

### **Meeting Summary ★ December 18, 2023**

#### **Members in Attendance:**

Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves, Chair, Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Nancy Navarretta, Co-Chair, Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Tanya Barrett, United Way of CT

Paul Bourdoulous, Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services

Heriberto (Eddie) Cajigas, Department of Labor (Domain 1 Committee Chair)

Daniel Cargill, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Rose Colon, Greater Hartford Legal Aid

Diana DiTunno, DSS Office of Organizational & Skill Development

Joseph DiTunno, Judicial Court Support Services Division (Domain 4 Committee Co-Chair)

Doug Edwards, Real Dads Forever

Hon. Michael Ferguson, Judicial Branch Family Support Magistrate Division

Scott Gaul, Office of Policy Management

Anthony (Tony) Judkins, DSS Office of Child Support Services (Domain 5 Committee Co-Chair)

Nicole Kilduff, Family Strides Inc. (Provider Representative, Executive Level)

Lesley Mara, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

Deputy Commissioner Brandon McGee, Department of Housing

Robert Pinnock, Career Resources (Provider Representative, Direct Service Level)

Lynn Reeves, DSS Office of Child Support Services

Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy (for Commissioner Bye), Office of Early Childhood

Ariana Trotman, GBAPP (Provider Representative, Program Manager Level)

Deputy Commissioner Michael Williams, Dept. of Children and Families (Domain 3 Committee Chair)

Commissioner Ronald Welch, Department of Veterans Affairs

Former Representative Patricia Wilson-Pheanious

Chairperson Jennifer Zaccagnini, Board of Pardons and Parole

#### **Member Regrets:**

Dr. Kari Adamsons, University of Connecticut, Human Development & Family Sciences

Michael Bartley, Department of Labor

Katie Breslin, Office of Policy Management

Commissioner Beth Bye, Office of Early Childhood

John Frassinelli, State Department of Education

Anthony Gay, Department of Children and Families (Domain 2 Committee Chair)

Gerald Gore, Department of Developmental Services

Steven Hernández, CWCSEO (Domain 5 Committee Co-Chair)

Aileen Keays, UConn Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (Domain 4 Committee Co-Chair)

Kevin Krusz, Department of Public Health

Commissioner Angel Quiros, DOC



### **Meeting Summary ★ December 18, 2023**

### Welcome/Introductions

Commissioner Barton Reeves opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance, including Commissioner Navarretta as the new CFI Council Co-Chair. Commissioner Navarretta expressed her and her Department's commitment to the collaborative and excitement about serving in her new role as Co-Chair. Members introduced themselves.

### DSS-certified Fatherhood Program Recognition Ceremony

Prior to the Council meeting today, a brief ceremony was held to recognize the eight agencies whose fatherhood programs successfully completed the 2023 DSS Fatherhood Program Certification Process. The DSS-certified programs will maintain this status until December 2027. The agencies, and representatives in attendance to accept their certificate plaques, included:

AGENCY	REPRESENTATIVES	PROGRAM NAME
New Opportunities, Inc. Waterbury, CT	William Rybczyk, President/CEO Gawdys Grullon Francisco Hildalgo James Mason Robert (Bobby) Sanchez	Fatherhood Initiative Program
Career Resources, Inc. Bridgeport, CT	Robert Hebert, Vice President Robert Pinnock	Fathers For Life Program
GBAPP, Inc. Bridgeport, CT	Nancy Kingwood, Executive Director Greg Bendolph Corey Saulsbury Ariana Trotman	Teen Fathers Program
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford 2 program sites Hartford, CT	Peter Lewis Shanikwa Williams Johnny Alicea	Fatherhood Program
Community Renewal Team, Inc. Hartford, CT	Daviana Contreras Matthew Hjalmeer Terry Perry	Real Fathers, Real Men
Madonna Place, Inc. Norwich, CT	Claire Silva, Executive Director Jason Malcolm Randy Flythe Will Marquez	Fatherhood Initiative Program
Family Strides, Inc. Torrington, CT	Nicole Kilduff, Executive Director PJ Cifaldi Sarai Perez	Nurturing Fathers Program
St. Joseph Parenting Center 2 program sites Stamford and Danbury, CT	Rhonda Neal, Executive Director Frazier Termon	Dads Are the Difference Program



