Implementing Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs within Different Organizational Structures

Real Families Real Strengths

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Introduction

Marriage and relationship education programs arose from increased public concern that high rates of single parent households and family instability placed children at risk of poverty and a host of other negative impacts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1970 and 2005, the percentage of children living in two-parent families dropped from 85% to 68%.

The passing of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 and the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 represent federal efforts to respond to these negative trends. With the advent of dedicated funding, healthy marriage and relationship education, and responsible fatherhood programs became more readily available; particularly in low-income and challenged communities where these programs could now be made available for free.

Although there is much research to support the idea of family stability as a key anti-poverty strategy, there is limited research to indicate which approaches are the most effective. In 2006, the Administration for Children and Families Office of Family Assistance (OFA) awarded Healthy Marriage (HM) and Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grants to a variety of organizations offering a diverse range of programming. The funded organizations were required to work within a framework of guidelines, including target populations and allowable activities. However, as demonstration initiatives, program design was intentionally flexible to encourage creativity in approach; offering deeper insight into which organizational structures, implementation strategies and service delivery models might offer promise as effective and replicable approaches to serving families.

Organizational structures included state and local government agencies, community-based organizations of varying sizes, universities, and faith-based groups. While varied in service delivery models, a core mission of these programs was to educate participants on the components of healthy relationships, primarily focusing on communication and conflict resolution skills along with some parenting and financial literacy education. Responsible fatherhood programs included economic stability components as well. Additionally, all of these OFA funded programs were required to consider family safety as a priority and mandated to develop domestic violence protocols for participants and staff training.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the major organizational structures within which OFA Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood programs were operated and explore how these

structures may have affected program implementation as perceived by the program staff. Through a series of discussions with program leaders we explored how a program's organizational structure influences the following: how and with whom community partnerships are formed, program marketing, recruitment and retention, how program evaluation is conducted, and the development of strategies for sustaining programs beyond the life of the federal funding.

Methodology

The first step was to categorize OFA's organizational structure information which revealed that community-based nonprofit organizations made up the largest percentage of funded programs at 76%, followed by Colleges/Universities at 12% and other categories in small percentages. For the purposes of this paper, we have organized the information based on the following categories:

1. Large Community-based Organizations (CBOs) [50 employees and over]
2. Average-sized CBOs [up to 49 employees]
3. Faith-based Organizations
4. Institutions of Higher Learning
5. Government - State/County Agencies.

As indicated previously, these demonstration initiatives were diverse not only in organizational structure, but also in program components and service delivery models. The charts, located in **Appendix A**, are provided to offer context regarding the various programmatic components within the individual organizations included in this discussion.

The organizations are intentionally not identified in the body of this paper to allow the focus of the discussion to be on the organizational structure instead of the individual programs. The charts provide program detail and illustrate program variations even within the same organizational structure. This information is helpful in understanding the various other factors that may impact program implementation. For example, recruitment and retention strategies for a one-day workshop will vary, from those required to recruit and retain participants for a 12-week program. It is important to recognize that all of these attributes play a role in program implementation and service delivery and therefore contribute to differing perspectives of program leaders as they manage unique programs with common goals.

Targeting healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs representing each of the organizational structure categories identified previously, we hosted 90 minute focus group

discussions with a total sample size of 33 program leaders selected in partnership with OFA. Participants were from both high performing programs that had consistently met their targets as well as less successful programs that had experienced greater challenges with program implementation. Program leaders were advised that they would not be identified in the narrative of this paper to encourage them to speak freely about challenges. The discussions were designed to gather program leaders' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of program implementation within a particular type of organizational structure. Issues such as staff size, budget, organization's mission, perceived reputation in the community, and history of relationships with other community groups were discussed at length. *A complete list of focus group questions can be found in **Appendix B**.*

Large Community-Based Organizations

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

The majority of the programs implemented as part of large community-based organizations offer relationship education sessions off-site relying on partnerships to assist with service delivery. In most cases, the program staff facilitate the training sessions in space provided by partner organizations. A unique spin on this is offered by a national organization that uses trained professionals to facilitate through teleconferences hosted at partner sites. Some of the programs engage partners as facilitators, including one program that relies on partners to help provide quarterly workshops in addition to regular staff-facilitated trainings. Another example where the partner was critical to service delivery was a site that uses a bilingual partner to translate curricula. A couple of these programs also have a national reach; one as a pilot site and the other as a chapter under a national umbrella organization.

While only one of the programs in this focus group offered onsite services in the form of one-on-one assessments with life coaches rather than group instruction; its leadership also spoke of partner involvement and having a strong relationship with the county Child Support Enforcement (CSE) office. A CSE representative visits the program offices regularly to help participants with child support status assessments and reinstating driver's licenses[1].

It is clear from the comments that partnerships, whether locally, or through national networks, have been key components of the service delivery strategies addressed here. When asked about the partnerships, the majority of the program leaders noted that association with their parent organization was very helpful in terms of partnering with other organizations. Program leaders are able to leverage resources through existing relationships related to the parent organization's longstanding presence and connections within their communities. These programs are able to access space and solicit referrals through already established partnerships.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

Community partner organizations are also important for outreach serving as a major avenue for recruitment. Programs take advantage of parent organization's affiliation with other agencies

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[1] Some state child support enforcement offices suspend driver's licenses of noncustodial parents who fail to pay child support.

such as a local Head Start program to recruit families. Another advantage to being part of a larger organization is recruiting participants from within the CBO's other departments or through other local chapter members. Internal marketing included ideas like distributing program flyers to other staff working under the umbrella of the large community-based organization and making marketing materials available in the CBO lobby.

