

News Today

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Virginia Delegation Visited to Learn Best Practices

A delegation of state and county administrators from Virginia and representatives from the Annie E. Casey Foundation recently visited Ohio to observe best practices in child support, child welfare and other services as they relate to fatherhood. Director Colbert joined members of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OFC) in welcoming the Virginia delegation during the commission's last meeting of the year, held Nov. 14 at the Riffe Center in Columbus.

OCF Interim Executive Director Kimberly Dent said the Annie E. Casey Foundation arranged the Virginia delegation's visit.

"They were interested in Ohio because we have a fatherhood program that is codified into state law and has bipartisan support," she said.

During the OFC meeting, Dent spoke about outreach efforts to help fathers become more involved parents and overcome financial obstacles to paying child support.

Director Colbert shared with the Virginia delegation that ODJFS provides a full range of support services to the OCF.

"We see the total picture at Job and Family Services," he said. "We are able to address fatherhood from a holistic approach."

Also during the meeting, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Director Gary C. Mohr spoke about initiatives to help incarcerated parents who are soon to be released to find employment and clear up child support arrearages.

"We have judges, we have legislators saying, 'Let's give people a second chance who deserve it,'" Mohr said.

Also offering remarks during the meeting were Susan Brown, director of the Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency; Deb Ortiz-



(Left to right) Director Colbert addressed a delegation from Virginia during a recent meeting of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood as OFC Interim Executive Director Kimberly Dent and OFC Chairman David Kontur looked on.

Flores, director of Lucas County Department of Job and Family Services; Jeanne Bennett, Summit County Children Services; Glenn Harris, Action for Children; Eugene Norris, Fame Fathers nonprofit organization of Akron; and Daniel Johnson and Craig Gerbers, Zepf Center Fatherhood Connections of Toledo.

After the OFC meeting, the Virginia delegation accompanied Dent on office visits to OFC grantees.

"We wanted to give them the big picture of what the commission does and give them an opportunity to hear from some of the grantees and other stakeholders," Dent said.

Ohio has hosted other national and international delegations this year: one from Russia and one from New York City. Both of those groups visited Columbus last summer. In October, staff members from the offices of five members of Congress visited Ohio as part of a fact-finding trip to help those in Washington learn more about Ohio's child welfare system.