### Meeting Summary ★ December 18, 2023

### DSS-certified Fatherhood Program Recognition Ceremony, continued

Also in attendance were several Council members and members of the 2023 Certification Review Committee. Tony provided information about the process, and explained the benefits of DSS certification of fatherhood programs include the opportunity to strengthen their services in support of low-income, noncustodial fathers and their families; the ability to offer the State of Connecticut Child Support Arrearage Adjustment Program to eligible enrolled program participants and the ability to present a comprehensive, father- and family-centered approach to service delivery to potential funders. Any organization/agency that provides dedicated program services to fathers for at least three full years (36 months) prior to entering into the process is eligible to apply for participation in the DSS Fatherhood Program Certification process, and agencies with fatherhood programs that are currently DSS-certified and wish to continue to hold this status submit a letter of intent in order to participate.

The Certification Review Committee (CRC) manages tasks through this intensive assessment process and submits final recommendations regarding whether a program should be certified to the DSS leadership, who will in turn make final decisions and notify participating agencies. To achieve official recognition through the DSS Fatherhood Program Certification Process, programs must fulfill the requirements at each step of the process and demonstrate compliance in all seven Fatherhood Program Standards categories. The Process runs approximately 6-9 months and includes the following steps: Fatherhood Program Orientation Session; Application/Letter of Intent Submission and Review; Program Compliance Report Submission and Review; On-Site Program Review; Program Approval/Denial and Notification; Fatherhood Program Certification Renewal (every four years).

A sincere thank you was shared to the 2023 Certification Review Committee members:

Dan Cargill, CCADV Wanda Huertas, CSSD Fred Diggs, DSS Maria Lopez, DSS Nicole Dilernia, DSS Todd Mallard, DSS Denise Drummond, CWCSEO Melissa Mendoza, DSS Doug Edwards, Real Dads Forever Linette Pisani, DSS Kelley Edwards, DMHAS Heide Sulewski, DOL Anitra Harris, DSS Jennifer Wilder, OEC Barbara Hartwright, SES Pat Wilson Pheanious

Melvette Hill, CWCSEO

#### Review/Acceptance of September Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Navarretta asked members to review minutes from the September meeting for approval. Members reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Dan Cargill and seconded by Heriberto (Eddie) Cajigas. All in favor, one abstention, none opposed. Minutes accepted by the Council as written.



### Meeting Summary **★** December 18, 2023

### Annual CFI Dear Dad Tour Campaign: 2024 and Beyond

Diana reviewed the revised proposal submitted by American View Productions (AVP) for the CFI Dear Dad Tour (DDT) annual campaign. She reminded members that the DDT will run during the weeks after Mother's Day up until Father's Day (roughly mid-May to mid-June). DSS would enter into contract with AVP for this campaign.

Diana reviewed the following answers provided by AVP to Members' questions raised at the September 25, 2023 meeting.

<u>QUESTION</u>: Is there a cost advantage to a multi-year contract, and if yes, what would that look like? AVP ANSWER: Yes.

- The Cost Estimate Range for one year is \$25-31K
- The Cost Estimate Range for two years is \$23.5 -29K per year
- The Cost Estimate Range for three years is \$22 27K per year

<u>QUESTION</u>: Are there measurable outcomes for the DDT to illustrate effectiveness of the campaign? AVP ANSWER: Yes.

- 1. The free press media that cover our events will tell us quantifiably what our reach looks like.
- 2. We can also garner analytics comparing the baseline from web visits to the number of visits post campaign.
- 3. Social Media Analytics will provide numbers related to exposure, engagement, and interaction.
- 4. Any eblast campaigns can also be measured for click throughs.

QUESTION: Are outcomes anecdotal?

<u>AVP ANSWER</u>: Yes outcomes can also be anecdotal and are the basic idea behind the program as people will provide testimonies not only to their experiences but their awareness of the Fatherhood Program.

<u>QUESTION</u>: Could there be a brief pre/post survey perhaps, for those visiting the booth – ask individuals did they know about the CFI before they came to the booth; what did they know about it or think it was before they read the overview or talked with AVP staff, etc.?

AVP ANSWER: Yes there can be such a survey; we just have to be careful not to make it too onerous.

