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## **Notes on the Fatherhood Collaboration Network Call – April 18, 2006**

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Thank you very much to Ms. Lois Bell, Director of the Division of State and Territory TANF Management, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, who gave the April 18, 2006 presentation on the Collaboration Network Call.

**Please save the date: The next Collaboration Network Call will be on July 18 1:30 PM CT, 2:30 PM ET.** Participants suggested several topics and interest was high for a discussion on bridging healthy marriage and fatherhood. Region V Administrator Joyce Thomas will be on the speakers on the upcoming call. Additionally, Region V call participants are proceeding with arrangements to send contact information for additional speaker(s). One of the call participants, Dianna Durham McCloud, Illiana Coalition, volunteered to present on the call. You will find the announcement of the next call with more specific details and information on how sign up for the call on the Fatherhood Listserv approximately a month prior to the call.

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Kathleen Penak, Region V Head Start, welcomed the participants on the call and participants introduced themselves.

#### **Illinois Participants:**

- McLean, Annette – Rockford MELD, Rockford
- McCloud, Dianna Durham – Illiana Coalition, Hazel Crest
- Prunty, Rodney – Rockford MELD, Rockford
- Rawn, Barbara – Prevent Child Abuse of America, Chicago
- West, David – Illinois Department of Children & Families Services, Chicago

#### **Indiana Participants:**

- Moore, Thelzelda – Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Indianapolis
- Moussou, Fey Fey – CANI Head Start, Fort Wayne

#### **Michigan Participants:**

- DeKraker, Brian – Eight CAP, Inc., Greenville
- Funnell, Tammy – Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, Clare
- Goorhouse, Ruth – Inter-Tribal Council, Sault Ste. Marie

#### **Minnesota Participants:**

- Hayne, Jan – Dad Make a Difference, Minneapolis
- Masiarchin, Paul – Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, St. Paul
- Penick, Mary – Goodwill Easter Seals, Minneapolis

#### **Wisconsin Participants:**

- Green, Nichole – Dane County Parent Council, Inc., Madison
- Hamilton, Jerry – Midwest Center for Workforce & Family Development, Kenosha

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- Kinas, Sue – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Child Support, Madison
- Leonhart, Linda – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Child Support
- Marrero, Rene – Dane County Parent Council, Inc., Madison
- Parades, Jose – Dane County Parent Council, Inc., Madison

### **Washington D.C. Participants:**

- Ames, Terri – ACF
- Bell, Lois – Division of State and Territory TANF Management, Office of Family Assistance, ACF
- Bohn, Jason – ACF
- Gunn, Tanya – ACF
- Taft, Neil, National Practitioners Network for Fathers & Families

### **Region V Participants:**

- Bishop, Geneva – Child Support
- Krasner, Steve – TANF
- Lawrence, Linda – Child Support
- Penak, Kathleen – Head Start
- Schindler, Tom – TANF
- Thomas, Joyce – ACF Administrator, Region V
- Vicars, Mike – Child Support
- Weiser, Jenny – ACF

### **Booz Allen Hamilton Participants:**

- Rakov, Lois
- Seneviratne, Rosie
- Welch, Bill – Region V Technical Assistance, Wisconsin

\* There were other participants whose names or organization names were not captured clearly on the call and we would like to add you to the participant list. Please e-mail [Rakov\\_Lois@bah.com](mailto:Rakov_Lois@bah.com) with this information. Thank you.

Kathleen Penak, Region V Head Start, introduced the presenter, Ms. Lois Bell.

## **II. Presentation/Discussion**

Ms. Bell began by explaining the role of the Division she manages within the Office of Family Assistance and its responsibility for funding the Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage initiative under the Deficit Reduction Act. Total funding approved by Congress was \$750 million for five years, of which \$150 million dollars was appropriated for the initiative (\$100 million for the health marriage initiative and \$50 million for the fatherhood initiative).

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Lois Bell introduced her two staff members who were on the call with her: Terry Ames (with fatherhood) and Tanya Gun (with healthy marriage).

The program announcement will be made public in the spring of 2006 (one month to six weeks from now or sometime around May). ACF will be sending announcements through the various listservs and will be posting on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Furthermore, she provided information on how to find the Healthy Marriage and Fatherhood legislation; it can be found at [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov) (Library of Congress). The Legislation outlines allowable activities for the use of the funds. The Legislation Bill number is F1932, which will take you to the TANF legislation starting at 7100, after which you would need to click-on the healthy marriage/fatherhood website. For the program description go to [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov) # 93.086.

Ms. Bell proceeded to illustrate the four components of the Fatherhood grants, which are authorized under the legislation for the use of funds. Of the four components, three are program activity areas.