Program leaders described various additional types of marketing and recruitment efforts. For example, one program's most successful recruitment method is its newsletter, which has a circulation of 4,000. This program is also part of its city's Healthy Marriage coalition, with 100 member organizations that help distribute information about the program. Responsible Fatherhood programs working extensively within the criminal justice system rely on that system's internal communication network to assist with recruitment.

Increased outreach capacity was another advantage conveyed by the program leaders as a result of access to specialized departments within their organizations to help produce effective marketing materials (e.g., the IT department and Public Relations Director, and marketing team). The majority of the programs found it helpful to leverage the parent organization's identity in marketing their programs. It provided more immediate recognition and a level of familiarity and credibility.

Retention/Completion

The majority of the programs provide a range of program supports to their clients, including food, transportation, child care stipends or on-site child care during sessions. In addition to program supports, some organizations also offered incentives such as gift cards and certificates of completion. Some program leaders acknowledged that being part of a large community-based organization allowed them to take advantage of program supports already available within the larger organization. In general, providing program supports and incentives are considered to have had a positive impact on participant retention and completion.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

All of the program leaders in this category reported collecting and analyzing data related to their programs; some used independent evaluators, others simply administered pre- and post-tests with participants. They were able to garner additional resources from their parent organizations

for evaluation/program monitoring in the form of staff oversight, data processing, and, in one case, use of the parent organization's online database system.

Sustainability

All of the program leaders said that their parent organizations were planning to sustain their projects beyond the current grant funding. Sustainability plans mentioned included looking for alternate sources of funding through grants or donations and developing partnerships with other organizations to help share some of the program costs. One organization plans to use a train-the-trainer strategy, and the parent CBO is planning to integrate some of the program elements into other programs they offer. Another organization plans to use a "workshop in a box", consisting of a facilitation guide, marketing and implementation materials, and PowerPoint slides.

According to the group, the size of the parent organization makes a difference in the ability to aid program sustainability efforts or at least provide a level of job security for program staff. The perception was that a smaller organization would probably not be able to sustain employees brought on through a specific grant, where a larger organization has a better chance of finding different positions for these employees after grant programs expire. It was also suggested that it can be helpful to be part of a national network, as national organizations are interested in program replication and can share sustainability strategies used by other sites.

Summary

Overall, the representatives of programs connected to large community-based organizations noted advantages to their recruitment efforts by being able to tap into already established community partnerships or recruiting directly from other programs under the umbrella of the large CBO. They were also able to leverage CBO staff or a database system to conduct data analysis and/or evaluations. Some advantages were also associated with individual job security as well as program sustainability efforts, including program replication through local chapters of a national organization.

They did not believe that being sponsored by a large CBO created any particular challenges to program implementation. This was also true when talking with a program leader from a more challenged organization. Although they had difficulty making their targets, they did not attribute the challenges to the program's affiliation with a large CBO. Instead the difficulties cited by the

challenged program centered on the poor economic climate and on multiple barriers of working with their targeted populations.

Average-Sized Community-Based Organizations

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

All of the program leaders in this group offer instruction using a similar off-site service delivery strategy although they target different populations. The healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs serve high school students, substance abuse treatment center residents, as well as couples and fathers attending training sessions offered at churches and other community organizations.

Most of the organizations provide facilitators or use staff within partner organizations as facilitators. Being connected to an average-sized CBO has proved helpful in forming partnerships with other community organizations—either by tapping into existing partnerships, or as a result of the affiliation with a community-based organization with an established and trusted reputation in the community.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

Program leaders discussed using a variety of mediums to promote their programs, including radio, TV, billboard advertisements, newsletters, brochures, and flyers. They also noted that their relationship with the parent CBO helped with recruiting through existing partnerships or community recognition. For example, leveraging the organization's reputation enabled a program leader to easily implement their program in all regional high schools. Like the large community-based organizations, these average-sized organizations also marketed internally by placing brochures in waiting rooms and describing the program in the parent organization's overall marketing materials.

Retention/Completion

Retention strategies were similar to larger organizations and included providing program supports and incentives. Covering the cost of marriage licenses was one of the more unusual incentives mentioned. In addition, program leaders acknowledged modifying their programs to be more appealing to participants – some by including interesting instructional activities. A noted advantage of the organizational structure was that program supports, such as child care and transportation, were often funded by the parent organization enhancing the program's retention and completion rates.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

The majority of the programs in this group were working with independent evaluators, using grant funds to conduct program evaluations which often entail the collection of pre- and post-test data. One program noted having access to the parent organization's agency-wide database to track participant data. The web-based system allowed facilitators to input data and the program to have a much more robust system than if it had been paid for through the program grant money.

Sustainability

All of the average-sized community-based organizations plan to look for opportunities to extend the program beyond the grant by identifying other funding and leveraging partnerships with other organizations, including city and county agencies (juvenile justice, youth jobs academies) as well as schools. Another idea was to transition to offering an on-line course as a cost-effective way to continue the program's work.

Most program leaders believed that being sponsored by an average-sized CBO has impacted their sustainability efforts in a positive way. As one program leader explained, its rather small organizational size has been an asset in reaching out to new partners that are intimidated by large organizations. In contrast, another reported that due to the limited capacity of the parent agency, the CBO does not have a grant writer on staff. As a result, the program is having difficulty applying for other funding as program staff are funded out of the current grant and cannot engage in fundraising while running the program.

