



How Fatherhood Programs Engage Fathers to Promote Healthy Relationships

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Partners



OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



Presentation Overview

- Project Context
- CHaRMED Study Objectives
- Overview of Current Data Collection Efforts
- Observations from Data Collection Process



Project Context

Project context

- Fathers, children, and their families benefit from healthy relationships (both romantic and coparenting)
- Fatherhood programs can support healthy relationships
 - For instance, many programs aim to improve a wide array of fathers' relationships skills, such as communication, conflict management, emotional self-regulation, and program solving
- The Office of Family Assistance prioritizes healthy relationship education as part of their federal Responsible Fatherhood grant program

Project context (continued)

- Despite the importance of healthy romantic and coparenting relationships, information is limited on:
 - How fatherhood programs incorporate healthy relationship services
 - How programs account for unique strengths and needs of fathers served (e.g., fathers who are married, cohabiting, or single)
 - What strategies hold promise for promoting active engagement in healthy relationship services and supporting fathers' romantic and coparenting relationships

CHaRMED study

The Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED) project aims to build knowledge about approaches that fatherhood programs currently use, or could use, to foster healthy coparenting and romantic relationships




CHaRMED Study Objectives

CHaRMED study objectives

- Describe characteristics and qualities of marriages or romantic relationships, and coparenting relationships, of fathers who are likely to participate in fatherhood programs
- Develop a conceptual model for addressing coparenting with fathers, including those most likely to be served by fatherhood programs

CHaRMED study objectives (continued)

- **Document current services offered by fatherhood programs in the areas of healthy romantic relationships and coparenting**
- **Understand participant and program staff perspectives on healthy romantic relationship and coparenting services, and how these services might be improved**
- Identify gaps in existing approaches to healthy romantic relationship and coparenting services, and identify other approaches and/or resources relevant to address those gaps