1. Marriage in the context of fatherhood. (Ms. Bell discusses the details below)
2. Responsible parenting: The second activity area consists of activities/services to help people become better parents such as parenting education, mediation, etc. One example is to help the absent parent learn how to work with the custodial parent in planning the child's activities, in order to make a better future for the child.
3. Economic stability: According to Ms. Bell, it is important for the absent parent to provide support for the child, thus the third activity area consists of services to help the absent parent understand Child Support and assist them in finding a job, ultimately helping them move-up the economic ladder.
4. The Clearing House: The Clearing House will be used for technical assistance & marketing. The Clearing House will provide technical assistance to the fatherhood grantees.

After, briefly describing each component Ms. Bell further discusses in more detail each area.

### **First funding component/activity area:**

**Marriage in the context of fatherhood:** Funding can be used for counseling, enhancing relationships, building relationship skills, understanding the causes of domestic violence, child support education, pre-marital counseling, marital education, skill-based marital education, financial education (assisting in managing family business affairs), and educational counseling on budgeting/banking/home maintenance.

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The participants in these programs can be couples, people thinking about getting married, couples at the birth of a child, and people thinking about marriage while living together, and those who might be interested in getting married. The grantee can provide any of these activities to strengthen the family to create a healthy environment to assist in the development of healthy children. The idea is to bring a couple together in a healthy environment in which to raise a healthy child. The program announcement will have the priority areas as well as models and examples.

### **Second component:**

***Responsible parenting:*** Funding can be used for mentoring, counseling, mediation, encouraging child support payments, skill-based parenting, encouraging child support, activities to teach parents what activities contribute to good parenting skills and help in assisting in the finances and financial education of the family.

The participants in these programs can be people who might not be thinking of marriage but need help in raising a child.

In selecting awardees, the reviewers will be looking at activities that contribute to the child's well being even though the couple is not planning on marriage.

### **Third component:**

***Economic stability:*** Activities to foster economic stability and self sufficiency. Some research says the main reason couples break-up is due to money. Activities include job training, job search, job retention services, job enhancement training, dissemination of employment information, referral for services to enhance employability, education-career advancement, coordinating existing employment services and any other method activities to foster economic stability.

Total fatherhood funding for the three above areas is up to \$50 million. The grant application process will be a competitive process. Applications will be assessed by nonfederal peer reviewers. Applicants can be states, tribal units, public, and not for profits including faith-based organization.

## **III. Questions from Call Participants & Answers from Lois Bell**

**Can an agency that is applying for a grant subcontract out the money?** Yes

**How much time do people have to develop the grant application?** Ms. Bell said she cannot say until the announcement is sent out, but it will be more than 30 days. She again advised everyone to regularly check the [grant.gov](http://grant.gov) website for an announcement.

**Does the money have to be spent by the end of the fiscal year?** No, but the Administration of Children and Families has to obligate the money by the end of the

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fiscal year. The award does not have to be spent by the grantee by the end of the fiscal year.

**Will there be a match requirement?** There is a cost share requirement in the announcement. She said she cannot say how much but it will be a minimal amount.

**What is the duration of grant?** The grants will be authorized for 5 years. Grantees awarded the grant this year will be able to receive a four year renewal.

**Are the grant amounts set?** The announcement will illustrate the funding levels, but she cannot disclose the funding levels until the announcement is made public.

**Is there any money earmarked for rural areas or is the money for all for urban areas?** There is no intention to keep the funding within a certain area. ACF is looking at funding diverse programs. ACF want programs which serve various ethnic groups and both rural and urban areas.

**To whom can we disseminate the information, as one of the grant activities involves dissemination of information?** ACF is looking to saturate the community with fatherhood information; we want a complete culture change. They will disseminate information at schools, churches, synagogues, mosque, youth groups, so the concept of the involvement of fathers becomes universal.

**Does ACF have any intent or are they designing a plan to combine the Healthy Marriage & Fatherhood Grants?** The intent is to have two separate programs; have two distinct programs. There will be TA available to the grantees and there may be coordination between the healthy marriage grantees but it is separate.

**Could it be possible for states to work together?** Yes, it is possible. We are looking for partnerships with new ideas. We are interested in what does not work as well as what does. We are looking for innovation.

**Can grant proposals cover programs that cross state lines?** Yes, geographic area can be defined by grantees across state lines.

**Will consideration be given to states with high job loss like Michigan?** No, special consideration for states with high job loss. Applications are graded based on merit of proposal. No extra points are based on economic condition of the state or locality.

**Can services be mandated?** No, applicants will have to show upfront the process they will use to coordinate with domestic violence agencies and come-up with a plan for consultation. Participation is voluntarily.

