cook healthy meals with their children;
4. Organizing interactive activities to build the social-emotional bond between the father and child;
5. Measuring outcomes of activities to evaluate the effectiveness of program services and make improvements.

ARCA Inc., based in Cuyahoga County, will serve three of the four Ohio counties in Region 8: Cuyahoga, Lake, and Lorain. **ARCA Inc.** will provide fatherhood programs to non-custodial and at risk young fathers.

ARCA's program services include:

1. The Inside/Out Dads Curriculum for fathers in the Cleveland Workhouse and the IMPACT Curriculum for fathers in the community;
2. Activities focused on increasing father involvement and improving parenting skills;
3. Helping fathers navigate public and private service systems.

The Cleveland Eastside Ex-Offender Coalition, also based in Cuyahoga County, will serve all four Ohio counties in Region 8: Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Lorain. The **Cleveland Eastside Ex-Offender**

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Coalition will provide fatherhood programs to incarcerated fathers and fathers in the community.

The program goal is to restore and re-engage absent fathers back into their children's lives. **CEEC's** Fatherhood Initiative will extend the agency's popular program, Project IMPACT (Incarcerated Mothers, Parents And Children's Televisitation), to fathers.

The program will provide free video visits for incarcerated fathers and their children. **CEEC** will use best practice curricula in a strength-based format to respond to the causes of father absence in minor children, especially African-American youths.

ForeverDads, based in Muskingum County is the lead agency for a program serving Region 10. The **ComeUNITY** program will set out to change the landscape of fathers and families in all of Region 10.

Serving as a prototype of successful fatherhood practices and program implementations, **ComeUNITY** a project of ForeverDads have set out to do the following:

1. Provide Consultation and Training on Fatherhood Programming, Design, Delivery, and Community Partnership Development for Region 10;
2. Create a Region 10 Fatherhood Advisory Team, inclusive of all 10 counties, and convene a Conference and Training Forum;
3. Establish The Center for Fathers & Families that will serve as a prototype. This Center will provide workshops and materials on parenting and relationship skill building. The key focus will be to coach men to become responsible fathers and mentor others toward this end. The Center will use a number of well established

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curricula and program techniques;

4. Establish a Marketplace Employment Training Program, providing

5. Foster the Future of Fatherhood coordination in Coshocton and Guernsey Counties;
6. Program Replication through the development of a best practices playbook, coaching and progress development assessments.

The Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, will be the lead agency for a second program serving Region 10. The program will serve four Ohio counties: Columbiana, Carroll, Harrison, and Tuscarawas. The CAA of Columbiana County will provide fatherhood programs to all fathers.

CAA's primary program components include:

1. The Nurturing Fathers Program;
2. Mentors for new Teen Fathers to support relationship-building activities among fathers and children;
3. Evaluation activities to measure the increase of healthy parenting attitudes and behaviors among participating fathers.

For additional information or questions please contact the programs directly (see below). For information about future grants contact **J. Tracy Robinson, Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood at (614) 752-0583 or at Tracy.Robinson@jfs.ohio.gov**

Ohio Fatherhood Initiative Program and Referral Contact Information

- **Alvis House** (Region 1) - Contact Cinnamon Reiheld, program manager, at 614.258.9284 or 614.223.1499, or by email at creiheld@alvishouse.org
- **Northcoast Fatherhood Initiative** (Region 2) - Contact David Justus, program director, at 419.917.9204 or Mark Robinson, assistant program director, at 419.917.8648 or either by email at northcoastfathers@yahoo.com
- **V.I.P and Fatherhood Connection** (WSOS, Regions 2 & 6) - Contact Stephanie Fischer at 1.800.775.9767 or 419.447.0084 or by email at safischer@wsos.org
- **Miami Valley Partnership for Fathers** (Region 4) - Contact Eric Smith, program director, eric@thinktank-inc.org, 937-935-7139 or Rev. Darryl Grayson, case manager, pastorgrayson1@msn.com, 937-244-0884 or either toll free at 1.877.856.1700
- **Southern Ohio Fatherhood Coalition** (Region 7) - Contact Kenny Walters at 740.533.9077 or by email at kwalters@headstartworks.org
- **ARCA Inc** (Region 8) - Contact Gladys Hall, executive director, at 216.432.3310 or by email at gladysh@arca-cleveland.org
- **Cleveland Eastside Ex-Offender Coalition** (Region 8) - Contact Caroljean Gates, executive director at 216.426.9012, toll free at 1.877.426.3030 or cjgates@clevelandeastside.org
- **ComeUNITY** (Forever Dads, Region 10) - Contact Burl Lemon, project director, at 740.455.4340 or by email at info@foreverdads.com
- **Community Action Agency of Columbiana County** (Region 10) - Contact Kathy Shaver at 330.424.7221 ext 300 or by email at kshaver@caaofcc.org

The mission of the Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families is to enhance the outcomes of children, families and communities by providing information, training and encouragement to father and family-serving practitioners. www.opnff.net