**QUESTION**: Could program track referral source as the DDT?

<u>AVP ANSWER</u>: This is less likely as our program is a branding campaign, that while will refer people, it is not intended as a hard sell sales pitch. The primary purpose is simply to make people aware enough so that if they need the program or knows someone who does they may recall the Fatherhood Initiative and refer them to the website. The idea is to make people informal ambassadors of Fatherhood.



### Meeting Summary ★ December 18, 2023

### Annual CFI Dear Dad Tour Campaign: 2024 and Beyond continued

Council members agreed to DSS entering into a two-year contract with AVP for the annual Dear Dad Tour (DDT), since the 2019 DDT was a positive experience, AVP's reputation a socially conscious, flexible, responsive contractor and the fact that they have produced high-quality products with DSS in the past. Further, Members expressed that a multi-year contract allows the campaign to build on itself more effectively. DSS currently has contributions from several state agency partners who are parties to the Interagency Fatherhood Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to be used for CFI activities, that cover the cost for the first year (2024 DDT). Those from MOU partner agencies agreed to support the campaign, with costs divided across several agencies and will identify funds for the second contract year and future years.

A proposal was made to move forward with DSS entering into the two-year contract pending financial commitment; Deputy Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept and Chief Family Support Magistrate Ferguson seconded. All Members in Favor, motion approved. Tony will reach out to AVP to begin the contracting discussion with AVP.

### Strategic Plan: Implementation Update

#### **Domain Committee Chair Reports**

#### DOMAIN 1 (D1): Fathers economically stable

D1 Committee Chair Eddies Cajigas first acknowledged the fatherhood programs that were successful in being awarded DSS Certification and then proceeded with his report. Eddie stated the job aid developed for providers serving fathers across Connecticut, as they assist program participants with connecting to resources/services under the Domain 1 areas of focus, was disseminated to providers across the state on October 18.

The tool, *CFI D1 Quick-Access Resource List for Fatherhood Providers*, was a result of the fatherhood program providers' survey disseminated by the D1 Committee in Spring 2023. The list is organized by D1 economic stability area, links to online resources available under each area, and "what you'll find" when you click the links for each identified resource.

Eddie acknowledged his Committee members for their efforts on this tool, stating he has received numerous positive responses form providers such as "this is great!", "very easy to use" and "this will be very helpful in my work with fathers". The tool can be found at the end of these minutes.





Strategic Plan: Implementation Update continued

**Domain Committee Chair Reports continued** 

### DOMAIN 2 (D2): Fathers in healthy relationships with their children, co-parents, significant others

Diana reported on behalf of D2 Committee Chair Anthony Gay, who was unable to attend the meeting. The Committee continues their review of a DCF Request for Proposal (RFP), compiling suggestions on how state agency RFP templates can be drafted to be more inclusive of fathers in their parenting role. A short survey for DCF workers in the adolescent unit regarding post-secondary education opportunities for male youth in the human services/social work field is finalized, next step is to disseminate to DCF staff.

#### DOMAIN 3 (D3): Young people prepared to be responsible parents

Deputy Commissioner Michael Williams reported the Committee has experienced some meeting attendance issues, but despite that challenge has completed the D3 Committee's Asset Map analysis for Focus Area 1, Healthy Masculinity/Healthy Relationships/Violence Prevention. The analysis found gaps and provides recommendations for resolving/addressing those gaps. Curricula and other services are lacking gender and age perspectives for the target population of this Committee's efforts and should be expanded to be more inclusive of young fathers/fathers-to-be as it relates to both relationship management and masculinity. The group will now begin the analysis for the other two focus areas; namely, Identification of/Services for Male Youth Who May Be Fathers/Expectant Fathers and Quality Education and Support for Teen Male Parenting (includes examination of young parents' program models). DC Williams requested Ariana Trotman join the Committee. A representative from the DMHAS Young Adult Services is sought as well. Jennifer Wilder, who currently serves as a member of the D3 Committee, noted the OEC home visiting program is seeking out teen parents, and she will provide information at the next Committee meeting.

### **DOMAIN 4 (D4):**

### Men involved in the criminal justice system supported in being responsible fathers

Co-Chair Joseph DiTunno reported the group held their event for criminal system agency leaders and their training staff on Friday, September 29 at Central CT State University. Seventy-three leaders and their staff were registered representing the Department of Correction, Division of Criminal Justice, Division of Public Defender Services, Judicial Court Support Services Division, Board of Pardons and Parole and others. Joe noted this groundbreaking event was the first time these leaders gathered at an event focused on fatherhood. Ann Adalist-Estrin, an expert in the field, and currently the Director of the *National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated* at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, served as keynote and Nicholas Aponte-Rodriguez, a father with lived experience, delivered a powerful talk which resulted in many staff requesting his help as they begin the development of staff training efforts.