Summary

Echoing the comments of the large community-based organizations, the average-sized community-based organizations said that their organizational structure helped them in terms of recruitment and retention of participants. Recruitment through both the good reputation of the CBO and its existing partnerships with other community organizations; marketing by describing the programs in their overall promotional materials; and retention by offering program supports. Responses were more mixed on the topic of sustainability, with some program leaders seeing the organizational structure as a benefit, and another noting that the lack of the agency's grant-writing staff hindered efforts.

In addition to the usual challenges related to serving their target populations and the difficulties of working with partners with limited funds and different missions, some program leaders did attribute certain challenges to their affiliation with an average-sized CBO. For example, in a case where the narrow scope of the program did not fit into the parent organization's overall mission, the parent organization decided to discontinue support of the program. A similar example was a situation where the average-size community-based organization offered core services that did not appear to naturally align with the missions of either Responsible Fatherhood or Healthy Marriage programs requiring extra internal efforts to create buy-in. This can be particularly challenging when staff turnover at the parent organization means that program staff have to take the time to regenerate buy-in and interest for their program from new CBO staff. One perception was that larger organizations might have sufficient staff to be able to avoid these re-education efforts.

Faith-Based Organizations

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

The majority of the faith-based organizations interviewed offer their own facilities as the primary service delivery location; occasionally using partner facilities. Those programs targeting inmates and students offered training sessions exclusively in prisons or schools.

Many of the faith-based organizations have formed partnerships with prisons, schools, and a range of other community-based organizations including health clinics and one WIC center. In terms of leveraging these partnerships, most of the programs developed cross-referral partnerships or were at least able to refer program participants to partners for services such as food and utility assistance, transportation, domestic violence, and housing. Some programs were provided space by their partners to conduct training.

Overall, none of the program leaders expressed any major concerns with compliance to federal faith-based regulations when conducting secular programming in a faith-based environment. However, conversations did reveal some adjustments were necessary to remain in compliance. For example, a wording change in the curriculum used by one program was required to comply with the regulations. Others acknowledged that some partner churches had difficulty following the regulations at first, but that they were able to educate the partners and eventually come into compliance.

Several of the program leaders felt their faith-based organizational structure negatively impacted their efforts to create partnerships with other organizations—both faith-based and secular. For example, some churches did not want to work with the program because the instruction was secular. Mmarketing and creating partnerships with non-faith-based organizations was occasionally challenging because they worried the programming would be religious. Interestingly, one organization encountered problems hiring staff because some job seekers mistakenly believed that one needed to be religious in order to work for the program.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

The programs located in faith-based organizations operating within prisons and schools found it easy to promote their programs. In the case of schools, training sessions are infused into already

existing classes, making it easy to recruit participants. The majority of other programs recruit through typical methods such as television, radio, newspaper advertisements, and flyers.

Similar to previous types of organizations, faith-based programs found that their recruitment efforts have benefitted from affiliation with their parent organization—one noting a positive reputation in the community, and the other saying that pastors were a great referral source of couples to the program. However, similar to the challenge described related to creating partnerships, churches normally affiliated with a faith-based organization can be unreceptive to secular programs and some secular organizations resist partnering because they believe the instruction would contain religion, and therefore not universally appeal to their client base.

In order to minimize some of these disadvantages, a few program leaders marketed their programs separately from their sponsoring faith-based organizations. A couple of programs changed their program name to separate it from the sponsoring organization while another downplayed the affiliation and minimized the recognized faith-based logo in advertisements and materials.

These challenges did not appear to be widespread and the majority of the program leaders reported that the affiliation with a faith-based organization did not negatively affect recruitment efforts.

Retention/Completion

The usual perspective regarding program supports and incentives existed among faith-based organizations as well. Like other programs, they leveraged partnerships within the faith-based community to provide program supports.

An interesting attribute that was unique to the conversation with the faith-based program leaders was the idea that one of the major contributing factors to retention was building strong relationships between staff and participants. They believe that after a few sessions, the participants began to value the relationships made and became more receptive to the information learned, which had a greater impact on retention than traditional incentives.

When asked about the extent to which being sponsored by a faith-based organization affected retention rates, none of the program leaders noted a connection—either positive or negative.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

The majority of the faith-based programs utilize grant-funded evaluators to collect and analyze data. None of the program leaders were currently leveraging resources from their sponsoring organizations to assist with program performance monitoring or evaluation.

Sustainability

All of the faith-based programs plan to continue at least some of the elements of these programs by identifying other funding sources such as foundations and private organizations, fee for service restructuring, accepting donations, or promoting the program to other communities. A prison-based program hopes to negotiate state funding. The program leaders did not see their organizational structure as providing advantages or disadvantages to sustainability, although one organization reported part of the difficulty in identifying funding is that they want to avoid "stealing" current donors from the larger organization.

Summary

As have other organizations, these program leaders discussed the advantage of a parent organization having a trusted reputation in the community in developing partnerships and in recruitment and sustainability efforts. Several program leaders highlighted the dilemma of that recognition for faith-based organizations. Some found themselves in the position of being unable to attract those who perceive the program as having a religious orientation (both individuals and organizational partners); as well as the reverse scenario with religious people and groups that are disappointed the program does not offer a religious approach to relationship education. However, they did not perceive the organizational structure as affecting the other aspects of retention, completion, or sustainability.

One program leader discussed facing multiple implementation challenges that may be perceived as related to organizational structure. He expressed difficulty recruiting potential participants based on comments that they feared being judged by others if they came to the church as an unmarried couple. He also indicated challenges with program staff who found it difficult to adhere with faith-based regulations and found it difficult to avoid religious references when conducting training sessions in a church, especially when the participants assume the program is faith-related.

