

# Increasing Family Stability while Reducing the Size and Cost of Government

By Eli Williams, OPNFF Board Member

As the Department of Government Efficiency (D.O.G.E.) takes a chainsaw to the budgets of taxpayer-funded agencies, many programs and services are being eliminated or severely reduced. Some of the cuts are having major negative consequences for some of the most vulnerable people and families in our communities. The full extent and long-term impact of these cuts are still unfolding.

My guess is that most people agree that the federal government's budget does need to be balanced, and that fraud, waste and abuse must be eliminated. They, however, disagree about the methods being used.

My question is this: Is it possible to reduce the size and cost of government while simultaneously strengthening the family, which ultimately benefits children? My answer is "yes." I believe that public and private investment in father and family programs can have such an impact. Read on.

## A Case for Reduced Government Costs and Improved Family Stability

The well-being of children is inextricably linked to the stability and support of their families. A growing body of research highlights the crucial role fathers play in fostering healthy development and contributing to overall family stability. By actively engaging fathers, we can not only improve outcomes for children but also reduce the burden on government resources.

### The Benefits of Father Involvement

The research indicates that children with involved, loving fathers tend to thrive. Father involvement is associated with:

- Improved emotional and behavioral development
- Enhanced cognitive abilities and academic achievement
- Greater social competence
- Reduced risk of delinquency and substance abuse

When fathers are actively engaged in their children's lives, families are more stable, and children are better equipped to succeed, reducing the need for government intervention.

## Economic Benefits of Strengthening Fatherhood

The positive impact of father involvement translates into significant economic benefits for society:

- **Reduced Poverty:** Fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives are more likely to provide financial support, decreasing the number of families living in poverty and reducing the need for public assistance programs.
- **Decreased Crime Rates:** Children with involved fathers are less likely to engage in criminal activity, leading to lower costs associated with law enforcement, the justice system, and incarceration.
- **Improved Educational Outcomes:** Father involvement is linked to higher high school graduation rates and increased college attendance, leading to a more productive workforce and higher tax revenues.
- **Reduced Healthcare Costs:** Children from stable families with involved fathers tend to have fewer health problems, resulting in lower healthcare expenditures.

## Policy Recommendations

To promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen families, policymakers can consider the following:

- **Support Fatherhood Programs:** Invest in evidence-based programs that provide fathers with the skills and resources they need to be actively involved in their children's lives.
- **Promote Economic Opportunities for Fathers:** Implement policies that help fathers secure and maintain stable employment, enabling them to provide financial support for their families.
- **Reform Child Support Policies:** Develop child support policies that are fair to both parents and encourage father involvement.
- **Educate the Public:** Raise awareness about the importance of father involvement and the benefits of strong father-child relationships.

By investing in strategies that strengthen fatherhood, we can create a positive cycle of improved family stability, better outcomes for children, and reduced government costs.

## The Societal Benefits of Private Sector Support for Fatherhood Programs

As established, active and engaged fatherhood leads to positive outcomes for children, families, and society as a whole. Private sector involvement in supporting fatherhood programs can amplify these benefits, creating a more robust and sustainable social support system.

### Benefits of Private Sector Support

- **Increased Resources and Reach:** Private sector funding can significantly expand the reach and resources of fatherhood programs, allowing them to serve more fathers and families. This can include financial contributions, in-kind donations (e.g., office space, technology), and employee volunteer programs.
- **Innovation and Efficiency:** Businesses often bring innovative management practices, technological expertise, and a focus on efficiency to their philanthropic endeavors. This can help fatherhood programs operate more effectively and achieve better outcomes.
- **Enhanced Credibility and Awareness:** When reputable businesses support fatherhood initiatives, it can raise public awareness about the importance of father involvement and enhance the credibility of these programs. This can help to reduce the stigma associated with seeking help and encourage more fathers to participate.
- **Workforce Development:** Companies can partner with fatherhood programs to provide job training, mentorship, and employment opportunities for fathers. This not only improves the economic stability of families but also creates a stronger, more skilled workforce, benefiting businesses and the overall economy.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Private sector support can help ensure the long-term sustainability of fatherhood programs, reducing their reliance on government funding and creating a more stable and reliable source of support.