Strategic Plan: Implementation Update continued

**Domain Committee Chair Reports continued** 

#### **DOMAIN 4 (D4):**

Men involved in the criminal justice system supported in being responsible fathers, continued

Next, D4 Committee members will work with each agency's training academy staff to identify their needs. And ultimately, the group can support agencies with policy change and development of metrics on men as fathers in the system.

### **DOMAIN 5 (D5): Policy/Public Awareness**

Tony reported the Winter 2023 issue of the CFI Newsletter was electronically disseminated to the CFI network on December 6. He reminded members to please forward the email they received with newsletter attached throughout their respective agencies and partner/contractor networks. This CFI product is helping to memorialize how we tell the story of our collaborative.

The newsletter will continue to highlight one CFI partner agency and related topic area per issue, but rather than quarterly issues, a bi-annual dissemination cycle will begin in 2024, with a Spring/Summer Issue disseminated early May and a Fall/Winer Issue disseminated in early November.

#### **CFI-211 Workgroup Chair Report**

Tanya Barrett reported the following efforts of this group:

- an overview and "demo" of 211CT website's electronic referral feature was be delivered at the DSS-certified fatherhood program coalition's October 24 meeting with the goal of having it piloted with the programs; this requires a commitment between CT 211 and agencies to provide a smoother connection to services; programs will also be able to refer potential clients to each other, if someone moves or is outside of a particular program's service area
- 2-1-1 CT is offering the "Ride United" Program, which is a partnership between United Way Worldwide and Lyft it provides free transportation for adults 18 years+ who indicate a need when speaking with a Contact Center Specialist; those adults who meet the parameters for the program can be given up to 4 one-way or 2 round-trip rides per week, when used for appointments related to healthcare, food, education, employment, housing or legal purposes (i.e., court, appointments with agencies for which they are required to meet for their case such as DSS, DCF, Family Services, etc.)
- The group will begin a review of the white papers available on the website (e-library) for necessary updates to papers under the "fatherhood" category



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### DSS-certified Fatherhood Program Providers Report: Coalition Updates

Nicole Kilduff stated the Coalition had no updates since the September meeting to report, as all providers were involved with the DSS Certification Process, including 2-day onsite visits by the Certification Review Teams.

### 2024 New England Fathering Conference

Tony reported that the online registration system opened on December 15. He thanked sister agency partners who had committed funds as sponsors for the 2024 event, and stated once those agencies confirmed the staff who would be using the attendee slots that were provided in return of their sponsorship, they should email names and addresses to Diana so she can provide them the required code specific to each group for proper registration.

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Navarretta noted the 2024 Council meeting dates are confirmed as follows:

- Monday, March 25, 2024; 1:30-3:30pm
- Monday, June 24, 2024; 1:30-3:30pm
- Monday, September 30, 2024; 1:30-3:30pm
- Monday, December 16, 2024; 1:30-3:30pm

All will be held in-person, at DSS Central Office, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford.

Outlook invites will be forwarded by Commissioner Barton Reeves; members were asked to accept the invitation upon receipt.

Meeting Adjourned.



Economic Stability Area	Resource	What you'll Find
	CT Department of Labor (DOL) website, American Job Center page:  American Job Centers (ct.gov)	The American Job Center (AJC) system is a partnership of organizations that provide workforce assistance to job seekers and employers. This collaboration of state, regional, and local organizations helps prepare and train workers and offers services that help business and industry find talent. AJCs have services for everyone, regardless of employment status.
EMPLOYMENT	CTHires website:  CTHires	To register in many AJC workshops at locations across the state, individuals must register in CTHires (CT Helping Individuals and Employers Reach Employment Success) which is designed to provide integrated services to individuals and employers.
	CT DOL website, Services page:  Services (ct.gov)	This page provides links to various services including jobseeker assistance, youth employment, career exploration, unemployment assistance to name a few.
	The CT Office of Workforce Strategy CareerConneCT website:  CareerConneCT	CareerConneCT provides individuals with FREE training for high-demand careers. Eligible participants will gain the skills needed for a job in 4 to 24 weeks, work with a career coach, and get connected to employers that are ready to hire.