While these challenges are similar to those described by more successful faith-based organizations, it was unclear why some organizations struggled more or less with these challenges than others.

Institutions of Higher Learning

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

The majority of the program leaders in this group reported that they partnered with an external agency (e.g., prisons, Head Start centers) to deliver program services. For example, partner organizations supported the program by providing classroom space, transportation, child care and other program supports. Another service delivery model included leveraging relationships to integrate training sessions into pre-existing community programs, such as mental health programs, health care centers and health departments. The program leader targeted agencies that could deliver the program, and also provided logistical and financial support.

As with other organizational structures the reputation of the parent organization played an important role; affiliation with a college or university made it easier for organizations to form community partnerships, as the sponsoring institution's name and reputation were already well-known and respected in the community. Also, in some cases, programs could leverage community partnerships established through work on previous university projects or community outreach efforts.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

Like program leaders in the other organizational structures, multiple recruitment and marketing strategies are used; flyers, radio and newspaper ads, billboards, and bus wraps. One organization hosts a website that includes a toll-free number directing callers to their nearest healthy marriage training session. Further, word of mouth from program graduates is an important source of referrals.

While university affiliation boosted community credibility, most program leaders did not utilize university resources for program promotion. For example, one program determined their best recruitment strategy was through program facilitators (teachers); another program partnering with early childhood classrooms engaged teachers to reach out to fathers to attend the Responsible Fatherhood program when they dropped off and picked up their children from school; another worked within the prison system. Because recruitment did not occur at the university level, program leaders did not perceive that being affiliated with a university made a significant difference in its recruitment efforts.

Retention/Completion

As with the other organizational structures, colleges and university-based programs employ a number of strategies to recruit and retain participants in their programs; meals, on-site child care, cash incentives and offering a flexible schedule of services to encourage retention.

In addition, programs encourage participants to form social networks where participants encourage each other to continue with the program. A manager of a Responsible Fatherhood program also emphasized the importance of connecting fathers with their children. The program encourages fathers to make art work for their children, stages a family day, and holds a graduation ceremony that includes child-friendly activities.

In regards to the sponsoring institution's influence on retaining participants, some program leaders noted that program retention had more to do with what partners and the facilitators offer participants than the programs' affiliation with a university. For example, some fatherhood program leaders felt that fathers stay in the program because they enjoy the educational aspects of the program and appreciate how they are treated by facilitators.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

Similar to other organizational structures, the college/university-based organizations also collected pre- and post-test to evaluate their program's performance. In addition, two programs implemented a brief evaluation after each class in order to gauge participants' understanding of the instruction or process evaluations to assess whether the programs were being implemented as intended. A higher emphasis on evaluation was noted in the conversation with this group versus other organizational structures.

Unique to this category was that none of the program leaders reported working with evaluators outside of their sponsoring organization. University staff members (faculty, graduate students and research assistants) designed the evaluations (e.g., created measurement tools), as well as collected and analyzed the data.

Sustainability

A number of organizations plan to sustain their program through grant writing, foundation support, and embedding themselves within already established community programs (e.g., Family Assistance Centers, health care facilities, and state child care facilities).

Similar to programs operated in the government organizational structure, a major challenge to sustaining the program is that project staff cannot independently seek external funding; they must work through university channels even though it might be easier to approach their own contacts instead of working through the university.

Exploring the concept of fee-for-service, program participants in one program were asked if they would attend the program if required to pay. Even though the program targets low-income persons, participants said they would be willing to pay some fee; the program will be instituting a fee when grant dollars end to offset program costs.

Unique to this organizational structure was the recognition that a strong evaluation would help make a case to funders to continue supporting their program. Overall, they acknowledged that being affiliated with a university helped when talking to potential funders, and that having institutional backing was a key to successful sustainability.

Summary

There are both advantages and challenges to having programs associated with a college or university. In terms of recruitment advantages, the institution's well-known and respected name and reputation assist the programs in developing relationships with community partners, which helps to create a sizeable participant pool from which to recruit. In terms of program support and evaluation, respondents say that colleges or universities are likely to provide more resources than other sponsoring agencies. Disadvantages mentioned included having to face layers of bureaucracy in order to manage grant finances and reporting, and having to go through university channels to fundraise.

Institutions of higher learning with programs that seemed to struggle more with implementation and meeting participation targets indicated facing considerable challenges around recruitment and retention. Examples offered were: a jaded view of a healthy marriage, narrow targeted population, lack of interest by one partner in a couple, and organizational partners tasked with marketing activities that did not follow through. While all real challenges, these issues were, on the surface, unrelated to the nature of the program's organizational structure.

One program leader attributed its staffing problems to its university affiliation, noting that the lengthy process required to hire staff through the university personnel system made it difficult to hire or replace staff quickly.

State and County Agencies

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

This group includes programs coordinated by a range of government agencies such as corrections departments, school districts, and social services agencies that offer training sessions in multiple off-site facilities, whether in schools or correctional facilities with six to twenty partner sites across their states. Organizational partners provide staff members to support the program.