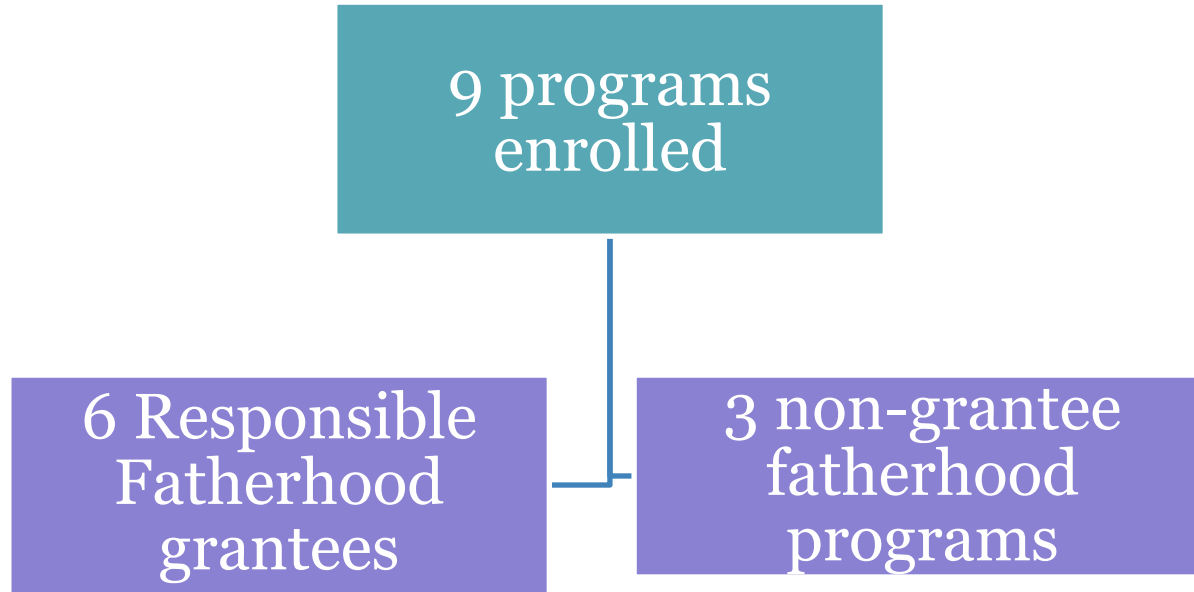


Overview of Current Data Collection Efforts

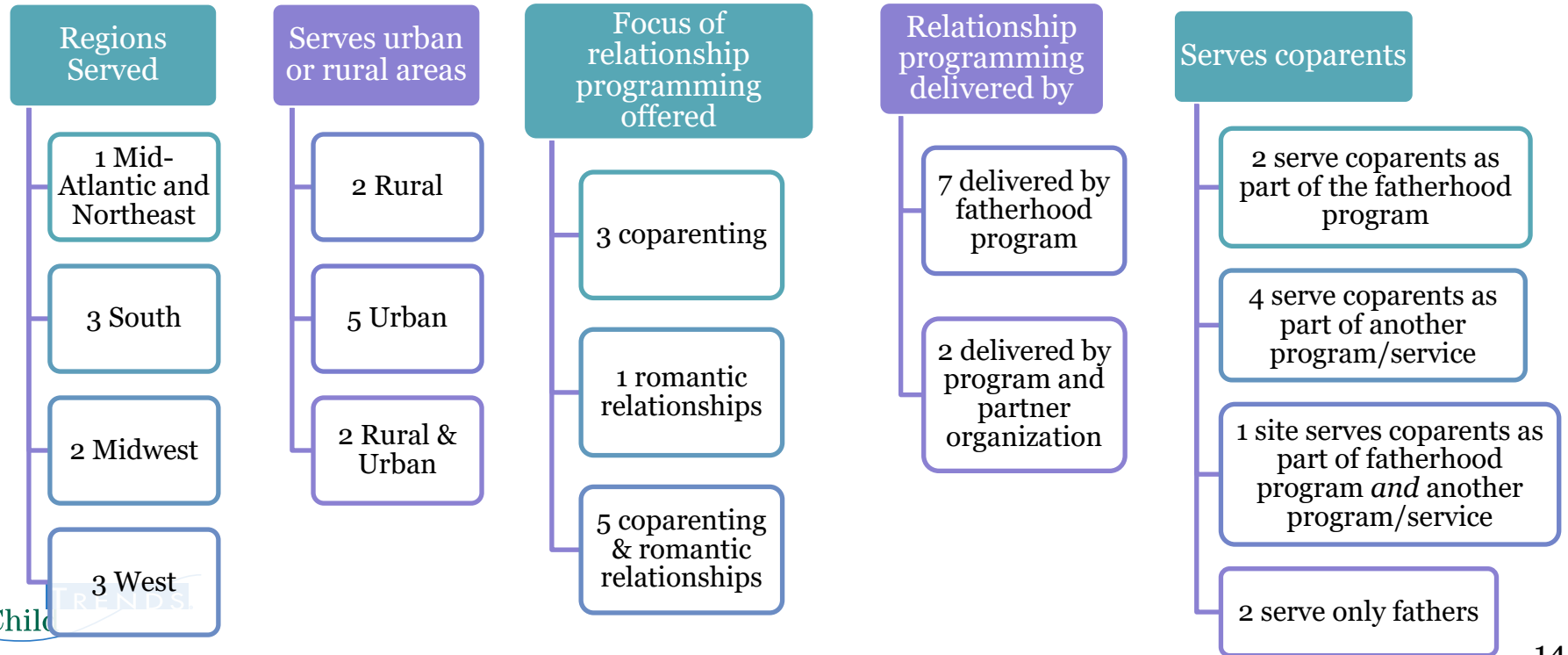
Data collection approach

- Using existing data (e.g., fatherhood program documents; grantee documents; publicly available curricula)
- New data collection efforts primarily qualitative
 - Program screener with program directors
 - Semi-structured interviews with program directors and facilitators, program partners, participating fathers, coparents of participating fathers, nonparticipating fathers, and curriculum developers
 - Father and coparent questionnaire