Economic Stability Area	Resource	What you'll Find
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	ADS / Bureau of Rehabilitation Services: Welcome to Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (ct.gov)	The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is Connecticut's vocational rehabilitation program. We help individuals with disability to prepare for, enter and maintain employment through a wide range of services that best fit your need and will lead to your success.
ADULT EDUCATION	Adult Education Website, Programs: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Adult-Ed/Adult- Education-Instructional-Programs	This page links to the free instructional programs offered through CT Adult Education. Connecticut Adult Education offers three distinct pathways for adults to attain a high school diploma (GED, CDP, and NEDP). CT Adult Education also offers instruction for foreign-born adults who wish to become United States citizens. Additionally, CT Adult Education also has programs designed for adults who have limited proficiency in the English language or whose native language is not English.
	https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Adult- Ed/providerdirectory.pdf	The second link provides a list of all adult education agencies and contact information across the CT.
HIGHER EDUCATION	CT State Community College website:  https://ctstate.edu	This is the new website for the CT State Community College (as of July, 2023, the 12 community colleges have been consolidated into a single accredited college). It shares statewide opportunities, both on the credit and noncredit (workforce development) sides.



Economic Stability Area	Resource	What you'll Find
SUPPORTS FOR INCARCERATED FATHERS	CT Department of Correction (DOC) website, Programs & Services page:  Program and Services (ct.gov)	This page provides the listing of programs offered at each DOC facility, including educational and vocational training, substance abuse treatment, parenting, anger management, domestic violence counseling, health education, sex offender treatment, religious services and many more.  Fatherhood Program Providers should contact Counselor Supervisor Adrienne Kerwin with any questions about programs via email at <a href="mailto:Adrienne.Kerwin@ct.gov">Adrienne.Kerwin@ct.gov</a>
CHILDCARE	CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Website, Programs & Services page:  https://www.ctoec.org/child-care-and-camps/	The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) helps make sure that childcare programs and camps are safe, healthy places for children to learn and grow. Learn about your options for licensed childcare programs and camps.  The easiest way is to use the 2-1-1 Child Care online search tool. The tool allows you to search by name or location and can give you key information about programs in your area, including:  • Ages of children they serve  • Costs  • Hours  • Inspection and violation history  • Provider's experience and qualifications



Economic Stability Area	Resource	What you'll Find
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES	CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) website, Supported Employment Services page:  Supported Employment Services (ct.gov)  DMHAS Supported employment providers (ct.gov)	This page provides a list of DMHAS partner agencies to offer a recovery-oriented system of care for persons in recovery who are seeking employment or education while experiencing behavioral health conditions. Employment strategies are tailored to meet individual needs. Services may include career planning, job search assistance, job placement, on- and off-the-job coaching, and career advancement services.
	Programs and Services page:  Programs and Services (ct.gov)  Crisis Services: 1-800.467.3135 or 2-1-1  24/7 Access Line: (800) 563-4086  Bed Availability: Connecticut Addiction Services (ctaddictionservices.com)  Connecticut Mental Health Services (ctmentalhealthservices.com)  www.Livel.OUD.org  www.drugfreect.org  Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT)   Carelon Behavioral Health of Connecticut (ctbhp.com)  NORA - Naloxone + Overdose Response App (ct.gov)	This page, and the additional links provided here, provide quick access to numerous programs and services available through DMHAS, including how to find services by geographical area of the state. These resources can assist individuals' with their economic stability goals.



Economic Stability Area	Resource	What you'll Find
	CT Department of Housing Website: www.ct.gov/doh	
HOUSING	https://portal.ct.gov/DOH/DOH/Housing/Programs	This link brings you to the list of all DOH funded programs from affordable housing resources to homeless services, including the Coordinated Access Networks and homeless shelters.
	Call 211 for Essential Community Services   United Way 211	If experiencing a housing crisis individuals can visit this webpage or call 2-1-1 for assistance.
	CT Housing Choice Voucher Program (cthcvp.org)	This website lists all public housing authorities that have a current open waitlist and instructions to apply for that waitlist.
	www.cthousingsearch.org	This website lists affordable housing properties and any vacancies they may have.