Program leaders acknowledged that being part of a government organizational structure allowed them to tap into networks of partnerships that state or county organizations have built over time. Many of these networks are already working with the targeted populations that programs hope to serve. In addition, their longstanding positive reputation in the community has helped them expand their partnership networks. For example, one program leader said involvement with the school district lends the organization a level of credibility across other communities. Another example is a state fatherhood program that requires sites to meet standards set from a national network and, with state sponsorship, additional fatherhood program sites have been certified since the beginning of the grant.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

Most of the program leaders in this group cited word-of-mouth as their most important method of recruiting participants. Establishing a positive reputation among current Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood program participants engenders trust in the community and attracts more clients. Aside from a program that only operates within prisons, the programs share similar recruitment efforts such as using flyers, brochures, social media advertising, and attending community events.

Leaders agree that their affiliation with a state or county agency has helped them recruit participants. As noted above, the programs recruit many participants through organizational partnerships already established by the parent state or county agency. Like large community-based organizations, they were also able to recruit directly from the pool of clients served by other agencies within their umbrella organization in addition to leveraging agency resources to conduct outreach campaigns. The organizational structure also positioned one program to expand its services to reach foreign-born populations and offer a wider range of opportunities for participants.

The only disadvantage noted was the perceived "welfare" stigma that comes with working within a state department of social services. To address the concern, program leaders suggested strategies such as providing specific information about the program, encouraging staff relationships with participants, and a proactive marketing strategy. Marketing strategies stress the affiliation with the state or county agency and is seen as an advantage to recruiting.

Retention/Completion

In addition to typical program supports and incentives, a program offered in a prison setting offers reduced sentencing and increased visitation privileges upon program completion. Beyond tangible incentives, emotional support was cited by respondents as an important retention strategy and often results in participants continuing to interact with the staff after program completion. Other examples included tailoring programs to the targeted population; hiring male staff to assist with recruiting and retaining male participants; using culturally relevant videos; and offering flexible class schedules to increase retention.

Although most of the program leaders did not identify a direct link between their organizational structure and program retention, they did acknowledge that the overall trust and recognition of the parent organization helped recruit and retain participants. It also helped that participants were familiar with agencies as a result of other services which had been accessed.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

As with the other organizations, many of the programs conduct pre- and post-test surveys with participants to assess knowledge gained and program satisfaction. Some also contract with evaluators outside of their organization, mostly at universities to collect and analyze data.

The prison-based program has the advantage of being able to obtain participants' quarterly conduct records and re-incarceration rates from the prison. Another program found its database cumbersome and was able to leverage local government agency resources to rebuild the website and create a more useable database.

Sustainability

Like programs in the other organizational structures, these organizations would like to continue their programs as well. They are proposing many of the same strategies as other programs, however, because of state agency affiliation, an organization would be unable to charge clients

fees. They would need to partner with a local non-profit to begin a fee-for-service program. School and governmental budget cuts also threaten program sustainability. Many school districts have cut programs and eliminated teachers, and may not be in a financial position to absorb the program because it is considered nonessential.

As noted, being affiliated with a state/county agency has both advantages and drawbacks in relation to sustainability efforts. One advantage related to grants includes having an in-house department to handle grant writing; while a disadvantage is not being able to apply for some funding opportunities because of the program's state agency status.

Summary

Overall, most programs said that their affiliation with a state/county agency greatly helped marketing and recruitment efforts, due to the already existing partnerships with other community organizations, the ability to recruit from the agencies' existing client base, and the agencies' strong reputation that made it possible to create additional partnerships. The one disadvantage stated was the perception that affiliation with the particular agency stigmatized the program in the eyes of potential participants. Agency affiliation seemed not to impact retention activities and was beneficial to evaluation efforts for one program. Program leaders offered mixed reviews in terms of the organization structure's impact on sustainability efforts, noting the benefit of in-house grant writers but limitations in some instances on pursuing certain funding opportunities and charging program fees.

An organization struggling to meet its target participation numbers suggests its affiliation with a government agency results in greater negative impact from the declining economy. Although the program leader did not elaborate, one can speculate the decrease in tax base related to foreclosures, business shut-downs, and reduced retail sales may have a more direct economic impact on a city agency than other types of organizations which rely on grant funds.

Insights

Service Delivery Model and Partnerships

Program leaders within each of the organizational structure categories provided information related to their program implementation and service delivery models. Many of the service delivery strategies were common across organizational structures. Interestingly, most of the program leaders did not readily associate organizational structure with challenges in program implementation. Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that service delivery may have already been organically designed to be complimentary to the structure given the natural paradigm of the parent organization. However, program leaders overwhelmingly associated advantages related to service delivery models with the value brought by partner relationships.

Larger community-based organizations, government entities and universities seem to have a greater advantage in leveraging partnerships; these brought more value in terms of access to larger pools of potential participants such as schools, prisons and social service agencies. Smaller faith and community-based organizations most often engaged in partnerships that offered space for workshops, but included access to smaller participant pools.

As it relates to staffing, it was noted that large organizations, universities and government entities had lengthier and more complex hiring processes. The lag time often affected service delivery. Smaller organizations were able to fill positions more quickly, but were seldom able to offer the same level of compensation, benefits, or growth potential as larger organizations, limiting their applicant pool.

Recruitment/Marketing/Outreach

Advantages frequently noted across organizational structures in relation to recruiting and participant outreach were the ability to draw from already-existing organizational partnerships and the strong reputation of the parent agency. Larger community-based organizations and government agencies were able to recruit through existing client databases, extensive internal networks and through long-standing partnerships.

Many organizations relied on internal marketing strategies to expand knowledge of their programs and encourage other agencies under the parent organization's umbrella to promote services. Although effective, this strategy could become labor-intensive where staff turnover

necessitated frequent retraining or where mission alignment was less obvious and required more effort to help staff understand the linkage between Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood and the parent organization's mission. The larger an organization, the more problematic these issues could become.