Participating programs

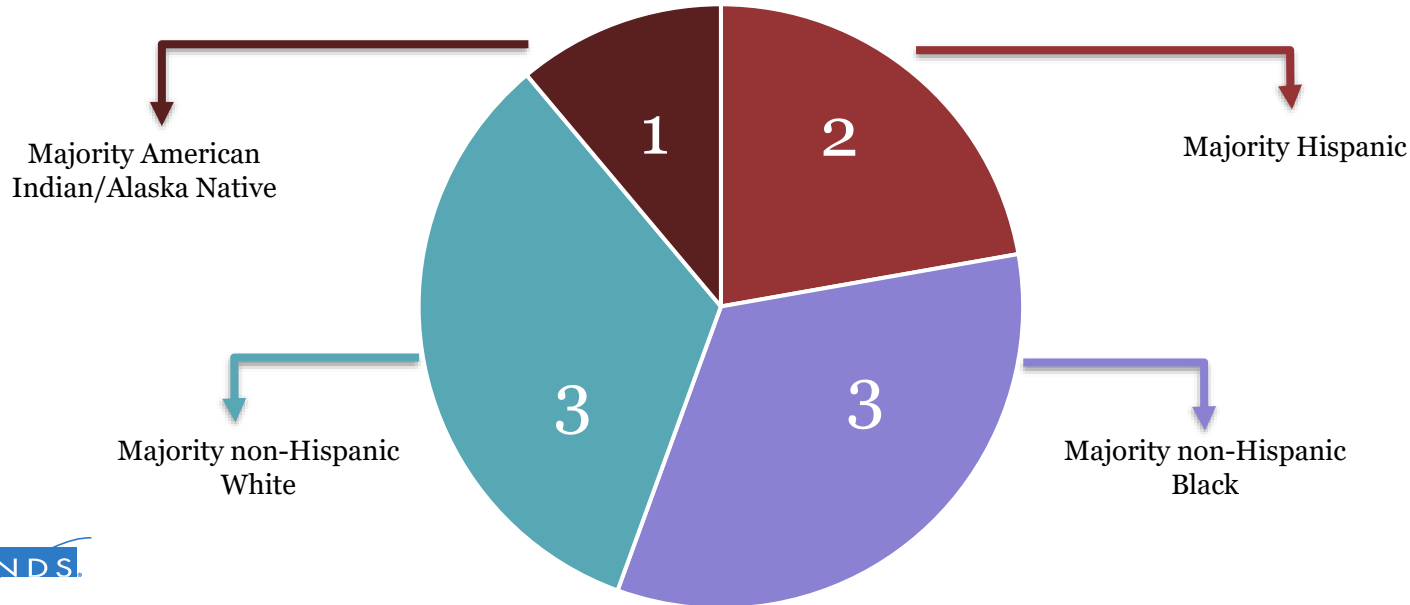


Participating programs (continued)

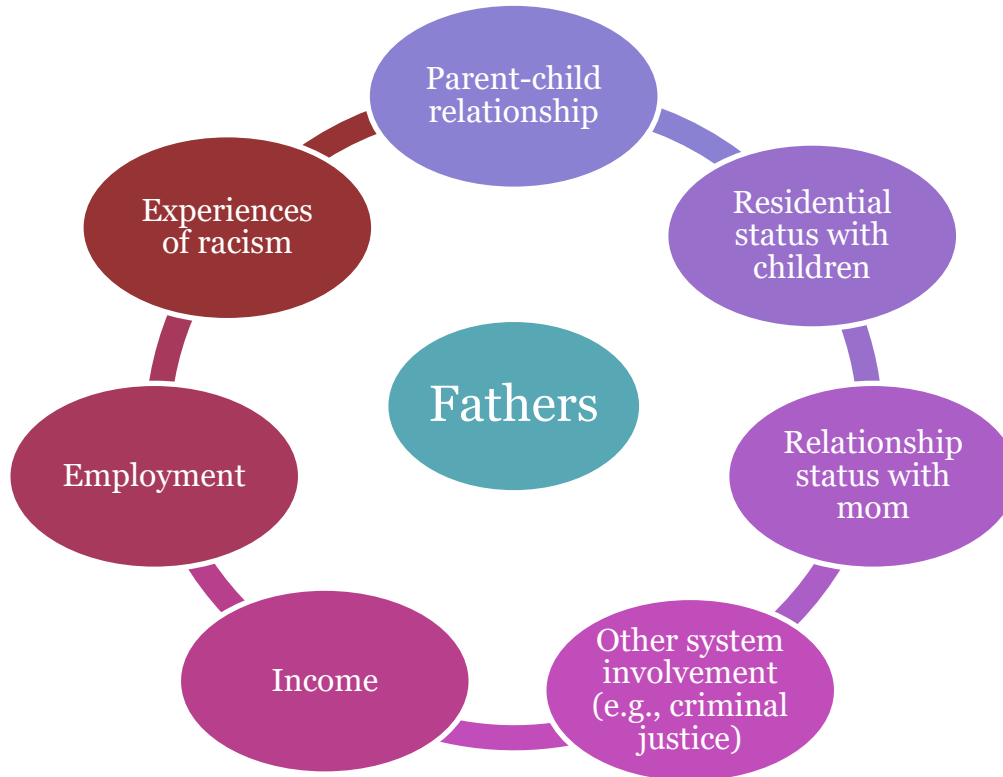


Participating programs aim to serve fathers from a variety of racial ethnic identities

Racial Ethnic Makeup



Participating programs serve fathers with a variety of experiences that may help or hinder relationships



A young couple with curly hair are laughing together in a city setting. The woman is on the left, laughing heartily, and the man is on the right, smiling and looking at her. They are wearing casual clothing. The background shows blurred city buildings. A blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

Observations from the data collection process

Data collection considerations and challenges

- It can be difficult to distinguish how curricula address relationships versus how the overall program does
- Coparents and non-participating fathers are challenging to recruit
- A father-centered and strengths-based approach to data collection is important

Exploring how other systems intersect with fatherhood programs

- Using information from staff, father, and coparent perspectives, study will:
 - Examine how systems and policies affect fathers' relationships
 - Consider implications for fathers' engagement in fatherhood programs, program content, and services provided

Data collection considerations due to COVID-19

- Important to be responsive to program staff needs and requests
- Virtual programming can make the recruitment of fathers and coparents for study participation more difficult

Thank You!

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