





Family Assistance Letter # 198
OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE, OHIO COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD
March 14, 2022

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Wanda J. Ellis, Deputy Director 
Office of Family Assistance

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Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

SUBJECT: **Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative**

Background

Father-absence is a national crisis with significant negative consequences not only to the immediate (i.e., the father himself, his child(ren), and the family), but also to society overall. For example, according to the National Fatherhood Initiative®, children who experience father absence are at four (4) times greater risk of poverty; at two (2) times greater risk of infant mortality; more likely to face abuse and neglect; seven (7) times more likely to become pregnant as a teen; etc. (see <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/135704/NFIFatherAbsenceInfoGraphic071118.pdf>). The negative effects of father-absence are compounding. Therefore, Responsible fatherhood programming is a necessary response to this crisis in Ohio by the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OCF).

The mission of OCF is to enhance the well-being of Ohio's children by providing opportunities for fathers to become better parents, partners, and providers. OCF, established in 1999 pursuant to ORC § 5101.34 et al., seeks initiatives that do the following:

- A. Organize a state summit on fatherhood at minimum every four (4) years.
- B. Prepare a report each year that identifies resources available to fund fatherhood-related programs and that explores the creation of initiatives to:
 1. Build parenting skills of fathers;
 2. Provide employment-related services to non-custodial fathers;
 3. Prevent premature fatherhood;
 4. Serve fathers who are inmates or have been recently released from imprisonment;
 5. Reconcile fathers with their families; and
 6. Increase public awareness of the critical role fathers play.

Opportunity

OCF-funded Responsible Fatherhood programming currently does not exist in all counties in Ohio. To promote fatherhood and prepare counties to manage fatherhood programming, OCF funds the Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative for counties who have not received this training. The initiative provides prospective counties with:

- A. Training on how to conduct a fatherhood Needs and Assets Assessment in its communities;
- B. Planning for a Community Conversation on Fatherhood;
- C. Assistance on how to implement a Community Action Plan on Fatherhood;
- D. Guidance in how to identify and apply for sustaining funding for the County Fatherhood Initiative; and
- E. A \$10,000 implementation contract to begin or continue Responsible Fatherhood programming in the county.

A county's leadership team for the Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative should include at least five (5) of the following: (a) county commissioners; (b) county judges; (c) the county public children services agency (PCSA); (d) the county child support enforcement agency (CSEA); (e) the county job and family services (CDJFS); (f) faith-based community organizations; and (g) community business leaders, among others.

For more information about the Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative, please visit OCF's website at <https://www.fatherhood.ohio.gov/Special-Programs/County-Fatherhood-Initiative>.

Interested Counties

All counties interested in participating in the Ohio County Fatherhood Mobilization Initiative should contact OCF at fathers@jfs.ohio.gov.

c:

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