

## JOHN S. MARTINEZ (JSM) FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE OF CONNECTICUT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** *What is the John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut?*

**A:** The John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut is a broad-based, multi-agency, statewide program led by the Department of Social Services that is focused on changing the systems that can improve fathers' ability to be fully and positively involved in the lives of their children.

**Q:** *What's the goal of the Fatherhood Initiative?*

**A:** The goal of the Fatherhood Initiative is to promote the positive involvement and interactions of fathers with their children by providing dads with the skills and supports they need to stay connected to their children.

**Q:** *When did the Fatherhood Initiative begin?*

**A:** Fatherhood Initiative legislation was passed with bipartisan support in the fall of 1999, after state and local leaders continued to see children who had been affected by father-absence.

**Q:** *Who is involved in the Fatherhood Initiative?*

**A:** Partners in the Initiative include the Departments of Children & Families, Correction, Education, Labor, Mental Health & Addiction Services, and Public Health; Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services and Court Support Services Divisions; CT Commission on Children; CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Legal Aid Services and numerous community-based partners serving families (mothers, fathers, and children).

**Q:** *What is the Fatherhood Advisory Council (FAC) and when do they meet?*

**A:** As lead agency for the fatherhood initiative, in the fall of 1999 Department of Social Services established a broad-based advisory council to assist in the planning and implementation of statewide activities to support the Fatherhood Initiative. The council which consists of a diverse group of stakeholders focused on creating. The FAC has met on a quarterly basis since its inception.

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**Q:** *How is the programming element of the Initiative funded?*

**A:** Over the past several years fatherhood programming has been funded in multiple ways: legislative appropriations, federal grants and through the Department of Social Services budget. Pilot programs such as Problem Solving Court and the Employment Pilot have been funded through the Judicial Branch. Community-based providers also seek/use funds through private foundations and other funders as well.

**Q:** *How many Fatherhood Initiatives are there in Connecticut?*

**A:** There is only one statewide Fatherhood Initiative. It is led by the Department of Social Services and implemented by the state and local network partners.

**Q:** *Does each state agency have a fatherhood initiative?*

**A:** There is only one *JSM Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut*, which serves as the umbrella under which all fatherhood efforts within and across agencies fall. The state agency partners have been running fatherhood activities within their agencies and externally with their various partners as a result of their commitment to the *JSM Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut*.

**Q:** *Is the Fatherhood Initiative a DSS program?*

**A:** No, the John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut is a broad-based, multi-agency, statewide program that is led by the Department of Social Services.

**Q:** *How do I get help and learn more about the Fatherhood Initiative?*

**A:** You may get help by visiting our website at [www.ct.gov/fatherhood](http://www.ct.gov/fatherhood), contacting our information and referral line at 1.866.6CT.DADS or dialing 211.

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## CERTIFICATION

**Q:** *What is fatherhood program certification?*

**A:** The purpose of program certification is to recognize fatherhood programs that have demonstrated exemplary practice, and to ensure consistency and quality service delivery to low-income, noncustodial fathers and their families. Through program certification, fatherhood programs in Connecticut will increase their ability to provide quality services to fathers and ultimately benefit the children who live in low-income families.

**Q:** *What are the benefits of certification?*

**A:** Through the certification process, fatherhood programs have

- 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 program participants
- The ability to present a comprehensive, father- and family-centered approach to service delivery to potential funders

**Q:** *How do I get my program certified?*

**A:** [link to Connecticut Fatherhood Program Certification information sheet](#)

**Q:** *Is my program guaranteed funding once it is certified?*

**A:** Certification does not automatically lead to funding, whether state, federal, or private, and should not be the reason to enter into this process. However, being state-certified does allow programs the opportunity to demonstrate the delivery of comprehensive services based on the seven standards identified by national groups as best practices, which will enhance grant and/or RFP applications and may increase an agency's chances to be successful in obtaining funding.

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**Q:** *Who are the current certified fatherhood programs and where are they located?*

**A:** [link to GIS Map with listing of certified fatherhood providers](#)

**Q:** *What services do the certified fatherhood programs offer?*

**A:** The certified programs offer an array of services including but not limited to: Comprehensive Intake & Assessment, Case Management Services, Curriculum-based Group Instruction, Access to Domestic Violence Prevention Services, Voluntary Paternity Establishment Services, State-Owned Arrearage Adjustment Program, Internal & External Referrals, Systems navigation, assistance with completing court documents

**Q:** *How many fathers are served annually by the certified fatherhood programs?*

**A:** The certified programs have served over 5,082 program participants over the last six years, that's an average of 847 program participants annually.

**Q:** *Are there any eligibility requirements to participate in a certified fatherhood program?*

**A:** The target population is fathers and/or family-men between the ages of 16-65 who reside in Connecticut

**Q:** *Are there any fees required to participate in a certified fatherhood program?*

**A:** No, participation in case management and classes at a certified fatherhood program is free.