A programming paradox unique to faith-based organizations is the challenge of not being considered religious enough for some organizations and individuals, and being perceived as too religious by others. Programs in this category found it helpful to explicitly advertise to the general public that their programming is non-religious and suggest other complimentary programs or venues to those wanting more religious content.

Retention/Completion

All of the programs recognized the need to provide program supports such as meals, transportation, and child care to remove barriers to attendance as a strategy to retain participants. Organizational structure often played a key role in providing those supports in addition to enhancing a program's capacity to provide incentives. In general, larger more connected organizations were better able to financially support these efforts.

A specific example of an incentive that could not have been offered without a partnership is the prison-based project's ability to provide reduced confinement or increased visitation. Program leaders attributed their access to institutions such as schools and prisons as being a result of affiliation with their parent organization and acknowledged that working in schools and prisons enhances completion given that audiences are less transitory.

Smaller faith- and community-based organizations, or those not connected to a broader network, had the advantage of being more nimble with regard to program modification based on participant feedback. Adding interactive activities, not part of the original program design, to enhance retention by making the program more appealing was easier to accomplish without the levels of approval associated with an institute of higher learning or a national program.

Faith-based organizations and those connected with social-service agencies noted that relationships between staff and program participants were important to retention. This may be related to the fact that within these organizational structures, multiple services may be available to participants providing more interaction and, with that the opportunity, for program staff to develop supportive relationships. It may also be related directly to the nurturing personalities of

the staff themselves. The university group also mentioned relationships, but from the perspective of encouraging peer-to-peer relationships among participants.

Performance Monitoring/Evaluation

All of the programs engaged in some level of data collection. Many of the programs took advantage of the grant funding to engage an external evaluator. The level of organizational sophistication and partner-reach seemed to have a direct correlation to the type of data collected and comprehensiveness of any evaluation efforts.

Larger parent organizations with information management systems provided access for program staff to use their systems. Smaller faith- and community-based organizations typically did not collect data beyond pre- and post-testing and data required by the funder. Institutes of higher learning were the most focused on evaluation and even spoke of the need to use the data for sustainability efforts. An example of partner-reach would be the organization partnering with the prison system, thereby having access to data related to recidivism rates.

Sustainability

Organizational structures such as government agencies, universities, and large community-based organizations may be better able to devote some of their resources to assist programs with program supports and with evaluation efforts which can lead to enhanced sustainability plans. Larger organizations may have grant writers on staff.

However, programs affiliated with these organizational structures must work through levels of bureaucracy; from receiving permission to pursue funding opportunities and then applying for them. Large organizations tend to have multiple priorities and may make application decisions at a higher level based on resource allocation to support priority projects. Additionally, programs may not be eligible for certain funding opportunities as a result of their parent organization. Another constraint on state or county government agencies is the inability to charge program fees as a sustainability strategy.

In contrast, the size of the organization may also result in limited access to staff and other resources for sustainability.   For example, one average-sized community-based organization noted that the lack of the agency's grant-writing staff hindered sustainability efforts. Another challenge faced by smaller organizations is that program staff are usually allocated to the project

100%, which prevents them from participating in unallowable activities such as fundraising and grant writing.

Summary

In summary, it would be impossible to say that success or failure of any program could be totally attributed to its organizational structure. Nor can we infer from the information gathered that any one organizational structure offers more or less challenges or potential for success than another. Each of the organizational structures had nuances that enhanced program implementation and others that provided challenges.

Successful implementation seemed to hinge on an organization's ability to proactively identify and leverage organizational strengths, while minimizing challenges by understanding the nuances of their organizational structure. For example, acknowledging the bureaucratic approval processes of government or university and allowing for it when developing a project time-line.

Sustainability challenges related to lack of resources could be enhanced by engaging board members or volunteers in resource development where staff are restricted from participating in these activities. An increased understanding of the value of data in telling the program's story to potential funders may also be helpful in encouraging program staff to consider enhancing their data collection and evaluation efforts.

The overarching theme for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood program success and sustainability regardless of organizational structure was building and maintaining strong relationships – internally and externally.

Positive internal relationships between the grant-funded program and the parent organization are essential. A high-trust culture where the program staff feel supported and their services are valued as part of the larger organization's mission seem to weigh heavier on the perceptions of program leaders than did the specifics of programmatic challenges.

External relationships between the organization and the community they intend to serve were most often developed by leveraging the positive reputation of the parent organization. This reputation is also affected by the perception of mission-creep; parent organization's implementing programs that are not aligned with their core mission for the purpose of generating funding. If the parent organization's reputation is solid, it provides an advantage to the program. If it is not, even needed services can be underutilized.

