

February 27, 2015



To: Senator Beth Bye, Co-Chair  
Representative Toni Walker, Co-Chair  
Senator Joan Hartley, Vice Chair  
Representative Henry Genga, Vice Chair  
Representative Robyn Porter, Vice Chair  
Members of the Appropriations Committee

On behalf of the fathers of Connecticut, I ask you to please **restore \$566,656 to the DSS budget to fund services for fathers**. Without this funding, thousands of children and their parents will not receive critically needed services to achieve healthy family relationships and self-sufficiency. Responsible fathers – who play key roles in child development and family economic success- create strong families, and strong families lead to good outcomes for children.

*Father absence takes a toll on government. One conservative estimate is that father absence costs taxpayers \$100 billion yearly (the One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Annual Cost of Father Absence, National Fatherhood Initiative, 2008).*

The objectives of the initiative are to provide dads with the skills and supports they need to get involved in the lives of their children and stay connected by

- Promoting public education concerning the financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood;
- Assisting men in preparation for the legal, financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood;
- Promoting the establishment of paternity at childbirth;
- Encouraging fathers, regardless of marital status, to foster their emotional connection to and financial support of their children;
- Establishing support mechanisms for fathers in their relationship with their children, regardless of their marital and financial status; and
- Integrating state and local services available for families.

The Department of Social Services is the lead agency for the Representative Juan S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative and State Fatherhood Advisory Council. The Council has recently developed a strategic fatherhood plan for the state. All stakeholders understand and embrace public policy dedicated to promoting positive fatherhood engagement with children.

Six programs currently receiving state funding (\$94,442 per site)

- Career Resources, Inc., Fathers for Life Program
- Families in Crisis, Inc., Inside Out Dad
- Family Strides, Inc., Fatherhood Initiative Program
- Madonna Place, Inc. Fatherhood Initiative Program
- New Haven Family Alliance, Inc., Male Involvement Network
- New Opportunities, Inc., Fatherhood Initiative Program

The above agencies are contracted with the Department to provide a Fatherhood Initiative Program to assist at least 500 unduplicated low-income noncustodial fathers with services including but not limited to economic self-sufficiency; positive involvement and interaction with their children; outreach and recruitment to engage noncustodial fathers, intensive case management (i.e., establishment of paternity, responding to support order, linking with necessary human services including DSS assistance, housing, employment, education, training, parenting, self-help, counseling, transportation, legal assistance, mental health, substance abuse, pregnancy prevention, domestic violence, conflict resolution, anger management, relationship mediation, personal development, life skills, core interventions, responsible fatherhood, health and sexuality and other regionally available programs); and curriculum-based group sessions.

I urge you to restore \$566,656 to the DSS budget to fund services for fathers.

Respectfully,



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Executive Director

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