**Will there be an evaluation?** Technical assistance will be provided by ACF through a contract. Technical assistance staff will help grantees come up with a feedback mechanism or logic model. Some grantees will be selected for a formal evaluation paid

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for by ACF. Grantees that have been in this category have to cooperate with ACF's evaluator.

**Will there be quarterly reporting requirements?** Yes, the standard reporting requirements to the grant managers will be in place. 24 new grant managers will be hired.

**Does the application need language about the Agency's plans for an evaluation?** The program announcement will describe the evaluation plan requirements.

**Can helping people obtain their GED be an eligible activity?** Yes, encouraging education is part of the economic stability component.

**Why is the grant up to \$150 million for Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage?** There is a funding ceiling. 75% will be actually used for the grants because they will need funding for technical assistance and to evaluate applications.

**Are Head Start grantees eligible to apply for money?** Yes, please read the legislation to get a better idea who is eligible; the pool is very broad.

**What is the purpose of Clearing House?** To provide information to the broader public and provide assistance to the fatherhood grantees once the grants are awarded. The Clearing House will also disseminate information and draft a media campaign. ACF will release a separate RFP for the Clearing House, which will be awarded to a not for profit.

**If a grantee is already involved in a healthy marriage grant can they apply again?** Yes.

**What is the anticipated time for the Clearing House RFP?** If we the Federal government does not award money by the end of the fiscal year we will lose it.

This is the only year you can receive funds in these components. There will be no new awards. Whoever is awarded this year may have the grant for the next 4 years, as long as the grantee is performing on a satisfactory basis.

**Will there be any grants awarded beyond this year?** The ACF regional office may still award money for other marriage initiatives beyond this initiative.

Please remember there will be two separate program announcements for the two pots of money. This conversation today focused on the fatherhood grants.

There will be a separate announcement for the health marriage grants.

**Are there fatherhood activities within the healthy marriage component?** No. There are eight components: public ad campaign, marriage education, premarital for engaged

couple or interested, relationship building, marriage enhancement, relationship skills, marriage mentoring programs, working on adversarial relationships.

#### **IV. Presentation Conclusion**

Ms. Bell concluded her presentation by emphasizing how they encourage groups to come up with new ideas within fatherhood, expand services to couples and families. This is an opportunity to test the healthy marriage and fatherhood concepts. We are currently in the business of intervention, always working to mend families, but this new funding is geared toward what can we do before a couple has a baby or before a couple breaks up, giving them the parenting skills to form a health marriage and become good parents. These new grants will be focused on prevention.

She noted that there is a floor and ceiling mentioned on the CFDA website, but she cannot reveal the exact floor and ceiling until the announcement is released because of the standard of grant procedures, where the federal entity has to make sure the information is released to everyone at the same time. The announcement will give the funding levels and the number of awards.

We will have reviewers from all over the country (i.e. non-governmental trained peer reviewers, grad students, etc.) they will be formally trained. Applications with the highest score will be awarded the grants.

Ms. Bell was thanked by Kathleen Penak for presenting.

#### **V. Future Calls**

Lois Rakov continued the collaboration network call by asking the participants if they had any ideas for future calls. Ms. Rakov read a list of topics, which were continuously requested. The topics are: In-Service Training and Staff Roles in Father/Male Programs; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Supporting Grandparents; Tribal Fatherhood; Looking at Fatherhood “Curriculums”; Fathers Programs in Rural areas; Bridging Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage; Fathers as resources; Access and Visitation: What dads and moms want to know; Updates on policies, programs and challenges; Healthy Marriage Initiatives; Paternity Establishment Updates

A call participant suggested that marriage is on everyone’s radar screens and asked if it would be possible to talk about how different areas have addressed marriage; and what the thinking was on the collaboration of fatherhood and healthy marriage.

Lois Rakov suggested the topic could deal with bridging the two areas. Thus, it was decided that the topic for the next call will be bridging healthy marriage and fatherhood.

Lois Rakov asked Dianna Durham McLoud if she would like to be a presenter on the next call; she accepted the request. Ms. McLoud expressed her concern that maybe

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what her agency is doing above and beyond what is allowed by the federal government, in regards to bridging the two areas.

Barbara Rawn volunteered to contact individuals in Indiana and Florida who would be willing to present their pilot health marriage class program.

As the May 16<sup>th</sup> call was cancelled and replaced with today's call because of speaker availability, Kathleen Penak proposed **June 18 at 1:30 PM CT, 2:30 PM ET** for the next collaboration call.

Kathleen Penak concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for joining and hoping everyone will be available to join the next call.