### Examples of Private Sector Involvement

- Companies can provide financial grants to non-profit organizations that run fatherhood programs. This enhances the long-term financial sustainability of

fatherhood programs as government grant funding is limited, often unreliable and is highly competitive.

- Businesses can offer workshops and training sessions for fathers on topics such as financial literacy, job readiness, and parenting skills.
- Corporations can partner with fatherhood programs to create mentorship opportunities for fathers.
- Companies can implement family-friendly policies, such as paid paternity leave and flexible work arrangements, that support father involvement.

## Breaking the Cycle: How Fatherhood Programs Save Tax Dollars

Unlike many social interventions that require substantial ongoing government funding, fatherhood programs offer exceptional return on investment. For every dollar spent on effective father engagement initiatives, communities save multiple dollars in reduced public expenditures.

### Consider these cost-saving outcomes:

1. **Reduced welfare dependency:** When fathers are actively involved, family income typically rises, reducing reliance on TANF, SNAP, and other assistance programs.
2. **Lower juvenile justice costs:** Communities with strong father presence experience demonstrably lower youth crime rates, saving millions in juvenile detention, court, and rehabilitation expenses.
3. **Improved educational outcomes:** Father involvement correlates strongly with better academic performance, reducing the need for costly special education services and remedial programs.
4. **Decreased mental healthcare utilization:** Children with involved fathers experience fewer behavioral and psychological problems, reducing the burden on publicly funded mental health systems.

The fiscal math is straightforward: investing in fathers now prevents much larger government expenditure later.

## The Private Sector Advantage

What makes fatherhood initiatives particularly appealing from a budgetary perspective is that they don't require massive new government bureaucracies or tax increases.

Innovations like [Fathering Strong](#)® for example demonstrate how private sector approaches can contribute to sustainable community transformation through father engagement utilizing digital, Internet, and mobile technology.

Fully funded, these programs can leverage community connections, volunteer mentorship, and targeted education—multiplying impact without multiplying government overhead. The model creates social infrastructure that reduces dependency rather than managing it, addressing root causes instead of symptoms.

## Beyond the Budget: The Human Return on Investment

While the financial case for fatherhood programs is compelling, the human impact extends far beyond spreadsheets and budget lines. Children with involved fathers:

- Perform better academically
- Develop healthier relationships
- Show greater resilience and emotional regulation
- Experience higher levels of confidence and well-being

These outcomes represent not just savings but societal gains—stronger communities, more productive future workers, and healthier families for generations to come.

## A Personal Story

I know firsthand what a difference good fathering makes. My father and mother came from fatherless homes. Yet, together, they raised thirteen children on a common laborer's pay. None of their nine boys spent time in prison. Not one of their four girls became unwed mothers. Never was the family on welfare nor did we ever live in government subsidized housing. We cost the government nothing, and each child became tax-paying members of society. The keys to their success were their hard work, faith, father-presence and committed co-parenting.

## A Practical Path Forward

For taxpayers and policymakers concerned about fiscal responsibility, supporting fatherhood initiatives offers a pragmatic approach to addressing complex social challenges without expanding government or raising taxes.

Simple steps can make a difference:

- **Support community-based fatherhood programs** through private donations or corporate social responsibility initiatives
- **Advocate for policies** that remove barriers to father involvement
- **Volunteer as mentors** in communities with high rates of father absence
- **Recognize businesses** that implement father-friendly workplace policies

By investing in fathers, we invest in families. By investing in families, we build stronger communities. And by building stronger communities, we naturally reduce the need for government intervention and expenditure.

In today's polarized climate, few solutions offer common ground. Fatherhood programs represent that rare opportunity—a fiscally responsible approach to meaningful social change that benefits everyone's bottom line, from family budgets to county, state, and federal balance sheets.

By investing in fatherhood programs, the private sector can play a vital role in strengthening families, improving outcomes for children, and creating a more prosperous and sustainable society. This not only aligns with corporate social responsibility goals but also makes sound business sense by fostering a healthier, more educated, and more stable community.

Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (OPNFF) is prepared to advise you in building a fatherhood collaborative in your community that includes private sector funders. To begin a conversation about this, contact OPNFF at: [info@opnff.net](mailto:info@opnff.net).

Learn about the other ways OPNFF can provide Training and Technical Assistance at [https://opnff.net/training\\_technical\\_assistance.asp](https://opnff.net/training_technical_assistance.asp)