Appendix A:
Profiles of HM and RF Programs Reflecting
Core Program Components

Organizational Info	Program Type	Other Services Offered	Partners
Large Community-Based Organizations			
Family Services of Greater Houston: Houston, TX. Funding: $477,539/year	Healthy Marriage RELATE pre-marital inventory, range of curricula used by members 1-day workshop	Referrals	50 organization members: nonprofits, corporations, churches
Kentucky River Foothills Development Council, Inc.: Richmond, KY. Funding: $490,680/year	Healthy Marriage Ideals, Financial Piece for the Next Generation (school version) 12 weeks, 2 hours per week	Coaching, referrals	Churches
Lighthouse Youth Services: Cincinnati, OH. Funding: $500,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood Nurturing Fathers 1x per week	Case management, reinstating driver's licenses, child support services, child care	Hamilton County Child Support Enforcement
National Multiple Sclerosis Society: Denver, CO. Funding: $530,755/year	Healthy Marriage Relationship Matters (created in-house, includes PREP curriculum and other research) 1 day or a weekend. Teleconference classes are 4-6 weeks	Pharmaceutical partners, resource center available for calls, resources from specialists.	Different MS Society Chapters, other MS organizations, commercial organizations, pharmaceutical organizations
National Organization of Concerned Black Men, Inc.: Washington, DC. Funding: $250,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood Strengthening Families Program (SFP) 13-week session, 2 hours each	Child support services, substance use services, Job Corps, DC Public Schools, workforce development, One-stop	Job Corps, DC Public Schools, substance use transitional programs, child support agency, DC Coalition for DV, Veterans' Affairs
Southwest Key: San Antonio TX. Funding: $460,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood Raising Children with Pride by National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute 14 hours, 8 weeks	Case management	Correctional facilities, community locations
Trinity Health Michigan DBA St. Joseph Mercy Oakland: Pontiac, MI. Funding: $545,730/year	Healthy Marriage Loving Couples Loving Children 15 sessions, 2.5 hours each	In-home services	Community OB/GYNs, WIC

Organizational Info	Program Type	Other Services Offered	Partners
Average-Sized Community-Based Organizations			
AVANCE: Austin, TX. Funding: $261,825/year	Healthy Marriage Parejas Unidas 32 hours over 4 Saturdays	Parenting education through sponsoring CBO	Local school districts, community partners
Brighter Beginnings: Oakland, CA. Funding: $250,000	Responsible Fatherhood Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers Eight 3-hour sessions	Referrals, case management	Substance abuse centers, community-based organizations
Character Counts in Maine: Portland, ME. Funding: $500,000/year	Healthy Marriage Maine TeenTalk Healthy Relationships Curriculum 8 hours over 6-8 weeks	Referrals	High schools, juvenile justice system
CJH Educational Services: Raleigh, NC. Funding: $550,000	Healthy Marriage Love U2 4 hours per day, after school and Saturdays	Referrals	School districts, Boys & Girls Club, Faith-based organizations
enFAMILIA, Inc.: Homestead, FL. Funding: $250,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood 24/7; The Nurturing Fathers; enFAMILIA curriculum 8 sessions, 2 hours each	Wraparound services, child support, parenting classes, bullying prevention, summer camp	Schools, churches, other community agencies
Family Lifeline: Rio Rancho, NM. Funding: $495,000/year	Healthy Marriage Prepare and Enrich Curriculum 8-10 1-1.5 hour sessions, every other week	Child care	Churches, other community organizations
Professional Counseling Resources, Inc.: Wilmington, DE. Funding: $250,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood REACH 8 weeks	Counseling, referrals	Criminal justice system
Relationship Research Foundation, Inc.: Newport Beach, CA. Funding: $250,000	Responsible Fatherhood Mastering the Mysteries of Love (couples), Ready for Love (single), Journey to Love (fathers), Bringing Baby Home 16 hours, 8-10 weeks, or an all- day session and follow up	Referrals	Schools, churches, community organizations, health clinics

Organizational Info	Program Type	Other Services Offered	Partners
The HIVE Creative Group, Inc.: Dothan, AL. Funding: $550,000/year	Healthy Marriage Active Relation-ships, for young adults, for healthy marriage, for active adults 8 hours over 2 days or 2 weeks in schools	Referrals	Schools, military, and local agencies
Faith-Based Organizations			
Catholic Charities of Wichita: Wichita, KS. Funding: $505,154/year	Healthy Marriage PREP Within Our Reach once a week for 12 weeks	One-on-one support from family specialists, referral to food and utility assistance, social services, DV, housing	Local Catholic university, state social rehabilitation services, welfare agency
Elizabeth's New Life Center, Inc.: Dayton, OH. Funding: $1,754,872/year	Healthy Marriage Love Thinks (long), Marriage/Relationship Builders (medium), Growing a Loving Lasting Marriage (1 day), Healthy Couples, Go for the Gold (HS25.5 hours (1-3 hrs.), 12 hours (1.5), 8 hours, 14 hours, 9 hours (1 hr.).)	Referrals	Catholic social services, pregnancy care center, Ohio State Extension, Green County DV Center, YMCA, churches, Head Start
Friendship West Baptist Church: Dallas-Ft Worth, TX. Funding: $546,025/year	Healthy Marriage Married and Loving It, Fragile Families 8 hours in one day	Referrals	Community centers, juvenile detention center, local clinic working with expectant parents, Housing Authority
Live the Life Ministries, Inc.: Tallahassee, FL. Funding: $549,985/year	Healthy Marriage Start Smart, FOCCUS, PAIRS 3 weeks	Child care in churches	Prisons, churches
Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota: Sioux Falls, SD. Funding: $450,671/year	Responsible Fatherhood PREP Within Our Reach; Long Distance Dads curriculum is funded by SD DOC 12 hours	Referrals, case management	Prison system, Hospitality House
Trinity Church: Miami, FL. Funding: $550,000/year	Healthy Marriage Love U2: 13 hours, Within My Reach: 12 hours. Frequency - 2 schools; Mon-Thurs in days or 1x a week in high summer camp programs	AmeriCorps programming	Schools, AmeriCorps

Organizational Info	Program Type	Other Services Offered	Partners
Institutions of Higher Learning			
John Brown University: Siloam Springs, AR. Funding: $544,782/year	Healthy Marriage Growing a Healthy Marriage, Foundations for a Healthy Marriage, I Choose Us, Keys to Loving Relationships 8 hours over 3 classes, 1-day events, or 1x a week for 8 weeks	Referrals	Hotels, community spaces
The Regents of New Mexico State University: Las Cruces, NM. Funding: $218,335	Responsible Fatherhood Nurturing Parenting 1x a week for 3 hours for 15 weeks	Life skills training	Prisons
The University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, NC. Funding: $375,685/year	Healthy Marriage Love's Cradle 24 hours over multiple days	Case management	County Health Department OB/GYN, County Cooperative Extension Service
University of Arkansas Medical School: Little Rock, AR. Funding: $224,562/year	Responsible Fatherhood Teaching Important Parenting Skills: TIPS for Great Kids! 1-2 days	None	Childcare organizations, North Little Rock School District Early Childhood Education Program
University of Louisville Research Foundation: Louisville, KY. Funding: $250,000/year	Healthy Marriage PREP and self-developed curriculum 16 hours, 2 days (retreat style)	Referrals to agencies	Community organizations, Health Department
Utah State University: Logan, UT. Funding: $449,586/year	Healthy Marriage Smart Steps 1x a week for 6 weeks	Referrals	Community agencies
Government Agencies			
Booneville School Districts: Booneville, AR. Funding: $548,225/year	Healthy Marriage Rise to Your Dreams, Connections 10-12 hours, once a week or bi-monthly	Mental health services, DV services, Boys and Girls Clubs	Schools, Sheriff's Office, human services, detention centers, Boys & Girls Clubs
Connecticut Department of Social Services: Hartford, CT. Funding: $1,000,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood 24/7 Dad; Relationships for Real Life; Money Smart; Inside/Out Dad; Healthy Relationships; Credit Where Credit is Due 24/7: 24 hours, Relationships: 16 hours, Inside/Out: 24 hours, Healthy: 16 hours, Cred: 8 hours	Connect to judicial and executive branches, child welfare, dept. of education, nurturing families network, referrals.	Community-based agencies, judicial and executive branches, Department of Education, Nurturing Families Network

Organizational Info	Program Type	Other Services Offered	Partners
Detroit Workforce Development Department: Detroit, MI. Funding: $500,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood Effective Black Parenting, Fatherhood Curriculum, Young Fatherhood Curriculum (from fatherhood.gov) 26 weeks, 2 -hour sessions	Referrals	Health Department, One-stop, United Way
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program: El Centro, CA. Funding: $479,031/year	Healthy Marriage PREP Within Our Reach, Loving Couples Loving Children 65 hours total - 20 hours of PREP held primarily on Saturdays	Cal Works, DSS, Mental Health services, One-stop centers	Schools, Cal Works, Department of Social Services, mental health providers, One-stop centers
Indiana Department of Corrections: Indianapolis, IN. Funding (2 grants): $250,000/year and $400,000/year	Responsible Fatherhood PREP (12 hours); 24/7 Dads (12 hours), Inside/Outside Dads (12 hours) 12 hours in 12 weeks	Child support services, Handbook of resources	Community volunteers

Appendix B:
Questions for Focus Groups

SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

○ Please describe how you deliver Healthy Marriage services to your participants

○ *(Prompt: does your org. conduct the classes? If so, are they delivered on your premises? What coordination, if any, do you get from your partners – do they conduct classes? Do they provide staff? Do they provide space for classes?)*

○ Are you able to leverage other resources from the grantee organization to deliver your services?

○ *(Prompt: any wraparound services such as child care, transportation, etc. space, staff?)*

○ Was your service delivery model developed to ensure compliance with the structure of your grantee organization?

○ How has the fact that your HM program is sponsored by a [insert type of grantee organization] affected your ability to form partnerships with other community organizations? To what extent has it affected your choice of organizations with which to partner?

RECRUITMENT, MARKETING, OUTREACH

○ Please describe your recruitment/marketing/outreach strategies for bringing participants into the program.

○ In what way, if any, has the [insert type of grantee organization] shaped your recruitment/marketing/outreach strategies?

○ Do you find that having your program sponsored by a [insert type of grantee organization] has been more of an advantage or more of a challenge in recruiting participants? Please explain.

○ Does the fact that your program is sponsored by a [insert type of grantee organization] affect whom services are provided to and/or where services are provided?

○ Did you market the HM or RF program is such a way that made it seem separate from your grantee organization, or its reputation?

RETENTION/COMPLETION

○ Please describe any strategies your program uses for getting participants to complete the program.

○ Has the fact that you are housed in a [insert type of grantee organization] had any bearing on your ability to retain program participants? Please explain.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING/EVALUATION

○ Please describe your practices for monitoring program performance/conducting program evaluation.

○ Are you able to leverage any resources (evaluation staff/sample performance measures etc.) from your grantee organization to help you with program performance monitoring/evaluation activities?

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

○ With less than 6 months left to grant funding, please describe any efforts you have under way to sustain your program beyond the life of the grant.

○ Please describe any advantages/challenges to sustainability efforts related to your program being sponsored by a [insert type of grantee organization].

Additional question for state and county agency focus group

A number of state/county agencies have a contracts and grants office that handles financial monitoring of grants and contracts that the agency has been awarded. Are there benefits and challenges to this arrangement?

Additional question for faith-based organizations

Have there been any challenges in adhering to the federal faith-based regulations in implementing your program and/or your curriculum?

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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